QUEER DOUBLES: THE VICTORIAN SENSATION NOVEL AND ENGLISH SEXOLOGY

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Abstract

By representing deviant gender and sexuality through the structural principle of doubling, Victorian sensation novels from the 1860s and 1870s anticipate the English branch of sexology that emerged in the 1880s. As critics such as Winifred Hughes have shown, doubled identities—whether disguised, exchanged, confused, mistaken, mirrored, opposed, or divided—characterise the sensation genre, including its treatment of gender ambiguity and same-sex bonds. Dualistic structures likewise underlie sexological concepts of sexual inversion and same-sex desire, which conflated what we now consider the separate categories of gender identity and sexual orientation. Modern critics have demonstrated how Victorian periodical reviewers constructed sensation fiction as the deviant oppositional "double" of the dominant realist novel; in a different way, my dissertation construes the genre as also the double of sexology, not only for their shared concerns with non-normative gender behaviour and sexual desire, but also because of English sexology's close ties with literary culture. A study of doubles in major Victorian sensation novels thus illuminates the conversant discourses of sensation fiction and sexology, and how the former contributed to the emergence of the latter.

The first chapter examines two early sensation novels by Mary Braddon and Ellen Wood to show how gender-transgressive female protagonists who double their own identities are punished in the narrative for exposing the construction of normative femininity. The second chapter analyses novels by Charles Reade and Wilkie Collins that focus on homosocial pairings of complementary male characters to illustrate how the authors, in their lack of scientific precision, differ from sexologists, who presuppose a fixed relationship between inverted gender and same-sex attraction. The third chapter studies Thomas Hardy's first novel, *Desperate Remedies*, published anonymously but assumed by some critics to be the work of a woman. Hardy's intellectual kinship with major sexologist Havelock Ellis underlies the dualities of identity in his novel, which simultaneously connotes and distances itself from the sexual sciences. A brief coda considers the legacies of the sensation novel with respect to the literary depiction of gender and sexual variance.

The scholarly understanding of Victorian sensation fiction has evolved from that of a minor, marginal genre to one whose subject matter reflects key anxieties of the era, particularly the instability of gender roles and relations. Yet a retroactive queer critical approach to sensation texts requires thorough historicisation by way of period notions about gender and sexual deviance. By studying English sexology alongside gender and sexual representations in the sensation novel, my work grounds its contemporary queer, feminist, and gender studies approach with a historically proximate discourse while engaging questions about genre, and thus opening up the interdisciplinary possibilities of literary analysis.

RÉSUMÉ

Les Doubles *queer* : le roman à sensation victorien et la sexologie anglaise

En représentant les déviances du genre et de la sexualité par le principe structurel de dédoublement, les romans à sensation victoriens des années 1860 et 1870 anticipes la branche anglaise de la sexologie qui a émergé au cours des années 1880. Ainsi que les critiques tels que Winifred Hughes l'ont démontré, les identités doubles—qu'elles soient déguisées, échangées, troublées, confondues, parallèles, opposées ou divisées—caractérisent le roman à sensation, incluant son traitement de l'ambiguïté du genre et des relations de même sexe. Des structures dualistes sous-tendent également les concepts sexologiques d'inversion sexuelle et de désir entre personnes de même sexe, regroupant ce que nous considérons maintenant comme des catégories distinctes, à savoir le genre et l'orientation sexuelle. Les critiques contemporains ont démontré comment les critiques périodiques victoriens ont établi le roman à sensation comme le double déviant à l'opposé du roman réaliste dominant ; d'une autre façon, ma thèse interprète également le genre du roman à sensation comme analogue à la sexologie, non seulement en raison de ses préoccupations communes, avec les comportements de genre non normatifs et le désir sexuel, mais aussi à cause du rapport entre la sexologie et la culture littéraire en Angleterre. Une étude des doubles dans certains romans à sensation victoriens majeurs éclaire ainsi les discours liés du roman à sensation et de la sexologie, et comment le premier a contribué à l'émergence du second.

Le premier chapitre examine deux des premiers romans à sensation, écrits par Mary Braddon et Ellen Wood, afin de démontrer comment les protagonistes féminins au genre transgressif qui doublent leurs propres identités sont punis lors de la trame narrative et ainsi révéler la construction d'une féminité normative. Le deuxième chapitre analyse des romans de Charles Reade et Wilkie Collins qui mettent en relief des jumelages homosociaux de personnages masculins complémentaires afin d'illustrer comment les auteurs, par leur manque de précision scientifique, diffèrent des sexologues, qui présupposent une relation fixe entre le genre inversé et les désirs homosexuels. Le troisième chapitre examine le premier roman de Thomas Hardy, *Les Remèdes Désespérés*, publié anonymement mais attribué à tort par certains critiques à la plume d'une femme écrivaine. Les liens intellectuels entre Hardy et le célèbre sexologue Havelock Ellis répondent aux les dualités de l'identité dans son roman, qui fait référence aux sciences de la sexualité tout en s'en distanciant. Une brève coda considère l'héritage du roman à sensation en ce qui concerne la représentation littéraire du genre et des sexualités alternatives.

L'appréhension critique du roman à sensation victorien a évolué : au départ, genre mineur et marginal ; à présent, reflet des inquiétudes-clés de l'époque, en particulier de l'instabilité des rôles et des relations entre genres. Pourtant, une approche critique rétroactive *queer* des romans à sensation nécessite une historicisation approfondie des notions de genre et de déviance sexuelle durant cette période. En étudiant la sexologie anglaise en parallèle des représentations du genre et de la sexualité dans les romans à sensation, ma thèse confère à ces approches contemporaines des théories *queer*, féministes et du genre une perspective historique, tout en suscitant des questions à propos du genre littéraire, cette fois, et donc participe à l'interdisciplinarité dans le domaine de l'analyse littéraire.

INTRODUCTION

Histories of Victorian fiction have commonly viewed the sensation novel as a transgression from the realist norm, whereby the intrigue-laden plots of bestsellers by Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Ellen Wood, Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade, and others indulged readers' cravings for scandalous incidents, while confounding social boundaries and affronting both aesthetic and moral standards. Once maligned for salaciousness by Victorian reviewers, the sensation genre has been read as a hybrid form: a domesticated subset of the Gothic romance, a precursor to English detective fiction, and a counterpart to theatrical melodrama among other interpretations.[1] Populated by fallen women and scheming femmes fatales, criminals, bigamists, adulterers, blackmailers, and murderers, the sensation novel trades in secrets and manifold duplicities with profound implications for its treatment of gender and sexuality. The central characters of sensation fiction frequently embody split, mistaken, exchanged, inverted, or otherwise doubled identities that transgress gender norms and sexual propriety. The doubles of sensation fiction thus destabilise Victorian constructions of gender and sexuality in ways that anticipate another cultural project later in the period: sexology.

Non-normative expressions of gender and sexuality form the main subject matter of nineteenth-century sexology as it emerged in Continental Europe in the 1860s and then England in the 1880s. Its practitioners attempted to create a medico-scientific discourse of human sexuality by examining anonymous case studies and theorising new diagnostic categories of "sexual inversion" or an "intermediate sex"—early concepts of homosexual identity that conflated what twenty-first-century Western culture now views as the separate labels of gender identity and sexual orientation.[2]

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[1] In Mary Rimmer's words, Victorian critics dismissed the sensation novel as "a kind of literary deviancy" (xviii). Andrew Radford's *Victorian Sensation Fiction* (2009) supplies a concise introduction to the genre and its criticism. Characterising sensation fiction as a subgenre of the Gothic with similarities to theatrical melodrama and a preoccupation with domestic themes (1-3), Radford observes that it "appeared 'hydra-headed' to its original critics" (19).

[2] Gender identity encompasses the labels of man and woman, both transgender and cisgender, plus various non-binary designations. Sexuality includes orientations such as homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, asexual, or one of many more recent coinages. Susan Stryker's *Transgender History* (2008) provides a thorough summary of terms and concepts

The initial heyday of sensation fiction in the 1860s was contemporaneous with the emergence of sexology in Continental European while preceding its advent in England by a couple of decades.[3] Rather than tracing a direct influence between European sexology and English sensation fiction, however, I read the sensation genre against the theories of three prominent English sexologists, Havelock Ellis, John Addington Symonds, and Edward Carpenter, whose works bear close ties to the literary culture that produced sensation novels from the 1860s through the fin de siècle.

Beyond anticipating sexology's concerns with gender and sexual deviance, the sensation genre more specifically provided a vehicle for Victorian fiction to explore gradations of gender ambiguity comparable to those that the English sexologists would subsequently medicalise through fixed categories such as sexual inversion. As James Campbell points out, sexology further impinges on the legal ramifications of these medico-scientific categories (65), echoing the sensation novel's concerns with criminality. Sexology thus retroactively supplies taxonomies that, while not historically applicable to the characters in sensation novels, can nonetheless help us appreciate how sensation novelists depicted same-sex attractions and challenged the boundaries of masculinity and femininity long before the dawn of LGBTQ liberation in the twentieth century. In this way, sexological concepts help bridge the gap between Victorian constructions of sexuality and the deconstructionist notions of late-twentieth and twenty-first century queer theory, thereby aiding readers to historicise queer interpretations of sensation novels and other Victorian literature.[4]

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distinguishing sexuality from gender identity (7-24). Judith Jack Halberstam's *Female Masculinity* unpacks the connections between sexology and transgender history (82), as I discuss later in this introduction. Jay Prosser goes so far as to argue that "sexual inversion *was* transgender" (117), while Chiara Beccalossi contends that inversion theories sometimes "referred to what we might call today transgender" (xii).

[3] Lynn Pykett designates the 1860s "the sensation decade" (*Sensation Novel* 1); Patrick Brantlinger also propounds this view, further suggesting that the genre "die[d] out a decade or two later" (1). More recently, Andrew Maunder's multi-volume *Varieties of Women's Sensation Fiction: 1855-1890* (2004) has helped expand the chronological understanding of the genre. Heike Bauer's *English Literary Sexology: Translations of Inversion 1860-1930* (2009) foregrounds the 1860s as the beginning of Continental European sexology.

[4] Other queer critics of Victorian literature historicise their work vis-à-vis sexology, such as Holly Furneaux, who situates Dickens with respect to the "sexological invention of homosexuality" (11). But Furneaux diverges from queer readings

If an understanding of sexology thus sharpens the lens of the present study, then sensation novels and their cultural effects are the focus. As a vehicle for ideas about ambiguous gender and transgressive sexuality, sensation fiction arguably had greater efficacy and reach than did sexology. English sexological texts by Ellis, Symonds, and Carpenter were not widely accessible beyond their niche readership. Attesting to their limited dissemination, Laura Doan observes that sexological ideas about female inversion failed to circulate in legislative discourse even as late as the 1920s (211). Sensation novels conversely boasted an immediate and massive popular audience that spanned class boundaries and reached across the Atlantic, with titles such as Collins's *The Woman in White* (1860) and Wood's *East Lynne* (1861) achieving both financial success and cultural influence, much to the displeasure of reviewers at the time.[5]

With their alleged provocation of somatic effects on readers through exciting incidents, these texts roused the moral outrage of critics, including Margaret Oliphant and the Reverend Henry Mansel, who viewed them as endemic to a voguish and depraved culture obsessed with stimulating the senses. In an 1862 piece for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* titled "Sensation Novels," Oliphant bemoans the cultural pursuit of "new shocks and wonders" (9). Mansel, in his 1863 piece for the *Quarterly Review*, borrows the phrase "preaching to the nerves instead of the judgment" from an

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of *Little Dorrit*'s Miss Wade that "have focused on how Dickens's representation anticipates late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century classifications of the female invert and lesbian" in order to draw on "queer literary and social contexts which were already available to Dickens" (21). Furneaux's approach is well grounded, but instead of limiting my readings to what was accessible to Braddon, Collins, and other sensation novelists, I choose to explore how their texts participated in the discourses that would birth sexological concepts.

[5] W. Fraser Rae dubbed sensation novels "the literature of the Kitchen," which violated class boundaries to become "the favourite reading of the Drawing-room" (105). Bachman and Cox's edition of *The Woman in White* records that the serialised version of the novel pushed sales of the periodical *All the Year Round* to 100,000 copies; the three-volume edition went to print before the final serial installment appeared, while a one-volume American edition attained equal popularity (41-42). Matthew Sweet's introduction to the Penguin Classics edition observes the cultural impact of Collins's novel in various phenomena: the swift appearance of a pirated stage production, the increased popularity of the name Walter for newborn boys after the novel's hero—and even the trend of naming pet cats after the villainous Fosco (xvi)! Maunder's introduction to his edition of *East Lynne* likewise covers the novel's unprecedented success in three-volume form, with three re-printings of the first edition in a period of five months, a total of twenty-four editions in ten years, and sales figures of 400,000 by 1895 (19-20). Kama Al-Solaylee notes that the success of Wood's novel in America prompted the commission of a theatrical adaptation that reached the stage as early as 1862 (xvi).

unknown source to describe the genre's modus operandi, and he further traces its appeal to "the cravings of a diseased appetite" (32-33).

Thus aligned with subversive cultural effects, sensation authors elided conventional modesty in their depictions of gender transgression, illicit love, and criminality, among other shocking subject matter. The genre has consequently generated a growing body of queer criticism in the wake of D.A. Miller's "*Cage aux folles*: Sensation and Gender in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*" in *The Novel and the Police* (1988). These works include Jennifer Kushnier and Richard Nemesvari's essays on male homosociality in *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862), and Maria K. Bachman and Don Richard Cox's "Wilkie Collins's Villainous Miss Gwilt, Criminality, and the Unspeakable Truth," which touches on same-sex love in *Armadale* (1866). Lynda Hart's *Fatal Women: Lesbian Sexuality and the Mark of Aggression* (1994) includes an analysis of *Lady Audley*, while a whole chapter of the late Richard Fantina's *Victorian Sensational Fiction: The Daring Work of Charles Reade* (2010) is devoted to sexuality, gender, and transgender issues in Reade's oeuvre.[6] As the proliferation of queer readings implies, sensation novels contributed to the evolution of mid-Victorian cultural conceptions of homoerotic attraction and gender transgression, which sexologists would medicalise decades later.

But even the most outré of sensation novels could not be as direct in its treatment of these issues as medico-scientific texts like Ellis's *Sexual Inversion* (1897), by definition, aimed to be. Indeed, the sensationalistic content of the genre—often drawn from newspaper reports of actual crimes—notably excludes any directly identified treatment of homosexual offences, which, if not explicitly addressed in English novels for most of the century, would eventually make headlines by the fin-de-siècle with such events as the Wilde trials in 1895.[7] Following the criminalisation of "gross

[6] Ross Forman gives a more extensive overview of the genre's appeal to queer critics, further citing its influence on Sarah Waters's queer-themed neo-Victorian novels, *Tipping the Velvet* (1998) and *Fingersmith* (2002) (Forman 414-15).
[7] See the commentary by Wilde's grandson Merlin Holland in *The Real Trial of Oscar Wilde* (xxvii-xxxii).

indecency" between men in the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act,[8] the social disgrace and legal prosecution of homosexual offenders presented the Victorian public with true-life stories rife with several hallmarks of the sensation novel: secrecy, double identities, sexual impropriety, the breach of class boundaries, criminality among the privileged classes, and blackmail. In brief, by the end of the century, the Victorian culture of sensation would converge with the subject matter of sexology.

Not only, then, do the literary sensation genre and the field of English sexology comprise two mutually revelatory discourses that benefit from concurrent study, but the themes and subject matter of the former set the cultural stage for the work of the latter. Crucial to my analysis of sensation novels are two topics: first, the sensational motif of doubled identities, which I read as mirrored in sexology's dualistic concept of inversion, and second, the dichotomy between the genres of sensation and realism. To unify these two strands of my argument, I assess the sensation novel as the canonically excluded "double" of realism, constructed by critics as its generic opposite yet simultaneously bearing a close and complex kinship to it. As I will show, the relationship between sensation fiction and realism finds an apt analogy in contemporary queer deconstructions of binary sexuality. In this way, my reading interrogates an opposition between the realist novel as a heteronormative, privileged form versus the sensation novel as a queer, marginalised genre whose "unnatural" characterisations often reflect non-normative gender and sexual behaviour. I will substantiate the analogy by examining sensational characterisations that touch on medico-scientific questions, thereby demonstrating how the scientific pursuit of empirical credibility impinges on literary claims to verisimilitude that concerned the sensationalists as much as the realists.

Queering the Sensation Novel: The Construction of a Deviant Genre

The queerness of the sensation novel is evident in how Victorian critics defined and denigrated it according to its effects on readers' bodies. The sensation label derives as much from

[8] Civil sodomy laws had criminalised the separate offence of "buggery" since 1533 (Hyde 38).

the purported excitement of physical responses as it does from the sensationalistic subject matter of the novels. Writers of sensation fiction were criticised on moral grounds for inciting readers' physical sensations with the thrills of suspense, shock, fear, horror, and most infamously sexual titillation.[9] In 1863, a mock advertisement in *Punch* satirised the methods of sensation fiction as "Harrowing the Mind, Making the Flesh Creep, Causing the Hair to Stand on End, Giving Shocks to the Nervous System, Destroying Conventional Moralities, and generally Unfitting the Public for the Prosaic Avocations of Life" (193; qtd. in Hughes 3). D. A. Miller analogises these supposed somatic effects to the sexological concept of "*anima muliebris in corpora virili inclusa*," which he translates as "a woman's breath caught in a man's body," a parallel reinforcing the latent queer potentialities that he finds in the readerly experience of sensation novels (154-55). Adding to the queerness of the genre, its transgressive content includes behaviour outside the gender norms of realist fiction in the era—hence, the critical outcry over such unconventional female characters as the bigamous, homicidal title figure of Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*, or Wood's Isabel Vane in *East Lynne*, who, to Oliphant's dismay, elicits sympathy despite her adultery ("Sensation Novels" 10-13).

As exemplified by the reception of these and other texts, the treatment of women's sexuality is a particular target for moral censure in Victorian critics' responses to sensation fiction. Although sensation novels were penned and read by men as well as women, Oliphant emphasises the genre's effects on its female readership. Writing for *Blackwood's* in 1867, she claims that sensation novels stimulate a woman reader's urge for "flesh and muscles, for strong arms that seize her, for warm breath that thrills her through, and a host of other physical attractions" (175). Most offensive to Oliphant is what she deems the false representation of these carnal desires as natural in women, a literary misdemeanour that she deplores all the more for its frequent perpetration by *female* novelists:

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[9] An 1863 piece in the *Medical Critic and Psychological Journal* linked the genre's success to "the interest excited by sexual immorality" and argued that this interest "increases in proportion to the increasing variety of the offence" (71-74).

> The peculiarity of it in England is, that it is oftenest made from the woman's side—that it is women who describe these sensuous raptures—that this intense appreciation of flesh and blood, this eagerness of physical sensation, is represented as the natural sentiment of English girls, and is offered to them not only as the portrait of their own state of mind, but as their amusement and mental food. [. . .] [W]hen it is added that the class thus represented does not disown the picture—that, on the contrary, it hangs it up in boudoir and drawing room—that the books which contain it circulate everywhere, and are not contradicted, then the case becomes much more serious. For our own part we do not believe, as some people do, that a stratum of secret vice underlies the outward seeming of society. (175)[10]

In Oliphant's view, sensation fiction distorts reality by normalising transgressive behaviour as acceptable entertainment. Her critique recalls the discourse around the Gothic titillation of women readers in the early nineteenth century, memorably parodied in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817). The crux of Oliphant's appraisal is that sexualised portrayals of women violate the standards of both normative feminine behaviour and literary verisimilitude. The implicit equation of anti-realism with depictions of sexual immorality and gender transgression opens up a parallel between the literary construction of the sensation genre and the social construction of binary sexuality.

To apprehend this parallel, we must observe how modern scholars of Victorian fiction have increasingly viewed the sensation label as a coinage of mid-nineteenth-century periodical critics who constructed the new genre as a deviation from the realist movement, which was emerging as the dominant literary mode. Accordingly, Deborah Wynne deconstructs the opposition between the two, observing that, in actuality, "Sensation novels and their domestic realist counterparts existed

[10] Women sensation novelists incensed other reviewers as well. The anonymous writer of an 1868 piece in *The Broadway* titled "Women's Novels" chastises Braddon for glamorising murderous women—for "lead[ing] us to infer that the possession of an abundant and silky *chevelure* does in some mysterious manner render guilt less guilty" (221).

within Victorian culture at different points along a continuum, rather than as unrelated or opposite forms" (145). Evincing this claim, both realist and sensation fiction filled the pages of the same literary periodicals, such as *The Cornhill Magazine*, which serialised realist novels like Anthony Trollope's *The Claverings* (1866-67) as well as sensation novels like Wilkie Collins's *Armadale* (1864-66). Sensation writers, meanwhile, disavowed the labelling of their work as sensationalistic or anti-realistic, protesting that they drew their fictions from reality.[11]

Further collapsing the separation between sensation and realism, Richard Nemesvari argues that when literary reviewers of the 1860s invented the sensation genre, they effectively consolidated the realist novel by defining it as a more respectable form at a moment in literary history when the novel itself was struggling to secure its respectability in Victorian culture:

> the sensation fiction controversy served not to oppose a new genre to a pre-existing one, but rather [. . .] the formulation of "the sensational" was an essential, constitutive strategy which reified "the realistic" in ways which had been unachievable before. ("Literary Standard" 17)[12]

This line of thinking overturns the expected order of genre formulation so that realism does not necessarily precede sensationalism. The deviation of sensation novels from a normative realist standard is thus a literary construction, and it is more accurate to see the two genres as mutually constitutive. The debasement of sensation fiction was the expedient by which realism gained legitimacy in literary culture.

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[11] In the preface to *Hard Cash*, Reade refutes charges of inaccuracy in the asylum scenes by calling his novel "a fiction built on truths" (Reade n. pag.). Collins's introduction to *Armadale* defends the text as "daring enough to speak the truth" (4).

[12] In *Thomas Hardy, Sensationalism, and the Melodramatic Mode* (2011), Nemesvari expands this argument to explore Hardy's debt to sensation fiction (9-11). His analysis of sensation vis-à-vis realism invites comparison to Nicholas Radel's claims about Havelock Ellis's role in securing the canonical primacy of Shakespeare over Marlowe. Radel argues that Ellis, by reading Marlowe as sexually deviant, helped establish Shakespeare's comparative sexual normalcy, thus reinforcing his higher place in the canon (1046-70). As Radel writes, "Ellis initiated a binary discourse of alternative sexualities and something that begins to look like modern heterosexuality within the early modern canon" (1047). Literary hierarchies thus intertwine with sexual taxonomy. In the case of Shakespeare versus Marlowe as in the case of realism versus sensation, the construed deviance of the latter enabled critics to elevate the former.

Thus reappraised, the realist-sensationalist debate parallels another cultural development from the period: the construction of sexuality as a binary.[13] Similarly to Nemesvari's claim that the sensation novel reified realism, a central tenet of queer theory is that the nineteenth-century construction of homosexuality also birthed heterosexuality. In Annamarie Jagose's words, "heterosexuality is derivative of homosexuality," and the coinage of the latter affirmed the normative status of the former, contrary to the expected order of construction (*Queer Theory* 16). Queer scholars frequently cite sexology as the cultural discourse that inscribed the binary of homo- versus heterosexuality in the nineteenth century. In *Female Masculinity* (1998), for example, Judith Jack Halberstam indicts Ellis for "reduc[ing] sexuality to binary systems of difference" (76). Not only, then, do sensation fiction and sexology share a preoccupation with transgressive gender and sexuality, but the deconstruction of sensation fiction's deviance from realism mirrors the deconstruction of the homo-heterosexual binary that sexology consolidated.

The parallel is not merely symbolic; in a more concrete way, the sensation novel's violation of gender boundaries and sexual norms contributes to the moral ambiguity that underlies its violation of genre distinctions. The links between eroding social boundaries and the effects of sensational influences on more respectable fiction were not lost on the mid-Victorian periodical press. Writing in 1862, the anonymous author of "The Philosophy of 'Sensation'" in *St. James's Magazine* laments that the genre's ambiguous treatment of good and evil has infected other, presumably more realistic fictions:

> We are sorry to be obliged to add that even great artists sometimes condescend to adopt the tricks of sensation writers, for the sake of popularity, and present the public with hybrid combinations of the mean and the noble, the modest and the

[13] In *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), Sedgwick argues that the binary definition of sexuality in the late-nineteenth century would indelibly mark all facets of Western culture in the twentieth (1).

> impure, the hero and the scoundrel, and the angel and the tigress. They may succeed in making highly dramatic pictures by grouping such characters on their canvas, but we must be permitted to remind them that the truly virtuous masters of their art were content with representing virtue as virtuous, and vice as vicious. (21)

The critic attributes the appeal of the genre to its subversion of moral dichotomies governing social systems of class and sexual virtue ("mean" versus "noble," "modest" versus "impure"), as well as literary archetypes of masculine and feminine conduct ("hero" versus "scoundrel," and "angel" versus "tigress"). By deeming sensation fiction anti-realistic in part for depicting sexual impropriety and gender deviance, and further imbuing these transgressions with moral ambiguity, Victorian periodical reviewers hinged a defining difference between sensation and realism on questions of sexual morality and gender normativity—two subjects central to the sexological project.

Sexology: The Literary Roots of the English Sexual Sciences

In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Michel Foucault posits that Western civilisation lacks an *ars erotica* (erotic arts) and instead practices a *scientia sexualis* (sexual sciences) as its cultural project for discovering the truth about sex (1: 58). As part of this *scientia sexualis*, the nineteenth-century field of sexology[14] created medico-scientific discourses about sexual behaviour through the compilation of real-life case studies and the extrapolation of theories, categories, and labels through which to understand and organise the knowable varieties of human sexuality. By creating new categories and labels, sexology effectively constructed sexual new identities by which people could understand themselves and others—hence, Foucault's famous claim that homosexuality as we now know it entered Western discourse in the nineteenth century (1: 43, 101).

[14] In the introduction to his edition of *Sexual Inversion*, Ivan Crozier justifies the retroactive use of the term "sexology," coined in 1906, to include "medical, psychological and to some extent biological discourses about sex" that arose in the late-nineteenth century (1). It is crucial to distinguish between current twenty-first-century practitioners of sexology and the historical sexologists of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

Yet, as Foucault complicates this argument, the Western sexual sciences have actually "functioned, at least to a certain extent, as an *ars erotica*" in their inducement of "pleasures connected to the production of the truth about sex":

> The learned volumes, written and read; the consultations and examinations; the anguish of answering questions and the delights of having one's words interpreted; all the stories told to oneself and to others, so much curiosity, so many confidences offered in the face of scandal, sustained—but not without trembling a little—by the obligation of truth; the profusion of secret fantasies and the dearly paid right to whisper them to whoever is able to hear them; in short, the formidable "pleasure of analysis" (in the widest sense of the latter term) which the West has cleverly been fostering for several centuries: all this constitutes something like the errant fragments of an erotic art that is secretly transmitted by confession and the science of sex. (1: 71)

The salient point is that Foucault construes the pleasures of obtaining the scientific truth about sex—including the reading experience itself—in terms emphasising the concealment and revelation of secrets. Therefore, the sexual sciences echo a major narrative impetus of sensation fiction and more generally recall the hermeneutic function of narrative as a process of uncovering, which Roland Barthes and others have theorised.[15] The better to understand Foucault's interpretation of Western *scientia sexualis* as "an extraordinarily subtle kind of *ars erotica*" (71), then, we might reframe it more precisely as a commentary on the pleasures of narrative—pleasures that the sensation genre makes overt by prioritising readers' physical reactions.

[15] See Barthes's concepts of the different codes of narrative meaning in *S/Z* (1970) and Peter Brooks's definition of plot as a principle of intentional narrative design in *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (1984).

If the Western scientific pursuit of knowledge about sexuality thus relies on narrative inducements of pleasure, suspense, shock, and other sensations, then it is easy to see how the sexological project intertwines with literary culture and specifically Victorian sensation fiction. The very provenance of sexology illustrates its ties with literature and literary criticism, a relationship that Heike Bauer argues grew increasingly close as the field spread from German to English medico-scientific discourse. While the field did not reach England until later in the century, Bauer's *English Literary Sexology: Translations of Inversion, 1860-1930* (2009) begins with its German antecedents, broadly designating "the period between the 1860s and the 1930s [as] that moment in time when sexuality as we know it was first classified within sexology" (1).[16] To prove how the English sexologists were more explicitly literary than their Continental European predecessors, Bauer notes that "[k]ey theorists such as John Addington Symonds, Havelock Ellis, and Edward Carpenter [. . .] approached the study of sex exclusively or at least partially from non-scientific backgrounds," and "wrote autobiographical texts, poetry and translations that distinguished their contributions from the disciplined approach of Continental sexology" (52). These three figures will be the main sexological sources for the present study, but in order to supply the necessary background for their writings, I will first survey the Continental branch of the field.

Although arguably the first major landmark in sexology was the 1886 German publication of Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*, this text had significant predecessors in the writings of Carl Friedrich Otto Westphal, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, and Johann Ludwig Casper. Krafft-Ebing's text compiles case studies documenting various kinds of sexuality that society deemed perverse at the time, including homosexual attraction and behaviour. Krafft-Ebing cites his indebtedness to the

[16] While the major English sexological publications that I cite date from the 1890s onward, Symonds first printed "A Problem in Greek Ethics" privately in 1883 for circulation among his peers before Ellis included it in *Sexual Inversion* in 1897. As well, Lucy Bland and Laura Doan's *Sexology Uncensored: The Documents of Sexual Science* includes English texts from as early as 1886. Thus, I identify the 1880s as the decade in which English sexology began to emerge.

German psychiatrist Carl Westphal (223-4), whose importance Ellis and Foucault also stress. Ellis credits Westphal as "the first to put the study of sexual inversion on an assured scientific basis" (*Sexual Inversion* 115), while an article by Westphal in the *Archiv für Psychiatrie* is Foucault's source for dating the "birth" of homosexuality as a medical category to 1870 (Foucault 1: 43). As for Westphal's forebears, Ellis cites the influence of the mid-nineteenth-century Austrian sexologist Karl Ulrichs (*Sexual Inversion* 116), whom Chris Brickell categorises as an emancipationist more than a sexologist (Brickell 428).[17] Brickell conversely counts as an early sexologist Johann Casper, whose multivolume *Handbook of the Practice of Forensic Medicine* (1858) precedes *Psychopathia Sexualis* by almost thirty years, entering English medical discourse via translation in the 1860s (Brickell 425). But, as its title indicates, Casper's handbook did not focus mainly on sexuality, with only one section in the third volume devoted to "Disputed Sexual Relations" (243-352). Krafft-Ebing's text thus has a strong claim to being the first extended book-length sexological study. Foreshadowing the literariness of English sexology, *Psychopathia Sexualis* cites Zola's fictional depictions of masochism, while using the poet Baudelaire to exemplify a "decidedly abnormal" sexual life (112-13).

In 1897, Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds's *Sexual Inversion* advanced sexology in the English medical sciences, yet the publication of their work faced juridical consequences that further ensconce sexology within literary culture. Attributing aberrant sexual behaviour to congenital predisposition, Ellis and Symonds promoted a medical account of same-sex behaviour in the interests of homosexual rights.[18] Although the two men never met in person, collaborating only by correspondence, their work responded to the legal prohibitions against homosexual acts and suffered from the stigma codified by these laws, as shown when the radical free-love advocate

[17] I will address Symonds's writings on Ulrichs later.

[18] Albert Moll published *Perversions of the Sex Instinct* (1893) in English four years before Ellis and Symonds's text, but, as Brickell observes, Moll did not share their emancipationist views, instead studying same-sex desires as pathological (Brickell 431). Ellis and Symonds are therefore important for uniting sexological enquiries with the cause of liberation.

George Bedborough was arrested and tried for obscenity—effectively as if distributing pornography—after selling a copy of *Sexual Inversion* to an incognito police detective in 1898. Notably, the law intervened to curb the distribution of the text but did not charge Ellis for compiling his case studies or writing the book.[19] The ensuing Bedborough trial demonstrates the role of textual circulation in the legal controversies surrounding sexual deviance. Sexology in England thus roused controversy not as a medical practice, but as a published literary discourse.

Ellis and Symonds's credentials further evince the literariness of their work. As a poet and literary critic, Symonds focused on literary and historical evidence for his contributions to *Sexual Inversion*, while Ellis, as a trained physician, dealt with medical and psychological content to write the bulk of the text. Yet Ellis was also an accomplished critic in his own right, and indeed more experienced in literary scholarship than in medicine, for he never maintained a regular medical practice.[20] In 1887, Ellis had edited an unexpurgated collection of the plays of Christopher Marlowe, whom he would later mention in *Sexual Inversion* as a writer whose "peculiar sensitiveness to masculine beauty" likely indicated a "psychosexual hermaphrodite's temperament" (109)—that is, an attraction to both sexes (156). The speculation about Marlowe's sexuality marks an overlap between Ellis's literary and medical pursuits, suggesting a continuity between his two modes of writing, but significantly the overlap occurs in *Sexual Inversion* rather than one of Ellis's earlier literary reviews. Ellis's legacy depends mainly on his notions about same-sex desire, and he was able to explore this topic more overtly in sexology than in literary criticism. In other words, the aegis of sexology as a medical science enabled Ellis to develop a theme that had first intrigued him in the literary arts.

Ellis theorised same-sex attraction as a congenital inversion of "normal" heterosexual desires, but not as a diseased condition in need of cure. His writings define sexual inversion as

[19] Crozier's edition of *Sexual Inversion* provides a discussion of the Bedborough trial (60).
[20] See Chapter 3 of this dissertation for more autobiographical details about Ellis's literary activity (148-51).

"sexual instinct turned by inborn constitutional abnormality towards persons of the same sex," thus maintaining that it is nonetheless a natural phenomenon (*Sexual Inversion* 96). In this way, Ellis foreshadows the late twentieth-century gay rights movement in its emphasis on homosexuality as a natural, inborn identity. Accordingly, Paul Robinson, in *The Modernization of Sex*, credits Ellis rather than Freud as the progenitor of a "modern sexual ethos" distinct from Victorian conceptions of sexuality (3). As evidence of Ellis's sexual modernism, Robinson points out that Ellis

> took a dim view of all psychoanalytic claims about curing homosexuality. In fact, it was precisely the exaggerated therapeutic ambitions of the Freudians that inspired his critique. His case histories had convinced him that inversion was a permanent state of affairs, and indeed that the vast majority of homosexuals had no desire to be "cured." (Robinson 6)

In Robinson's reading, Ellis's congenital model of sexual inversion differs from the theories of Krafft-Ebing, who deemed congenital inversion "a functional sign of degeneration" (6). Eschewing these degenerative associations as unscientific, Ellis sidesteps moral judgments about sexual inversion, exhorting society to "refrain from crushing with undiscerning ignorance beneath a burden of shame the subject of an abnormality which [. . .] has not been found incapable of fine uses" (*Sexual Inversion* 222). His collaborator Symonds and their colleague Carpenter qualify these "fine uses" by appealing to Classical Greek ideals, as I will discuss in the next section.

Uranians and "Romantic Friendships": The Classical Influences of Victorian Homophile Culture and English Sexology

Thus far, my discussion of sexology has predominantly centred on men, an emphasis reflecting the English sexologists' bias toward ancient Greece with its idealisation of male beauty and same-sex love. These masculinist interests particularly drive Symonds's contributions to *Sexual*

Inversion, which offer a more emphatic defence than Ellis's of sexual inversion and its worth. To be sure, Ellis's work also bears strong Classical influences; Tom Gibbons appraises his "use of modern science and the latest literature to rehabilitate thoroughly traditional ideals, such as those of Hellenism," which in turn provided Ellis and his peers an "image of the human perfection to which evolution was supposed to be leading" (140). Ellis and Symonds shared an interest in using scientific insights to revive ancient Greek thought (Gibbons 132-33), but Symonds's writings arguably surpass Ellis's in using Classical models to rehabilitate same-sex love. First printed privately in 1883, Symonds's "A Problem in Greek Ethics" appears in the appendices to the 1897 edition of *Sexual Inversion* and takes a firmly liberationist bent. It advocates the ancient Greeks as "a great and highly-developed race not only tolerating homosexual passions, but deeming them of spiritual value, and attempting to utilise them for the benefit of society" (229). In another piece from the appendices, titled "Ulrichs's Views," Symonds recapitulates Ulrichs's rebuttals of common objections to sexual inversion, concluding that the invert is "one of nature's sports, a creature healthy and well organised" (307). Whereas Ellis focuses on disproving that the invert is diseased, Symonds goes further to uphold the invert's healthiness.

In its fascination with the ancient Greeks, Symonds's work accords with the neo-Classical leanings of Victorian homophile culture, as exemplified by such stalwarts of the era as Walter Pater, Gerald Manley Hopkins, and Oscar Wilde. All four were Oxford-educated and gravitated toward Hellenic homoeroticism in Classical literature, myth, and philosophy, as well as in contemporary texts such as the poetry of Walt Whitman, with whom Symonds was in correspondence.[21] Symonds studied the Classics at Oxford under the tutelage of Benjamin Jowett, and later helped to revise Jowett's famous 1871 translation of Plato's *Symposium* in 1888. As for Pater, who authored the 1895

[21] See Grosskurth's introduction to Symonds's memoirs (20) and Crozier's introduction to *Sexual Inversion* (110) for discussions of Symonds and Whitman's letters regarding the latter's "Calamus" poems.

essay collection *Greek Studies*, James Eli Adams credits his work with effecting an "influential recuperation of a homoerotic 'Greek ideal'" (152). Hopkins, meanwhile, was a seasoned Classicist who translated Latin and Greek poetry, and became a professor of the two languages. His own poetry drew comparisons to Whitman's, as Richard Dellamora discusses in *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (87). In a letter by Hopkins addressing these comparisons, Dellamora reads a reference to Whitman as shorthand for the unarticulated spectre of male same-sex desire (88). Symonds himself declared Whitman "more truly Greek than any other man of modern times" by virtue of his being "at one with nature" (qtd. in Dellamora 86). Wilde, of course, met with Whitman while touring America in 1882, and dealt with Classical influences in his own writings. For instance, in *De Profundis*, his lengthy letter to Lord Alfred Douglas upon being released from Reading Gaol in 1897, Wilde likens Douglas to "Hylas, or Hyacinth, Jonquil or Narcisse or some one whom the great God of poetry favoured" (40), implicitly comparing himself to Apollo.

These examples illustrate Linda Dowling's observation in *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (1994) that "Greek studies operated as a 'homosexual code'" during the late 1850s and 1860s, when Jowett reformed the teaching of Classics (xiii). English sexology would make this code explicit in the decades following Jowett's reforms, which invigorated the Greek-obsessed Oxford culture of male camaraderie, eventually birthing the homosexual apologist movement in which Ellis, Symonds, and Carpenter participated. As Dowling recounts, Jowett's great innovation was to move the Classical curriculum "away from a narrowly grammatical emphasis in reading ancient texts and toward a powerfully engaged mode of reading which insisted on the vivid contemporaneity and philosophical depth of these works" (64). This climate of readerly engagement fostered a passionate revival of interest in Classical thought and its applicability to Victorian life.

Yet the academic championing of the Greeks could not countenance the physical manifestation of homoerotic love. As Sean Brady observes in his recent critical edition of Symonds's writings, Jowett adopted for the most part a historically relativistic attitude toward Hellenic culture vis-à-vis Victorian morality, but he drew the line at Greek traditions of pederasty, which he condemned as degrading (Brady 14). Thus, according to Brady, "the eminent Victorian *litterateurs*, Pater and Symonds, and the literary genius of Wilde, were educated at a particular period at Oxford when an idealised, though decidedly non-sexual notion of masculine platonic comradeship was being promulgated" (15). Oxford's official stance on Greek love would not stop Symonds from later defending and celebrating it in his work, although he and his fellow sexologist Edward Carpenter would stress its spiritual dimensions over its physicality, as we will see.

Carpenter, like Symonds, explicitly links male homosexual bonds of his own era to a lineage of ancient Greek homoeroticism. Appealing to Classical ideals, his writings adopt a liberatory approach that defends sexual inverts as a third or "intermediate sex," a phrase that he uses as the title of his most important work on the topic. In *The Intermediate Sex* (1908), Carpenter recounts Ulrichs's theory that sexual inverts or "Urnings" experienced predisposed same-sex attractions as a consequence of inverted gender: thus, a male sexual invert is a case of *anima muliebris virili corpora inclusa*, or a feminine soul in a man's body, while a female invert is a masculine soul in a feminine body. As an alternative to Ulrichs's word "Urning," Carpenter adopts the Anglicised term "Uranian," which connotes Greek and Roman mythology, and thus the Classical roots of the concept. Carpenter offers the label of "homogenic" as an etymologically preferable substitute for "homosexual" to describe same-sex love (37-8), and refers to the bonds between Uranians as "romantic friendships" (19), a term that scholars have since historicised vis-à-vis same-sex studies.

To conflate the Victorian and early twentieth-century concept of romantic friendship entirely with homosexuality is historically imprecise, although the two ideas should be considered along a continuum of same-sex affection. As the Classical paradigm revived by Victorian homophile culture navigates a tricky labyrinth of intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic ideals, it is not always clear to what extent we should read affectionate same-sex bonds in the era as sexual. On the one hand, a strictly platonic definition of romantic friendship does not align with the historical reality of actual sexual relationships between men in the era. For instance, Oxford's aforementioned rejection of homoeroticism belies the actual sexual lives of famous alumni like Wilde and Symonds, whose respective homosexual relationships at Oxford are well documented. But we cannot assume that all romantic friendships of the era—in literature or history—should be understood as sexual. Carolyn De La Oulton, in *Romantic Friendship in Victorian Literature* (2007), unpacks the complexities of linking same-sex friendship bonds with those of unambiguously erotic same-sex love. Distinguishing between Greek models of male companionship versus the inheritance of this tradition as filtered through Victorian culture and circulated at Oxford, Oulton surveys the diverse deployments of Platonic male love by apologists such as Ellis and Symonds, as well as by those who upheld romantic friendship as a strictly non-sexual affection:

> If homosexual apologists deliberately conflated friendship and sexuality, taking the ancients as their model and justification for so doing (and this is precisely what Wilde did in his writing and at the Old Bailey), then proponents of romantic friendship had an obvious stake in maintaining clear distinctions and patrolling the boundaries between the two. (Oulton 41)

To acknowledge both views, we might then understand "romantic friendship" in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries as comprising a range of same-sex affections from the non-sexual to the

erotic, even though writers such as Ellis, Symonds, and Carpenter drew overwhelmingly on the homoeroticism of ancient Greek models in their discussions of companionate love between men.

To be sure, the denial of a sexual component in these bonds was sometimes a function of the masculinist impetus in Victorian homophile culture. In *Another Kind of Love: Male Homosexual Desire in English Discourse, 1850-1920* (1994), Christopher Craft cites Symonds alongside Pater and Wilde as part of "the nineteenth century's fantasmatic quest [. . .] for a noneffeminated intermasculine sexuality" that stopped short of fully vindicating the corporeality of male same-sex desire (19). In Craft's reading, Carpenter's concept of homogenic love subordinates sensuality to spirituality (32), while Oulton likewise shows that Symonds, in his efforts to valorise the male invert, "repudiates the connotations of excessive lust associated with male love" (40). Carpenter, too, deemphasises the physical side of same-sex love, instead celebrating its "*emotional* channels" as expressed "in sympathies of social life and companionship," which he claims are rooted in the idealism of the ancient Greek model:

> the *ideal* of Greek life was a very continent one: the trained male, the athlete, the man temperate and restrained, even chaste, for the sake of bettering his powers. It was round this conception that the Greeks kindle their finer emotions. And so of their love: a base and licentious indulgence was not in line with it. (*Intermediate* 63)

However, we should regard these renunciations of lust with some skepticism, as a strategic downplaying of male homoerotic desire was necessary in a time when sexual contact between men—that is, sodomy and specifically anal sex—was criminalised.

The ambiguities surrounding physical versus ethereal conceptions of same-sex desire comprise one of the key dualisms at the heart of sexology. The following section will elaborate on

how the Classical foundations of sexology shape its dualistic notions of gender and sexuality in ways that engage inconsistent power dynamics between the genders.

Doubles and Third Sex Theories: The Dualities of Sexology

The Classical antecedents of sexology's structural dualities can be gleaned from the influence of Plato's *Symposium*: specifically, Pausanias's distinction between heavenly and earthly Love, and Aristophanes's tale of three original sexes each split in two. These concepts resonate with the Cartesian dualism opposing the sexual invert's physical exterior to an interior gendered consciousness. Pausanias attributes the two Loves to the existence of two Aphrodites, one heavenly, the other linked to fleshly desires (8-9).[22] Aristophanes designates the original sexes as man, woman, and a combination of the two, with love originating from their physical division, as Jowett's translation shows:

> After the division the two parts of man, each desiring his other half, came together, and throwing their arms about one another, entwined in mutual embraces, longing to grow into one, they began to die from hunger and self-neglect, because they did not like to do anything apart; and when one of the halves died and the other survived, the survivor sought another mate, man or woman as we call them,—being the sections of entire men or women,—and clung to that. (16-17)

While sharing sexology's concerns with the nature of different kinds of love, Aristophanes's origin story attributes same-sex desire not to the third androgynous sex, but to the division of the individual male and female sexes. Thus, contrary to the sexological definition of male inverts as feminine souls in male bodies, Plato describes men who love men as "valiant and manly" with "a manly countenance," for "they embrace that which is like them" (17). Indeed, *The Symposium*

[22] According to Bauer, Pausanias's speech inspired Ulrichs's notions of sexual inversion: "a principle of same-sex desire according to which same-sex oriented men had a feminine soul within their male bodies" (Bauer 23). Thus, in Ulrichs's words, "only the soul, not the body, belonged to the other sex" (qtd. in Bauer 23).

designates the third sex as the source of heterosexual and not homosexual passions, whereas sexology aligns the concept of a third sex conversely with same-sex desire. For example, when Carpenter draws on Ulrichs's theory of the Urning as a doubled or 'split' figure (*anima muliebris in virili corpora inclusa*), the underlying conception is a Cartesian divide between mind and body or body and soul (*Intermediate Sex* 19). When Symonds reiterates this theory of inversion in "Ulrichs's Views," he presents it as consistent with the *Symposium*, and explains that a sexually differentiated foetus "does not always effect the proper differentiation of that portion of the psychical being in which resides the sexual appetite," thus resulting in a soul gendered differently from the body (304).

These accounts of variety in sex differences derive partly from a misogynistic notion in the period that "the male is a more advanced product of sexual evolution than the female," which Symonds attributes to Robert Chambers's *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, anonymously published in 1844 (304). Ellis, in *Man and Woman: A Study of Secondary Sexual Characters* (1894), cites Herbert Spencer as another Victorian proponent of this idea, while contending that to accept his premise "that on this account 'woman is undeveloped man,' is to state the matter in an altogether misleading manner" (390). Hardy's 1871 sensation novel *Desperate Remedies* alludes to this theory as a commonly debated idea of the time, as I will discuss in the third chapter of this dissertation.[23]

While this theory performs an overtly patriarchal function of reducing women's status, Symonds overturns its gender-essentialist ramifications. Extrapolating from Ulrichs again, Symonds writes of biological sex differences:

> The line of division between the sexes, even in adult life, is a subtle one; and the physical structure of men and women yields indubitable signs of their emergence from a common ground-stuff. Perfect men have rudimentary breasts. Perfect women

[23] The narrator observes: "for in spite of a fashion which pervades the whole community at the present day—the habit of exclaiming that woman is not undeveloped man, but diverse, the fact remains that, after all, women are Mankind, and that in many of the sentiments of life the difference of sex is but a difference of degree" (Hardy 173; vol. 2, ch. 2).

> carry a rudimentary penis in their clitoris. The raphé of the scrotum shows the aperture, common at first to masculine and feminine beings, but afterwards only retained in the female vulva, was closed up in the male. Other anatomical details of the same sort might be adduced. That gradual development, which ends in normal differentiation, goes on very slowly. It is only at the age of puberty that a boy distinguishes himself abruptly from a girl, by changing his voice and growing hair on parts of the body where it is not usually found on women. This being so, it is surely not surprising that the sexual appetite should sometimes fail to be normally determined, or, in other words, inverted. ("Ulrichs's Views" 305-6)

From a modern standpoint, Symonds appears to exchange the misogynist notion that women are underdeveloped men for the heteronormative notion that sexual inverts are underdeveloped humans. The innovations of his thinking, however, are to locate a biological basis for sexual variance, and, even more radically, to destabilise the boundary between the sexes.

Although the sexologists' congenitalist accounts of same-sex desire are in many ways also essentialist, Victorian sexology nonetheless raises profoundly anti-essentialist implications for the sex binary. Symonds's collaborator Ellis furthers this logic in his later work. In *Psychology of Sex* (1933), Ellis traces homosexuality to a "fundamental basis in biological constitution" challenging the strict division of male and female into mutually exclusive categories:

> It may seem easy to say that there are two definitely separated distinct and immutable sexes, the male that bears the sperm-cell and the female that bears the ovum or egg. That statement has, however, long ceased to be, biologically, strictly correct. We may not know exactly what sex is; but we do know that it is mutable, with the possibility of one sex being changed into the other sex, that its frontiers are often uncertain,

> and that there are many stages between a complete male and a complete female. (225)

Attesting to the subversive power of these ideas in the late-Victorian period, Showalter's *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (1990) discusses how the erosion of sex categories provoked a crisis of masculinity (9). Further blurring the boundaries between male and female in the era were the rise of the New Woman and the advent of Decadence with its figurehead of the dandified aesthete (Showalter 169). Sexology thus reflects and compounds a cultural fascination with doubleness that culminates in the breakdown of binary distinctions—both of biological sex and socially constructed gender.[24]

The breakdown of the gender binary is also central to modern queer theory, which deconstructs normalised distinctions between female and male, homosexual and heterosexual. Arguing that sexology prefigures the indeterminacies of queer theory, Brickell reads Ellis's notion of sexual inversion as one of "universal potential," given that "all human beings possess both 'male' and 'female' characteristics" and therefore "every person embodies some degree of 'homosexual' tendency, if only in latent form" (Brickell 432). But, as Brickell also points out, Ellis's model still essentialises the link between femininity and an attraction to men, and between masculinity and an attraction to women (432).

Furthermore, feminist critics such as Showalter, Lilian Faderman, Sheila Jeffreys, and Margaret Jackson have disparaged sexology for undermining women's relationships and pathologising lesbianism as intrinsically morbid.[25] Showalter's *The Female Malady* (1985) characterises

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[24] This concept of breaking down is consistent with the principles of Decadence as Ellis understood them. In his introduction to J. K. Huysmans's *A Rebours* (1884), Ellis cites French poet Paul Bourget's definition of Decadence as a style "in which the unity of the book is decomposed to give place to the independence of the page, in which the page is decomposed to give place to the independence of the phrase, and the phrase is decomposed to give place to the independence of the word" (xvi).

[25] Jeffreys contextualises the sexological construction of lesbianism with respect to other anti-woman discourses of the era, including "the backlash against feminism" and "alarm at spinsters and celibacy" (205).

Ellis's writings along with those of Freud as a "direct attack" on social and institutional bonds between women (198). In the feminist classic *Surpassing the Love of Men*, Faderman claims that both Krafft-Ebing and Ellis associated the love between women "with behavior which had nothing to do with same-sex love but did have a great deal to do with the insanity of some of the patients they examined," so that it was through sexology that "the twentieth century received its stereotypes of lesbian morbidity" (Faderman 241).[26]

However, Faderman's condemnation of Ellis undervalues the pro-homosexual rhetorical power of his case studies who speak in defence of their sexuality. Among the most memorable of these is Case XXIX, the anonymous "Miss M.," who

> can see nothing wrong in her feelings; and until, a year ago, she came across a translation of Krafft-Ebing's book she had no ideas "that feelings like mine were 'under the ban of society' as he puts it, or were considered unnatural or depraved". She would like to help to bring light on the subject and to lift the shadow from other lives. (170)

In the subsequent example of Case XXXI, identified as "Miss H.," Ellis observes that the "effect on her of loving women is distinctly good both spiritually and physically, while *repression* leads to morbidity and hysteria" (173, my emphasis). Ellis's treatment of lesbianism cannot fairly be reduced to a morbid portrayal in light of these inclusions and his sympathetic commentary on them.

If Faderman overlooks the emancipatory potential of these testimonies to emphasise the morbid cases of homicide in Ellis's chapter, moreover, her interpretation may result from a textual change—or perhaps even a quirk of reformatting—between the original 1897 edition of *Sexual*

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[26] Similarly, Jackson contends that sexology's "morbidification of lesbianism was undoubtedly a key factor in undermining feminism" (108). Jagose, however, observes a negative consequence of Faderman's argument that, "before their morbidification in sexology, romantic friendships between women were culturally idealized and not considered sexual even by the romantic friends themselves" (*Inconsequence* 9); in other words, Faderman erases the historical possibility of sexual love between women in the pre-sexological era.

Inversion and the 1915 reprint, expanded for inclusion in Ellis's multivolume *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. Faderman cites Ellis as beginning his discussion of female inverts with an anecdote about Alice Mitchell, an American woman charged with the brutal murder of her lover Freda Ward (Faderman 241). Yet this anecdote occurs only as part of a lengthy footnote in the 1897 edition (160-61), which was apparently relocated to the main body of the chapter in the 1915 printing, where it appears in smaller typeface than the main text (201-2). Situated early in the chapter, the revision changes the overall tenor of the piece so as to shift the balance toward the morbidity that Faderman reads in Ellis's work. Whether or not Faderman's interpretation stems from a textual idiosyncrasy, its influence has had considerable reach in Victorian historical and literary scholarship: from Hart's *Fatal Women* (1994) to Ardel Haefele-Thomas's *Queer Others in Victorian Gothic* (2012), which follows Faderman's example by lumping together Ellis and Krafft-Ebing as sexologists who negatively pathologised homosexuality (Haefele-Thomas 97).

However, recent scholarship contests the adverse readings of Ellis's work. In a 2008 critical edition of *Sexual Inversion* that restores the original 1897 version, Ivan Crozier argues that Faderman "fails to judge Ellis as a product of his own context" (79). Chiara Beccalossi's *Female Sexual Inversion: Same-Sex Desires in Italian and British Sexology, c. 1870-1920* (2011) maintains that the controversial Alice Mitchell anecdote was an addition to the 1915 version of *Sexual Inversion*, and she contends that its inclusion does not outweigh Ellis's many positive representations of women who love women. According to Beccalossi, although the revised edition of *Sexual Inversion* appears to emphasise "female sexual inversion as a morbid condition characterised by masculine aspects," a fairer picture emerges when one considers the full context of the passages implying lesbian morbidity:

> Although a violent case such as Alice Mitchell's could not be sidestepped, Ellis started his chapter on female sexual inversion with a lengthy treatment of Sappho

> rather than with a criminal female sexual invert. Sappho was intended to exemplify Ellis's view that 'inversion is as likely to be accompanied by high intellectual ability in a woman as in a man'. Ellis moved on to recount how female homosexuality was portrayed by French writers such as Zola, and as a current example of a female invert he cited Renée Vivien, a French poet whose verses were, he said, amongst the 'finest in the French language', and who was described as 'very beautiful, very simple and sweet-natured, and highly accomplished in many directions'. Only subsequently did Ellis deal with the famous case of Alice Mitchell and other psychiatric cases. (Beccalossi 196)

As Symonds invokes Classical paradigms to ennoble the male invert, so Ellis cites Sappho to place female inversion firstly in a favourable light before turning to less positive examples.

Yet, if Ellis's writings are not as inhospitable to lesbianism as many feminist critics allege, sexology as whole may not be as liberatory in its treatment of male homosexuality as its defenders claim. Craft complicates the ramifications of the sexual inversion model for male same-sex desire:

> Feminization of the male is […] an intrinsic aspect of the inversion figure, the very ground of its taxonomic coherence: any and all desire for a male is encoded, from the first, as a specifically feminine desire, despite its incongruent placement in a male body. As, therefore, part criss-cross and part double bind, inversion offers no conceptual space for even the possibility of a virile or masculine male homosexuality, a literally homophobic denial that, among other things, perpetuates the regime of a compulsory heterosexuality whose axiomatic normalcy may thus reign without question. (xi-xii)

A possible counterargument to this critique of inversion might be that any rhetorical privileging of "manly" over "effeminate" homosexuality merely reinforces the misogynist component of homophobia.[27] But Craft's contention resonates with the ways in which the inversion model further clashes with twenty-first-century queer identity politics surrounding transgender issues.

Halberstam, for instance, appraises how the sexological concept of inversion differs from modern ideas about gender and sexuality, while still holding value for transgender history:

> Inversion as a theory of homosexuality folded gender variance and sexual preference into one economical package and attempted to explain all deviant behaviour in terms of a firm and almost intuitive belief in a binary system of sexual stratification in which the stability of the terms "male" and "female" depended on the stability of the homosexual-heterosexual binary. When, some fifty years later, lesbian feminists came to reject inversion as an explanation for same-sex sexuality, they also rejected female masculinity as the overriding category of lesbian identification, putting in her place the woman-identified woman, who is most often gender androgynous. To reconstitute the history of female masculinity, we have to accept that the invert may not be a synonym for "lesbian" but that the concept of inversion both produced and described a category of biological women who felt at odds with their anatomy. (82)

In *Masculinities Without Men* (2004), fellow transgender theorist Jean Bobby Noble echoes Halberstam's sentiments that sexology helped solidify binary sexuality by privileging heterosexuality "via the pathologization of its 'Other' (i.e., homosexuality)" (Noble 11). While conceding that the field offered a relatively "humane treatment" for the "unfortunate sufferers" of homosexuality, Noble maintains that it reproduced "the very cultural narratives about gender and sexuality that it

[27] See Sedgwick's premise in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985) that "homophobia directed by men against men is misogynistic" (20).

had purported to 'scientifically' discover" (18).The essentialising tactics of sexology undermine its credibility in the eyes of scholars like Halberstam and Noble, who view the field as contributing to the pathologisation of gender variance and same-sex desire—similarly to the Victorian literary reviewers who blamed sensation novels for distorting reality.

Other critics, however, stress the commitment of the most forward-thinking sexologists to lifting the taboo on alternative sexualities. Brickell argues that "the sexologists, credited with transforming the juridical subject of sodomy into the medical subject of homosexuality, also understood male sexuality as complex and variable," so that postmodern notions of sexual fluidity have precedents in nineteenth-century sexological thought (424). Although Jonathan Ned Katz cites *Sexual Inversion* as a text that helped to naturalise the term "heterosexual" in its modern sense (88), he acknowledges Ellis's efforts as a "liberal sex reformer" who re-appropriated medical discourse to increase awareness and acceptance of sexual behaviour outside the social norms of his time (55). Crozier likewise applauds Ellis's agenda of legal reform (11).

We should nonetheless note that, excepting Beccalossi, the predominance of male critics defending the sexologists against feminist objections reflects the original reception of sexology by men as opposed to women. Faderman explicates a disparity in the relative acceptance of sexology by male homosexuals versus lesbians. "Men who loved men," Faderman writes, "were happy to accept the scientific explanation that their feelings were due to a congenital problem" because it undermined legislations that targeted men's same-sex relations but ignored those between women, as in the case of the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act, which criminalised gross indecency between men (248). As Faderman further explains, "[t]hose laws implied that the reason homosexuality was illegal was because it was a vice. The congenitalists, however, showed that it was not a vice but a condition with which one was born. This meant that it was neither sinful nor

catching, and the laws against it were superfluous" (248). For women in the era, however, sexology merely imposed another system of labelling and pathologising their behaviour according to male-dominated authorities.[28]

Further evidence suggests that, while the English sexologists clearly defended male homosexuality, they espoused common masculine misperceptions about female sexuality, if not quite the extremely morbid impressions attributed to them by feminist critics such as Faderman. Robinson, who otherwise praises Ellis's modernity regarding male homosexuality, concedes that Ellis's "views on women and female sexuality were in general ambiguous" and surmises that "the unequal treatment meted out to male and female homosexuals reflected this larger difficulty in his thinking" (11). As Robinson subsequently details, "Ellis generally sought to veil female sexuality in mystery. The sexual instinct in women, he wrote, was 'elusive,' while male sexuality was 'predominantly open and aggressive'" (17). If, as Brickell observes, the sexologists characterised male sexuality as "complex and variable" (424), the same cannot be said of their treatment of female sexuality. This gender disparity can be traced back to sexology's Classical roots.

Symonds's celebration of masculine love inherits negative connotations of effeminacy from his Greek sources. In "A Problem in Greek Ethics," Symonds describes "two separate forms of masculine passion clearly marked in early Hellas—a noble and base, a spiritual and a sensual," which first appear to promote a kind of gender parity, being demarcated by two separate titles under which both the goddess Aphrodite and her male equivalent Eros were worshipped: Ouranios or celestial versus Pandemos or vulgar (233-34). While echoing the heavenly and earthly loves that Pausanias describes in Plato's *Symposium*, this model emphasises that lofty ethereal love and base carnal desire could be either masculine or feminine. But Symonds cites the writings of Greek philosopher Maximus Tirius to qualify the two kinds of love in a less gender-equitable way (234):

[28] I further discuss the patriarchal applications of medical discourse in Chapter 1 (57-58).

Aphrodite/Eros Pandemos	Aphrodite/Eros Ouranios
Vulgar	Celestial
Lust	"heroic love"
Effeminate	noble, masculine
Barbarous	Greek

This schema equates effeminacy with vulgarity and barbarity, aligning a gendered dichotomy with a racialised one, and privileging *Ouranios* in a hierarchy both patriarchal and xenophobic. The significance of this structure for Symonds's liberatory agenda is that Greek same-sex love in its most idealised form received cultural sanctions at the expense of femininity. The model thus supplied the perfect counterargument to Victorian anxieties about sexual inversion endangering the social order, yet its defense of same-sex love rests on a firmly patriarchal basis. Hellenic ideals historically ennobled the love between men, in Symonds's words, as "a passionate and enthusiastic attachment subsisting between man and youth, recognised by society and protected by opinion, which, though it was not wholly free from sensuality, did not degenerate into licentiousness" or, by association, effeminacy (235). Classical exemplars of same-sex love could safeguard the Victorian male invert from charges of social disorder insofar as the invert's feelings upheld notions of propriety and masculine supremacy, as defined against a second of kind of same-sex love, in turn characterised as feminine, degenerate, and grossly sensual, and projected onto an exoticised, barbaric 'other.' By maintaining this distinction in their eschewal of the more carnal aspects of homosexual desire, Symonds and his peers defused any associations with the illegal and socially taboo act of sodomy, which threatened to effeminise men.

Yet Victorian sexology ultimately overturns this underlying principle of masculine loftiness versus feminine baseness by reframing same-sex desire as less an act (sodomy) and more a state of

being (inversion). Even if sexology downplays the degraded physicality of sodomy, the paradigm of inversion acknowledges the potential for femininity in men. Craft characterises this logic as a

> tropological duplicity by which the inversion metaphor would articulate or incite (at the level of 'sentiment' or subjective affect) the very homosexual desire it would also repress (at the level of act). Homosexual desire would be 'perfected' in a precariously balanced, inverted subjectivity—a subjectivity characterized, in Foucault's terms, 'less by a type of sexual relations than by a quality of sexual sensibility, a certain way of inverting the masculine or feminine in oneself.' (32)

The potential for balance and resolution likewise underlies Carpenter's analysis of the duality of *Ouranios* and *Pandemios* in *Sex-Love and its Place in a Free Society* (1894). In this text, Carpenter nuances his earlier notion—shared with Symonds—that the physical be subordinated to the spiritual. As he ponders, "Perhaps the corporeal amatory instinct and the ethereal human yearning for personal union are really and in essence one thing with diverse forms of manifestation," so that the one may even metamorphose into the other:

> It is a matter of common experience that the unrestrained outlet of merely physical desire leaves the nature drained of its higher love-forces; while on the other hand if the physical satisfaction be denied, the body becomes surcharged with waves of emotion—sometimes to an unhealthy and dangerous degree. Yet at times this emotional love may, by reason of its expression being checked or restricted, transform itself into the all-penetrating subtle influence of spiritual love. (8)

Whereas Symonds's use of Classical ideals ultimately defers to a patriarchal disavowal of effeminacy and physical lust, Carpenter suggests that fleshly urges, if controlled rather than indulged, can engender a higher form of love.[29]

These complex dualities resemble the structural dualisms of sensation fiction, which also taps into social fears of degeneracy and excessive sensuality.[30] As the following section will show, the sensation novel's use of doubles further reflects the inconsistent treatment of male and female gender transgressions and same-sex desire, paralleling the diverging significations of sexology for Victorian men and women.

Sensational Doubles: Interrogating Identity Through Class and Gender Subversions

The proliferation of doubles throughout sensation fiction impinges directly on the genre's treatment of character, particularly the criticism that it emphasises action-packed plots at the expense of believable characters. Mansel, for instance, belittles the characters of sensation novels as mere "lay-figures on which to exhibit a drapery of incident" (36). To defend the merits of the genre, modern reassessments of sensation fiction have to address such charges of insufficient or unrealistic characterisation that have dogged the genre since its initial reception. Winifred Hughes offers a revisionist perspective in the first extensive book-length study of sensation fiction, *The Maniac in the Cellar* (1980), observing how "[i]t is the Novel of Incident, paradoxically, that first suggests a new view of character as an unstable process rather than a finished identity" (187). Lynette Felber applies a similar argument to *Lady Audley's Secret*: that, contrary to Victorian critics' charges that the surface-based characterisation of Lucy Audley evinced the weak, anti-realist writing associated with the

[29] Reinforcing the liberatory strain of Carpenter's attitude toward sexuality, Anna Katharina Schaffner observes how Carpenter deems sexual liberation "the prerequisite for social reform, for same-sex love has the power to overcome class boundaries" (104).

[30] Indeed, the literary tradition of doubles shares the same Classical roots as sexology. Ilana Shiloh's study of doubles in crime fiction traces the trope of the double "as a split-off self" back to Aristophanes's speech (31).

sensation novel, "the inscrutability of her presentation makes a statement [. . .] about the obstructive strength of social construction" (481). In this light, sensation novelists, rather than denying their creations the depth found in realist fiction, operate according to an anti-essentialist and dynamic understanding of identity.[31]

Sensation narratives destabilise identity precisely through the structural feature of doubling that characterises the genre. As Hughes describes,

> The plot devices of the sensation novel, however bizarre and multiform they may at first appear, can actually be reduced to the generic principle of doubling; in essence, they are all "double-edged," as *Temple Bar* says of bigamy and *le mort vivant*, two of the most prominent among them. The favourite expedient, universal in Victorian melodrama, is mistaken identity, caused by crime, accident, illegitimacy, or deliberate impersonation. (20)[32]

Hughes's reasoning thus exposes a progressive impetus behind the sensation novel's dualistic approach to character, which modern readers can view as harmonious with deconstructionist approaches to identity that question class, gender, and sexuality.

Sensation plots frequently hinge on the doubling of identities via substitution, confusion, or impersonation in ways that complicate gender identities, class boundaries, sexual relationships, or all three. In *East Lynne*, the sexually disgraced Isabel Vane doubles her identity by posing as governess

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[31] In contrast, Catherine Belsey claims that realist fiction performs "the work of ideology" by representing "a world of consistent subjects who are the origin of meaning, knowledge and action" (67). But it would be unfair to regard the realist novel as a naïve form wholly aligned with dominant ideologies, although I believe that Victorian reviewers were ideologically driven in their dismissal of sensation fiction according to realist standards. I side instead with critics who challenge the very distinction between sensation and realism, such as Daniel Brown (12) and Nemesvari.

[32] Radford similarly counts "duplicates" and "transposed identities" among the sensation novel's prominent devices (3). Kathleen Tillotson, however, contends that its central trope is secrecy, defining the sensation novel as "the novel-with-a-secret (xv). I lean toward Hughes's emphasis on doubles, which encompass secret identities, whereas not all kinds of doubling entail secrecy. For instance, see my reading in Chapter 2 of the complementary doubling between Alfred Hardie and Edward Dodd in *Hard Cash*, which lacks the element of secrecy that complicates the bond between Allan Armadale and Ozias Midwinter in *Armadale*.

to her own abandoned children. *The Woman in White* finds Sir Percival Glyde seizing his wife Laura's inheritance and confining her in a madhouse under her half-sister's name. In *Lady Audley's Secret*, the upwardly mobile Helen Talboys reinvents herself as Lucy Graham and eventually the eponymous Lady Audley by passing off another woman's death as her own and concealing her bigamous past. Magdalen Vanstone, the disinherited heroine of Collins's *No Name* (1862) employs her skills as an actress to assume various false identities in her scheme to reclaim her birthright. In one of the most shocking plot twists of Sheridan Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas* (1864), the heroine Maud Ruthyn watches in horror as the villainous Madame de la Rougierre is mistakenly murdered in her place. Lydia Gwilt, the ambiguous villainess of Collins's *Armadale* (1866), marries one man named Allan Armadale in order to claim the widow's inheritance of another man bearing the same name. In Rhoda Broughton's *Cometh Up as a Flower* (1867), Dolly LeStrange commits forgery to manipulate her sister Nell into marrying a wealthy aristocrat instead of the poor soldier that she loves. Franklin Blake in Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868) finds his identity split when he discovers himself to be the perpetrator of a crime that he has no conscious recollection of committing. *Poor Miss Finch* (1872), also by Collins, depicts one man impersonating his twin brother to usurp his fiancée. And in Florence Marryat's *Her Father's Name* (1876), the gender-transgressive heroine Leona Lacoste disguises herself as a man on multiple occasions throughout her quest to restore her late father's reputation.[33] These and other variations on the double motif abound throughout the sensation genre as page-turning plot devices that sometimes expose or propose the slipperiness of identity.

[33] The trope has its place, too, in the related genre of English detective fiction, which some critics regard Collins's *The Moonstone* as inaugurating. Conan Doyle's famous Sherlock Holmes frequently assumes false identities in his role as detective, often facing adversaries who use similar tactics. The villain of Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches" (1892) employs a governess to be the unwitting impersonator of his daughter in a plot to steal the inheritance left by her late mother. The story bears similarities to sensation plots, emphasised by an opening dialogue in which Dr. Watson refers to "the charge of sensationalism" leveled at his written accounts of Holmes's cases (250).

We can better understand the gender and sexual implications of these doubles by historicising how the concomitant slippages of identity bear on evolving psychological notions of the self. As the nineteenth century wore on, problems of subjectivity increasingly unsettled the Victorian literary imagination and overlapped with changing ideas about gender and the growing awareness of diverse sexual desires. In *Doubles: Studies in Literary History* (1985), Karl Miller writes that, during the 1880s and 1890s, the literary theme of duality

> underwent a revival which carried the subject, together with its predicated psychic state, into the century that followed. During these years, which are sometimes mistaken for the inaugural years of the subject, a hunger for pseudonyms, masks, new identities, new conceptions of human nature, declared itself. Men became women. Women became men. Gender and country were put in doubt: the single life was found to harbour two sexes and two nations. Femaleness and the female writer broke free; the New Woman, and the Old, adventured into fiction, and might be found to hold hands there, as sisters. James's tale of 1894, 'The Death of the Lion', describes an age in which there seemed to be three sexes, an age tormented by genders and pronouns and pen-names, by the identity of the authors, by the 'he' and 'she' and the 'who' of it all. (209)

The rise of sensation fiction, from the 1860s through the following decade, anticipates these changes that Miller situates in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Miller subsequently connects doubles to sexual desire, but while his discussion overlaps with the dualistic concerns of sexology, he makes no reference to the field:

> Late Victorian duality may be identified with the dilemma, for males, of a choice between male and female roles, or of a possible union of such opposites. The

> Nineties School of Duality framed a dialect, and a dialectic, for the love that dared not speak its name—for the vexed question of homosexuality and bisexuality. (216)

Nor does Miller's study directly discuss sensation fiction, although the genre is perhaps even more invested in doubling than the texts that Miller cites.[34] As shown, sensation novels overwhelmingly examine split, combined, or otherwise doubled identities, likewise undermining the stability of marriage through their treatment of bigamy and adultery. Reade's *Hard Cash* and Collins's *Armadale*, in particular, demonstrate the complex union of male and female qualities.

Miller does, however, mention Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) and Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), two texts that have drawn more critical attention for homoerotic content than many sensation novels have. Showalter reads Stevenson's novella as a "fable of fin-de-siècle homosexual panic" (*Sexual Anarchy* 107), while pioneering queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick cites Wilde's novel to illustrate the double's euphemistic function as a veil for homoeroticism, often studied in terms of "the Divided Self" or "the Theme of the Double" by scholars who eschew discussion of any homosexual content (*Epistemology* 161). Showalter goes further than Miller to examine late-Victorian homosexuality as a "double life" (106), but Miller delves into greater specifics by delineating two oppositional kinds of duality as embodied by Stevenson and Wilde's titular characters:

> Dr. Jekyll had embarked on a project of separation: Dorian embarks on a project of union, in a work which strives, too, for separation. By joining body and soul, as by the exercise of insincerity, 'we can multiply our personalities.' Another way of doing this is to get married: according to Lord Henry, marriage makes some people 'more

[34] Benjamin Eric Daffron studies the double as a Gothic literary trope representing "an extreme effect of sympathy" that renders two individuals the same (1). John Herdman's *The Double in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* conversely focuses on the double as a "device for articulating the experience of self-division" (1). My study includes both kinds of double.

> complex'—this may be Wilde's way of saying, with Yeats, that it solves their antimonies. Such people 'retain their egotism, and add to it many other egos. They are forced to have more than one life. They become more highly organised, and to be highly organised is, I should fancy, the object of man's existence. The preoccupation of a later literary criticism is foreshadowed here in what could almost be called a Darwinian prescription of adultery and bisexuality. (Miller 228)

In Miller's reading, doubling can manifest in separation or union, the latter involving the body and soul, and thus mirroring the Classical dichotomy between *Pandemos* and *Ouranios* that influenced Symonds's thinking.[35] The same themes of separation and union likewise underlie Aristophanes's speech in *The Symposium*.

Even more relevant to sexology, the manifestation of doubling as either the splitting of the self or the unification of two selves parallels a conceptual debate over the centrality of likeness or difference in same-sex desire, which Sedgwick takes up in *Epistemology of the Closet*. Sedgwick contests the assumption that homosexual bonds entail mutual identification, or that "same-sex relationships are much more likely to be based on similarity than are cross-sex relationships," even though these assumptions are built into "the definitional invention of homosexuality" that dates back to the nineteenth century (159). My reading of Collins's *Armadale* in the second chapter will expand on the ramifications of this debate.

Homoeroticism, however, is not the sole means by which the sensational motif of doubles links gender with deviance. The doubled identities of the sensation genre often impinge on crime

[35] My analysis of Reade's *Hard Cash* in Chapter 2 expands on the union of body and soul within a context of male homosocial camaraderie. Also relevant is Alex Wolcott's discussion of the double or doppelgänger as a minor character whose predominant exteriority reflects facets of the protagonist's interiority, while forcing the protagonist to "confront or conceptualize himself as an object rather than a subject, as a *social* rather than merely psychological being (and thus as a minor rather than central character)" (238).

and gender transgression, with particular respect to the dictates of feminine conduct. Helena Michie appraises the particular stakes of the double motif for women in sensation novels,

> [. . .] who disguise, transform, and replicate themselves, who diffuse their identities and scatter clues to them over the surface of their parent texts [. . . .] In the cases of Lady Audley and Isabel Vane this duplicity, this multiplicity of identity, is explicitly marked by the text as criminal; it is the job of the reader and/or detective figure of each novel to sort through the multiple identities offered by each heroine, to work against her self-reproduction, and to close the novel with a woman confined to a single identity, a single name [. . . .] (59)

Thus, and as Michie argues, gender deviance overlaps with criminality in sensation fiction, as the policing of the law coincides with that of societal gender norms.[36] Doubling permits the deviant heroine of the sensation novel to evade the constricting forces of the law, sexual propriety, and conventional femininity itself, even if the morality of the period must ultimately condemn her. The severity of this punitive logic further reflects the relentless insistence with which Victorian gender ideology divided its constructions of womanhood into two oppositional archetypes.

Critics of Victorian culture have exhaustively chronicled a fundamental split between the spotless "Angel in the House" versus the fallen woman. In this paradigm, a woman's sexual fall from grace usually precipitates a social descent, as undergone by characters like Isabel Vane in *East Lynne*. Anne McClintock's *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (1995) supplies a class-focused analogy for the dichotomy of angel and fallen woman in the divide between the sheltered upper- or middle-class mother and the menial nursemaid, who "represented different class aspects of the contradictory, doubled Victorian image of womanhood" (80). In *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (1988), Mary Poovey perceives an

[36] Miller's *The Novel and the Police* examines criminal and sexual surveillance in the Victorian novel.

analogous opposition between the middle-class mother, "who epitomized the domestic ideal," versus the working-class woman, "who threatened to destroy it" (127). The deeply embedded duality of Victorian femininity also inheres in the sensation novel, which metes out largely negative consequences for deliberate duplicity, especially when the perpetrators are women.

Women in sensation fiction who are compelled by circumstances to split their identities frequently face narrative retribution through death, as if punitively expelled from the text for daring to surpass the boundaries of a single unitary self. To be sure, many male figures in sensation novels also lead double lives, for which several of them, such as Francis Levison in *East Lynne* and Aeneas Manston in *Desperate Remedies*, are likewise fatally punished. (Conversely, Franklin Blake in *The Moonstone* is absolved because his seeming duplicity is an involuntary result of being given laudanum.) But, by and large, sensation narratives that focus on men tend to allow greater and more positive possibilities for doubling to achieve unity, whether through companionship with a complementary male figure as in the case of Ozias Midwinter and Allan Armadale, or by uniting complementary qualities within a single self, as with Alfred Hardie in *Hard Cash*. Few women in sensation fiction receive such possibilities. Consider the thwarting of any true camaraderie between other women and Lady Audley or Lydia Gwilt; the former's relationship with Phoebe Marks ends in betrayal, whereas the latter's collaboration with Mother Oldershaw is fraught with antagonism. Likewise, the two sisters in *Cometh Up as a Flower* are at odds as one thwarts the other's true love to secure a more socially and financially desirable union for her. Even the lovingly bonded Vanstone sisters in *No Name* embody contrasting personalities that set them on divergent paths, with one sister's acquiescence ultimately rewarded over the other's rebelliousness. Although the Vanstone sisters ultimately reunite after recovering their inheritance, it is not the ambitious and transgressive Magdalen—who doubles her identity throughout her schemes—but the docile and respectable

Norah who obtains their legitimacy through her marriage. Furthermore, if Magdalen's fate is a relatively happy one compared to that of other female deceivers, it is because her deceptions are mitigated by their socially acceptable outcome. At the end of the novel, Magdalen discovers that her machinations to regain the family fortune have indirectly "opened the way" for her sister to meet and wed the man in possession of the money (724-25; sc. 8, ch. 3). Magdalen's redemption is consistent with Sharon Marcus's argument in *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (2007) that intimate female bonds were culturally accepted insofar as they were compatible with the institution of heterosexual marriage. Magdalen escapes moral censure because her schemes serve her sisterly bond in a way that enables Norah's marital happiness and their mutual return to respectability. Similarly, in *The Woman in White*, Marian and Laura's bond is a positive one because it supports the latter's marriage to Walter Hartright, but does not preclude intimacy between the two women.

In contrast, deceptive doublings that thwart heterosexual marriage are subject to narrative retribution. In *Poor Miss Finch*, the devious Nugent Dubourg impersonates his twin brother Oscar to steal his blind fiancée. The oppositional doubling of the twins leads to a usurpation of identity that is eventually punished for impeding the rightful lovers' marriage. The Dubourg brothers stand in contrast to favourably depicted male doubles such as *Armadale*'s Ozias Midwinter and Allan Armadale, or *Hard Cash*'s Alfred Hardie and Edward Dodd, whose homosocial bonds mainly support their heterosexual unions.[37]

Likewise, gender transgression escapes punishment within the moral economy of sensation narratives if it does not ultimately overturn the essentialism of prevailing gender norms. In Marryat's *Her Father's Name*, Leona Lacoste masquerades for a time as her friend Christobal Valera, at one point even kissing an unwitting woman because "it only seemed natural" to do so in the moment

[37] Chapter 2, however, will address Lydia Gwilt's perception that Ozias's bond with Allan is a threat to her marriage.

(172; ch. 16). The same-sex kiss receives scant narrative commentary, being naturalised as a consequence of Leona's male drag and her ease with performing masculine qualities. After she achieves her goal of vindicating her late father's name, however, the narrative swiftly and somewhat perfunctorily resolves in a heterosexual marriage plot by uniting Leona with Christobal, whose romantic interest she has repeatedly declined. Throughout the novel, Christobal rebukes her for alternately flouting feminine nature and reverting to it. At one point, he declares, "You are not a true woman—you have no heart!" (51; ch. 5), yet he later chastises her for betraying her gender when she shows emotion after wounding a man in a duel (60-61; ch. 6). The narrator's commentary on Leona's theatrical career similarly shows how her forays into masculine self-expression do not permanently negate her femininity:

> The wonderful exactitude with which she mimicked the gait, gestures, and expressions of the other sex, had been the marvel of New York, and the means of her being constantly brought before the public in the character of men and boys. It seemed much more natural to Leona to play a man's part than a woman's; indeed, her own character was almost too strongly marked to enable her to be pleasant on the stage. She could portray the passions of jealousy, revenge, or hatred to the life, and as a murderess she was perfection; but the loving, submissive, tender female characters had to be entrusted to girls, with not a tithe of her real deep womanly feeling, because they *looked* so much what they ought to have been. (95-96; ch. 9)

Leona's deviance differs significantly from the imminent inversion model. Rather than deeming Leona a member of a third sex, Marryat characterises her as a woman to whom masculinity comes naturally, suggesting that a propensity for gender fluidity can exist within the realm of femininity. Her characterisation thus illustrates how, when the novel was published in 1876, English sexology

had not yet relegated female masculinity to the separate realm of inversion. Consequently, Marryat is still able to essentialise Leona as a woman—and, importantly, one motivated by proper devotion to her father—which allows Leona to reap rewards denied to other deceptive sensational heroines.

This example underscores how sensation fiction structurally disfavours women's doubled identities to a harsher degree than those of men, only pardoning female transgressions insofar as they reinforce or harmonise with the dominant order of gender ideologies and domestic familial norms. In contrast, the genre allows more space for male doubles to flourish in complementary bonds because they are consistent with the masculinist bent of Victorian homophile culture and its fascination with ancient Greece. The asymmetries between female and male doubles inform the structure of my dissertation, as the following chapter summaries illustrate.

Chapter Overview

My first chapter, "Perfect Wife and Loving Mother: The Deviant Sensational Heroines of *Lady Audley's Secret* and *East Lynne*," contrasts two of the genre-defining sensation novels penned by women. Mary Braddon's duplicitous Lady Audley violates the expectations of womanly propriety paradoxically by performing an exemplar of classed femininity that exposes the fictions of gender and social rank. Her castigation as a gender deviant ("no longer a woman") and confinement to an asylum reflect the pathologisation of women's gender transgressions that lesbian feminist critics such as Faderman attribute to sexology, yet Braddon lays the groundwork for a pro-feminist reassessment of her character. In *East Lynne*, Wood simultaneously naturalises gender traits as hereditary, yet undermines the gender binary through a motif of cross-gender inheritances. Lady Isabel's excessive maternal desires, represented as part of her inherited aristocratic constitution, further constitute a kind of queerness in her motherly attraction to the ailing son who resembles her.

The second chapter, "Bodies and Minds: Male Homosocial Bonds and Feminised Sensational Heroes in *Hard Cash* and *Armadale*," contends that the male doubles in *Hard Cash* initially oppose two different ideals of masculinity, but ultimately collapse difference into sameness, implying a third type analogous to the sexual invert or "intermediate sex" theorised in sexology. Collins's *Armadale* (1866) furthers the analogy with intermediate sex categories by reading the social, racial, and gendered otherness of Collins's hysterical Ozias Midwinter in terms of his doubling with both Allan Armadale and Lydia Gwilt.

Following these studies of two female sensation novels and two male sensation novels, the third chapter, titled "Queer Doubles: Hardy's *Desperate Remedies* (1871) and Ellis's Sexology," will argue that Hardy's anonymously published novel surpasses the depiction of same-sex attraction in earlier sensation texts by contemplating female and male doubles in scientised terms that link gender ambiguity to homoerotic desires. Hardy's intellectual kinship with Ellis, who deemed him a "literary psychologist" in his treatment of women, implies a closer relationship between sensation fiction and sexology than entertained in the previously discussed texts. Hardy fixates on an idealised femininity that he undermines by meta-fictionally hinting at its social and textual constructedness—a literary tactic that exemplifies a key difference between novelistic and sexological treatments of gender. The lynchpin of my study will be to confirm the efficacy of narrative fiction and specifically the sensation novel in representing slippages of gender and sexual identity in the period prior to the sexological sanction of binary categories of homo- and heterosexual. I contend that these slippages are especially at stake in a genre that developed concomitantly with the field of English sexology. Finally, I conclude the dissertation by assessing the intertwined legacies of sensation fiction and sexology, while comparing and contrasting their methods of understanding and representing gender and sexuality.

My work in the present study contributes to an expanding corpus of recent scholarship that historicises Victorian fiction with respect to medico-scientific innovations of the period. For instance, Andrew Mangham's *Violent Women and Sensation Fiction: Crime, Medicine and Victorian Popular Culture* (2007) uses medical and legal discourses to examine how sensation novels constructed narratives of violent femininity. Tabitha Sparks's *The Doctor in the Victorian Novel: Family Practices* (2011) studies the role of medical professionals in the marriage-plots characteristic of Victorian novels. Laurie Garrison's *Science, Sexuality and Sensation Novels: Pleasures of the Senses* (2011) emphasises the influence of physiology on the reception of sensation fiction and the theorisation of its effects on readers. Like these works, my study primarily deploys the methods of literary analysis, as I demonstrate how sensation novels contributed to the cultural discourse in which English sexology developed.

This dissertation is not concerned with re-defining characters as homosexual or trying to identify them as prototypical inverts. Speculating about the sex lives of fictional characters is a task best left to modern-day writers of leisurely "slash fiction," not to the work of scholarship. I will further temper the urge—always too strong in criticism of literature before one's own era—to read the sensation novelists and sexologists as our intellectual prototypes, and to congratulate the ones who most closely mirror our thoughts and values. What this study does instead is to consider the dynamics of gender and sexual ambiguity that animate the characterisations of men and women in sensation novels, and to appraise these representations as part of the changing cultural dialogue about sexuality in the Victorian period.

CHAPTER 1

Perfect Wife and Loving Mother: Deviant Sensational Heroines

"That gender reality is created through sustained social performances means that the very notions of an essential sex and a true or abiding masculinity or femininity are also constituted as part of the strategy that conceals gender's performative character [. . . .]" Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (192)

With its bigamous, upwardly mobile protagonist and her self-aggrandizing crimes, Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) is a defining text of sensation fiction that exemplifies how the genre's use of doubles destabilises gender. Braddon's heroine sets the paradigm for female deceivers that would become a stock-in-trade of the genre, while exemplifying a kind of doubling that arises from one woman's shrewd negotiation of classed categories of femininity. A former governess who marries up, the eponymous Lucy Audley is the angel in her husband Sir Michael's house, widely admired for her beauty and wifeliness.[38] But when Lucy's nephew Robert Audley discovers her secrets of bigamy and apparent homicide, he denounces her by denying her gender: "Henceforth you must seem to me no longer a woman; a guilty woman with a heart which in its worst wickedness has yet some latent power to suffer and feel; I look upon you henceforth as the demoniac incarnation of some evil principle" (354; vol. 3, ch. 3). Periodical reviewers shared this view of Braddon's title character as an abomination of womanhood—a charge they similarly levelled at women writers of sensation fiction. In their eyes as in Robert's, Lucy Audley's misdeeds dehumanise and unsex her, yet she resorts to these unwomanly acts to maintain her performance of the ideal woman, thus embodying a paradox that subverts Victorian womanhood.[39]

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[38] Coventry Patmore completed the last instalment of his long narrative poem, *The Angel in the House*, in the same year that Braddon published *Lady Audley's Secret*.

[39] According to Radford, the exposure of "Victorian femininity as a cold-blooded performance" (88) is partly what unsettles Margaret Oliphant in her 1867 critique of Braddon's protagonist and other sensational heroines as a "fleshy and unlovely record" of womankind (174). My reading of Lady Audley's performance also accords with Susan Bernstein's appraisal of the sensation genre overall—that it "reveals angelic womanhood as a cultural construction" (214). I complicate this analysis with my reading of Lady Isabel in *East Lynne* in the second half of the present chapter.

The social ascent of Braddon's heroine contrasts with the fall of the female protagonist in Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* (1861), another of the three sensation novels often cited as starting the trend, along with Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1860).[40] Whereas Lucy Audley is an abandoned wife-turned-governess who becomes lady of the manor through a bigamous second marriage, Lady Isabel Carlyle née Vane is a born aristocrat who abandons her husband and children, then faces social ruin, divorce, and other misfortunes before she masquerades as a governess to her own children. But while these two sensational heroines undergo starkly different transformations, each woman doubles her identity along the axis of class difference, exposing the porousness of the social divide that she crosses. Both perform their womanly roles of wife and mother in ways that undermine Victorian feminine domestic ideals.

The two heroines deviate from the era's culturally imposed maternal obligations as typified in Sarah Stickney Ellis's *The Mothers of England* (1843), which defines motherly love as the "strongest of all principles in the female sex" (1). Lucy repudiates maternity with cold pragmatism by giving up her child to start her new life, first as a governess, then as a lady; Isabel forsakes her maternal role in a fit of passion and later assumes her new identity as a governess to reunite with the children that she regrets leaving behind. The differences and similarities between them are instructive. Lady Audley never exhibits the maternal impulses that compel Lady Isabel to return to her children. But if Lady Audley's lack of maternal femininity contributes to her overall deviant pathology, Lady Isabel's eventual display of *excessive* maternal desire also reads as deviant, in part because the narrative links it to her paternally inherited traits of sensitivity and extravagant emotionalism, which earlier led her to abandon her family for an adulterous love affair.

The two texts thus associate gender transgression with discourses of hereditary predisposition, situating them both vis-à-vis the emerging scientisation of gender in the period.

[40] See, for instance, Loesberg's "The Ideology of Narrative Form in Sensation Fiction" (115).

Braddon's novel reveals Lady Audley's maternally inherited madness as a putative if ultimately unconvincing explanation for her transgressions; Wood entertains hereditary causes throughout *East Lynne* by gesturing to the generational recurrence of physical and character traits in Lady Isabel's family. Wood more than Braddon, however, associates hereditary traits specifically with gender-*inverted* behaviour by making Lady Isabel's father the effeminised scion of a dying aristocratic lineage, characterising her through a strain of doubleness resonant with sexological discourse. Just as Braddon's gender-ambiguous characterisation of Lady Audley ventures on discursive ground prescient of third-sex theories, Wood's association of Lady Isabel with hereditary gender-inverted traits also impinges on the nascent discourse of sexual inversion. In light of these connections to sexology, this chapter presents twin readings of *Lady Audley's Secret* and *East Lynne* to argue that Lady Audley's calculated performance of wifely perfection is pathologised for subverting the feminine ideal she enacts, whereas Lady Isabel's disruptive maternal desires are forgiven as part of her nature.

I. "No Longer a Woman": Inversion and Female Pathology in *Lady Audley's Secret*

> "The chief characteristic of the sexually inverted woman is a certain degree of masculinity." Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Inversion* (173)

Published in the early twentieth century but set in the nineteenth, Charles Reade's "Androgynism; Or Woman Playing at Man" (1911) and George Moore's "Albert Nobbs" (1918) feature women who disguise themselves as men for economic opportunity and survival but subsequently fall in love with other women.[41] Reade's text, published posthumously in the *English Review*, purports to be a non-fictional account, while Moore's is a work of short fiction.[42] The two texts, coming after the advent of English sexology and detailing overt cases of gender

[41] Note that I refrain from discussing the central figure of either Reade's or Moore's text as a transgender man, as I wish to avoid any transhistorical ascription of a modern modality of gender expression.

[42] See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of Reade's "Androgynism" (116-18), which follows the character of Kate as she makes the decision to adopt a male identity. In a somewhat more sensational fashion than Reade's text, "Albert Nobbs" conversely divulges its title character's sex as a narrative surprise. Moore's short story, narrated in the first person by a former lodger of the hotel where Albert Nobbs works, initially describes Nobbs as male before switching to female pronouns after revealing his sex when the character of housepainter Hubert Page makes the discovery (114).

transformation, are obvious candidates for reading against sexual inversion theories—indeed, more so than the sensation novels examined in the present study. But when we compare the central characters of these texts to Lucy Audley, we see a common thread: the notion that an underprivileged Victorian woman's options for economic survival depend on a gendered and classed performance, whether she is playing the role of an independent working man, or that of a wife and titled lady. With this comparison in mind, the following reading of Braddon's protagonist draws on English sexological theories from later in the Victorian period, and on modern queer theory via Judith Butler's argument about the performativity of gender in her seminal *Gender Trouble* (1990).

Contending that social constructions of femininity and masculinity depend on "a *stylized repetition of acts*" that a given culture has coded as feminine or masculine, Butler posits that there is no stable interior essence of gender (191). Rather, gender occurs in outward appearances and behaviour, so that even a woman who embodies the feminine ideals of her time, as Braddon's protagonist does, may be understood as "performing" her gender. This deconstruction of gender essentialism informs my argument that Lady Audley subverts an ideal of Victorian upper-class femininity by consciously performing it to seeming perfection—an exaggeration that exposes its instability.

As Braddon's text clarifies, this double-bind of Victorian femininity implicates medical discourses of the era that historically oppressed women, but the narrative does not propound these misogynist beliefs wholeheartedly. Once her crimes are known, Lucy divulges her late mother's puerperal insanity, which, as a maternally inherited condition, feminises Lucy's transgressions, contradicting Robert's denial of her gender. Braddon figures Lucy's supposed insanity as a feminine biological inheritance: "the hidden taint," in Lucy's words, that she "had sucked in with [her] mother's milk" (Braddon 398; vol. 3, ch. 6), and which presumably is the root of her criminal tendencies. Consequently, at a point when the integrity of Lucy's gender is under attack, the

revelation of mental illness restores her to a womanly state but not a normative one, in accordance with popular Victorian ideas of female deviance as a diagnosable condition. Yet there lingers a sense that madness is too convenient an explanation to be convincing. Because Lucy Audley's scandalous history uncovers the shaky foundations of pathological femininity, the medicalised essentialism of female behaviour comes into question. Is Lucy's madness feminine, or is she mad because she is unfeminine? The narrative has it both ways: Lucy's crimes of self-advancement (and later self-preservation) violate her gender, yet simultaneously fulfill the gendered expectations of her feminine "hereditary taint" of madness. This double-logic undergirds pathologies of women's behaviour in the period, including the medical discourse of hysteria, which essentialised a range of disorders as intrinsically feminine, and the sexological category of inversion, which provides a historically proximate model through which to contextualise female masculinity and homoeroticism in Braddon's novel.[43]

Modern criticism of *Lady Audley's Secret* evinces the relevance of sexual inversion theories to Braddon's text without fully exploring the sexological connections. Various critics attribute Lady Audley's tenacity and aggression to a pathological masculinisation. Natalie Schroeder characterises Lucy as a narcissist whose "vanity is the source of her [. . .] unfeminine strength" (90), while Andrew Mangham, in *Violent Women and Sensation Fiction*, observes how Braddon appropriated "her era's ideas on the links between the female body and violent insanity" (87). Lynda Hart's *Fatal Women: Lesbian Sexuality and the Mark of Aggression* comes closest to reading Lucy in sexological terms by contextualising her gender-bending potential vis-à-vis the related discourse of criminology (29). Yet

[43] As if to make up for the association of Lady Audley's transgressions with malady, Braddon's other famous heroine, Aurora Floyd, is vigorously healthy, as Laurie Garrison discusses (109). Further subverting any apparent feminisation of mental illness in *Lady Audley's Secret*, Braddon's *Thou Art the Man* (1894) concerns the hereditary illness of a male aristocrat.

Hart's analysis of Braddon's novel stops short of discussing Lady Audley with respect to sexual inversion, likely because the text predates Ellis's theories.

To read the text vis-à-vis sexology, we must first appreciate the historical value of Braddon's narrative itself in representing female perspectives on women's medical issues and thus supplying a counter-narrative to male-dominated medical authorities of the period. In her classic monograph on women and madness, *The Female Malady* (1985), Elaine Showalter contends that sensation novels such as Braddon's offer "a more subtle and complex way of understanding the crises of the female life-cycle than the explanations of Victorian psychiatric medicine" (61). Showalter historicises Braddon's text by way of Victorian physician John Conolly's case studies, and raises the question of whether the medical designation of insanity merely provided an expedient social label for undesirable behaviour in women (71-72).[44] The present chapter will later address how other feminist critics have likewise regarded the sexologists' labeling of female sexual inversion as another such expedient.

As shown in my introduction, sexual inversion collapsed gender deviance and same-sex desire—itself premised on a kind of doubling—into a single medico-scientific type. Although Braddon's representation of Lucy Audley in 1862 is too early to deem a literary example of a sexual invert, critics have noted that the character lacks genuine heterosexual desires and instead reserves her only true affection for her maid Phoebe Marks, who functions in the text as her double.[45] In an early private scene between the two women, which I will later discuss in depth, Lucy luxuriates in her furs and satins, taking Phoebe into her confidence before requesting a kiss. Premised on

[44] Like Showalter, other critics remain skeptical of the medical explanation of Lucy's behaviour. Tabitha Sparks, in "To the Mad-House Born: The Ethics of Exteriority in Lady Audley's Secret," sets aside "the novel's glib and unconvincing gesture toward inherited madness" in favour of a cultural explanation that foregrounds Lucy's materialism (20).

[45] Schroeder and Elizabeth Steere have both advanced queer readings of Lucy and Phoebe's bond. Building on Helena Michie's interpretation of Phoebe as Lady Audley's double (65), Steere characterises Phoebe as a "dark doppelgänger and Svengali-like influencer" for Lucy (303), and argues that their cross-classed relationship hints at homoerotic desire (308). If their viewpoints hold, then Lucy's characterisation poses a crucial exception to Oliphant's complaint about women's sensation novels over-emphasising their heroines' physical urges for men ("Novels" 175).

resemblances that transcend social status, their bond bears both narcissistic and homoerotic potentialities, which sexology did not deem mutually exclusive as Ellis ascribes narcissistic tendencies to one of his female case studies in *Sexual Inversion* (196). Exemplifying slippages of gender and sexuality as well as class, Braddon's doubling of Lucy and Phoebe thus intimates what Victorian culture would read as homoerotic desire later in the century. I follow Sharon Marcus's argument in *Between Women* that Victorian culture before sexology normalised physical affection between women and did not regard it as erotic or socially threatening. If the onset of English sexology subsequently re-coded women's same-sex intimacies as homoerotic, however, then we can already see a harbinger of this re-coding in Braddon's novel when the deviant femme fatale Lady Audley expresses her affection for Phoebe. In other words, what would have been an innocuously affectionate encounter between Phoebe and any "healthily" gendered woman becomes potentially sinister and sexual because of Lucy's abnormalities. With this addition of same-sex attraction to Lucy's mix of homicidal violence and supposed hereditary madness, the resulting fictional portrait is of a multifariously diagnosable female deviant who reflects emerging theories about Victorian women's bodies and minds in the era, including discourses of criminology, hysteria, and, most significantly for my purposes, sexology.

At a time when Continental sexology was negotiating medical theories of same-sex attraction, Braddon's most famous character embodies the kind of behaviour subject to pathologisation according to the theories of German sexologists like Krafft-Ebing. Yet the narrative simultaneously undermines the medico-scientific essentialisation of female behaviours. By unsettling the grounds of sexology's treatment of women decades before the field entered English discourse with Ellis's *Sexual Inversion*, Braddon's novel marks an unfixed conception of how same-sex attraction could co-exist with inverted gender behaviour, while hinting at the conundrum of gender

being an essentialist binary in the first place. Contrary to the sexologists' later conception of the female invert, which unified female masculinity with same-sex desire and essentialised these traits as the result of congenital predisposition, Braddon's central character signifies a site of confusion in which her same-sex desires and violations of femininity never coalesce into a singular "inverted" identity, even as other characters murkily perceive her as a threat and supply convenient diagnoses for the causes of her behaviour. Because we cannot historicise the mid-Victorian Lucy Audley as a lesbian or a sexual invert, the portrayal of her character and the moral ambiguity surrounding her secrecy and doubleness help us understand the evolving Victorian constructions of gender and sexual deviance, and how the putatively medical concept of sexual inversion has cultural and specifically literary antecedents.

Gender deviance and class transgression; misogyny and pathology

Lady Audley may at first seem an unlikely figure to relate to sexology at all, given that her deviance ostensibly stems less from sexual desire or gender behaviour than from her criminal defiance of class boundaries and the crimes that she commits to preserve her newfound status. But her social-climbing decisions implicate her gender: her cavalier abandonment of her son, for example, repudiates the feminine maternal feeling that the Victorians thought essential to all normal women. In effect, Lucy's character undermines any essentialist link between feminine gendered characteristics and outward appearance. Herbert Klein identifies the paradox that Lucy possesses the stereotypically masculine qualities of "aggression, perseverance, dominance and initiative" in the "highest degree," yet "is also the one who outwardly appears to be the most feminine" (173). Jennifer Hedgecock likewise observes that Lucy manipulates "culturally acceptable attributes of her gender, such as passivity and submissiveness," which belie her "generally accepted male qualities" of calculated resourcefulness in covering her own tracks (128). Even without considering any

homoerotic inclinations, one could argue that this defiance of coherent gender already makes Lucy a figure analogous to sexological case studies.

The paradox of Lucy's gender deepens when we observe the full extent to which her transgressive upward mobility depends on a self-conscious performance of idealised femininity that simultaneously marks her as a transgressor. Lucy climbs the social ladder by exemplifying upper-middle-class domestic womanhood, yet she does so in a patriarchal milieu wherein medical discourses framed womanhood as a deviation from the masculine norm. Following Aristotelian notions of "woman as an incomplete man," nineteenth-century pseudoscientific theories claimed that women were undeveloped men—a notion that Ellis attributes to Herbert Spencer and refutes in *Man and Woman* (1894).[46] But while this misogynist logic devalued women, it did not socially consign all women to a state of deviance. The period had its normative models of femininity, promoted in texts like Stickney Ellis's *The Women of England* (1839) and John Ruskin's "Of Queens' Gardens" (1865), both of which idealise feminine qualities that Lucy successfully performs. Braddon's novel itself represents healthy, normative femininity in the characters of Alicia Audley and Clara Talboys.[47]

What distinguishes Lucy from these women—what makes her a shining paragon of Victorian womanhood before transmitting that ideal into a pathology—is her *consciousness* of her femininity, and her willingness to capitalise on its performance. Early in the novel, the narrator notes Lucy's apparent *lack* of self-consciousness or calculation: "There was nothing whatever in her manner of the shallow artifice employed by a woman who wishes to captivate a rich man" (49; vol. 1, ch. 1). But an oft-studied scene later paints a different picture. Lucy muses to Phoebe Marks that, "with a bottle of hair dye [. . .] and a pot of rouge" (95; vol. 1, ch. 7), Phoebe or any servant could

[46] See my citation in the introduction (22). Hardy references this idea in *Desperate Remedies* (1871), as I will discuss in Chapter 3.

[47] Michelle Lin complicates Alicia's normative function, however, by pointing out her subversive qualities reminiscent of the New Woman (59). I would argue that this contradictory aspect of Alicia's characterisation supports my overall reading of how constructions of femininity in the text contain the seeds of their own undoing.

become as beautiful as any woman of standing. This revelation says as much about the performativity of gender as it does about class aspirations. Lucy knows that women's social mobility hinges on their gender performance, and this knowledge makes her dangerous to the social order, which depends on women not questioning the gender ideologies that they perpetuate through unselfconscious behaviour. Katherine Montwieler accordingly apprehends a "subversive message" in Lucy's affectation of a "child-wife persona" that pleases the male characters in the novel (49-50). Lucy's awareness of the artifice constituting her identity is what enables her to perform unfeminine acts to achieve and maintain feminine perfection, thus underscoring the contradictions at the heart of Victorian womanhood.[48]

A summary of Braddon's plot illustrates how this double-bind dooms Lucy for being a self-made woman who dares overstep the role society has designated for her. Born Helen Maldon, she later marries George Talboys only for him to abandon her and their son. She then starts anew by posing as an unmarried governess named Lucy Graham, whose angelic beauty and gentle manner gain her the hand of the wealthy Sir Michael Audley. This new position grows precarious when her first husband George reappears and threatens to expose her, and she retaliates by pushing him down a well during a violent struggle. George's friend Robert Audley, nephew to Sir Michael, suspects Lucy's role in George's disappearance and vows to find the truth. A third male antagonist appears in the figure of the innkeeper Luke Marks, husband to Lucy's former maid and confidante Phoebe, whose knowledge he exploits to blackmail Lucy. Lucy attempts to kill both Luke and Robert by setting fire to Luke's inn, but Robert evades harm and brings Lucy to justice. After revealing her

[48] My argument resonates with other feminist contestations of Lady Audley's putative deviance. Showalter argues that "Lady Audley's real secret is that she is sane, and, moreover, representative" ("Desperate" 4). Emily Steinlight likewise contends that, apart from her supposed madness, the "other known details of this woman's personal history tend rather to equate her with than to differentiate her from the rest of the novel's female population" (508). I do not go so far as to render Lady Audley indistinguishable from the other women in the narrative, but rather argue that her transgressions implicate the broader Victorian construction of femininity.

mother's insanity as a putative defence, Lucy spends her final days confined in a Belgian madhouse, a punitive expulsion from the domestic order.[49]

As would become a convention of sensation novels, Braddon plots the narrative as a mystery, concealing Lucy's secret from the reader and deriving suspense from Robert's attempts to uncover it. This narrative choice limits the central female character's interiority and shrouds her in intrigue and ambiguity, befitting the social ramifications of the text that upset the solidity of female gender identity itself. Braddon's plotting also exposes the male power to dictate women's identities, as seen when Robert disavows Lucy's womanhood, or when Sir Michael and the doctor consign Lucy to the madhouse under a false identity. This use of masculine authority to deny the title character's gender and sanity—and to rename her identity—has serious literal and symbolic implications for the pathologisation of women's behaviour in the period.

The narrative expediency of Lucy's dubious diagnosis as a madwoman foreshadows sexology's pathologisation of women who defied their socially assigned roles. Modern feminists have denounced the sexological category of inversion as a vehicle of male-dominated Victorian medicine to explain and dismiss women's discontentment with the ideological restrictions placed on their lives. According to Faderman, when nineteenth-century sexologists catalogued women's non-normative gender behaviour, they constructed a pseudo-scientific explanation of why some women rejected their prescribed social roles. As a result,

> those opposed to women's growing independence could now hurl, with credible support behind them, accusations of degeneracy at females who sought equality, and

[49] The narrative restores the domestic order in a new household formed by Robert's marriage to George's sister Clara, a union engendered by their mutual love of George and by Robert's recognition that Clara resembles her brother. Given the text's emphatic negations of femininity, it is unsurprising that the male hero's bride is a woman he desires for her resemblance to a man. Nemesvari discusses the implicit triangulation in this relationship (524), while reading Robert as "driven by repressed homoerotic desires" ("Robert Audley's Secret" 516). Jennifer Kushnier further links Robert's queerness to his education in the homosocial culture of Eton (61-62). Robert is thus another character ripe for analysis vis-à-vis sexology, but the present chapter focuses on Lady Audley. Note, however, that Robert's homosocial devotion to George triumphs in the narrative, whereas Lucy's womanly interest in Phoebe is repaid with betrayal.

> thereby scare them back to the hearth with fears of abnormality. A lesbian, by the sexologists' definition, was one who rejected what had long been women's role. She found that role distasteful because she was not really a woman—she was a member of the third sex. (Faderman 240)

Hart sounds a similar note in discussing how violent behaviour masculinised women of the period:

> Women who were incapable of redemption simply were not women at all. The born offender, usually a murderess, was in the last analysis not even an aberration of femininity, but rather a man, albeit problematically in a woman's body, a close cousin to her newly constructed sister the invert. Thus the ultimate violation of the social instinct, murder, and the perversion of the sexual instinct, same-sex desire, were linked as limits that marked the boundaries of femininity. (Hart 30)

By reading Lucy Audley's violence as simultaneously unwomanly yet borne of an intrinsically feminine madness, Hart recapitulates the double-bind of Victorian gender that is central to Braddon's novel.

In their negative appraisals of sexology, Faderman and Hart overlook the genuine emancipationist goals of key figures like Ellis, Symonds, and Carpenter, but it is important to concede that the progressive aims of these male sexologists focused primarily on men rather than women—on defending male same-sex love against criminal stigmatisation under the existing buggery laws and later Section 11 of the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act. Although modern historians like Ivan Crozier, Chris Brickell, and Chiara Beccalossi rightly re-evaluate Ellis and his sexological peers in a favourable light,[50] there is an undeniable disparity in the effects of sexology on women as opposed to men. Whereas congenitalist accounts of male sexual inversion justified homosexual men's desires, women did not benefit in the same way from these theories. Victorian

[50] See my discussion of their stances in the introduction (26-29).

medicine already pathologised women under the catchall of hysteria, while the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864 made women vulnerable to forced medical observation. A new medical category that justified men's sexual behaviour was simply another means of regulating women's bodies.

The concept of lesbianism subsumed in the category of the female sexual invert added to the growing list of labels by which to contain and dismiss women who transgressed the norm. As Marcus contends, nineteenth-century medicine understood lesbians as "those who refused or threatened to undo their era's definition of womanhood" (259), a description that applies equally to Lady Audley as a woman dangerously aware of the construction of her own feminine identity.[51] Ellis ventriloquises Victorian fears about this heightened female consciousness in *Sexual Inversion* when he attributes the rise of women's rights to the proliferation of female homosexuality:

> The modern movement of emancipation—the movement to obtain the same rights and duties, the same freedom and responsibility, the same education and the same work—must be regarded as, on the whole, a wholesome and inevitable movement. But it carries with it certain disadvantages. It has involved an increase in feminine criminality and in feminine insanity, which are being elevated toward the masculine standard. In connection with these—we can scarcely be surprised to find an increase in homosexuality which has always been regarded as belonging to an allied, if not the same, group of phenomena. (177)

As we have seen, the vilification of Lady Audley depends on this connection between criminality, insanity, and gender deviance that Ellis articulates. Ellis's theory of inversion makes a further connection to homosexuality that Braddon's text approaches but does not yet complete.

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[51] Compare Marcus's statement to Faderman's argument that the sexologists defined a lesbian as "one who rejected what had long been woman's role" (240).

In another connection, Ellis's negative sentiments about women's emancipation echo Robert Audley's overzealous diatribes against the female sex in Braddon's novel. Unlike Ellis, however, Robert sees feminine unruliness not as a modern phenomenon but an eternal truth. Disdaining the ambition that he perceives in Lucy, Robert imagines an everlasting discontentment as the trans-historical essence of feminine character, uniting the modern woman with legendary figures from the past: "Semiramides, and Cleopatras, and Joans of Arc, Queen Elizabeths, and Catharines the Second," who

> riot in battle, and murder, and clamor and desperation. If they can't agitate the universe and play at ball with hemispheres, they'll make mountains of warfare and vexation out of domestic molehills, and social storms in household teacups. Forbid them to hold forth upon the freedom of nations and the wrongs of mankind, and they'll quarrel with Mrs. Jones about the shape of a mantle or the character of a small maid-servant. To call them the weaker sex is to utter a hideous mockery. They are the stronger sex, the noisier, the more persevering, the most self-assertive sex. They want freedom of opinion, variety of occupation, do they? Let them have it. Let them be lawyers, doctors, preachers, teachers, soldiers, legislators—anything they like—but let them be quiet—if they can. (228)

As the amateur detective of the mystery plot, Robert is the presumable hero, but it is hard to accept his words as the favoured worldview of Braddon's text; so overstated is his harangue that it approaches parody. The argument for an intrinsic female aggression is nonetheless crucial to understanding the paradox of gender transgression by which Braddon characterises Lucy Audley through the eyes of male characters like Robert. On the one hand, Robert deems women wicked because they are inherently more aggressive and ambitious than men; on the other, Lady Audley's

ambitions negate her femininity, rendering her the sexless abomination that Robert denounces toward the end of the novel.

What, then, to make of this disparity in Robert's observations about women? It may represent a change in his opinion; plausibly, the hitherto confirmed bachelor's newfound love for Clara Talboys has tempered his misogyny so that he declares his nemesis a sexless monster rather than the archetypal scheming woman he had previously deemed her. Robert's motivations aside, the consequence is that the feminisation of evil gives way to a new conflation of evil with indeterminate gender, foreshadowing the paranoia over gender deviance that would reach new heights toward the end of the century.

Moreover, it is telling that both labels—being feminised *and* being deemed genderless—are susceptible to pathologisation as well as vilification. Women of the era were at the mercy of medico-scientific authorities that could define them as unhealthy on any number of pretexts. Rachel Malane accordingly reads in Braddon's novel "the tacit suggestion that perhaps Victorian morality and social norms lead to a misdiagnosis of universal human traits such as assertion, self-interest, and fury as aberrations in women" (201). But it does not suffice to study Lady Audley's pathologisation exclusively through the lens of medical insanity, for contemporary reviewers of Braddon's text understood Lucy's abnormality in more explicitly gendered terms than even the discourse of hysteria encompasses.

Indeed, the revelation of Lucy's madness did not convince all of Braddon's critics, who instead focused on the character's gender transgressions, even resorting to physical metaphors for her deviance. According to an anonymous reviewer in *The Spectator*, "Lady Audley leaves the impression, not of an evil woman, or a mad woman, or any definite kind of a woman, but simply of a monstrosity,—a moral Julia Pastrana—a *lustrus naturae* [freak of nature], whose aspect and

movements excite only a dull and morbid curiosity" (483-84). Pastrana, who lived from 1834 to 1860, was an indigenous Mexican woman exploited and exhibited for her hirsute body that defied the norms of feminine appearance. As Rachel Teukolsky points out, Pastrana fascinated Victorian audiences because her non-conforming body belied her ladylike gracefulness and accomplishments, a contradiction that some scholars believe inspired another heroine of sensation fiction, Collins's Marian Halcombe in *The Woman in White* (Teukolsky 428).

The comparison of Lady Audley to Pastrana embodies the contradictions underlying both Victorian gender ideology and the disparagement of sensation fiction. The *Spectator* critic dismisses the disparity between Pastrana's body and her feminine presentation as something unbelievable — at odds with any easily recognisable or "definite kind of a woman"—but Pastrana was a real, living person. The comparison to Lady Audley thus implies that a gender-ambiguous fictional character was liable to charges of anti-realism. In the eyes of Victorian critics, for whom realist characterisations hinged partly on normative gender constructions, the deviance of sensational female figures like Lady Audley disqualified the verisimilitude of their portrayals and of the genre that produced them.

These charges are ultimately incoherent. The *Spectator* reviewer rebukes Braddon for not portraying her title character in credible (that is, properly gendered) detail. Within the text, however, Robert's outright denial of Lady Audley's womanhood suggests that her gender deviance is a deliberate choice of Braddon's, and no mere mimetic shortfall of her writing. The resulting impression of Lucy is that of a mysterious figure outside of gender: a fitting resolution of her many disparities and the paradoxical notions about women that circulate and violently clash throughout the narrative. By unfixing Lucy's gender, the text depicts female identity in flux and in crisis.

The racialised comparison to Pastrana grants further insights into Lucy's gender deviance and social transformation in light of McClintock's argument in *Imperial Leather* that mid-Victorian degeneration discourse masculinised and racialised working-class women (103).[52] The cultural codes of the era figured one kind of transgression in terms of others, so that by violating social boundaries, Lady Audley violates those of gender and morality, rendering her metaphorically comparable to the indigenous Pastrana. Knowing that class difference could implicate gender and racial differences for the Victorians helps us to appreciate the full stakes of Lucy's actions, and the condemnation they incurred—from readers of the novel as well as its characters.

The castigation of Lady Audley extended, moreover, to her creator. Literary commentators of the period went so far as to deem the gender of women sensation writers like Braddon as being equally in jeopardy as that of their characters. An 1867 *Tinsley's Magazine* article written playfully under the pseudonym of "Aunt Anastasia" puzzles over what to make of female sensationalists who depict women's sexual improprieties: "I do not understand them," she (or he?) writes, "I cannot find expression for my thoughts about them. It is not correct to say they are unsexed, for men would not write such books" (165). While the article may well be satirising the views of a stodgy reader, the attitudes of "Aunt Anastasia" may nonetheless be taken to represent a common perspective of the time. Eneas Sweetland Dallas similarly muses in *The Gay Science* (1866), "It is certainly curious that one of the earliest results of an increased feminine influence in literature should be a display of what in women is most unfeminine," a conundrum that he likens to the Biblical Eve's "masculine lust for power" (298). Emily Steinlight pinpoints the implications of Dallas's scriptural example: "even before a feminine norm has been established, female nature has already emptied it of any meaning retroactively ascribed to it," so that the category of woman is consequently "neither a stable essence

[52] McClintock writes, "In keeping with the discourse on degeneration, the more menial, paid work a woman did, the more she was manly and unsexed; the more she was a race apart" (103).

nor even a performative construction of identity but a role that cannot be fulfilled" (508-9). Sweetland and "Aunt Anastasia" identify in female sensation writers the incoherence that I argue also underlies their characterisations of women such as Lucy Audley: the paradox of "unwomanly" behaviour particular to women, which medical discourses such as sexology pathologically (as in the case of Krafft-Ebing) or congenitally (as in the case of Ellis) essentialised as a feminine predisposition.

In this light, the tale of Lady Audley's vilification and punishment allegorises a larger cultural narrative of how the social threat of female gender deviance in the era was conveniently medicalised in order to contain it. Lucy's discontentment with her station thus provides the impetus for her duplicity and the true root of her transgressions, including her pursuit of same-sex desire as the next section will detail by exploring her relationship with Phoebe Marks.

Doubling, identification, and desire

The preceding section relates Lady Audley's gender deviance to sexual inversion theories by showing how her social ascent hinges on a precarious double bind: carrying out unfeminine acts to create and sustain a self-conscious image of feminine perfection, a performance which doubles her identity. But the narrative also doubles Lucy with the character of her maid Phoebe Marks in a bond that further exposes the workings of her gender performance and its attendant class dynamics. If Lucy is, as her nephew accuses her, "no longer a woman," she nonetheless expresses a pronounced identification with at least one other woman in the narrative: working-class Phoebe, whose appearance and vulnerable position in the world remind her of her own, while in turn reminding the reader of Lucy's class origins and outsider status.

The physical resemblance between the two women compounds the sympathy that Lucy derives from their similarly modest beginnings, while raising the possibility that Phoebe could attain

an equal social rank as her mistress. Lucy remarks on their similar facial features in the aforementioned scene where she instructs the young maid that, by improving her colouring cosmetically, she can raise her social prospects (95; vol. 1, ch. 7).

This conspiratorial affinity between mistress and maid upends the bulwarks of domestic ideology in the era. The doubling of Phoebe and Lucy both replicates and subverts the bifurcated images of Victorian womanhood as mapped out by McClintock, who theorises that the "Victorian splitting of women into whores and madonnas, nuns and prostitutes has its origins [. . .] not in universal archetype, but in the class structure of the household" (87), namely the dyad of mother versus maid that indelibly marked the middle-class childhood experience in the period. Lucy already subverts this duality as a former governess, a role that Mary Poovey connects to

> [. . .] two of the most important Victorian representations of woman: the figure who epitomized the domestic ideal, and the figure who threatened to destroy it. Because the governess was like the middle-class mother in the work she performed, but like a working-class woman and man in the wages she received, the very figure who should have defended the naturalness of the separate spheres threatened to collapse the difference between them. (127)

Herein lies the source of the dangerous knowledge that Lucy imparts to Phoebe. For a woman to traverse the class boundary is to defy the dyadic division of women and assail a structural foundation of the domestic order, which Lucy accomplishes by ascending from governess to domestic matron. By telling Phoebe that *any* woman can deliberately defy the social hierarchy if only cosmetically equipped, Lucy affronts the governing precepts of Victorian femininity, which require obliviousness to be deemed authentic. Lucy's rebellious social ascent provides a model for Phoebe and other

women of the lower orders to rise up by splitting their own identities—rattling the edifice of Victorian womanhood not by eschewing femininity but by occupying multiple feminine roles.

Lucy's intimate behaviour with Phoebe further subverts the schisms of class that regulated Victorian femininity. Significantly, class sensibilities and not sexual deviance initially encode Lucy and Phoebe's relationship as transgressive. When Lucy's stepdaughter Alicia walks in on her and Phoebe laughing together, and withdraws from the room "in disgust at my lady's frivolity" (95; vol. 1, ch. 7), she recoils at Lucy's familiarity with a servant, not her intimacy with another woman. Marcus's research indicates that same-sex attentions such as those bestowed by Lady Audley on her maid would not have signified as deviant for readers of the period. Refuting commonplace assumptions about nineteenth-century gender, Marcus uncovers historical evidence that women's same-sex affections had an accepted, visible role in Victorian culture prior to the stigmatisation of lesbianism that resulted from pathologising the female invert. Intimate friendships between women bolstered the Victorian feminine norm and thrived as a supportive complement to heterosexual marriages, and not a threat. "Women took note of other women's attractions," Marcus claims, "not only as models to emulate but as pleasurable objects to consume. Women attracted to other women were not seen as less feminine because of the attention they lavished on other women's bodies, but more so" (61). If Marcus is correct, then Lucy's attraction to Phoebe should be consistent with her own femininity rather than characterising her as a deviant in the eyes of a Victorian audience. Her same-sex affections would have been accepted as normal inasmuch as they supported and did not interfere with her marital relations.

But Braddon's narrative choices shift Lucy's affection for Phoebe outside the norm for loving relationships between women in the era so that same-sex affection becomes yet another aspect of idealised Victorian femininity that Lady Audley's characterisation subverts. Marcus writes

of women in the period facilitating each other's marriages as a way of "express[ing] their love for one another in a world that valued female friendships but deemed marriage the most important tie a woman could forge with another adult" (71). Various literary examples likewise represent heterosexual courtships "proceed[ing] in tandem with declarations of female amity" (Marcus 76). But rather than supporting Phoebe's marriage to Luke, Lucy offers Phoebe refuge from her violent alcoholic husband. Lucy opposes Phoebe's marriage to Luke from the start, dismissing him as an "awkward, ugly creature" that she can pay to relinquish his engagement to Phoebe: "I tell you you shan't marry him, Phoebe. In the first place, I hate the man; and, in the next place, I can't afford to part with you. We'll give him a few pounds and send him about his business" (140-41; vol. 1, ch. 14). The reasons for Lucy's disapproval lie in her past. As the daughter of a "drunken pauper" (206; vol. 2, ch.4) and later the abandoned wife of a sailor, she knows what it means to be beholden to unreliable men. She reveals her distrust of men in an earlier scene when Robert affirms George Talboys's devotion to his wife—whom Robert does not yet know is Lucy:

> "Dear me!" she said, "this is very strange. I did not think men were capable of these deep and lasting affections. I thought that one pretty face was as good as another pretty face to them, and that when number one with blue eyes and fair hair died, they had only to look out for number two with black eyes and hair, by way of variety." (120; vol. 1, ch. 11)

Hair colour would become a maligned trope of sensation novels, which critics viewed as a sign of what Michie dubs "female iterability" (63), especially as deployed by Braddon, whose extravagant descriptions of Lady Audley's hair were mocked in an 1865 *North British Review* article (qtd. in Michie 68). But, as Michie contends, Braddon's text evinces a self-aware insight into the "inevitable replacement of one woman by another in the sexual and economic system of Victorian marriage"

(64). Lucy believes that men in their fickleness render women interchangeable, a bitter sentiment which plausibly underlies her advice that Phoebe need only alter her hair colour and complexion to reap social advantages—in effect, to exploit a male-dominated system that otherwise uses and replaces women. Lucy's worldview further devalues heterosexual courtship as a mere strategic means for women to cross class barriers.

Lucy's resentment of male faithlessness lends poignancy to her professions of female loyalty, as when she promises Phoebe material and affectionate support, vowing, "while I live and am prosperous you shall never want a firm friend or a twenty-pound note" (115; vol. 1, ch. 9). As per Marcus's findings, such loving fidelity between women is not in itself at odds with Victorian femininity, but Lucy proposes a bond that would take precedence over any ties to men. The text ultimately negates any positive outcome of the relationship between Lucy and Phoebe, however, when the younger woman reveals her mistress's bigamy to Luke, who in turn uses the information to blackmail Lucy. When Lucy discovers that Phoebe has betrayed her secret, her dismay has the weight of a spurned lover's jealously: "Phoebe Marks, you have told *this man!*" (142; vol. 1, ch. 14). Lucy's regard for Phoebe thus transgresses the Victorian norm for female friendships by representing an alternative and not a complement to heterosexual marriage.[53] By depicting female same-sex affection in a gender-transgressive woman who undermines the institution of heterosexual marriage, Braddon unsettles a defining component of Victorian femininity and pushes it closer to the deviant model of sexual inversion that sexology would later reify.

[53] Late twentieth-century feminism as influenced by Adrienne Rich's theory of the "lesbian continuum" would retroactively interpret bonds of female solidarity—particularly those that resist or provide respite from patriarchal oppression—as contiguous with lesbian existence. Rich's Victorianist literary criticism has a formative role in her theorisation of the lesbian continuum. See how Rich's reading of the bond between young Jane Eyre and Helen Burns in her 1973 essay "Jane Eyre: The Temptations of a Motherless Woman" anticipates her ground-breaking work in "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (1980). When read through Rich's theoretical lens, Lucy appears in a highly sympathetic light for offering to spare Phoebe from an abusive marriage.

No wonder, then, that modern critics of Braddon's novel intuit transgressive undertones in the private intimacies between Lucy and Phoebe that belie the normalisation of women's affection in the era, perhaps because they highlight Lucy's comparative lack of affection toward her husband. Schroeder points out that Lucy and Phoebe's exchanges are more sensual than any of the heterosexual interactions in the novel (Schroeder 92), while Klein maintains that it is toward Phoebe alone that Lucy shows any genuine feeling (Klein 166). Braddon sensuously details the physical ease of Phoebe's attendance to her mistress's needs, with Lucy "throwing back her curls at the maid, who stood, brush in hand, ready to arrange the luxuriant hair for the night" (95; vol. 1, ch. 7). Lady Audley reciprocates this attentiveness when they are alone behind closed doors, entreating Phoebe to sit at her feet as she "smoothe[s] her maid's neutral-tinted hair with her plump, white, and bejewelled hand" before requesting a private errand and then asking the girl for a kiss (96; vol. 1, ch. 7).[54] Braddon punctuates these intimacies with symbols of the class distinctions between the two women—Lady Audley's jewelry a clear marker of her wealth and station—even as their shared physical affections bridge the gap.

The class transgression of Lucy's intimacy with Phoebe is further consistent with the cross-class dynamics that Ellis found in some of his case studies of female sexual inverts, in another anticipation of the sexological model. In *Sexual Inversion*, Ellis cites an anonymous letter purporting that middle and lower-class morality prohibits sexual freedom whereas social rank and privilege allow for a higher incidence of same-sex behaviour in women:

> the English girl, especially of the lower and middle classes, whether she has lost her virtue or not, is extremely fettered by conventional notions. Ignorance and habit are

[54] In contrast, similarly intimate exchanges occur in Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* (1865) between Lizzie Hexam and Jenny Wren, albeit without the unsettling quality that characterises the parallel interactions in Braddon's novel. See, for instance, the description of Lizzie "playfully smoothing the bright long fair hair which grew very luxuriant and beautiful on the head of the doll's dressmaker" (232; bk. 2, ch. 2).

> two restraining influences from the carrying out of this particular kind of perversion to its logical conclusions. It is, therefore, among the upper ranks, alike of society and of prostitution, that Lesbianism is most definitely to be met with, for here we have much greater liberty of action and greater freedom from prejudices. (164-65)

The dynamics of Lady Audley's bond with Phoebe thus accord with Ellis's class-based appraisal of lesbianism, for Lucy's status affords her the privilege to enjoy the physical intimacies of a maid attending to her. Phoebe, however, feels compelled to forsake the attentions of her mistress in favour of a volatile marriage to a man of her own class.

But while Lucy's higher social rank may well facilitate the expression of her desire for Phoebe, Braddon's text clarifies that it is Lucy's sense of her own *lower* middle-class origins and ambitions that prompts her affinity toward her servant:

> There were sympathies between her and this girl, who was like herself, inwardly as well as outwardly—like herself, selfish, and cold, and cruel, eager for her own advancement, and greedy of opulence and elegance, angry with the lot that had been cast her, and weary of dull dependence. My lady hated Alicia for her frank, passionate, generous, daring nature; she hated her step-daughter, and clung to this pale-faced, pale-haired girl, whom she thought neither better nor worse than herself. (313; vol. 2, ch. 13)

Lucy's sympathetic identification with Phoebe thus externalises the self-love that critics like Schroeder read as Lucy's main erotic interest (90), but to deem Lucy a narcissist is not to negate her character's foreshadowing of sexological notions of homoerotic desire. Lucy's narcissism is consistent with Ellis's Case Study XXVII in *Sexual Inversion*, whom Ellis records as exhibiting "vanity and delight in admiration" to "an almost morbid extent" (196). Indeed, Crozier, in his critical edition

of *Sexual Inversion*, attributes the concept of narcissism to Ellis himself (69), which further reflects how sensation novels like *Lady Audley's Secret* anticipated the innovations of sexology.

Braddon's protagonist most strikingly foreshadows sexual inversion in the active or even aggressive role that she takes in expressing her desire for Phoebe. As Hart observes,

> the female invert's *aggressiveness* was what marked her as deviant and therefore dangerous, not her object choice. [. . .] Havelock Ellis concluded that among all the characteristics he enumerated in seeking to isolate the female invert, it was finally only her *initiation* of the seduction that set her apart from "normal" women. (9)

Consistent with Marcus's findings, Hart understands Ellis as claiming that even "normal" Victorian women could partake in same-sex intimacies without being viewed as deviant, but it is only the true female inverts who aggressively pursue their homoerotic desires. While Hart resists an ahistorical reading of Lady Audley through the model of sexual inversion, her description of the female invert could easily apply to Lady Audley's seductive conduct toward Phoebe Marks.

Even if these strong anticipations of sexology do not mean that Lucy should be understood anachronistically as a sexual invert, however, the retroactive sexological comparisons help historicise her pathologisation as a case of congenital mental illness. The diagnosis of Lady Audley does not go so far as to account for her same-sex attractions precisely because England had at that time no established medical science to categorise variances in sexual attraction. Consequently, the behaviour of Braddon's protagonist reinforces how pre-sexological representations of homoerotic desire in Victorian sensation fiction were understood predominantly through the register of class identity before they were medicalised. To be sure, the era offered other explanations for deviance: for example, Robert's labeling of Lucy as a "demoniac incarnation" conjures up religious tropes of devil

possession. But demonism belongs more firmly in the realm of the Gothic genre,[55] whereas class issues pervade the discourse of the sensation novel as well as sexological literature, as I show throughout this dissertation.

While it would take the intervention of English sexology and its categories of inversion to construe female masculinity and class-subversive affections between women as sexual and deviant, Braddon's text is a clear literary harbinger of this cultural development. *Lady Audley's Secret* prefigures sexology's intervention into gender and sexuality by depicting the rising tide of medicalised discourses of human behaviour. Lucy's desire for Phoebe may not yet fall under the purview of her doctor's diagnosis, but her other actions in the novel do, and it would be no huge leap to imagine the growing sphere of medical discourse expanding to account for yet another aspect of Lucy's character. Later sexological writings by Ellis and his peers make this leap that I propose is nascent in Braddon's novel and other sensation narratives such as Wood's *East Lynne*, to which I now turn.

II. "Perhaps Nature Was Asserting Her Own Hidden Claims": Heredity and the Queer Excesses of Maternal Desire in *East Lynne*

> "In France especially, since the days of [Benedict-Augustin] Morel, the stigmata of degeneration are much spoken of and sexual inversion is frequently regarded as one of them, *i.e.,* as an episodic *syndrome* of an hereditary disease [. . .]." Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Inversion* (206)

Whereas *Lady Audley's Secret* undermines the archetypal angel in the house by unmasking the ideal wife as a social-climbing bigamist and attempted killer, *East Lynne* unsettles Victorian ideals of motherhood by portraying a former adulteress who previously abandoned her family as having a greater capacity for maternal feelings than the respectable middle-class woman who takes her place. Similarly to Braddon's text, Wood's best-known novel challenges domestic feminine roles of the period through two kinds of doubling characteristic of the sensation genre: the splitting of one

[55] For instance, Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) links demonic possession to gender and sexual deviance, as Steven Blakemore attests.

identity in two and the pairing of two oppositional characters.[56] Lady Isabel Vane both doubles her own identity through her disguise as the governess Madame Vine, and finds an oppositional double in the character of her domestic successor Barbara Hare.[57]

As in *Lady Audley's Secret*, these doubles appear to hinge predominantly on class—specifically the distinctions between lady versus governess and aristocracy versus middle-class, which become blurred in both novels. But Wood as well Braddon exposes the gender implications of these doubles in ways that subvert Victorian femininity and preview English sexology's association of gender deviance with congenital predisposition. Wood, more than Braddon, entertains a principle of gender inversion in her protagonist's inheritance of traits from an effeminised aristocratic bloodline. Wood's narrative thus favours a natural and biological hard-wiring of inverted gender traits, which coheres with the theories of Ellis and his peers. As established in my introduction, however, English sexologists espoused one kind of biological essentialism by explaining inversion as congenital, yet simultaneously troubled the gender-essentialist binary of male versus female by positing the sexual invert as a third or intermediate sex category.[58] The first half of this chapter reveals how Braddon presages the anti-essentialist strain of these third-sex theories by attributing deviance to Lady Audley's self-consciously performative femininity and depicting her pursuit of same-sex desire beyond the social norms for female companionship. In *East Lynne*, Lady Isabel's characterisation similarly subverts the ideals of class and gender that she embodies. The narrative imbues Isabel with

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[56] Another instance of doubling occurs in the murder mystery subplot, when Isabel's seducer Francis Levison is mistaken for a man named Thorn. Only when Barbara Hare resolves this confusion of identities is Levison revealed as the real murderer, and suspicion lifted from Barbara's wrongfully accused brother Richard Hare. The exposure of Levison as the killer unites the two plotlines of the novel. As this iteration of the double motif focuses on masculine identities in the narrative, however, it falls outside the scope of the present chapter.

[57] Barbara's conjugal succession of Isabel also recapitulates the bigamy plot common to the genre. While Archibald is technically not a bigamist since he does not remarry until he has divorced Isabel and has every reason to believe she has died, his remarriage and Isabel's adultery contribute to the doubles in the narrative. Isabel betrays one man for another; Archibald transfers his affections from one woman to another. Indeed, when Archibald discovers that Isabel is alive and living at East Lynne incognito, his first panicked thought is that he must be a bigamist.

[58] As cited in my introduction (29), Brickell argues that this strain of non-binary thinking puts nineteenth-century sexology in line philosophically with the tenets of twentieth- and twenty-first-century queer theory (432).

emotional and maternal qualities that Victorian culture naturalised as feminine, yet she forsakes her motherly duties in a moment of passion. When she later longs for the children she has deserted, her maternal yearning exceeds the bounds of bourgeois feminine propriety that have come to dominate the moral order of the text. Her newly heightened maternalism paradoxically springs from the same passionate nature that earlier compelled her to adultery, and that the text attributes to the familial character of her decaying patrician lineage.

By thus rooting Isabel's transgressions in hereditary predisposition, *East Lynne* anticipates the essentialist strain of sexology, in contrast to the proto-deconstructionism foreshadowed in *Lady Audley's Secret*. Isabel's character is accordingly redeemable because the narrative accepts her deviant behaviour as prompted by inborn causes. Whereas Lady Audley is pathologised for her calculated misdeeds that expose the construction of classed femininity, Lady Isabel garners sympathy in spite of violating social boundaries and bourgeois feminine norms because her behaviour ultimately supports a natural account of gender and class that conciliates Victorian ideologies.

Queer excesses

As in Braddon's novel, the heroine's transgressions of gender and sexuality in *East Lynne* must also be understood as violations of class. A class-focused reading foregrounds a narrative trajectory whereby the declining nobility of Lady Isabel's family gives way to bourgeois money and values. An implicit dichotomy between feminised aristocratic excess and masculinised bourgeois self-containment underlies Isabel's characterisation as the offshoot of a degenerate line. Isabel's position is precarious from the start when she enters the narrative as the Earl of Mount Severn's "portionless," soon-to-be-orphaned daughter, whose survival after her father's death will depend on her marriageability (47-48; pt. 1, ch. 1). Her subsequent match with the middle-class lawyer Archibald Carlyle restores her to her family home and continues her line with the birth of their

children, but she soon faces social ruin in an archetypically melodramatic turn of events. Wrongly believing her husband unfaithful, Isabel succumbs to the advances of the villainous Captain Francis Levison, and forsakes home and family to become his mistress only to bear an illegitimate child who subsequently dies in a train crash that leaves her disfigured beyond recognition. Taking advantage of her altered appearance and false reports of her death, she then assumes the position of governess to her own children so that she can be with them again now that her former familial role has been usurped by Archibald's new wife, the staunchly middle-class Barbara Hare, whose brother Richard is embroiled in the murder-mystery subplot of the text. Signifying the triumph of bourgeois values in Wood's novel, the union of Archibald and Barbara instates a new domestic order to replace the one represented by the highborn Isabel, yet the narrative resolution demands Isabel's temporary return to the domestic sphere, culminating in her redemption and deathbed reconciliation with her former husband before her permanent expulsion from the text.

The emphasis on Isabel's deviation from bourgeois norms makes her at first seem a less likely subject for a queer reading than some of the secondary characters. For instance, Richard Nemesvari deems Archibald's half-sister Cornelia Carlyle a gender-disruptive figure who rejects "the conventional female domestic influence found in a husband/wife dyad" ("Queering" 76). Marlene Tromp likewise singles out Cornelia for gender transgression on account of her unmarried status, while locating in her dress and manner signs of what queer theorist Halberstam terms "female masculinity" (Tromp 264). Tromp and E. Ann Kaplan point to Barbara Hare's brother Richard as another queer figure, feminised by his gentle manner, his pampering by his mother, and his proneness to hysteria (Kaplan 39; Tromp 266).

In contrast to these characters, Lady Isabel's feminine beauty and the role it plays in her heterosexual courtship with Archibald ought to normalise her, yet the narrative emphasises her

qualities as being *beyond* the norm, and even desirably so. Early in the novel, Lady Isabel, similarly to Lady Audley, exhibits an idealised upper-class femininity expressed through superlative language about her physical attractiveness and poise. Isabel first appears as the object of Archibald's gaze, an apparition of loveliness that strikes him as "more like an angel" than a human being:

> A light, graceful, girlish form, a face of surpassing beauty, beauty that is rarely seen, save from the imagination of a painter, dark shining curls falling on her neck and shoulders smooth as a child's, fair delicate arms decorated with pearls, and a flowing dress of costly white lace. Altogether, the vision did indeed look to the lawyer as one from a fairer world than this. (49; pt. 1, ch. 1)

Wood strikes a metafictional note by likening Isabel to an artist's creation. The superlative diction encodes Isabel's aristocratic beauty as something that surpasses the earthly commonplace—perhaps too fragile and ethereal to survive. Her otherworldly appearance inspires excessive emotions as she moves Archibald to a previously unfelt appreciation of women. Archibald "had not deemed himself a particular admirer of woman's beauty, but the extraordinary loveliness of the young girl before him nearly took away his senses and his self-possession" (49; pt. 1, ch. 1). Her awakening of his theretofore dormant heterosexual desire threatens to overmaster him.

These destabilising qualities originate in Isabel's aristocratic paternal lineage, which the text essentialises as a degenerate, effeminate bloodline while also providing plausible social and economic motivations for some of the family's supposed predispositions. Wood characterises William Vane, Earl of Mount Severn, in terms of corrupted beauty, his "once attractive face" bearing "the pale, unmistakable look of dissipation" that reflects his youthful reputation for "the most reckless among the reckless, for the spendthrift among spendthrifts, for the gamester above all gamesters, and for a gay man outstripping the gay" (41-42; pt. 1, ch. 1). (This latter label carries antiquated connotations

of wantonness, which would evolve into the familiar colloquialism for homosexuality in the twentieth century.) John Kucich identifies the implicit effeminacy in the Earl's characterisation, such as "his cowardice toward creditors and the helpless physical dependence brought on by his infirmity," alongside his "[a]cts of moral impoverishment, particularly duplicity" such as the covert sale of his estate, all of which make the Earl an "icon of decadent late-Victorian aristocracy" (168). While it is only after he comes into his title and money that he is able to adopt a life of debauchery, the narrative attributes his misfortunes to causes inherent in his nature, suggesting that he was always corruptible and not merely corrupted by the trappings of wealth and power. Wood treats the Earl's putatively inherent failings with tempered sympathy by ascribing to his character a dichotomy of mind versus heart: "It was said his faults were those of the head; that a better heart or more generous spirit never beat in human form" (42; pt. 1, ch. 1).[59] Therefore, while Wood ambiguously allows for a social interpretation of Isabel's character, the narrative weighs in favour of hereditary motivations.

The text goes so far as to hint that social strictures and influences are but weak barriers against natural tendencies. The sensitivity and emotional excess that Isabel inherits from her father defeat the proper English upbringing that the Earl wrongly trusts will safeguard her from the kind of reckless love-match that he made when he eloped with her mother. The narrative stresses her delicate nature: the "timid and sensitive temperament" that exacerbates her early marital difficulties, rendering her "unfit to battle with the world" and "totally unfit to battle with Miss Carlyle," her husband's antagonistic half-sister (216-17; pt. 1, ch. 17). Following the example of her father's recklessness, Isabel succumbs to her emotions when she sacrifices her secure marriage by running away with Levison, albeit with social consequences more dire than those that followed from the

[59] The central flaw of the Vane family temperament thus comprises yet another duality to add to the doubles of sensation fiction.

Earl's elopement. While the text provides an external impetus by having Levison convince Isabel that Archibald is in love with Barbara Hare, Isabel's passionate reaction of "bitter distress and wrath" is still consistent with a familial predisposition toward excessive emotion (322; pt. 2, ch. 27). By making her vulnerable both to unfounded suspicions of Archibald's infidelity and to Levison's adulterous overtures, Isabel's excessive emotionality precipitates her fall.

The gendering of Isabel's attributes also bears out the hereditary determinism that the text endorses over social causes for her family's fate. The doomed Isabel inherits impulsive emotions from her father's side and physical weakness from her mother's side. Isabel's father explains that her late mother, whose dark colouring she has inherited, died of a wasting sickness similar to the "disease of the heart" which also claimed the life of her own father, General Conway (47; pt. 1, ch. 1). The source of Isabel's feminine beauty is thus the source of her illness, so that in a more literal way than with Lady Audley, Isabel's idealised femininity is self-destructive—and not because it is consciously performed. Rather, it is a physical consequence of her family's effeminised aristocratic legacy that further dooms her son William, who inherits her looks along with the name of her dissipated father. In yet another inheritance from a forebear of the opposite sex, Dr. Martin proclaims that "seeds of consumption must have been inherent" in William, whose maternal grandmother he retroactively declares a consumptive despite disagreement about the precise nature of her sickness (581; pt. 3, ch. 51). The ambiguity that shrouds the illness plaguing the Vane line suggests a vague but fatalistic confluence of medical and emotional causes and effects, in which the only certainties are the recurrence of traits and the ensuing failure of the line.

In effect, Isabel's physical and emotional predispositions imply the self-destruction of her aristocratic legacy. Upholding the contrast between her feminised family character versus Archibald's masculinised bourgeois principles, critics Hansson and Norberg argue that Isabel's

"excessive emotionality means that she fails to live up to both the ideals of the aristocracy she was born into and the middle class she married into" (166). But if Hansson and Norberg are correct, and Isabel's emotionalism is actually at odds with aristocratic ideals, it nonetheless inheres in her family line and engenders its undoing. Hers is thus an aristocratic lineage whose character undermines what aristocracy is supposed to stand for, and thus cannot survive. Isabel's susceptibility to seduction further evinces her doomed genetic line. Her capitulation to Levison's advances instigates the break between her and her Carlyle children, which is consolidated by the renaming of her daughter Isabel as Lucy, the death of her son William, and the presence of Barbara Hare as their new mother. I will later relate these self-destructive qualities to sexology by way of relevant degeneration discourses, but first the ensuing section will examine Isabel's maternalism as another naturalised feminine quality that paradoxically subverts her gender and spells the demise of her lineage.

Motherhood and deviance

The feminisation of the Vane temperament reaches its furthest extremes in the excess of maternal feeling that Isabel indulges in the latter half of the novel after having run away and repudiated her motherly role. As earlier established, Victorian culture essentialised maternal instincts as natural in women. But Isabel's overreaching maternal impulses exceed feminine propriety and constitute a kind of queer desire, surpassing her love for Archibald and provoking the drastic measures that she takes to reunite with her children. Her maternalism unseats the primacy of heterosexual romantic desire as the main motivator for her actions; it is so forceful that it redirects the narrative away from a plot driven by sexual jealousy, which drives Isabel from home and family, and toward the maternal melodrama that prompts her return. While the narrative acknowledges that Isabel's desire for Archibald torments her when she re-enters her former home, this impetus pales next to Isabel's yearnings as a mother. Her desire for her children outweighs her sorrow at seeing

Archibald wedded to another woman: "She passed another night of pain, of restlessness, of longing for her children: this intense longing appeared to be overmastering all her powers of mind and body" (455; pt. 3, ch. 39). These overwhelming urges compel her to cast aside her concerns about her former husband's remarriage and her potential unease at living under the same roof as his new wife. And since Archibald and Barbara's union has come to represent the normative domestic order, Isabel's desire for her children becomes even more deviant in contrast.

From a narratological standpoint, the excess of Isabel's maternalism encroaches on queerness because it defies normative categorisation and thus corroborates the sensation genre's disruption of realist narrative description, which is central to my reading of sensation fiction as realism's queer double. When Wood tries to describe Isabel's mental state as she decides to return to her children, the full extent of her desire for them exceeds the grasp of narrative representation:

> But now, about her state of mind? I do not know how to describe the vain yearning, the inward fever, the restless longing for what might not be. Longing for what? For her children. Let a mother, be she a duchess, or be she an apple-woman at a standing, be separated for a while from her little children: let her answer how she yearns for them. (446; pt. 3, ch. 39)[60]

Evoking the ineffability of Isabel's desires, the narrator grants the existence of her emotional interiority yet cannot fathom its depths. But while Isabel's emotional excesses approach the inexpressible, the narrative gestures outside the text to a reality upheld as consistent with her experience—a reality known by mothers of all stations in life, suggesting that maternal longing transcends class. Thus, to vindicate the motivations for Isabel's transgressions, Wood appeals to verisimilitude via a natural essence of maternal womanhood that transcends socially inscribed

[60] Compare this passage to one in *Hard Cash* about the indescribability of Alfred's mental state (346; ch. 31) that I cite in Chapter 2 as an example of Reade's authorial self-reflexivity (120).

differences. Other sensation novels depicting realities beyond the pale of most realist fiction came under fire for flouting mimetic standards premised on gender-essentialist assumptions. For example, the first half of this chapter detailed how Victorian periodical reviewers condemned Braddon's heroine as an unbelievable character for violating normative gender representation. Yet, like Lucy Audley's exaggeration of femininity, Isabel's maternalism grows so excessive as to produce a site of narrative and social discord that threatens the normative domestic order. Similarly to how Lady Audley lays bare the contradictions of Victorian femininity by achieving it at the cost of unfeminine acts, Lady Isabel's maternal impulses fulfil a defining requirement of Victorian womanhood, but she experiences them to a degree that exceeds the strictures of middle-class feminine propriety. In this way, both characters expose the paradoxes of gender construction. Lady Isabel's performance, however, is not deliberate or self-conscious in the way that Lady Audley's is. Consequently, Isabel elicits greater sympathy than Lucy, as evidenced by the reception of Wood's novel.

Contemporaneous reviews of *East Lynne* generally deem Isabel's character and predicament believable and sympathetic. The anonymous critic in the *Athenaeum* calls Wood's characters "life-like" and her prose "simple and natural" (707), while Richard Holt Hutton in the *Spectator* finds "nothing, either in writing or in principle, for the strictest moralist to condemn" (705). In contrast to the reviews of *Lady Audley's Secret*, which equated the protagonist's gender transgression with the author's mimetic failure, an anonymous review in the *Daily News* ascribes an intrinsic femininity to Wood's novel, style, and subject matter, befitting the author's sex: "It is concerned with the passions, and it exhibits that delicacy of touch and emotional part of our mental structure which would reveal the sex of the author even without the help of the title pages" (706). The *Literary Gazette* goes so far as to voice greater sympathy for Isabel than for Barbara Hare: "When we leave the married life of Isabel for that of Barbara, we feel that we have left a rarer, sweeter, deeper nature

for one that is comparatively vulgar and uninteresting" (710). The reception of Wood's novel thus implies that, even if Isabel errs first by succumbing to adulterous passions and then by taking her maternal desires too far, Victorian readers were largely willing to forgive her because her characterisation accords with their concept of a female nature. The coherence of Isabel's portrayal with naturalised Victorian gender ideologies allows Wood's text to gloss over the queer potentiality of Isabel's maternalism as manifested in her apparent attraction to similarity.

The desire for similarity: Queering maternal bonds

East Lynne enacts another kind of doubling by characterising Isabel's maternal desire as an attraction for individuals who resemble her. As a result, Wood's text pushes one of the defining criteria of Victorian womanhood into the realms of gender deviance later charted by sexology, even if it escapes censure by rooting the protagonist's proclivities in her nature. As noted in my discussion of *Lady Audley's Secret*, the attraction between Lucy and Phoebe derives from their similarities in a way that resonates with sexological notions of narcissism and inversion, exceeding the accepted models of female companionship in the era. While Isabel is also attracted to similarity, Wood's emphasis on Isabel's suffering and self-sacrifice diminishes the potential narcissism of her motives, while leaving open the interpretation of her maternal desire as transgressive in other ways.

Even before Isabel becomes a mother, the narrative lays the groundwork for her maternalism as a kind of doubling by establishing her affinity for children in her relationship with young William Vane, the namesake of her father. William is the son of her relative Raymond Vane, who inherits the Earldom after Isabel's father dies, and allows the newly orphaned young woman to reside with his family at Castle Marling, where she receives the flirtatious attentions of Francis Levison and thus provokes the jealousy of Raymond's wife Emma Mount Severn, Levison's cousin. Emma's disdain for the younger woman turns violent when she slaps Isabel following an argument

about Levison, much to the horror of Emma's son William, whose "sensitive nature" (160; pt. 1, ch. 12) suggests his inheritance of the same familial temperament that Isabel will pass on to her own children. Evincing greater affection for Isabel than for his own mother, William tells Archibald Carlyle of Emma's cruelty, which prompts his proposal of marriage to Isabel as a means of rescuing her from dependence on her relatives (163-64; pt. 1, ch. 12). A fleeting narrative detail, the child William's fierce devotion to Isabel bolsters her sympathetic characterisation and foreshadows the bond between her and her own son who will share William's Christian name. Isabel's style of mothering will contrast sharply with the example set earlier in the text by Emma, who lacks maternal warmth despite actually being a mother.

Isabel's maternal impulses begin to reveal their transgressive potential following the birth of her first child. As a fever-stricken new mother, she entreats Archibald not to marry Barbara if she should die and leave him a widower and their baby daughter an orphan: "She would ill-treat my child; she would draw your love from it and from my memory" (229; pt. 1, ch. 18). Isabel's protectiveness of her baby's place in Archibald's affections is inextricable from her own jealously possessive love of him, so much that the two feelings seem to originate from the same drive, which, as already shown, has destabilising effects on the narrative order. Her motherly concern for the daughter who shares her name is simultaneously an expression of her need for her husband's love—an early hint that her maternal feelings depend on a sense of similarity with her child.

Although the text establishes Isabel's great affection for her children, it does not convey the full extent of her maternal longings until the latter half of the narrative when she feels compelled to return to East Lynne following the death of her illegitimate baby with Levison. After the birth of her first child, Isabel Lucy, the narrative swiftly introduces her next two children, William and Archibald, but their births are overshadowed amid the details of her weakening physical condition and her

increasingly jealous suspicions about Barbara (245-47; pt. 2, ch. 20), thus suggesting that her love for them comes second to her love for their father. Isabel nonetheless expresses deep disappointment at being parted from her children when her illness takes her away to the seaside, and Miss Cornelia prevents them from accompanying her due to the financial expense (249; pt. 2, ch. 20). This episode anticipates the resurgence of maternal desire that will motivate her later return to them in disguise.

As Isabel's children grow, their pronounced resemblance to her develops the sexologically relevant theme of attraction based on similarity, which eventually comes to outweigh her feelings for her husband. Her daughter Isabel—called by her middle name Lucy after her mother's disgrace—inherits her "refined, sensitive feelings" (248; pt. 2, ch. 20), and other characters remark that the girl is her mother's "very image" (523; pt. 3, ch. 45). Isabel's son William inherits her delicate physical constitution and intensifies her previously nascent maternal longing into a consuming hunger as relentless as his illness:

> Lady Isabel gazed down at William, as if she would have devoured him, a yearning, famished sort of expression upon her features. He was white as death. The blue veins were conspicuous in his face, and his nostrils were slightly working with every breath he drew, as will be the case with the sickly. (499; pt. 3, ch. 43)

Wood juxtaposes Isabel's intense desire with the outward symptoms of William's consumption as if she were suffering in sympathy. The narrative confirms the son's maternal inheritance when one character remarks that young William bears "just the look that his mother had. The first time I saw her, nothing would convince me but what she had got paint on" (484; pt. 3, ch. 41); in other words, prior to her injuries, Isabel's delicate complexion appeared as though made-up with powder or rouge. Attesting to their similarities beyond appearance, Archibald later observes that his son's delicate health is "precisely what his mother's was" (535; pt. 3, ch. 46). Especially as linked to her

insular aristocratic lineage, Isabel's maternal attraction to similarity resembles the concepts of same-sex desire that sexologists would later theorise. That young William inherits his physical constitution from Isabel—the parent of the opposite sex—hints at a kind of gender inversion. The boy's likeness to his mother thus typifies a mode of doubling that fits within the larger pattern of gender inversion that I am establishing in the sensation novel's anticipation of sexological discourse.

Kaplan explores psychosexual explanations for the doubling between Isabel and her doomed son by reading *East Lynne* as a Freudian Oedipal drama recast as maternal melodrama, fixated on the mother rather than the father:

> *East Lynne* is particularly interesting in that it moves from the romance to the maternal sacrifice pattern, and exposes similarities between the psychic aspects of romance and mothering. Fascinating here is the tension between a view of women's psychology strikingly similar to the constructs of Helene Deutsch, the well-known neo-Freudian psychoanalyst, and the excess desire remaining from the pre-Symbolic mother-child relation that breaks through the narrative and must be contained in the end. Although *East Lynne* was written about thirty years before Freud initiated the psychoanalytic discourse, it embodies a conception of woman's psychology that Freud's female followers particularly were to develop. (34).

Kaplan interprets Isabel's maternal desire for her son William through Deutsch's theory that the experience of childbirth returns a woman to the narcissistic primal state before her libido distinguished between ego and object (Kaplan 35). In Kaplan's reading, Isabel fails to complete the necessary process of sublimation to move past this phase, and instead "displaces her erotic desire into the boy-child, for which she must be punished" (35). Kaplan's Freudian model connects back to sexology and its construction of the sexual invert, as Ellis entertains Freud's theories in the 1915

revised edition of *Sexual Inversion*, declaring it "quite easily conceivable that the psychic mechanism of the establishment of homosexuality has in some cases corresponded to the course described by Freud," while qualifying that it "is impossible to regard this mechanism as invariable or even frequent" (qtd. in Crozier, *Sexual Inversion* 70). My own reading of *East Lynne*, however, stops short of applying sexological theories to diagnose Isabel as a narcissist or invert, and I cite Kaplan's Freudian reading instead to demonstrate how Isabel's desire for her children invites a scientised interpretation informed by concepts overlapping with English sexology. Similar to my evocations of sexology, Kaplan's deployment of Freud and Deutsch shows how psychoanalysis also configures human desire in terms of doubling, or more specifically through a concept of blurred distinctions between self and other.

Isabel's ancestry connotes an intrinsic corruption that modern critics such as Andrew Maunder relate to the degeneration discourses of the day (61), and which further relate to the social anxieties about sexual inversion later in the century. Havelock Ellis's case studies in *Sexual Inversion* include thirty-two instances of heredity, of which "ten assert that they have reason to believe other cases of inversion have occurred in their families," even though he concludes that "the families to which the inverted belong do not usually present such profound signs of nervous degeneration as we were formerly led to suppose" (182). Nonetheless, the association of inversion with heredity persisted, as Ellis notes that Jean-Martin Charcot and Valentin Magnan "regarded sexual inversion as an episode (*syndrome*) in a more fundamental process of hereditary degeneration" (117-18).

These notions of degeneration cohere with the insularity of Isabel's aristocratic lineage, with its hereditary traits of sensitivity and frail constitution, and its history of terminal illness that all effect the self-destruction of the Vane line. Neither Isabel nor her sickly son can ultimately survive any more than the twins in Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), although the mother-son bond in

Wood's novel is more sympathetic and not as morbidly incestuous as the sibling bond in Poe's Gothic story. Roderick and Madeline Usher also share an association with wasting disease, contamination, and degeneration; the parallels with Lady Isabel and her dying son reflect the domesticated Gothicism of sensation novels such as *East Lynne*.[61] Hansson and Norberg symbolically associate the disease that claims young William's life with the excessive emotionalism that runs in Isabel's family:

> Since Lady Isabel's torrential passions approach the pathological, they are potentially contagious, which creates an imaginative link between the mother's 'unguarded tenderness' [. . .] and the consumption that eventually causes the death of her son William. [. . .] Lady Isabel's excess of emotion makes her so incapable of raising the new generation, as well as so unfit for life in the new world, that it finally kills her: (Hansson and Norberg 164)

A different iteration of doubling, the opposition between Isabel and her rival Barbara Hare, affirms the pathological reading of Isabel's temperament by emphasising her excessive tendencies toward emotionalism, sensitivity, and maternalism as a heredity consequence perpetuated through her ailing aristocratic line. I turn to this topic in the next and final section.

Isabel Vane and Barbara Hare

Isabel's emotional predispositions are most evident in contrast to Barbara Hare, who ostensibly figures in the text as Isabel's moral superior but elicits less sympathy from readers than Isabel, as reflected in the original periodical reviews of the novel.[62] As Archibald's first and second wives respectively, Isabel and Barbara form a same-sex pair triangulated by their common male love

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[61] A similar sensitivity of constitution accompanies the gender ambiguity of two characters created by Wilkie Collins: Ozias Midwinter in *Armadale*, and Ezra Jennings in *The Moonstone*, whom I will discuss at the end of the next chapter.
[62] Recall the earlier-cited critic in the *Literary Gazette* who finds Isabel to be of "a sweeter, deeper nature" than that of the "comparatively vulgar and uninteresting" Barbara (710). Another anonymous reviewer, writing in *John Bull*, describes Barbara as "irreproachable and disagreeable," while finding Isabel "sweet, fair, and frail" (708).

interest, inverting the pattern of triangulated male homosocial bonds that Eve Sedgwick studies in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985). Whereas Sedgwick analyses male rivals bonded by a common female love interest (albeit while more invested in their own male rivalry), *East Lynne* presents two female rivals who share a husband and eventually live under the same roof with him. The narrative anticipates this rivalry before Barbara becomes Archibald's second wife. When Archibald informs his half-sister Cornelia of his intention to re-marry, he asks her to move out of East Lynne before his new wife takes her new place in it, insisting that "two mistresses in a house do not answer, Cornelia: they never did, and they never will" (429; pt. 2, ch. 37). Although he is referring to the inadvisability of his sister and his new bride sharing the same household, his words unwittingly foreshadow his first wife Isabel's return to their home and the necessity of her adopting a different role—one presumably subordinate to the wife's station—if she is to have any place in the household. The text subverts this notion of one woman's ascendancy over another, however, as Isabel's emotional hold over the reader challenges Barbara's nominal superiority as the female representative of the text's bourgeois values.

The opposition between the two women has symbolic implications for the gendering of class dynamics in the text. Lyn Pykett argues that Barbara Hare embodies "proper femininity," whereas Isabel enacts the "improper feminine" (*Improper* 129-30). When contrasted with Barbara's more reserved motherly feelings, Isabel's overpowering maternalism transgresses the bounds of bourgeois propriety that have come to dominate the ethos of the text. In Pykett's words,

> [f]ollowing the loss of her husband and lover, Isabel's whole identity (for both the character and reader) is defined by her motherhood. Isabel is thus constructed as an over-invested mother, another version of the improper feminine which must be

> expelled from the text and replaced by the normative controlled and controlling proper femininity of Barbara Hare. (130)

Isabel's impropriety is consistent with her hereditary characterisation. As shown, her emotional excess and lack of self-control are classed and gendered as traits of an effete aristocratic lineage,[63] whereas Barbara's hardier, more middle-class virtues of propriety and emotional containment make her a better match for the bourgeois Archibald. While these traits are strongly tied to her socio-economic station, the text also hints at Barbara's temperament as having hereditary origins.

Suggestions of heredity underlie the contrasting physical traits of Barbara and Isabel while extending to their personalities in ways consistent with their differing approaches to motherhood. The text traces their contrasting colouring to their respective parentage: Isabel with dark hair and eyes inherited from her mother, versus the fair-haired, light-eyed Barbara, whose "aquiline nose, compressed lips, and pointed chin" resemble those of her father (60-61; pt. 1, ch. 3). The narrative further implies hereditary influences on personality, as evident in the formidable will that Barbara inherits from her father (61; pt. 1, ch. 3), and on physical constitution, such as that which William inherits from Isabel.

The gendering of these inheritances may help explain why Isabel garnered more sympathy than Barbara in the initial reception of the novel, despite the latter character's alignment with middle-class domestic feminine propriety. Although both women inherit personality traits from their fathers, Barbara inherits a "masculine" trait and Isabel a "feminine" one. Wood's novel thus debunks any essentialist gendering of behavioural attributes inasmuch as particular traits, regardless of their obvious gender connotations, can occur in persons of either sex. There is no consistent science in the way that Wood genders her characters any more than there is in her depiction of

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[63] In *Armadale*, Collins associates emotional excess with un-masculine and un-English qualities in the figure of the bi-racial Ozias Midwinter, whom I will study in detail in Chapter 2.

heredity, which suggests that *East Lynne* pre-emptively undermines the medico-scientific grounds for sexology even more than *Lady Audley's Secret* does. Nor is there a fixed logic to the social value of hereditary traits: Isabel's paternal inheritance of feminised traits disrupts the domestic order, whereas Barbara's paternally inherited masculine qualities have a restorative and ennobling effect. In spite of these contradictions, the text nevertheless accepts gender as a natural phenomenon, so that Isabel's emphatic feminisation may be what registers her character as worthier of sympathy than Barbara's.

Indeed, the supposedly exemplary Barbara's behaviour does not represent normative femininity in the eyes of all the characters. Her own father, frustrated at her seeming disinterest in marriage, describes her as "one of the contrary ones," observing, "Nothing has charms for her" (366; pt. 2, ch. 32). In the volume edition of the novel, he states even more insistently, "Nothing has charms for her that ought to have" (Jay 313).[64] While Barbara's father is, of course, unaware of her preoccupation with clearing her brother's name, is the reader to understand that her efforts to solve the mystery and vindicate Richard impede a proper feminine pursuit of marriage? Her interest in uncovering the real murderer brings her closer to Archibald, who eventually weds her, but her character—unlike Isabel's—is not involved in a conventional courtship narrative for most of the novel. These idiosyncrasies in Barbara's gendered characterisation destabilise her nominal status as the most reliable site of a feminine norm in the text. Isabel's comparatively greater sympathetic appeal may also reflect the generic leanings of Wood's sentimental sensation novel, which prioritises Isabel's maternal melodrama over Barbara's murder-mystery subplot.

Within this maternal melodrama that naturalises Isabel's proclivities as effects of her gender and class, the narrative further associates Isabel's genteel feminine sensitivities with her moral conscience and propensity for remorse:

[64] I cite the volume edition as edited by Elisabeth Jay for Oxford Classics. All other references to the novel come from the Broadview edition edited by Maunder.

> It is possible remorse does not come to all erring wives so immediately as it came to Lady Isabel Carlyle—you need not be reminded that we speak of women in the better positions of life. Lady Isabel was endowed with sensitively refined delicacy, with an innate, lively consciousness of right and wrong: a nature, such as hers, is one of the last that may be expected to err; and but for that most fatal apprehension regarding her husband [. . .] she never would have forgotten herself. (335; pt. 2, ch. 20)

Barbara's mother, Mrs. Hare, likewise takes Isabel's emotional sensitivity for granted as an inborn attribute of her refined upper-class temperament, describing Isabel as being "of a nature to feel remorse [. . . .] with every feeling of an English gentlewoman" (488; pt. 3, ch. 42). As Ellen Bayuk Rosenman elaborates, Isabel's "masochistic performance establishes her continuing claim to both morality and gender/class identity in the face of unfeminine behaviour" so that "[h]er remorse, then, marks her as a lady" (26-27). Lady Audley's deliberate performance of genteel femininity paradoxically obviates her femininity, but the supposedly inherited source of Lady Isabel's degeneracy becomes her saving grace. A similar contradiction characterises Isabel's good-hearted father, whose sudden access to wealth, as earlier shown, facilitates the dissipation that culturally codes him as an effete, decadent aristocrat. He therefore reflects the most debilitating versions of *both* masculine and feminine excessiveness: masculine indulgence and feminine emotionality. The integration of ostensibly oppositional gender traits defies the essentialism linked to Victorian explanations of masculine and feminine behaviour, yet the text, in its acceptance of nature, glosses over the contradiction. This incoherence resurfaces in the competing femininities that Isabel and Barbara embody in their respective attitudes to their maternal role.

Further evincing their relative claims on readers' sympathies, Wood clarifies the effects of the two women's personalities on their contrasting versions of motherhood in an interview between Barbara—now Mrs. Carlyle—and Isabel in her guise as "Madame Vine":

> I hold an opinion, Madame Vine, that too many mothers pursue a mistaken system in the management of their family. There are some, we know, who, lost in the pleasures of the world, in frivolity, wholly neglect them: of those I do not speak; nothing can be more thoughtless, more reprehensible; but there are others who err on the opposite side. They are never happy but when with their children: they must be in the nursery; or, the children in the drawing-room. [. . .] (464; pt. 3, ch. 40)

Barbara coldly elaborates her view that this constant and close attention to the children is actually the purview of the nurse, whereas the mother should keep herself at a proper remove from her children so that she can concern herself with their moral training:

> Let the offices, properly pertaining to a nurse, be performed by the nurse—of course taking care that she is thoroughly to be depended on. Let her have the trouble of the children, their noise, their romping; in short, let the nursery be her place and the children's place. But I hope I shall never fail to gather my children round me daily, at stated and convenient periods, for higher purposes: to instil into them Christian and moral duties; to strive to teach them how best to fulfil the obligations of life. This is a mother's task—as I understand the question; let her do this work well, and the nurse can attend to the rest. (464-65; pt. 3, ch. 40)

Barbara's sense of a dichotomy between nurse and mother coincides with the one that McClintock examines in *Imperial Leather* when she theorises that the dualism of Victorian femininity is not an essentialist quality, but a social construct derived from the middle-class household and its classed

division of women into wives and mothers versus servants (87). As discussed in reference to Lady Audley, McClintock argues that the working-class maid, nurse, or governess became the original trope of psycho-sexual identification for the Victorian child, later to be "doubled and contradicted by the presence of the biological mother" (94). Psychoanalytical discourse essentialised these gendered images, but McClintock's reading lays bare their social construction through the arbitrary hierarchies of class. Further evincing the constructedness of these tropes, Isabel's experience contravenes the cultural association of servant women with denigrated sexuality, for it is as a privileged wife and mother that Isabel transgresses, and as a servant that she atones for her transgressions. As much as Isabel's conduct subverts gender and class, however, the narrative depicts her as acting from natural inclinations. Barbara's speech about the duties of nurses versus mothers, in contrast, emphasises the deliberate performance of socially prescribed roles, which makes her brand of maternalism, in its own way, as calculated and thus as unsympathetic as Lady Audley's affectation of wifeliness.

That Isabel should be redeemed is all the more impressive when we consider how, according to McClintock, the boundary that she crosses between middle- and working-class women is, in some respects, so pronounced as to approach a difference in gender.[65] By this logic, Isabel's self-reinvention as a governess constitutes as profound a metamorphosis as her descent from titled lady and respectable wife to outcast fallen woman. In effect, Isabel undergoes a change analogous to one of gender. Accordingly, the narrator contrasts Madame Vine's appearance with that of the former Lady Isabel in the following extreme terms:

> Who could know her? What resemblance was there between that grey, broken-down woman, with her disfiguring marks, and the once lovely Lady Isabel, with her bright

[65] Elsewhere in *Imperial Leather*, McClintock illustrates the extreme disparity between the two classes of women by studying the racialisation of working-class women (105-11).

> colour, her beauty, her dark flowing curls, and her agile figure? Mr Carlyle himself would not have known her. (445-46; pt. 3, ch. 39)

The stripping of Isabel's feminine beauty suggests a queering of her gender, so that Isabel's transformation recalls the change implied in Braddon's novel when Robert denounces Lady Audley as "no longer a woman." Further widening the gap between Madame Vine and Lady Isabel is the expression that Cornelia uses, after the deception is discovered, to describe the change in Isabel's face and form: "she looked no more like the Isabel who went away from here than I look like Adam" (686; pt. 3, ch. 62). Cornelia modifies the popular idiom of not knowing someone "from Adam" to emphasise sex distinctions. That Madame Vine differs as much in appearance from Isabel as Cornelia does from the Biblical first man implies that Isabel's transformation from lady to governess is as dramatic as a change in sex.[66] Indeed, at one point, the narrator even likens Isabel's disguise to the emphatically masculine "hair and false whiskers" that Barbara's brother Richard Hare dons to avoid recognition while he is under suspicion for murder (459; pt. 3, ch. 40). The comparison of her disguise to that of a man emphasises the severe split between Isabel's identities as lady and governess, and demonstrates the potential analogies between gender and class, which affirm the necessity of reading the two in tandem in *East Lynne*. In more pointed terms, these analogies provide the grounds to read Isabel's class transformation as a kind of gender inversion bound up in her decadent aristocratic provenance with its tendencies toward emotional excess.

Yet Isabel's class masquerade never renders her the moral abomination that Lady Audley's performance does in Braddon's novel because the motivations behind Isabel's disguise are consistent with Victorian gender ideologies that naturalise maternal instincts. Isabel's maternalism

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[66] Yet Joyce earlier admits, "There are times when she puts me in mind of my late lady, both in face and manner," to which Miss Carlyle replies that, Madame Vine, without her glasses, bears "an extraordinary likeness" to Lady Isabel (531-32; pt. 3, ch. 46). Her appearance has significantly altered, but not fully beyond recognition. Moreover, Tromp's reading of Cornelia as a masculine woman (264) would indeed make her comparable to Adam, but there is no textual reason to assume that Cornelia perceives *herself* as gender deviant.

commands the reader's compassion despite infringing on the accepted norms of Victorian femininity. As Pykett observes, "particularly in the final volume, the reader is repeatedly invited to identify with Isabel through the text's staging of the spectacle of her maternal suffering" (130). Indeed, the ending of the novel is heartbreaking partly because Wood's narrative has raised hopes that the heroine need not be punished further, and that the moral and domestic order of the text might somehow allow the children to become aware of their mother's return. The narrator raises these hopes precisely by appealing to the naturalness of Isabel's maternal role:

> She had now been six months at East Lynne, and had hitherto escaped detection. Time and familiarity render us accustomed to most things, to danger amongst the rest; and she had almost ceased to fear recognition. She and the children were upon the best terms: she had greatly endeared herself to them, and they loved her: perhaps nature was asserting her own hidden claims. (497; pt. 3, ch. 43)

Of course, the text thwarts this possibility with the deaths of William and then Isabel, although Isabel is first recognised and pardoned by her former husband. And if nature's "hidden claims" cannot entirely supersede the moral economy in which a fallen woman must pay for her sins through suffering and death, they nonetheless allow her the promise of reunion with her family in the afterlife. The narrative significantly glosses over the fact that this incumbent reunion queers the heteronormative family, as Archibald promises to rejoin both of his wives in heaven. This final subversion of the bourgeois domestic order goes provocatively unremarked in the text, its tacit acceptance evincing how Wood's narrative redeems the female protagonist by forgiving her transgressions as part of an intrinsic nature, in spite of all the textual counter-evidence that favours a social understanding of her plight.

Conclusions

The legacy of *East Lynne* in English fiction revolves mainly around the melodrama of Isabel's thwarted motherhood, summed up in her famous exclamation to her son William on his deathbed: "Dead! And never called me mother!"—a phrase popularly misattributed to the novel, but which actually originates from the stage adaptations.[67] Even if Isabel's maternal excesses incur the penalty of death in the putative moral economy of Wood's text, they evince the lasting emotional power of the heroine's ordeal.

Isabel's emotionalism corresponds meta-fictionally to the emotional excesses of sensation fiction itself, which in part reflect the class-based prejudices against the genre. Her re-entry into the household at East Lynne inversely parallels W. Fraser Rae's analogy of sensation fiction as the literature of the kitchen infiltrating the drawing room (105): Isabel is a figure of the drawing room in reduced circumstances, disguised to infiltrate the lower orders. But, paradoxically, her new guise of governess is a better fit for her non-bourgeois but emphatically feminine feelings than her previous role as wife and mother. As Rosenman observes, when "Isabel takes up the position of the working-class mother-surrogate," she acquires "the emotional license that goes with it" (28). Like Lucy Audley in Braddon's novel, Isabel undermines Victorian ideals of what a lady should be. While both face social punishment and death, Isabel alone is allowed redemption by virtue of the supposed naturalness of her motivations. These two heroines of genre-defining sensation novels by women authors point forward to several cultural developments: the medicalisation of feminine behaviour by sexology, the flouting of traditional femininity at the fin de siècle, and further ahead, the late twentieth-century queer deconstructions of gender.

As I have argued, a major cultural legacy of Braddon's novel is that it exposes its own classed ideal of femininity as performative while ultimately pathologising a character who consciously

[67] Rohan McWilliam traces the origin of the line to an 1874 stage adaptation of *East Lynne* by T.A. Palmer (54).

performs this ideal, fabricating and maintaining a socially sanctioned model of her gender. If Lucy's wifely perfection is a fraud that any woman can commit, then the very roles of wife and lady that she inhabits are unstable, and a woman who knows and threatens to reveal their instability is branded a deviant. The enduring significance of Wood's novel lies in her relatively compassionate treatment of a fallen woman whose failings expose the contradictions of her culture: a theme explored outside the sensation genre in such novels as Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853), Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), and George Moore's *Esther Waters* (1894)—texts which, like *East Lynne*, allow sympathy toward the transgressive heroine in a way that is largely denied Lucy Audley.

As a figure of excessive emotions, inexpressible in their extremity, Isabel is also comparable to two prominent male heroes from the sensation genre: Alfred Hardie in Charles Reade's *Hard Cash* and Ozias Midwinter in Wilkie Collins's *Armadale*, whose gender complexities I will discuss in the next chapter. Both Alfred and Ozias survive to the end of their respective novels, whereas Isabel, like Lady Audley and *Armadale*'s Lydia Gwilt, must die. All three female characters inspire varying degrees of sympathy despite explicitly (and sometimes violently) transgressing Victorian feminine norms, yet the deaths of all three are central to the plot resolutions of their respective texts. This disparity in the representation of male and female characters in sensation fiction is analogous to how sexology treats male and female sexuality and gender behaviour differently, and how, once again, its legacy for men is liberatory while its legacy for women is one of pathology.

CHAPTER 2

Bodies and Minds: Male Homosocial Bonds and Feminised Sensational Heroes

"How does a man's love of *other* men become a love of the *same*?"
Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (160)

"'Dear me!' she said, 'this is very strange. I did not think men were capable of these deep and lasting affections.'"
Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret* (120)

In *The Intermediate Sex* (1906), English sexologist Edward Carpenter staunchly refutes the supposed pathology of the sexual invert or Uranian:

> Formerly it was assumed as a matter of course, that the type was merely a result of disease and degeneration ; but now with the examination of the actual facts it appears that, on the contrary, many are fine, healthy specimens of their sex, muscular and well-developed in body, of powerful brain, high standard of conduct, and with nothing abnormal or morbid of any kind observable in their physical structure or constitution. (22)

Although Carpenter includes both "men and women of the exclusively Uranian type" (22) in his vindication of the intermediate sex, the previous chapter shows how women historically did not benefit as men did from English sexology's emancipationist motives. Befitting this unspoken male bias, Carpenter's emphasis on physical and mental health recalls earlier discourses of masculinity such as the movement of Christian manliness espoused by figures like Thomas Hughes and Charles Kingsley, who championed spiritual virtues by associating them with secular values of physical strength. Yet, similarly to how Carpenter's defence of Uranians includes both sexes, the qualities of Christian manliness could apply to women as well as men in accordance with a universalized notion of mankind, as Norman Vance observes in *The Sinews of the Spirit* (Vance 1).

The ambiguous potential for women's inclusion in these discourses reflects the evolution of Victorian masculinity. In an article on Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857), Andy Harvey

observes that one legacy of Hughes's widely influential novel in the decades following its publication was to solidify the association of manliness with athleticism (Harvey 21). Harvey further infers from Hughes's representations of gender that "in the mid-nineteenth century, notions of effeminacy were not yet detached from masculinity but were a part of it" (22). But, by the time of Ellis's *Sexual Inversion* in 1897, Victorian gender ideologies were relegating effeminacy to new sites of gender deviance such as the cultural category of the dandified aesthete,[68] while sexology offered the diagnostic category of the sexual invert. Meanwhile, the understanding of male same-sex desire shifted with the construction of modern homosexual identity via medicalised models.

To help trace the redefinition of masculinity in the era, the present chapter scrutinises homosocial doubles and gender deviance in two major works by male sensation novelists: *Hard Cash* (1863) by Charles Reade, and *Armadale* (1866) by Wilkie Collins. At the centre of each novel is a pair of young men whose complementary doubling bears broader significance for the narrative treatment of gender and same-sex desire. Reade's text lauds the institution of collegiate homosocial camaraderie for generating healthy English masculine subjects, while Collins's favourably depicts a male friendship that transcends social and racial boundaries and the antagonisms wrought by a murderous family legacy. The triumph of these male homosocial bonds contrasts with the negation of female bonds in Braddon and Wood's novels as examined in the previous chapter, mirroring how Victorian culture privileged male pursuits while curtailing women's social possibilities.

The two novels advance my discussion of the encroaching medicalisation of gender variance, as Reade and Collins share Braddon and Wood's anxious concern with the pathology of mental illness and its symbolic implications for gender behaviour. As in *Lady Audley's Secret,* the spectre of nascent madness haunts both *Hard Cash* and *Armadale*, although Reade's novel is less concerned with

[68] In *Sexual Anarchy*, Showalter positions the effeminised aesthete as the male counterpart to the New Woman, as their visibility at the fin-de-siècle "redefined the meanings of femininity and masculinity" (3).

problems of mental illness than with the abuses of private mental institutions. The threat of excessive emotionalism as a hereditary medical condition, which Collins's text shares with *East Lynne*, endangers Ozias Midwinter's bond with Allan Armadale, while the balance between body and mind becomes the measure of Alfred Hardie and Edward Dodd's performances of masculine ideals in Reade's text. Although Reade establishes Edward and Alfred as friends and oppositional doubles who appear to embody the dichotomy of athletic versus intellectual abilities, Alfred emerges as the foremost hero by combining these complementary qualities. Collins, meanwhile, renders Allan and Ozias as complementary figures who bond despite their fathers' fatal rivalry, which the hysterical Ozias fears he is doomed to repeat. As the central hero, Ozias ultimately defies the prognostications of betrayal by saving Allan's life rather than killing him.

The main hero in each novel, moreover, is feminised by his psychological condition: *Hard Cash*'s Alfred by his severe headaches and dubious diagnosis with monomania, *Armadale*'s Ozias by a kind of hysteria. As the greater heroic burden thus falls on the male character who is pathologically feminised, the two texts imply that pathology is not destiny and that male effeminacy is not weakness. These feminised heroes also form stronger heterosexual bonds than their more masculinised counterparts, whose homosocial inclinations exceed their heterosexual attractions, contrary to the sexological theories that would later link effeminacy with congenital same-sex desire in the category of the invert or intermediate sex. The male doubles in *Hard Cash* and *Armadale* consequently invoke gender variance and same-sex attraction as separate albeit thematically-related phenomena, marking a cultural moment before sexology would fully conflate them.

I. Sons of "the modern Athens": The Classical Union of Athletic and Intellectual Masculinities in *Hard Cash*

> "[T]hey had heard of him as a victorious young Apollo trampling on all difficulties of mind and body; and they saw him wan, and worn, with feminine suffering: the contrast made him doubly interesting."
> Charles Reade, *Hard Cash*

The hero of a Charles Reade novel seems at first an unlikely prototype for the gender ambiguities that Victorian sexologists collapsed under the category of inversion. Reade's novels venerate a thoroughly masculine ideal that George Orwell would later typify as a formidable mix of "saint, scholar, gentleman, [and] athlete"—in short, a "compendium of all the talents that Reade honestly imagined to be the normal product of an English university" (34).[69] Reade's *Hard Cash: A Matter-of-Fact Romance* (1863) ostensibly divides two of these talents between the Oxford undergraduate athlete Edward Dodd and his more scholarly-inclined peer Alfred Hardie, yet the pair, as a subtle variant on the sensation genre's motif of doubled identities, defies any strict dichotomy of physical and mental abilities. Edward's primary aptitudes are physical, but Alfred, while foremost a scholar, does not lack in athleticism.

Nor are these two vigorous male subjects exempt from queer potential. Reade characterises them through a vision of Oxford as "the modern Athens," which, "like the ancient, cultivates muscle as well as mind" (5; Prologue). His championing of Classical idealism resonates with later Victorian homophile writings by English sexologists such as Symonds, Ellis, and Carpenter, who all turn to ancient Greek models in defence of same-sex love.[70] Homoerotic aesthetics accordingly vivify the Classical tropes through which Reade celebrates Edward's athletic beauty, while the Greek philosophical tradition—specifically concerning the interrelationship of body and mind—is central to Reade's intellectual characterisation of Alfred.

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[69] Further evincing the gendered perception of Reade's works, Victorian caricaturist Frederick Waddy described Reade's prose style as "nervous, vigorous, and masculine" in a biographical review accompanying his 1873 portrait of the author (qtd. in Wynne 132).

[70] Linda Dowling regards the Hellenist revival as a phenomenon of Oxford culture that liberal scholars like Symonds's tutor Benjamin Jowett championed in the 1860s (34-36).

Although the narrative lionises Edward for his athletic feats, Alfred ultimately emerges as the main hero, whose withstanding of adversity most forcefully demonstrates the cohesion of body and intellect that is the hallmark of Reade's "modern Athens." Alfred achieves this status despite suffering from bouts of mental anxiety that feminise him and make him an easy target for false diagnoses of insanity and wrongful confinement in a series of madhouses. By evoking Classical homoeroticism and Cartesian dualities of body and mind in a narrative that questions the abuses of pathology, Reade treads on sexological terrain yet pre-emptively undermines the sexual inversion model. In contrast to the sexual invert or Urning, the doubles of *Hard Cash* keep same-sex attraction separate from gender deviance: the masculinised Edward is a figure of homoerotic desire, the feminised but heterosexual Alfred a figure of gender inversion.

Oppositional male doubles and Classical ideals

The prologue and opening chapters of *Hard Cash* subtly introduce the sensation genre's trope of the double by contrasting Edward and Alfred as the two main candidates for the novel's hero. Their doubling operates on a more purely thematic level than in many other sensation novels, which often deploy doubles to unsettle the fixities of character, as shown in the preceding chapter's discussions of Lady Audley and Lady Isabel Vane. Reade's novel does not go quite so far as to destabilise the discrete identities of its characters, for Edward and Alfred double one another not by exchanging identities, but through their complementary personalities.[71] Edward exhibits physical prowess without academic aptitude: "He could walk up to a five-barred gate and clear it, alighting on the other side like a fallen feather; could row all day, and then dance all night; could fling a cricket ball a hundred and six yards," but "could not learn his lessons, to save his life" (2; Prologue). Alfred, however, as "Doge of a studious clique," is "a reading man who boated and cricketed, to avoid the

[71] The plot of Collins's *Armadale* conversely hinges on the interchangeability of its two complementary male doubles, as this chapter will later explore.

fatigue of lounging; not a boatman or cricketer who strayed into Aristotle in the intervals of Perspiration" (6; Prologue). When news of Edward's failure to pass his first-year examinations breaks out during his triumphant performance in the Henley Regatta, Alfred offers to study with him: "We will pull together, and read together into the bargain" (26; ch. 2). Edward's sharp-minded sister Julia, of whom the narrator remarks that "her very body thought" (3; Prologue), is an ideal partner for the young scholar Alfred, and the doubling mechanism of the plot soon pairs them romantically just as it pairs Edward with Alfred's sister Jane.

But despite their differences in intellect, Reade establishes Alfred as Edward's double by also stressing their commonalities alongside their distinctions from the moment Alfred first appears in the narrative:

> [Edward] was now as much talked of in the university as any man of his college, except one. Singularly enough that one was his townsman; but no friend of his; he was much Edward's senior in standing, though not in age; and this is a barrier the junior must not step over—without direct encouragement—at Oxford. (6; Prologue).

The doubling of Edward and Alfred thus plays with notions of sameness and difference, evoking the potential ambiguity that thematically undergirds the mistaken and substituted identities typical in other narratives of sensation. When the two become brothers-in-law at the end of the novel, they are at last doubled interchangeably, for "no stranger could tell by Mrs. Dodd's manner whether Edward or Alfred was her own son" (607; ch. 54). In the early chapters, however, Alfred's seniority over Edward reinforces the contrast between them.

Reade develops this contrast by measuring the two characters against Classical tropes that represent masculine physical ideals. Reade elaborates his analogy of Oxford as the modern Athens by appraising the aesthetic qualities of Edward's face and form with respect to ancient models:

> his countenance comely and manly, but no more; too square for Apollo; but sufficed for John Bull. His figure it was that charmed the curious observer of male beauty. He was five feet ten; had square shoulders, a deep chest, masculine flank, small foot, high instep. To crown all this, a head, overflowed by ripples of dark brown hair, sat with heroic grace upon his solid white throat, like some glossy falcon new lighted on a Parian column. (2; Prologue)

While Edward's physique approaches the heroism of Greek sculpture, his face falls short of the Apollonian ideal to exhibit instead the English qualities personified in the popular archetype of "John Bull." In height, moreover, he is outranked by Alfred, to whom Edward "look[s] up from a distance" (6; Prologue). At one point, the narrator describes Alfred "in an attitude as large and inspired as the boldest gesture antiquity has committed to marble—he had even the advantage in stature over most of the sculptured forms of Greece" (23; ch. 1). Alfred's imposing stature literally exceeds the ancient model, as if to emphasise that his oppositional relationship to Edward does not derive from any comparative physical shortcomings, even if Edward's body receives the most effusive visual descriptions.

The Classical allusions demonstrate how Reade's sensation novel helped to promulgate cultural ideas that would resurface in sexological writings and other texts. Reade's endorsement of Classical ideals is consistent with the emerging neo-Hellenism of Victorian homophile culture, exemplified in later non-fictional texts like Symonds's *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1873) and "A Problem in Greek Ethics" (written in 1873, privately printed in 1883, and published posthumously

in 1897), and Walter Pater's *Greek Studies* (1895). Both Symonds and Pater studied at Oxford (Symonds holding a fellowship at Magdalen College like Reade), where they were each the subject of scandals involving their love of men.[72] Their writings attest to how profoundly the eroticised Classical male athlete preoccupied Victorian men of letters. Symonds, in his essay on "The Genius of Greek Art" in *Studies of the Greek Poets*, uses the image of a young Greek wrestler as a simile for Classical art and its lasting appeal: "Like a young man newly come from the wrestling-ground, anointed, chapleted, and very calm, the Genius of the Greeks appears before us" (*Studies* 399). Richard Dellamora cites this passage as evidence for why Symonds, like Pater, was "suspect [at Oxford] on grounds of [. . .] an excessive interest in male beauty" (*Masculine Desire* 161). Equally telling is Symonds's ekphrasis on a marble copy of Lysippus's Apoxyomenos sculpture: "The athlete, tall and stately, tired with running, lifts one arm, and with his stringil scrapes away the oil with which he has anointed it" (407).

Symonds directly addresses his interest in Classical homoeroticism in "A Problem in Greek Ethics," observing the "philosophic idealisation of boy-love among the Athenians" (287), and postulating that Greek paederastia "was encouraged by gymnastics":

> Youths and boys engaged together in athletic exercises, training their bodies to the highest point of physical attainment, growing critical about the points and proportions of the human form, lived of necessity in an atmosphere of mutual attention. Young men could not be insensible to the grace of boys in whom the bloom of beauty was unfolding. Boys could not fail to admire the strength and goodliness of men displayed in the comeliness of perfected development. (285)

[72] Dellamora chronicles Pater and Symonds's experiences in "'The New Chivalry' and Oxford Politics,' in *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (147-66).

Hard Cash pre-dates Symonds's essay by a decade, but it is in the context of Symonds's writings that Reade's adulatory descriptions of Edward's physical appearance and ability should be read in order to appreciate their significance in shaping Victorian perceptions of same-sex relations. If Reade's Oxford is the "modern Athens," then Symonds's appraisal of its ancient predecessor provides key historical support for a homoerotic interpretation of the male bonding in *Hard Cash*. At the very least, Reade's close attention to the athletic male body warrants serious consideration in light of the homophile culture that would peak during the fin-de-siècle.

Reade's authorial intentions, however, are irrelevant to his text's contribution to the cultural dialogue about non-normative sexuality in the period. To be sure, Reade is not nearly as overt as Symonds regarding the eroticism of sport. But whether or not Reade intended to eroticise Edward's athleticism, his novel depicts a culture of male camaraderie that impinges on Classical strains of homoeroticism no less potent for being inadvertent, and no less legible to later Victorians such as Symonds, Pater, Wilde, and Carpenter. Moreover, James Eli Adams attributes the origins of late nineteenth-century homophile fascination with athletic bodies to a progressive aestheticisation of masculinity that he detects in earlier Victorian writings throughout the 1860s and '70s (152-53)—precisely the decades when sensation fiction rose to popularity in England and sexology was developing in German medical discourse. As Adams recounts, "the late-Victorian 'counter-discourse' of male desire" emerged in part from "'manly' praise of the male body as an object of aesthetic delight," which culminated in "rhapsodies of Victorian athleticism" (153). Reade's novel fits squarely in this nascent tradition.

The early chapters of *Hard Cash* accordingly display Edward's athletic body as a spectacle for "the curious observer of male beauty" (5; Prologue), to whom Reade tellingly assigns no gender. The omission allows for homoerotically desirous viewers of Edward's beauty, a queer potentiality

available to male readers of Reade's novel and plausible within the text itself, as Edward performs his athletic masculinity for the gaze of his male peers and ascends the sporting ranks in the homosocial space of the Oxford campus. Reade exposes the privilege that Edward accrues through visual appreciation by his fellow men, as shown when the rowing crew scrutinises his body:

> Then Edward was solemnly weighed in his jersey and flannel trousers, and [. . .] elected to the vacant oar by acclamation. He was a picture in a boat; and, "Oh!!! well pulled, six!!" was a hearty ejaculation constantly hurled at him from the bank by many men of other colleges, and even by the more genial among the cads, as the Exeter glided at ease down the river, or shot up it in a race. (6; Prologue)

Absent from the description are any specifics about the actual activity of rowing, as if Edward earns his male peers' approval by dint of his impressive appearance as much as—or more than—his performance.

Reade's emphasis on the spectacle of the athlete's body becomes all the more evident when we compare the scene to a similar moment in Hughes's *Tom Brown at Oxford* (1861), in which the coxswain of the St. Ambrose boat-club assesses the eponymous hero's potential:

> Tom, and the three or four other freshmen present, were duly presented to Miller as they came in, who looked them over as the colonel of a crack regiment might look over horses at Horncastle-fair, with a single eye to their bone and muscle, and how much work might be got out of them. (53; pt. 1, ch. 4)

Hughes, focusing on the functionality of the prospective rowers' bodies, shares none of Reade's fascination with the aesthetics of the athletic physique. In contrast to Hughes's treatment of his protagonist in this scene, Edward's athleticism is the source of increasingly intense visual gratification in the episode of the Henley Regatta.

Reade's detailed account of the boat races aestheticises Edward's physical beauty to an almost erotic extent as the narrator dwells lovingly on his strong physique: "his jersey revealed not only the working power of his arms, as sunburnt below the elbow as a gipsy's, and as corded above as a blacksmith's, but also the play of the great muscles across his broad and deeply indented chest" (11; ch. 1). Again, the emphasis falls less on the athletic activity than on the athlete's visible presence through the adulatory exhibition of his well-defined musculature. The comparisons to a "gipsy" and a "blacksmith" displace Edward from his normative context of white, middle-class, "John Bull" Englishness, evoking the Victorian racialisation of working-class bodies that McClintock associates with fetishistic images of female labourers in *Imperial Leather* (75-131). The subjection of Edward's body to racial tropes usually applied to working women of the period evinces the feminising potential of Reade's narrative viewpoint, even as the narrative voice blazons Edward's manhood in every striation of his torso. The hyper-masculinisation of Edward's body, in other words, queers him. Furthermore, the class connotations of Reade's similes recall the historical eroticisation of working-class male bodies,[73] which Ellis would document thoroughly in *Sexual Inversion*.

Ellis's case studies of same-sex attraction reflect a common trend toward idealising physical prowess over intellect, often cutting across the class divide. Case I expresses his attraction to men "of about the same age, but of different social class, and somewhat a contrast [. . .] both physically and mentally" (129). Case III desires "a healthy, well-developed, athletic or out-of-door working type, intelligent and sympathetic, but not specially intellectual" (130). Similarly, Case VI's "ideal of love is a powerful, strongly built man, of my own age or rather younger—preferably of the working class. Though having solid sense, he need not be specially intellectual" (132-33). Thus, even if no

[73] Sexual desire for lower-class men would also cause public scandal in Oscar Wilde's trial later in the century, as evidenced in Edward Carson's testimony about Wilde consorting with "young men who were not his co-equals in station" (Holland 251). Carpenter, in *The Intermediate Sex,* likewise remarks on "how often Uranians of good position and breeding are drawn to rougher types, as of manual workers" (107).

homoerotic impetus drives Reade's aestheticisation of the athletic male in *Hard Cash*, his narrative gaze and Classical aesthetics appeal to a distinct sensibility that Ellis, writing three decades later, would theorise as characteristic of sexual inversion.

Yet Reade focalises the spectacle of athletic male bodies at the regatta through the admiring gazes of Edward's mother and sister—a narrative choice that disrupts the homosociality of the earlier scenes at Oxford without overriding their homoeroticism. The two women attend the event with a "mild dignified indifference," but the races quickly become for them "an appendage to Loving" (11; ch. 1) at the first glimpse of their beloved son and brother, the sight of whom prompts Julia to rhapsodise about "how beautiful and strong he is!" (12; ch. 1). Whether or not Reade's text goes so far as to insinuate any incestuous desire for Edward on Julia's part—which would reinforce Edward's doubling with Alfred—her expression of delight in her brother's beauty nonetheless provides a point of pleasurable identification for female readers, which Reade further gratifies with subsequent details of the rowers and their "supple bodies swelling, the muscles writhing beneath their jerseys, and the sinews starting on each bare brown arm" (13; ch. 1). But these images potentially appeal to male readers as well, for Reade earlier depicts rituals of homosocial admiration in the "hearty ejaculation[s]" of approval that other men lavish on Edward's performance during rowing practice (6; Prologue). Julia exclaims a more direct response to the aesthetic display of manly beauty than these male spectators do, but in effect she enables Reade to ventriloquise an appreciation for the male body—already unmistakable in his narrative commentary—through a suitably female speaker.[74] Julia, in other words, allows the narrative to give unrestrained voice to pleasures that men in the novel have already been shown to share. Indeed, Edward's relationships

[74] My reasoning bears a debt to Sedgwick's *Between Men* and its theory of male homosocial desire triangulated through a female interlocutor (21-27). Whereas Sedgwick posits that two men's rivalry over a woman channels their desire for each other, I suggest a different configuration of the triangle: that Reade uses a female character's gaze and voice to ventriloquise male appreciation for masculine beauty.

with men have a dynamic vigour lacking in his love for Jane Hardie, which is at best a perfunctory melodramatic subplot, grossly underdeveloped in comparison to Alfred and Julia's courtship, and abruptly extinguished when Jane is suddenly murdered at the hands of a madman.

Reade's construction of the male athlete as an ambiguous object for male and female desire alike suggests links to the reception of sensation fiction, and the project of sexology. First, by articulating female pleasure in the male body, Reade employs a device that the periodical press negatively associated with sensation fiction: the incitement of women's desires for "flesh and muscles," which Oliphant protests in the second of her famous diatribes against sensation fiction for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (175). Secondly, these psychosomatic stimulations, which reviewers popularly attributed to sensation fiction, impinge on the interests of sexology, as Bauer contends that the homophile movements in Victorian aestheticism and English sexology, which both renewed an interest in Hellenism (7), also engaged in "aesthetic explorations around sensation, ethics and the emotions" (53). Krafft-Ebing had earlier evaluated these phenomena less favourably than would his English counterparts by interpreting the sodomitic rites of ancient Greece as a sign of degeneration (3-4), traceable to the sensations induced in the bodies of Greek citizens:

> The episodes of moral decay always coincide with the progression of effeminacy, lewdness and luxuriance of the nations. These phenomena can only be ascribed to the higher and more stringent demands which circumstances make upon the nervous system. Exaggerated tension of the nervous system stimulates sensuality, leads the individual as well as the masses to excess, and undermines the very foundations of society, and the morality and purity of family life. [. . .] Greece, the Roman Empire, and France under Louis XIV., and XV., are striking examples of this assertion. (3-4)[75]

[75] I use Klaf's 1965 translation rather than Chaddock's famous translation of 1892—which is often credited with introducing the word "homosexual" into the English language—because it includes the entire unexpurgated text.

In this passage from *Psychopathia Sexualis*, Krafft-Ebing's disparagement of sensory over-stimulation reads much like the alarmist allegations of Victorian literary reviewers against the sensation novel decades earlier, most significantly Mansel's famous critique of the genre for "preaching to the nerves instead of the judgment" (32). Given the close ties between English sexology and literature, it follows that Ellis and Carpenter would espouse similar values as Reade and other Victorian writers in turning to ancient Greece as a paradigm of health and progress rather than regressive depravity. Reade's depiction of Alfred's mental state, however, is compatible with Krafft-Ebing's theories about the feminising potential of an over-stimulated nervous system, but Reade vindicates Alfred as the victim of a misdiagnosis. Moreover, Reade's endorsement of Greek culture could not be clearer, and nowhere in his depiction of Greek-influenced male athleticism and homosocial bonding is there any suggestion of debauchery.

Resolving Dualities: Third Sex Theories and the Cartesian Divide

But the most compelling links between Reade's sensation novel, its trope of the double, the Victorian trends of neo-Hellenism, and the tenets of sexology, occur in the Cartesian divide that Alfred transcends by fusing intellect with athleticism, and in the tertiary position he occupies between the two poles. English sexologists and their Continental predecessors dealt directly with the Cartesian duality of mind and body in their theories of an intermediate sex. Symonds cites the Austrian sexologist Karl Ulrichs's notion of the Urning as a natural variation in the relationship of mind to body. At one point, Symonds imagines a hypothetical opponent who refutes Ulrichs's claims on the grounds that "Body and soul constitute one inseparable entity":

> So they do, replies Ulrichs; but the way in which these factors of the person are combined in human beings differs extensively, as I can prove by indisputable facts.

Furthermore, Bauer points out that neither Ellis nor Symonds read Chaddock's version, as it was more readily available in America than in Britain (37).

> The body of a male is visible to the eyes, is measurable and ponderable, is clearly marked in its specific organs. But what we call his soul—his passions, inclinations, sensibilities, emotional characteristics, sexual desires—elude the observation of the senses. [. . .] And when I find that the soul, this element of instinct and emotion and desire, existing in a male, has been directed in its sexual appetite from earliest boyhood toward persons of the male sex, I have the right to qualify it with the attribute of femininity. You assume that soul-sex is indissolubly connected and inevitably derived from body-sex. The facts contradict you, as I can prove by referring to the veracious autobiographies of Urnings, and to known phenomena regarding them. (306)

As recounted by Symonds, Ulrichs's emphasis on the visible male body as a comprehensible and quantifiable entity is comparable with Reade's narrative fixation on the athletic form, as seen in his detailed observations of Edward's height and build. The appeal to truthful representations of life, meanwhile, resonates with the literary debates over the merits of sensation fiction vis-à-vis realism—and the efforts of sensationalists to defend the verisimilitude of their works via their inspiration by current news events or their consistency with scientific fact. We see further examples of the latter in Braddon and Wood's respective uses of medical diagnosis as a way of determining the origins of women's behaviour in *Lady Audley's Secret* and *East Lynne*.

As a "reading man who boated and cricketed" (6; Prologue), Alfred defies the simple opposition of mind and body that might otherwise correspond with his relationship to Edward. *Hard Cash* thus complicates its doubles by suggesting a "third type" that combines the two halves of a seeming dichotomy. Reade's idealisation of this third type coheres with the Classical practices of

self-cultivation that Foucault documents in the third volume of *The History of Sexuality*.[76] Foucault elaborates specifically on the porous relationship between body and mind—or "soul," in Robert Hurley's translation—which necessitates cultivation of the two equally:

> bad habits of the soul can entail physical miseries, while the excesses of the body manifest and maintain the failings of the soul. The apprehension is concentrated above all on the crossover point of the agitations and troubles, taking account of the fact that one had best correct the soul if one does not want the body to get the better of it, and rectify the body if one wants it to remain completely in control of itself. (3: 56)

Pater articulates a comparable understanding of Classical ideals in his 1895 essay "The Age of Athletic Prizemen," albeit with a difference in emphasis. In Readean style, Pater likens the Victorian cricketer[77] to the ancient Greek athlete:

> It is of the essence of the athletic prizeman, involved in the very ideal of the quoit-player, the cricketer, not to give expression to mind, in any antagonism to, or invasion of, the body; to mind as anything more than a function of the body, whose healthful balance of functions it may so easily perturb;—to disavow that insidious enemy of the fairness of the bodily soul as such. (*Greek Studies* 302)

Pater breaks with Cartesian dualism to stress the mind as "a function of the body," while simultaneously acknowledging its potential threat to the body's workings.[78] From this caveat about the dangers of the mind, Adams infers a "pronounced anti-intellectualism" (178-79) on Pater's part.

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[76] Richard Fantina's *Victorian Sensational Fiction: The Daring Work of Charles Reade* (2010) also examines *Hard Cash* through a Foucauldian lens, but focuses on power relations and the disciplinary function of the asylum (63-75).

[77] Underlying the references to cricket is the iconicity of the sport as an English institution for acculturating proper masculine subjects in accordance with Classical principles. J.A. Mangan describes the Victorian regard for cricket as "the pre-eminent instrument of moral training," which Englishmen took with them as far abroad as colonial India (134-35). The cricket field is a social meeting ground in Reade's modern Athens, to which the narrator attests by observing "a tie between cricketers far too strong for social distinctions to divide" (65).

[78] Contrast Pater's concept of body-mind balance with Carpenter's idea that earthly, emotional love should not predominate over spiritual love, which I cite in the introduction (32).

Yet Pater states only that the mind *exceeding* its role as a function of the body endangers the subject's physical balance. Foucault's account is more nuanced, however: whereas Pater emphasises the mind alone as potentially endangering bodily balance, Foucault interprets the Greeks as believing that both body and soul could disrupt one another.

Reade's representation of Alfred is closer to Pater's account than Foucault's in demonstrating the need for the mind not to exceed its function. Alfred suffers persistent headaches that compromise his athletic performance and necessitate his removal from the Exeter crew during the regatta. Badham, an ambassador from the Wadham boat club, justifies his decision to withdraw Alfred from the race in a wry speech that appropriately parodies Classical logic to outline the consequences of Alfred's condition:

> "Hardie of Exeter is a good man in a boat when he has not got a headache.
>
> "When he has got a headache, Hardie of Exeter is not worth a straw in a boat.
>
> "Hardie of Exeter has a headache now.
>
> "Ergo, the university would put the said Hardie into a race, headache and all, and reduce defeat to a certainty.
>
> "And, ergo, on the same premises, I, not being an egotist, nor an ass, have taken Hardie of Exeter and his headache out of the boat, as I should have done any other cripple. (19; ch. 1)

Badham replaces Alfred with Edward, who now finds himself promoted from number six to the leading "Stroke" position. While Edward's elevation to Alfred's former place further develops the doubling of the two characters, Alfred's demotion illustrates the precarious balance of physical and mental health that is thematically implicated in their doubling. Badham significantly concludes his syllogism by likening the headache to a condition afflicting the whole body. As a physical ailment

linked to mental and emotional distress, Alfred's headaches function as a synecdoche for the effect of his mental exertions on his body, foreshadowing his later wrongful confinement in a succession of three private insane asylums on a dubious diagnosis of "Erotic monomania" (286; ch. 26).[79]

In Reade's narrative, these asylums, like the homosocial space of the Oxford campus, become another, albeit more severe iteration of the "modern Athens," where Alfred distinguishes himself as the novel's primary hero for his equal command of body and mind. When first detained at Silverton Grove House, Alfred uses his skills as a "practised gymnast" and trades blows like a pugilist with the attendants while desperately attempting to escape (343; ch. 31). Next, in Dr. Wycherley's asylum, Alfred makes the best of his time by reading Aristotle, Plato, Demosthenes, and others, which the doctor offers to review with him for an hour every day, taking pride in the opportunity "to turn out an Oxford first classman from his asylum" (428-29; ch. 40). Finally, when Alfred is transferred to Drayton House, his immediate sense of antagonism with the proprietor Dr. Wolf stirs his pugilistic instincts as the two men size each other up "like two prize-fighters" (442; ch. 40). But Alfred eschews physical action, instead resorting to his wits by conveying secret messages to the Lunacy Commissioners and the Dodd family.

The clearest testament to Alfred's physical and mental fortitude comes appropriately from his double Edward, whose own athletic prowess helps him to save the day when a fire breaks out at Drayton House, allowing Alfred to escape. When Edward learns that Alfred was an inmate in the

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[79] At the fin-de-siècle, Nordau would reject this particular mania along with Magnan's other specific classes of degeneration, on the grounds that the primary condition of "morbid cerebral activity" is "the great emotionalism of the degenerate," as characterised by "an excessive excitability" and "cerebral debility, which implies feebleness of perception, will, memory, judgment, as well as inattention and instability" (242-43). Nordau continues:

> Kowalski approached much nearer the truth in his well-known treatise, where he has represented all the mental disorders of the degenerate as one single malady, which merely presents different degrees of intensity, and which induces in its mildest form neurasthenia ; under a graver aspect impulsions and groundless anxieties ; and, in its most serious form, the madness of brooding thought or doubt. (243)

Compare these symptoms to the mental states that reviewers accused sensation fiction of inducing in readers.

asylum alongside Captain Dodd, Edward admiringly recalls his fellow collegiate rower's Oxford-honed skills:

> He was a beautiful oar, and handled his mawleys uncommon; he sparred with all the prizefighters that came to Oxford, and took punishment better than you would think; and a wonderful quick hitter; [. . .] And when I think that God has overthrown his powerful mind, and left me mine, such as it is! (511; ch. 44)

Edward's lament echoes a somewhat heavy-handed sentiment underlying the novel's action-packed asylum scenes: that the competitive spirit and manly camaraderie intrinsic to Reade's representation of Oxford culture equipped Alfred, mind and body, to navigate a world of increasingly harsh challenges. This message has symbolic implications for Reade's deployment of the sensational motif of doubles and its parallels with sexology. By fusing the initially opposed attributes of athleticism and intellect, Alfred occupies a tertiary position that bridges the Cartesian divide, inviting an analogy with third-sex theories that illuminates his simultaneous feminisation throughout the text.

The feminised hero

When we consider Alfred's feminisation in light of the preoccupation with dualities shared by sensation fiction and sexology, we see how his gender variance differs from that of the sexual inversion model. As discussed, English sexologists like Ellis and Carpenter follow their Continental forebears such as Ulrichs in defining the invert, Urning, or Uranian as an intermediate sex whose interior gendered subjectivity belies an oppositely sexed body.[80] Yvonne Ivory accordingly stresses "the invert's inconsistency—that characteristic that sets him apart and defines him as one whose inner self (feelings, drives, desires) is not in harmony with his outer self (his biological sex)" (334). Alfred embodies a similar schism, albeit without the connotations of same-sex attraction that

[80] The sexological assumption of a gendered interiority is thus at odds with Butler's theory of performative gender.

characterise the invert. In Reade's narrative, Alfred's combination of a masculine exterior with an interior feminine sensitivity appeals specifically to women's romantic sensibilities:

> The ladies saw, and their gentle bosoms were touched: they had heard of him as a victorious young Apollo trampling on all difficulties of mind and body; and they saw him wan, and worn, with feminine suffering: the contrast made him doubly interesting. (21; ch. 1)

Alfred's inner femininity makes him heterosexually desirable in contrast to the athletic masculinity that eroticises Edward for both male and female gazes. In this way, Reade's portrayal of Alfred implies a pre-sexological understanding of gender-inverted traits as consistent with heterosexual desire rather than a sign of queerness. But while Alfred's gender variance does not disqualify his heterosexual viability, the text suggests that he has an abnormal condition as signalled by his debilitating headaches. And although Alfred is falsely diagnosed, Reade nonetheless depicts him as needing medical diagnosis. Alfred's characterisation thus approaches the sexological model by associating gender inversion with the discourse of pathology.

Other writings by Reade prefigure sexology's unequal treatment of gender. Reade's notebooks evince a kind of sexological interest in essentialising women as *"fœmina vera"*—a species, or, as Emerson Grant Sutcliffe tellingly reads the term, a "race" (1263).[81] The pseudo-scientific diction bespeaks Reade's methodologies, as his notebooks compile newspaper clippings describing various types of women, much like the case studies of Krafft-Ebing and Ellis. Yet if Reade essentialises feminine behaviour in his notes, he nonetheless allows for variations by depicting examples of female masculinity in *Hard Cash*. Sutcliffe views Reade's androgynous, muscular female characters in the novel as Amazonian (Sutcliffe 1275), using an archetype of androgynous womanhood that derives from Classical antiquity just as Reade's models of male athleticism do.

[81] Similarly, Havelock Ellis regards Thomas Hardy as a literary psychologist of women, as I will discuss in Chapter 3.

These figures include Edith Archbold, the imposingly mannish asylum matron whom Reade labels a "female rake" (610; ch. 54), and Nurse Hannah, whom he describes as "purer and more womanly" than Edith, yet simultaneously masculinises through the muscular physique that earns her the moniker of "Baby-face biceps" (371; ch. 33). According to Sutcliffe,

> Reade's interest in androgynism and feminine savagery is akin to his interest in feminine athleticism, the most attractive quality on the sexual border-line. Though the superbly statuesque type of feminine beauty particularly pleased him, he apparently recognized that his age would not allow a novelist to describe a refined Victorian lady as muscularly energetic, at least on her native heath. But when conditions were favorable, he from the beginning of his career gave his women a chance to be as sinewy as his men [. . .] when his heroine or other important woman character was of low estate, and particularly when she was a rustic [. . . .] (1273)

Dynamics of class and race thus inflect the androgynous characterisation of the athletic woman as they do the eroticisation of the athletic male, as shown in Reade's earlier comparison of the strapping Edward to a gypsy. But in this case, lower social status is actually necessary to allow leeway for women's gender variance, whereas Edward's physicality merely likens him to marginalised classes. This disparity recalls the sexist double-standards suggested by feminist critiques of sexology.

Accordingly, Reade is quicker to imply pathological motives for the dynamic Amazonian female than for the Classically beautiful male athlete.[82] He portrays the gender-transgressive Edith as a sexual predator who makes unwanted advances toward Alfred and forcibly kisses him while he sleeps in his cell. In another sequence, Alfred encounters a female "erotic maniac" whom the nurses

[82] Collins's representations of female masculinity, in contrast, are not consistently pathologised. While he depicts the mannish Ariel in *The Law and the Lady* as mentally challenged according to archaic and ableist notions of idiocy, he characterises the mustachioed Marian Halcombe in *The Woman in White* with gracefulness and a keen intellect.

have apprehended for sneaking onto the men's side of the asylum (371; ch. 33). Reade populates the asylum scenes in *Hard Cash* with figures that illustrate his fascination with sexual idiosyncrasies.

Yet the representation of Edith differs strikingly from the female sexual invert in one important respect: whereas sexologists conceived of inversion to account for same-sex desire, Reade's characterisation of a masculine woman in *Hard Cash* is emphatically heterosexual. The masculinised Edith's desire for the feminised Alfred thus constitutes a kind of queer heterosexuality. Ultimately, Reade normalises Edith by having her happily marry a man; of their union, the narrator observes: "So you see a female rake can be ameliorated by a loving husband, as well as a male rake by a loving wife" (610; ch. 54). In a way that nineteenth-century sexology did not comprehend, Reade allows that sexual desire for a man is not necessarily a feminine trait—that it can occur in a "mannish" woman as easily as a feminine one.

Reade's posthumously published "Androgynism" (1911) conversely depicts a masculinised woman who experiences lesbian desire. Researched between 1858 and 1862, prior to the publication of *Hard Cash*,[83] "Androgynism" purports to derive wholly from fact, yet it features two genre-defining sensation tropes: a disguised identity and the threat of bigamy, the latter of which *Hard Cash* lacks. The novel features a fleeting gender masquerade when Alfred eludes Dr. Wolf's men while dressed in Julia's bonnet and cloak as a "handsome brazen-looking trollop six feet high" (529; ch. 46), underlining Alfred's gender-ambiguous potential primarily for comic effect. A more prolonged and consequential cross-gender disguise is central to "Androgynism," which recounts the case of Kate Coombe, an unhappily married woman forced by financial hardship to find work by adopting the guise of a man. Kate subsequently falls in love and elopes with the young, unwitting Nelly Smith, only to be exposed before their bigamous same-sex marriage can take place.

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[83] Dickens's periodical *All the Year Round* first serialised Reade's novel from March to December of 1863 as *Very Hard Cash*. A revised two-volume book publication—with shortened title—followed.

The piece makes the strongest case for Reade as a literary proto-sexologist, even if it confines his frankest treatment of same-sex desire—which might have given his novels their most sensational subject matter—to an unpublished manuscript, and not one of his "Matter-of-Fact Romances."[84] Reade explains Kate's attraction to women in terms of predisposition:

> Overpowering instincts, as I have hinted, repelled her from the male sex [. . . .] Such a being—in whom it is not easy to recognise either womanhood or manhood—occupied a quasi-neutral position ; nevertheless, experience goes to demonstrate the absolute impossibility of the heart, even in the case of the congenitally epicene, being utterly impervious. Given a subject having affinity with its erratic pulsation, it will show itself as capable of deep sentiment as the rest of us. A passion wholly spiritual may be derided as unreal, and inconsistent with what philosophy terms our environment. It is, in truth, hybrid ; perhaps morbid ; perhaps insane ; yet not outside the region of recorded fact. That it must yield nothing more satisfying than Dead Sea fruit does not militate against its existence. (21)

Reade's analysis of Kate's sexuality addresses some of the sexological concerns to which I have been tracing parallels in *Hard Cash*: the intermediate subject position between male and female, the essentialist theory of congenital erotic desire, and the morbid pathologisation of which feminist critics have accused sexology. Reade meanwhile describes Nelly's love for "Fred"—Kate's adopted masculine identity—as "a phase of human emotion baffling analysis, and wholly escaping definition," which, "[m]inus the element of falsity [...] might have been as poetic, as exalted, as

[84] Fantina points out the intimations of lesbianism in Reade's *A Woman-Hater* (1877), but he qualifies that the theme "is clear to modern readers" in a way that it would not have been to readers in 1877, because the "term [lesbian] had not entered common usage nor had the practice been pathologized" (114).

blameless as the love of David and Jonathan" (20).[85] Where a scientific account fails, Reade turns to a literary model from scripture.

Similarly, Reade's rawest representations of gendered and sexual subjectivity in *Hard Cash* ultimately belie and even undermine his gestures toward scientific veracity. Like other sensation writers responding to attacks on their artistic legitimacy,[86] Reade self-reflexively concedes the epistemological limits of his narrative, as seen when the narrator declines to describe Alfred's mental state in the asylum: the "hours of mortal anguish that no tongue of man can utter, nor pen can shadow. [. . .] We can paint the body writhing vainly against its unjust bonds; but who can paint the loathing, agonized soul in a mental situation so ghastly?" (346; ch. 31). In *The Maniac in the Cellar*, Hughes rightly discerns in Reade's authorial intrusion "a suggestion of the failure of his artistic form, of the inadequacy he senses in his own rant and rhetoric" (91). Thus, while Reade's writings may at times resemble a sexological case study, his tone eschews scientific positivism by disavowing the fitness of his literary medium to resolve the mysteries of the psyche. As this contrast with sexology reaffirms, the best practitioners of the genre were not guilty of superficial characterisations as Victorian critics alleged. Rather, they contributed to "a new understanding of human character" that Hughes interprets "as less monolithic and more subconsciously motivated" than previously depicted in literature (101), and which I would further describe as indeterminate or unstable in a manner that resonates with queer deconstructions of identity. This innovation profoundly affected the genre's representations of gender and sexuality, as shown by the volume of queer literary criticism about

[85] Reade draws on two Old Testament figures who would also signify same-sex love for later writers. Wilde would famously cite their example at his trial (Harding 346-7), and Forster would subsequently allude to them in *Maurice* (62; pt. 2, ch. 12). As Sally Cline points out, the Biblical couple even held meaning for early twentieth-century lesbians like Radclyffe Hall, whose lover Mabel Veronica Batten addressed her by the pet name of "John" while using the name of Jonathan for herself (Cline 66; qtd. in Dellamora, *Friendship* n. pag.).

[86] See the discussion of Braddon in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, and the discussion of Collins in the second half of the present chapter.

sensation fiction in the past two decades.[87] In another contrast with sexology, Reade, as shown, does not link either Alfred or Edith's gender ambiguity to same-sex desire.

However, if Alfred is not homoeroticised, Reade connects him to ancient Greek homoerotic traditions by way of his Classical education, which continues outside of Oxford when Alfred reads Greek philosophy in Dr. Wycherly's asylum. Wycherly's tutelage of Alfred aligns the doctor-patient bond with that of mentor and pupil, recapitulating the novel's recurring concerns of body versus mind in terms of ancient Greek pederasty and Platonic love. An anecdote from Carpenter's *The Intermediate Sex* upholds physical affection as commensurate with the Platonic ideal.[88] Carpenter cites an anonymous letter advocating a Platonic model for modern schooling precisely because it would allow affectionate bonds between pupils and teachers:

> Plato fully understood its importance, and aimed at giving what to his countrymen was more or less sensual, a noble and exalted direction. [. . .] As one who has had much to do in instructing boys and starting them in life, I am convinced that the great secret of being a good teacher consists in the possibility of that rapport; not only of a merely intellectual nature, but involving a certain physical element, a personal affection, almost indescribable, that grows up between pupil and teacher, and through which thoughts are shared and an influence created that could exist in no other way. (83)

The obviously controversial aspects of this stance aside, Carpenter's anonymous letter-writer construes Platonic love as inclusive of the physical. If Reade's novel shared this view, Dr. Wycherly's pedagogical, neo-Platonic interest in Alfred would be imbued with homoerotic affection, further

[87] The introduction lists a number of secondary sources that interpret sensation novels through a queer lens (4).
[88] Dellamora contends, however, that the physical act of pederasty was a threat to the virtues of a purely Platonic bond, arguing that in ancient Greece where "mentor-protégé friendships were a source of moral solicitude," anxieties persisted "that the improper exercise of friendship, especially between a citizen and a male on the verge of manhood, had an effeminizing, devirilizing effect that could undermine the very existence of the commonwealth" (*Friendship* 3).

intensifying the dynamics of their bond, given the doctor's medical authority to diagnose Alfred as psychosexually disordered. But Reade stops short of eroticising the mentor-pupil bond, or of making same-sex desire the diagnosis for which Alfred is incarcerated.

Thus, while the context of Classical Platonism opens up homoerotic potentialities, Alfred should not be read as a sexual invert. Nor is it my intention to "diagnose" him as one. In keeping with Reade's critique of the medical treatment of insanity, *Hard Cash* ridicules the very notion of diagnosing a fictional character. In a scholarly exchange with Wycherly, Alfred refutes the doctor's interpretation of Hamlet as a madman, protesting that "[a] man must exist before he can be insane" (439; ch. 40). Reade's narrative implicates Alfred and Wycherly's double-faceted relationship—doctor and patient, mentor and pupil—in the mid-century debates over education and psychosexual health, and in the idealised union of intellect and physicality that I have been arguing is central to the neo-Classical leanings of later Victorian homosexual liberationists. Yet Reade overturns the power dynamics of their relationship: the pupil schools the mentor by rejecting his reading of Shakespeare. Likewise, the doctor's diagnosis of the patient comes into question when Reade undermines Wycherly's medical authority by revealing him to be a monomaniac himself, and thus a potential candidate for his own asylum. The irony is instructive. Wycherly's diagnosis abilities are as fallible as his literary acumen, suggesting both the epistemological uncertainty of the English sexual sciences and their close relationship to literary culture of the period.

Consequently, Reade's condemnation of insane asylums contributes to Alfred's vindication as an exemplary—if delicate—balance between mental and physical capacities. Tellingly, this balance is achieved by the more feminised of the novel's two heroes as opposed to his more purely masculinised double. Whereas the previous chapter shows how Lucy Audley's performance of Victorian femininity paradoxically renders her a gender-ambiguous abomination of womanhood, the

paradox of Alfred's gender ambiguity is that it reinforces his healthy masculinity, even as Reade depicts his feminising potential for mental anguish as one of the threats to his well-being. Moreover, Reade does not associate Alfred's feminisation with same-sex desire, and conversely portrays the gregariously masculine Edward as the novel's most homoerotic figure. Reade likewise masculinises Edith as a sexual aggressor, yet does not associate her gender-ambiguity with lesbianism. In each case, gender variance and sexual desire remain separate. Reade's characters thus differ from the inverts or Urnings theorised by sexologists. Instances of male homoeroticism in *Hard Cash* stem less from the novel's pseudo-scientific interests in transgressive gender than from the homophile strains of Oxford neo-Classicism. These homoerotic undercurrents go largely unremarked in Reade's text yet are unmistakable to modern readers aware of how neo-Hellenic aesthetics would soon be taken up in defence of homosexuality throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century.

The following decades would see Classical and psychological interests gradually converge in the rise of English sexology. Only a few years following *Hard Cash,* Wilkie Collins would similarly explore ideas that resonate with sexology in *Armadale*. In this later sensation novel, as the subsequent section will address, the figure of Ozias Midwinter resembles Alfred Hardie in his excessive emotionalism, yet his characterisation hints perhaps even more emphatically at the potential medicalisation of the feminised male.

II. "A violent fancy: Male Hysteria, Sexual Inversion, and the Sensational Hero in Wilkie Collins's Armadale

> "[T]he defect of the male Uranian, or Urning, is *not* sensuality—but rather *sentimentality*."
> Edward Carpenter, *The Intermediate Sex*

Published three years after *Hard Cash*, Collins's *Armadale* (1866) deploys the complementary doubling of its two central male characters even more blatantly and pervasively than Reade's novel, with the further effect of destabilising their individual identities. The narrative mirrors their doubling across two generations, as conflicts of love and inheritance entangle a total of four men—two

fathers and two sons—who share a single name. In a further twist of identity, the fate of the second generation entwines with the machinations of two seemingly different women who turn out to be one. The younger generation of doubles bears obvious parallels to the two heroes of Reade's text: Collins's gregarious Allan Armadale recalls Reade's Edward Dodd, while Allan's friend and double, the brooding and sensitive Ozias Midwinter, corresponds to the scholarly Alfred Hardie as another figure who embodies a "third type." Like Alfred, Ozias is prone to mental anxieties and hysterical outbursts that feminise him, threatening his bond with Allan.

As in *Hard Cash* and *Lady Audley's Secret*, themes of madness and its containment loom throughout the text,[89] but *Armadale*, like *East Lynne*, is more overt than these other novels in linking excessive emotion to gender ambiguity. Unlike Alfred's nervous condition in Reade's narrative, Ozias's hysterical tendencies never undergo medical scrutiny but nonetheless have real significance in the plot as an externalisation of his inner struggles: a heightened sensitivity that makes the unstable workings of his psyche—already wracked by the inner burden of secrets—shatter any façade he tries to maintain. Ozias's hysteria thus becomes an apt metonym for sensation fiction as a genre of secrets and melodramatic excesses purported to act on the reader's nerves. As an instance of a supposedly feminine condition in a male character, it further poses a fictional equivalent to the cases of gender transgression that sexologists would categorise as inversion. But as with other close readings in this study, the goal is not to "diagnose" fictional characters as sexual inverts, but rather to show the commonalities and disparities between literary and medico-scientific representations of non-normative gender.

Foremost among the disparities evident from a reading of *Armadale* is that, like *Hard Cash*, the novel depicts male gender ambiguity without affixing it to an essentialist notion of same-sex

[89] Jenny Bourne Taylor compares Dr. Downward's sanatorium in *Armadale* to the asylums in *Hard Cash* "as a melodramatic force of evil, a means of sensational conspiracy and horror" (171).

desire in the pattern of sexology. Collins's treatment of Ozias reveals where his authorial choices coincide with and differ from sexological methods. Yet sexology nevertheless provides a historically situated context within which to assess how Collins's treatment of gender deviance reflects changing cultural attitudes of the period. The concept of sexual inversion resonates with the doubling principle by which Collins characterises Ozias and Allan and opens up homoerotic potentialities between them. The two men are distant cousins who share the titular surname yet differ in appearance and temperament. The fair-haired Allan is extroverted and unguarded, in sharp contrast to the dark, brooding, secretive, and sensitive Ozias. The narrative identifies Allan as physically stronger than Ozias, whose passions threaten to overtake and feminise him, yet the text ultimately upholds Ozias as the better man, partly through his self-sacrificing devotion to Allan, but also—ironically—through the villainous Lydia Gwilt's loving vindication of him over Allan. As will be discussed, the strong bond between the two men hinges ambiguously on their differences from one another (in a clichéd case of opposites attracting) and on a shared sense of their difference from the majority of men.

The distinctions that characterise Ozias and Allan are classed, gendered, and racialised, yet they simultaneously unsettle the very boundaries of class, gender, and race. The feminine, hysterical Ozias is a poor vagrant of mixed racial heritage, and Collins raises the question of whether his psychological traits are linked to his bloodline. Despite his otherness, however, Ozias is ultimately not the threatening outsider that other characters initially perceive him to be and that his father prophesises he will become. Allan, despite being the more normative Englishman, turns out to be ineffectual as a landed gentleman, while the real threat—to the estate and the rightful allotment of the Armadale fortune—is Lydia, a duplicitous and criminal woman.

But if Ozias turns out not to be a criminal menace, his struggle to resist the criminal fate presaged by his father opens up further comparisons to the sexological concept of the invert. Criminality, according to Yvonne Ivory, is among the recurring topics of sexological literature:

> In text after text, the invert's tendency toward criminality is pointed out. The mobility of the invert, both physically (between towns, workplaces, city neighborhoods) and socially (between classes), is noted regularly. Most striking is what we could call the invert's inconsistency—that characteristic that sets him apart and defines him as one whose inner self (feelings, drives, desires) is not in harmony with his outer self (his biological sex). (334)

These themes from sexual inversion discourse coincide precisely with three themes characteristic of the sensation novel: crime, the transgression of social boundaries, and deceptive appearances, all of which abound in *Armadale.* Reflecting the lack of rootedness that Ivory identifies as a trait of the male sexual invert, Natalie B. Cole characterises the men of Collins's novel as "perpetual strangers" who "range through its locations without a true resting point" (111). Ozias is foremost among these wanderers, and his characterisation, as contradistinguished through his relationships with Allan and Lydia, exemplifies how the sensation form generates ambiguous masculinities comparable to sexological case studies. The comparison of the sensation genre to sexology, while indicative of the links between literature and science, is imperfect. Collins's portrait of Ozias undoubtedly invokes a confluence of medico-scientific and cultural discourses available and emerging in the period, especially those pertaining to male effeminacy and hysteria. But while Ozias illustrates the sexological implications of sensation fiction, he is ultimately not a case study, for he defies clinical categorisation in the terms that English sexology would subsequently map.

As a figure of indeterminacies beset by deterministic forces—haunted by the fatalistic spectre of prophecy on one hand and the biomedical spectre of hysteria on the other—Ozias is a fitting hero for a genre of destabilised characters caught in the machinery of over-determined plots. Whereas Alfred in *Hard Cash* is a "third type" in that he transcends two oppositions by combining them, the outsider Ozias surpasses Alfred as a more overtly queer figure. Even though the text cannot avoid hetero-normalising him through his relationship with Lydia (a heterosexual bond forged by their similarities, as opposed to the homosocial bond with Allan forged by their differences), the consequence is that Lydia functions as another double for Ozias, which further bespeaks his femininity and reaffirms his queerness. In Ozias's characterisation, gender variance and intimations of pathology coexist with homosocial and heterosexual desires, suggesting a more fluid configuration of gender and sexuality than that which the sexual inversion model would solidify.

Homosociality, similarity, and difference: the intricate doubles of *Armadale*

First, however, Collins's gloriously convoluted plot demands a summary to elucidate its structural principle of doubling between two generations. In the generation preceding the main action of the novel, a wealthy miser named Allan Armadale cuts his son and heir out of his will on account of the young man's dissolute behaviour, and leaves his fortune to the son of a cousin in Barbados on the condition that this second young man adopt his unusual name. The disinherited Armadale travels to the West Indies under an alias, and gains employment as his successor's clerk before stealing his fiancée Jane Blanchard. The new heir retaliates by murdering his rival. Both men have sons named Allan Armadale, and the murderer leaves a deathbed confession in which he prophetically forbids his son to meet the son of the man he killed, lest the violent legacy perpetuate. He also cautions his son to avoid a treacherous young girl who aided his fatal elopement with the other man's fiancée.

In the second generation, the disgraced son of the killer, now in England, has become a wandering outcast who conceals his sad history under the alias of Ozias Midwinter to avoid the inheritance and thwart the apparent curse. The other Allan Armadale, to whom the family estate devolves, encounters and unwittingly befriends the vagrant, whom he welcomes to share his home. Ozias, a sensitive man of mixed race, is torn between affectionate gratitude and fear that he is predestined to harm his friend and benefactor. Meanwhile, the young girl Lydia Gwilt has grown up to be a scheming femme fatale with designs of her own on the Armadale fortune: first to marry Allan for his money, and then, when that fails, to marry Ozias under his real name, and subsequently murder Allan to claim his widow's inheritance. Throughout these twists of the plot, Collins exploits the double motif by interchanging the men who bear the titular name, and triangulating the doubles via a common female love interest.[90]

As shown by the preceding synopsis, the trope of the double in *Armadale* is a thematic vehicle for the attraction between the two main male characters. The doubling of the two young men derives from a complex interplay of similarity and difference, as Collins explores the love between the characters and the reasons for their mutual attraction. The narrative reveals that Ozias's uniqueness compels Allan to "take such a fancy" to the mysterious stranger:

> Allan had seen in him,—what he didn't see in people in general. All the other fellows were cut out on the same pattern. Every man of them was equally healthy, muscular, loud, hard-hearted, clean-skinned, and rough; every man of them drank the same draughts of beer, smoked the same short pipes all day long, rode the best horse, shot over the best dog, and put the best bottle of wine in England on his table at night;

[90] Both men fall in love with Lydia, which causes a rift between them. The two friends clash when Allan rejects Lydia after the dubiousness of her past is revealed, whereas Ozias comes to her defense. This aspect of the plot lends itself to Sedgwick's theory of triangulated homosocial bonds in *Between Men*. A key chapter in the development of Sedgwick's theory is her reading of Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* (published in 1865, the year before *Armadale*), which situates male homosocial desire in tandem with violent rivalry (Sedgwick 161-79).

> every man of them sponged himself every morning in the same sort of tub of cold water and bragged about it in frosty weather in the same sort of way [. . .] They were, no doubt, excellent fellows in their way; but the worst of them was, they were all exactly alike. It was a perfect godsend to meet with a man like Midwinter—a man who was not cut out on the regular local pattern, and whose way in the world had the one great merit (in those parts) of being a way of his own. (76-77; bk. 1, ch. 1)[91]

Ozias's harsh experiences and secret past, while unknown to Allan, distinguish him indelibly from the ordinary men of Allan's acquaintance. Filling in the negative spaces in the above description, Cole reads Ozias's masculinity as implicitly "unhealthy, soft, dirty, and smooth, qualities that place him in an ambiguous, effeminized category" (115). But the text is equally revealing in what it does not specify about Allan's masculinity or his desires. Allan loves Ozias for differing from other men of his acquaintance, yet the narrator is silent about whether Allan loves Ozias for differing from Allan himself.

To be sure, the overall portrait of Allan in the novel is of a hearty, outgoing young man, in some respects comparable to the kind whose company he disdains, albeit not "hard-hearted." But does Allan view his own qualities in this light, or does he feel as much an outcast from homogenous mankind as he sees Ozias to be? The text leaves the question open. While Allan admires—and desires—Ozias for embodying an alternative masculinity, his sense of his own masculinity remains a tantalising blank. He may also feel different from the crowd, so that, even if the two main male characters are complementary, neither of them embodies a masculinity that is derivative.

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[91] This passage shows how Allan and Ozias's pairing differs from the kind of doubling that Wolcott analyses in *The One vs. the Many* (238-43). Allan is not a minor figure who forces the hero Ozias to confront his own exteriority; rather, Ozias allows the seemingly more superficial Allan to have his own moments of interior self-reflection. Ozias, in turn, is initially shrouded in mystery, but his inner secrets are revealed. Edward and Alfred in *Hard Cash* may be more neatly divided in terms of exteriority (physicality) and interiority (intellect), but even their doubling does not reduce one character to minor status as a mere reflection of the main hero. Collins and Reade complicate their doubles in ways that exemplify how sensation narratives play with identity.

The text also intimates the closeness of their bond. If the quoted passage approximates Allan's own thought processes through free indirect discourse, then it reveals specific commonplaces of Allan's sociable familiarity with other men: the camaraderie of drinking, smoking, riding, and hunting together, extending even to the domestic closeness of a morning bath. The precise implication is that Allan has known other men to brag of withstanding a cold bath on a wintry day, the point being the commonness of male bravado and physical vigour. And yet, while no sexual intimacies are implied, the idiosyncrasy of one quotidian domestic detail among the list of publicly shared activities nonetheless calls attention to Allan's subsequent domestic arrangement with Ozias. Theirs is a rare companionate bond in its privacy, in contrast to the extroversion that Allan finds unappealing in other men.

Allan's own unique qualities likewise motivate Ozias's love for him. As Ozias explains to Mr. Brock, he is drawn by Allan's differences from other men he has known—and moreover to a degree that emboldens him to defy his father's warnings, as well as the social objections to their friendship:

> "I have kept out of Mr. Armadale's way, and I have not even answered his last letter to me. More than that is more than I can do. I don't ask you to consider my own feeling toward the only human creature who has never suspected and never ill-treated me. I can resist my own feeling, but I can't resist the young gentleman himself. There's not another like him in the world. If we are to be parted again, it must be his doing or yours—not mine. The dog's master has whistled," said this strange man, with a momentary outburst of the hidden passion in him, and a sudden springing of angry tears in his wild brown eyes, "and it is hard, sir, to blame the dog when the dog comes." (96-97; bk. 1, ch. 1)

Expressing a sense of attachment that overpowers any attempt at renunciation, Ozias echoes Allan's own esteem for him as a man "not cut out on the regular local pattern" by insisting that there is "not another like him in the world." Gratitude for Allan's kindness and generosity ostensibly suffices to motivate Ozias's devotion, yet the uncontrollable intensity of his feeling is alarming, amplified as it is by the pronounced power dynamics in his self-degrading perception of a dog-and-master relationship with Allan.

The pull of same-sex desire

It would be easy to attribute masochism to Ozias's self-debasement, but my discussion of *Armadale* is less concerned with pathology than with fictional representations of gender and same-sex bonds that anticipate what sexology would formulate as diagnostic criteria. Ellis's sexological case studies again help to illuminate Collins's novel as they elaborate the role of difference in same-sex desire, including power dynamics and social distinctions such as those implicit in Ozias's perception of Allan as his master. Ellis's findings in *Sexual Inversion* attest to

> a tendency for the invert to be attracted to individuals unlike himself, so that in his sexual relationships there is a certain semblance of sexual opposition. [. . .] In at least fifteen—probably many more—of my male cases there is a marked contrast between the subject and the individuals he is attracted to: either he is of somewhat feminine and sensitive nature, and admires more simple and virile natures, or he is fairly vigorous and admires boys, who are often of lower social class. (192)

Ellis reinforces the connection between difference and desire in ways that belie the notion of being attracted to the same. Yet if it is inaccurate to essentialise homosexuality as a love of sameness, it would be equally imprecise to equate Ozias and Allan's relationship with the homosexual bonds that Ellis documents, even as there is no doubt of the strong attraction between the two of them.

Little consensus exists among critics about how to read their passionate mutual regard in light of its homoerotic potentialities. Maria K. Bachman and Don Richard Cox argue strongly for the eroticism of Ozias and Allan's bond by way of the nineteenth-century association between same-sex desire and criminality (328). Carolyn de la Oulton counters that the candour of the pair's mutually avowed attraction "militates against a sexualised interpretation," although the narrative clearly expresses the social disruptiveness of their "romantic friendship" (120). Tabitha Sparks, in *The Doctor in the Victorian Novel*, observes that Ozias's love for Lydia eclipses the early homoerotic implications of his devotion to Armadale, and evinces his progression "away from neurotic femininity and towards a more stable masculinity" (96).

Ozias's eventual marriage to Lydia certainly stabilises his masculinity more than does Allan's love of Neelie Milroy, the latter romance being comparatively unconvincing due to the fickleness of Allan's heterosexual affections. In this respect, Allan once again resembles Edward Dodd from *Hard Cash*, whose homosocial bonds are more consequential than his heterosexual affections. Allan ceases his courtship of Miss Milroy as soon as Lydia enters the picture, only to abandon his new infatuation—which he even hastens to the point of proposing marriage—and resume the previous one as soon as doubts arise about Lydia's character. In contrast, Ozias and Allan's mutual devotion proves strong enough to endure the temporary fissure that Lydia causes. While Lydia is also the one who smoothes over their reconciliation as part of her plot to murder Allan, she acknowledges in her diary how strong the bond is between the two men, and how she even feels jealous of it: "Midwinter finds in Armadale's company," she writes woefully, "a refuge from *me*. He is always in better spirits

when Armadale is here. He forgets me in Armadale almost as completely as he forgets me in his work" (669; bk. 4, ch. 1).[92]

The ardour of their bond frequently manifests in sudden and excessive outbursts of feeling that suggest not inconstancy but intensity. Allan variously feels a "violent" and "perverse fancy" (72; bk. 1, ch. 1) for "his bosom friend" (96; bk. 1, ch. 1), while Ozias expresses his debt to Allan "with a fervor of thankfulness which it was not surprising only, but absolutely painful to witness" (72) and a "savage rapture of gratitude and surprise which burst out of him like a flash of lightning" (75). Although Ozias qualifies it as "a brother's love," it provokes an outpouring of feeling that he is powerless to contain (122; bk. 1, ch. 2). Images of sudden seizure, overflowing, and the rupturing of containment repeatedly characterise homosocial affection in the novel. But in addition to the obvious connotations of passion, the images of emotional excess additionally bear less positive associations for the male characters.

Terms of excessive and unrestrained emotion also articulate masculine transgressions in the text in ways that resonate with other prominent fictional doubles in nineteenth-century literature. Ozias's father, for instance, confesses that his "boyhood and youth were passed in idleness and self-indulgence" and his "passions were left so entirely without control of any kind," so that his eventual turn to homicide is unsurprising. The text likewise reveals that his victim, Allan's father, as a "young man had disgraced himself beyond all redemption; had left his home an outlaw; and had been thereupon renounced by his father at once and forever" (31; Prologue, ch. 3). The histories of Ozias and Allan's fathers are comparable to that of the eponymous narrator in Edgar Allan Poe's doppelgänger story "William Wilson" (1839), which similarly deals with murderous violence between

[92] Compare Lydia's sad realisation to Lucy Audley's surprise at the strength of Robert Audley's devotion to her first husband George Talboys: "I did not think men were capable of these deep and lasting affections" (Braddon 120; vol. 1, ch. 11). Both women's marital bonds take second place to their respective husbands' homosocial loyalties.

men, and which John Woolford cites as a direct and "celebrated precedent for Collins's own experiments" in appropriating the trope of the double from "the Romantic grotesque" (221). William Wilson is "the descendant of a race whose imaginative and easily excitable temperament has at all times rendered them remarkable," who "grew self-willed, addicted to the wildest caprices, and a prey to the most ungovernable passions" (Poe 66-67).

A similar refrain resounds in a later text, one of the English fin-de-siècle's quintessential tales of the double: Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), whose titular doctor was "wild when he was young," thus provoking rumours that "the ghost of some old sin, the cancer of some concealed disgrace" has returned to haunt him (43). Showalter's analysis of Stevenson's novella in *Sexual Anarchy* demonstrates how, in the late-nineteenth-century cultural imagination, men's unchecked desires potentially conflate with paranoid fears about male hysteria and homosexuality, which Showalter contextualises with respect to the medicalisation and criminalisation of homosexual acts.[93] According to Showalter, the concept of "the hysterical man as effeminate would be carried into psychoanalytic theory, where the male hysteric is seen as expressing his bisexuality or homosexuality through the language of his body" (*Sexual Anarchy* 106). Bachman and Cox similarly locate homoerotic intimations in the plot of *Armadale*, in the "unspeakable" depravities and crimes of the first generation (323-24).

My focus lies not with the criminal connotations of homosexuality, however, but with the anticipation of sexology in how the text associates Ozias's emotional extremes with his feminine qualities and his socially disruptive love for another man. His characterisation pairs a sexually inverted persona with a tendency toward same-sex attraction—an association that sexological theories would essentialise as a congenital predisposition. But Collins's novel does not go so far as to

[93] Showalter draws attention to the scientific preoccupation with male hysteria and homosexuality in 1886, the year in which both Stevenson's novella and Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* were published (*Sexual Anarchy* 105-6).

attribute one condition causally to the other; it never suggests that Ozias's feminine traits incline him to love Allan. In other words, Collins's novel depicts male gender ambiguity without affixing it to an essentialist notion of same-sex desire as the sexologists do.

Gender deviance and pathology

Yet Ozias's characterisation nonetheless conjures up popular notions of gendered pathology. Ozias is prone to mental anxieties and hysterical outbursts that threaten his bond with Allan and feminise him according to the Victorian medical understanding of hysteria as a woman's condition.[94] So entrenched was the association between hysterical tendencies and the female body that even by the fin-de-siècle, medical practitioners were reluctant to diagnose hysteria in men. Micale observes that, generally, "British physicians from the 1790s to the 1870s hastened to dismiss rather than to detail and dramatize the incidence of hysteria among members of their own sex" (88), and that even later, "in French, British, German, and American gynecology of the 1880s and 1890s, the uterine model of hysteria"—which dates back to ancient Greco-Roman medical beliefs—"remained medical dogma, and citations of Charcot's work in late-nineteenth-century gynecological texts are strictly limited to his work on female hysteria" (195). The feminine associations of hysteria carried over into the few instances of medical scholarship about male cases. Showalter, in "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender," notes that, in "many early studies the male hysteric was assumed to be unmanly, womanish, or homosexual, as if the feminine component within masculinity were itself a symptom of disease" (289). While Collins's novel does not refer explicitly to Victorian medical discourses of hysteria, its depiction of hysterical qualities in a male character helps to undermine the overwhelming gender-essentialism of the designation.

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[94] See Evelyne Ender's *Sexing the Mind: Nineteenth-Century Fictions of Hysteria* (1995) for a study of literary and medical discourses about hysteria as a condition associated with feminine affect and sensitivity. Ender draws on texts by Sand, Eliot, James, and Freud.

Observing Ozias's "sensitive feminine organisation," Jenny Bourne Taylor comments that his "anxiety continually hovers on the brink of *hysteria*," which only "arises from his struggle to suppress his nervous fancies, not from giving into them; from his attempts to enact a cheerful sociability, not from his customary melancholy" (165). This pattern of suppression and breakdown occurs most memorably in the scene of Ozias's "hysterical paroxysm" (271; bk. 2, ch. 6) that erupts when, in an effort to conceal his fears about the prophesied threat that he bears to Allan, he tries to affect "the gaiety and good spirits of Allan himself" (265; bk. 2, ch. 6). Ironically, it is when Ozias tries to imitate Allan's brand of masculinity that he is most feminised.

In contrast to Ozias's private anxieties that manifest in exterior hysterics, a much later episode in the novel depicts a collective, public hysteria that, while prototypically feminine, affects male subjects as well. During the flashback to Lydia's trial, which plays out as a spectacle for popular consumption, one character reports that "[t]he female part of the audience was in hysterics; and the male part was not much better" (644; bk. 4, ch. 15). The assumption, predictably, is that hysteria is a womanly reaction, yet the male spectators of the trial *also* approach a hysterical state, which suggests that Lydia's story provokes an emotional response that challenges gender boundaries. Furthermore, it is a kind of emotional excess also attributable to the male and female readership of sensation fiction.[95] To construe the trial sequence as a self-referential nod to the sensation genre is not far-fetched, given that true-life crimes, trials, and newspaper headlines were all common source material for sensation novels.[96] The resulting meta-fiction implies that the sensation genre feminises its male readers, much as Ozias's secret turmoil feminises him.[97] The hysterical Ozias is a quintessentially

[95] See the introduction for my overview of the somatic effects associated with the genre (6).
[96] For example, aspects of Lydia's story derive in part from the case of the infamous murderess Madeleine Smith, as Laurence Talairach-Vielmas relates in *Moulding the Female Body in Victorian Fairy Tales and Sensation Novels* (13-14).
[97] D. A. Miller explicates a similar effect of *The Woman in White* on the textually implied male readers, who "'catch' sensation from the neuropathic body of the [eponymous] Woman" in the novel's opening sequence (153).

sensational figure who embodies the central concerns of the genre, including its ambiguous treatment of gender.

In this way, Ozias also functions as the double of Lydia, the sensational villainess of the novel. Whereas Ozias and Allan are drawn together by a sense of the other's difference, Ozias and Lydia's attraction derives from their similarities as outsiders with secrets. The two of them embody sensation tropes, and defy easy categorisation in the terms that English sexology would subsequently codify. As a criminal schemer, Lydia obviously transgresses the norms of Victorian domestic femininity, but not in a way that connotes lesbian tendencies; in fact, she hates other women, whom she generally sees as adversaries. That Ozias is good and Lydia "evil"—and that each loves the other—exemplifies the moral ambiguity at the heart of sensation fiction. The moral approval ultimately conferred on the ambiguous Ozias reaffirms that the sensation novel, like sexology, is more tolerant of gender variations in men than in women.

Other notions of effeminacy from the period further help contextualise the characterisation of Ozias and his hysterical condition. Tamara Wagner argues that, by making Ozias the novel's "real hero" and Allan a figure of "fond ridicule" (488), Collins rejects muscular ideals of masculinity, and champions "delicate" male protagonists in a way nostalgic for the "sentimental heroes of the late-eighteenth-century novel of sentiment or sensibility" (Wagner 472).[98] While eighteenth-century fiction idealised sensitive feelings in men, G. J. Barker-Benfield notes that social commentators and reformers of the era simultaneously voiced concerns over men becoming too "effeminate," and thus undermining the difference between the sexes (341). The late-nineteenth century would subsequently see an increasingly aggravated alarm over the presumed breakdown of sex distinctions with the rise of the liberated New Woman and the dandified male aesthete. Showalter describes how

[98] Alfred in *Hard Cash* also reminds Wagner of the "sentimental man of feeling" (881), but I argue earlier in this chapter that Alfred's characterisation hinges not on the triumph of thought over physicality, but on the balance between them.

this erosion of sex categories shocked fin de siècle culture, and engendered a crisis of masculinity: "Where, men asked themselves, were they placed on the scale of masculinity? Were they dangerously close to the borderline?" (*Sexual Anarchy* 9). Questions raised in 1866 by the gender ambiguity of a marginalised outcast like Ozias would thus, by the end of the century, be questions applicable to the average Englishman.

English sexology situates Ozias within another medico-scientific framework that was developing in the mid-to-late Victorian period. As an instance of a supposedly feminine condition in the body of a male character, Ozias's hysteria parallels Ellis's sexological case studies of inversion, even if Ozias's same-sex inclinations are too complex to be strictly understood as homosexual. Ellis directly links inversion to hysteria, speculating that a "congenital nervous predisposition" is "allied to the predisposition to inversion," and suggesting that the male sexual invert's necessary recourse to everyday deception makes him "comparable to a hysterical woman" (196). Ellis's case studies further define and catalogue effeminacy according to traits of physical frailty that his findings occasionally associate with intellectual sensibilities. Case IX "has no inclination for field sports" but "is scholarly and especially linguistic in tastes" (136), while Case XI was, in his youth, "a delicate, effeminate boy, shunning games for which he was not strong enough and had no inclination" (138).

From these studies, Ellis generalises a "tendency for sexual inverts to approach the feminine type, either in psychic disposition or physical constitution, or both," perhaps explainable by "the irritable nervous system and delicate health which are so often associated with inversion" (193). He claims that at least nine of thirty-six cases

> included among those as having either good or fair health, may be described as of extremely nervous temperament, and in most cases they so describe themselves; a

> certain proportion of these combine great physical and, especially, mental energy with this nervousness; all these are doubtless of neurotic temperament. (182)

One of Ellis's anonymous sources, identified only as "Q," ascribes to the majority of male inverts "a remarkable sensitiveness and delicacy of sentiment, sympathy, and an intuitive habit of mind, such as we generally associate with the feminine sex, even though the body might be quite masculine in its form and habit" (193). Carpenter, in *The Intermediate Sex*, accordingly declares that "the defect of the male Uranian or Urning is *not* sensuality—but rather *sentimentality*," which he qualifies as "an immense capacity of emotional love," and a "genius for attachment" (13).

Ozias's feminine qualities must further be understood in contrast to the principles of masculinity that Victorian culture, as shown in my discussion of *Hard Cash*, derived from Classical ideals, and which the English sexologists used to champion same-sex love as a masculine feeling. In "A Problem in Greek Ethics," Symonds asserts that ancient "Greek love," being rooted in military culture, entailed no "tenderness or tears"—nor, he adds, "had *effeminacy*, a place in its vocabulary" (235). Symonds interprets the mutual devotion that bound the legendary Achilles and Patroclus as "a powerful and masculine emotion, in which effeminacy had no part, and which by no means excluded the ordinary sexual feelings" (231). Symonds's reading of Homer, being arguably a reflection of his own era more than that of ancient Greece, provides a context of cultural assumptions about masculinity that illuminates why Ozias is the outcast that the novel depicts him to be.

Carpenter, meanwhile, interprets the ancient Greeks as prizing self-control and temperance as necessary conditions for the proper male citizen:

> the *ideal* of Greek life was a very continent one: the trained male, the athlete, the man temperate and restrained, even chaste, for the sake of bettering his powers. It was

> round this conception that the Greeks kindled their finer emotions. And so of their love : a base and licentious indulgence was not in line with it. (63)

Ozias's tendencies toward expressive feeling contradict Symonds and Carpenter's notions of the Classical ideal, yet they accord with sensation fiction, which Victorian critics derided for plaguing society with its excesses, especially those of moral deviance.

Ozias's displays of excessive, hysterical emotion thus connote gender ambiguity according to medical notions that predate the novel and that persisted throughout the rest of the century, as shown by their recurrence in sexology at the fin-de-siècle. Ozias's hysterical condition never undergoes medical scrutiny in the novel, and is consequently never articulated with anything approaching scientific rigour. Yet it profoundly affects the plot as an externalisation of his inner struggles: a heightened sensitivity to outer pressures that exacerbates the unstable workings of his psyche—already wracked by the inner burden of secrets—and shatters any façade he tries to maintain. In this way, Ozias's hysteria signifies less to represent an actual illness than it serves as a metonym for sensation fiction itself: a genre of deviance, secrets, and melodramatic excesses that purportedly act on the reader's nerves.

Further adding to the duality of Ozias's character is his mixed racial heritage as the son of an Englishman and a Barbadian "woman of the mixed blood of the European and the African race" (23; Prologue, ch. 3). Collins's racialisation of Ozias also contrasts with that of Allan. In keeping with nineteenth-century constructions of race as visible and measurable, Collins identifies Ozias's biraciality with his "tawny complexion," "large, bright brown eyes," and "black beard" that give him "something of a foreign look" (67 bk. 1, ch. 1). Yet Victorian critics were disinclined to read significance in these details, or in the oppositional pairing of the two characters. The *Westminster Review* echoed the typical complaint against inadequate characterisation in sensation novels by

pointing to the contrast between "Armadale the Fair and Armadale the Dark" as evidence that Collins "cannot draw character" (158).

Armed with psychoanalytic and postcolonial theories, however, twenty- and twenty-first-century critics have found rich meanings in the racialised aspects of *Armadale*'s doubles. Catherine Peters configures Allan and Ozias in Jungian terms as "the self and the shadow self" (276), while Raffaella Antinucci reads Ozias as "Allan's doppelganger, his dark and colonial double" (138-39). Ozias's hybridity complicates the racial binary, as does the distant blood relationship between him and the "fine, fair-haired boy" Allan (60; bk. 1, ch. 1). Again, Ozias embodies a third type that fuses two opposites.

McClintock's analysis of mid-Victorian culture, meanwhile, uncovers a system of overlapping social and pseudo-scientific meanings—interchangeable tropes of race and class that Ozias's racial difference could have connoted for readers in the 1860s:

> [S]ocial classes or groups were described with telling frequency as 'races', 'foreign groups,' or 'non-indigenous bodies,' and could thus be cordoned off as biological and 'contagious' [. . .] The 'residuum' were seen as irredeemable outcasts who had turned their backs on progress [. . .] because of an organic degeneration of mind and body. (McClintock 48)

Particularly resonant is the paranoia toward racial otherness as a kind of degeneration. The outcast Ozias's dread of repeating his father's violent crime is an apt analogue for nineteenth-century anxieties surrounding the foreign body as an agent of atavistic regression. Yet any supposed racial hard-wiring of his nascent violent tendencies is ultimately incoherent because Ozias's otherness is inherited not from his murderous father but from his Barbadian mother.

The narrative draws attention to this maternal inheritance late in the novel, in an incident that connects Ozias's mixed race to his effeminising hysteria.[99] When Lydia, posing as Allan Armadale's widow as part of her scheme, denies to Ozias's face that she is his wife, "the savage blood that he had inherited from his mother" appears "dark and slow in his ashy cheeks" just before he suffers a sudden fainting fit (757; bk. 5, ch. 2).[100] There is a momentary threat of violence as Ozias, with the "frenzy of a maddened man" moves toward the wife who has betrayed him, but the bout of hysteria ends in a faint that feminises him once again (759; bk. 5, ch. 2). However, the text avoids confirming biological determinism as a definitive influence on Ozias. Factoring in the cultural implications of race, Woolford attributes Ozias's nervous condition to the social effects of his biracial background on his psyche, combined with the split in his identity that results from the concealment of his past:

> This social reduction or duplication of his identity [. . .] mounted upon his racial hybridity, haunts him throughout his subsequent life, producing the nerviness that links him with so many of Collins's protagonists, and more generally with those of other sensation novels. (221)

Ozias's sensitive nerves additionally link him with the *readers* of sensation novels, on whose nerves the suspense and shocks of the narrative supposedly act.

His racial hybridity also resonates with the Classical notions of race that resurface in sexology, specifically in the concept of a third type fused from two opposites that underpins intermediate sex theories. Symonds states that

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[99] For more background on the intersections of gender and race in sexology, see Siobhan B. Somerville's argument that sexologists "borrowed the model of the [racially] mixed body as a way to make sense of the 'invert'" (72).

[100] The novel links nervousness to savagery early on, when Mr. Neal arrives at Wildbad and asks that the band stop playing because his "nerves are irritable," a rude request that the townspeople attribute to the "the native ferocity of a Savage" (11; Prologue, ch. 1).

> Greek love owed its peculiar quality [. . .] to two diverse strains harmonised in the Greek temperament. Its military and enthusiastic elements were derived from the primitive conditions of the Dorians during their immigration into Southern Greece. Its refinements of sensuality and sanctified impurity are referable to contact with Phoenician civilisation. ("Problem" 224)

The Greek union of Dorian militarism with Phoenician sensuality results in a masculine principle, however, and not an androgynous one like the union of male and female embodied by the Urning or Uranian. Symonds further distinguishes between manly Greek love and "the unisexual vices of barbarians," which he traces to "the Scythian *disease of effeminacy*, described by Herodotus and Hippocrates as something essentially foreign and non-Hellenic," and which he ascribes to

> the North American Bardashes, the Tsecats of Madagascar, the Cordaches of the Canadian Indians, and similar classes among Californian Indians, natives of Venezuela, and so forth—the characteristic point is that effeminate males renounce their sex, assume female clothes, and live either in promiscuous concubinage with the men of the tribe or else in marriage with chosen persons. Precisely similar effeminacies were recognised as pathological by Herodotus, to whom Greek paiderastia was familiar. The distinctive feature of Dorian comradeship was that it remained on both sides masculine, tolerating no sort of softness. ("Problem" 245)

The equation between effeminacy and disease is noteworthy, as is the association with foreignness. These xenophobic strains that Symonds locates in the construction of ancient "Greek love" are consistent with Victorian constructions of race that inform the depiction of Ozias. As McClintock observes, for example, pseudo-sciences like physiognomy and phrenology aligned with racist degeneration theories in the period, so that consequently "anatomy becomes an allegory of progress

and history is reproduced as a technology of the visible" (39). A sensation novel like *Armadale* is a predictable vehicle for these discourses fixated on the visible, given the genre's reputation for privileging external sensations and outward characteristics over interiority.

While it is hard to ignore the racism and misogyny implicit in English sexology's lionisation of Greek love as masculine at the expense of non-Greek cultures deemed effeminate, the alignment of same-sex love with Classical values opens up an optimistic reading of the ending of *Armadale*, and it is within this context that the endurance of Ozias and Allan's friendship is best understood. The male-on-male violence of the past generation gives way to a companionate homosocial bond in the present. And when Ozias defies the prophecy and defeats his own anxieties to save Allan's life, it is a triumph of individual character over the supernatural determinism of fate and the biomedical determinism of Ozias's hysterical constitution. The text vindicates not only the love between two men, but also a socially disadvantaged racial outsider of ambiguous masculinity.

Collins would later deploy another male character of mixed race, Ezra Jennings in *The Moonstone* (1868), as a gender-ambiguous figure who identifies himself specifically as a case for medical study: "Physiology says that some men are born with female constitutions—," he proclaims, "and I am one of them" (441; vol. 3, ch. 9). Yet Ozias is an especially apt embodiment of the sensation genre, in part because the narrative of *Armadale* never definitively explains his behaviour according to the medical notions that it repeatedly raises. Collins's portrait of Ozias suggests a confluence of multiple medico-scientific and cultural discourses available and emerging in the period, especially those pertaining to gender and sexuality, and yet the character ultimately defies easy categorisation in the terms that English sexology would subsequently map. Like Reade's depiction of the male heroes in *Hard Cash*, the characterisation of Ozias resists a causal connection between his gender variance and sexual desires. But Collins's narrative is not entirely at odds with

sexology, for it is largely through characters like Ozias that sensation novels performed a function in popular Victorian culture similar to the work of sexological case studies: to bring ostensible deviance into the realm of the familiar.

Conclusions

In depicting transgressions of gender and sexuality as a recognisable part of life, Collins opened his work up to the kinds of moral censure that also faced his sensationalist peer Reade. Collins and Reade both addressed the moral opprobrium they received from critics. The introduction to *Armadale* pre-emptively rebuts the "Clap-trap morality" that would motivate objections to his novel. In a pamphlet titled "The Prurient Prude," which Catherine Peters compares to Collins's preface to *Armadale* (Peters 280), Reade lambasts American critics who label him an "impure writer" (315). Peters argues that "Reade's emphasis on a factual basis for his sensation was greater even" than that of Collins, who kept a collection of newspaper clippings at Reade's behest (281). Peters further acknowledges Reade's influence as a writer dedicated to "bringing contemporary scandals out into the open and using fiction to lobby for [. . .] changes in the law" (281)—another similarity with the English sexologists. Charges of indecency would also hound Thomas Hardy, whose foray into sensation fiction marks an even more extensive overlap with the concerns of sexology, as I explore in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3:

Queer Doubles: Hardy's *Desperate Remedies* and Ellis's Literary Sexology

Uniting the discussions of female and male gender deviance and same-sex bonds from the previous chapters, the doubles in Thomas Hardy's *Desperate Remedies* (1871) represent a high point in the convergence of sensation fiction and sexological topics. While both *Lady Audley's Secret* and *Armadale* prominently deploy interchangeable homosocial doubles, Hardy's text approaches a self-reflexive commentary on the device and its ramifications for the sexual sciences when the narrator describes two rivalries so intense that individualities recede. The first occurs between two women who desire the same man: the heroine Cytherea Graye and a minor character named Adelaide Hinton, the cousin and fiancée of Cytherea's love interest Edward Springrove. Observing "the same keen brightness of eye, the same movement of the mouth, the same mind in both," the narrator generalises that, "[a]s is invariably the case with women when a man they care for is the subject of an excitement among them, the situation abstracted the differences which distinguished them as individuals, and left only the properties common to them as atoms of a sex" (117; vol. 1, ch. 8). Although Hardy attributes this tendency to women, the second rivalry shows how men in the narrative can also become interchangeable via homosocial contention for a heterosexual love-object. At the climax of the plot, Edward faces the villain Aeneas Manston, his rival for Cytherea, in a physical struggle that confounds their identities, rendering them "one organic being at war with itself"—the "sharp panting of the combatants, so similar in each as to be undistinguishable" (360; vol. 3, ch. 7).[101] Like the two women, Edward and Aeneas become specimens of a type.

[101] Compare these two passages to one in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* about the three dairywomen who share Tess's love for Angel: "The differences which distinguished them as individuals were abstracted by this passion, and each was but portion of one organism called sex" (176; pt. 3, ch. 23). Note as well how Hardy's lexicon insists on "sex" rather than "gender"; the latter never appears in the text of *Desperate Remedies*, whereas "sex" occurs nine times. Although Hardy's diction reflects a scientific assumption of biological sex as a fixed category, his ideas about femininity and masculinity are not always rigidly essentialist, as I will show, and indeed sometimes resemble notions of socially constructed gender.

By couching the sensational trope of doubles in terms of "atoms," "organic being," and common "properties," Hardy applies scientific language to the realms of sexual desire and gender behaviour, thereby evoking the methods of sexology years before the field would gain prominence in England. While the two scenes cited above implicate totalising concepts of femaleness and maleness, their seeming essentialism belies a contrary strain throughout the text intimating that gender and sexual behaviour are social and literary constructs.

To demonstrate the complex ties between Hardy's sensation novel and subsequent developments in sexology, this chapter explores the mutually formative influence between Hardy and Havelock Ellis, whose writings as a literary critic and later a sexologist enrich our understanding of Hardy's gender representations. Ellis shares Hardy's particular focus on women and idealised constructions of femininity, which recalls the two sensation novels examined in my first chapter. A comparative analysis of Hardy's text and Ellis's theories illuminates the broader cultural conversation between sensation fiction and sexology about gender and sexual deviance that I have been exploring in other texts. Like Reade's *Hard Cash*, Hardy's novel explores Classical influences, which I contextualise by way of Ellis and, to a lesser extent, his sexological peers John Addington Symonds and Edward Carpenter, whose writings also evince the revival of Classical ideas in Victorian homophile culture.[102]

As in the preceding chapters, the trope of doubles ties together these disparate themes. In addition to her rivalry with Adelaide, the heroine Cytherea is doubled with her namesake Cytherea Aldclyffe, the mother of the villain Aeneas Manston, their names bearing Classical origins with rich significance for gender and sexuality in the narrative. A reading of these doubles vis-à-vis Ellis's

[102] Hardy also knew Symonds, having read a number of Symonds's articles, and corresponding with him on literary and personal matters after Symonds wrote Hardy a letter in 1889 to praise *The Return of the Native* (1878) (*Letters* 190-91). But Hardy's exchanges with Ellis arguably have a stronger bearing on the development of sexology than do his exchanges with Symonds. Although *Sexual Inversion* bears both writers' names, Ellis wrote most of the book after Symonds died in 1893, adding some of Symonds's work to the appendices (Crozier 57).

theories reaffirms the shared preoccupation with duality that links the emergent sexological discourses and the established conventions of sensation fiction that underlie the treatment of non-normative gender relations, sexual attraction, and femininity in *Desperate Remedies*. Yet the explicit literariness of Hardy's fictional medium generates another level of doubleness largely missing from Ellis's sexology: a metafictional self-awareness, coupled with a keen social perceptiveness offsetting any essentialist leanings in Hardy's proto-sexological treatment of same-sex desire, gender, and particularly women. By studying Hardy's sensation novel in light of his influence on Ellis, we can appreciate how Hardy gestures toward the developing sexual sciences yet maintains a novelist's distance from them.

Hardy and Ellis: English literature and sexology

Ellis was among the critics of Hardy's early fiction, and his writings about Hardy evince a disparity between his own sexological and literary pursuits. In an 1883 review of Hardy's works to that date, Ellis briefly assesses *Desperate Remedies* but not its treatment of sexuality (108). Given the homoeroticism in the novel, it is curious that Ellis's review avoids the same-sex issues that he would later discuss freely in his sexological writings. The silence may indicate a difference between what was acceptable in medical as opposed to literary writings[103] and in 1883 as opposed to 1897 when *Sexual Inversion* was published. But Ellis never mentions Hardy in *Sexual Inversion* either; his interest in Hardy seems to remain separate from the work on same-sex behaviour for which Ellis is best known, which may explain why Hardy's influence on him has yet to receive its full due.[104]

Hardy's novels and Ellis's non-fictional writings nonetheless share key affinities that illustrate the role of literary narratives and tropes in shaping the tenets of English sexology. Ellis's personal

[103] Recall that sales of *Sexual Inversion* were limited to medical and legal professionals, and that George Bedborough was tried for selling copies of the book to the public (Crozier 60).

[104] For instance, Susannah Bowser's essay on *Desperate Remedies* situates Hardy's portrait of Aeneas Manston's transgressive gender and sexuality with respect to Ellis's sexology without making any mention of Ellis and Hardy's intellectual relationship (121).

writings openly admit Hardy's influence. In his 1939 autobiography, he fondly remembers his first exposure to Hardy's work upon reading *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874) as a schoolboy (97). He calls his 1883 review of Hardy his "first elaborate essay," for which he prepared by reading all of Hardy's works and visiting the novelist's home county of Dorset (*Life* 189). Ellis singles out this essay as the one in which he "learnt how to write," although not yet in a style that he considered "vigorous, positive," or "masculine" (189-90). Even still, his lesson was rewarded with a letter from Hardy himself, who praised Ellis's "remarkable paper" for "its charm of style, & variety of allusion" and expressed a wish to "read some more of [Ellis's] critical writings in the future" (*Letters* 117). In a reversal of roles, the novelist thus critiqued his critic,[105] their dialogue exemplifying the encounter between literary culture and science that produced the English branch of sexology. While Hardy's remarks evaluate Ellis's prose for its literary qualities, Ellis's review anticipates his own subsequent sexological writings by focusing heavily on the representation of women's gender behaviour.

Hardy's later personal writings, in turn, reveal an awareness of sexological concepts. Evidence suggests that Hardy's interest in Ellis's literary criticism led him to read the younger man's sexological output. The two writers resumed correspondence in 1890 and would remain in touch, with Ellis sharing his work with Hardy on at least one occasion. A brief letter dated 29 July, 1895 confirms that Hardy received a pamphlet from Ellis, which Hardy scholars Purdy and Millgate surmise to be Ellis's "Sexual Inversion in Women," first published as an article in April, 1895 (*Letters* 83) and later included as the fourth chapter of *Sexual Inversion* (159-80). Subsequent correspondence supports this likelihood: in November of the same year, Hardy demonstrated his familiarity with sexual inversion in a letter to fellow writer Edmund Gosse. In it, Hardy denies that Sue Bridehead, the free-thinking heroine of his *Jude the Obscure* (1895), is an invert. He writes, "there is nothing

[105] Hardy toys with a similar reversal in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873) by having Elfride Swancourt confront Henry Knight after he has harshly reviewed her novel as a "palpably artificial" work that recalls "the most unreal portions of *Ivanhoe*" (ch. 15; 138-9).

perverted or depraved in Sue's nature" because the "abnormalism consists in disproportion: not in inversion, her sexual instinct being healthy so far as it goes, but unusually weak & fastidious" (*Letters* 99).[106] If Hardy had indeed read "Sexual Inversion in Women," the letter to Gosse indicates that he considered Ellis's ideas with regard to his own literary creations, albeit without sharing the morally neutral view of inversion that Ellis would espouse in his book.[107] Hardy would also have had opportunity to give Ellis feedback about the pamphlet before it appeared in *Sexual Inversion*.

Ellis's commentary on *Jude*, meanwhile, underlines how Hardy's fiction resonates with an imminent scientific approach toward sex. Ellis reviewed the novel for the *Savoy Magazine* in October, 1896, praising it as a work that, "for the first time in our literature," exposed "the reality of marriage" by daring to represent the complexities of human sexuality (314). His review recalls Hardy's own statements in the 1890 essay "Candour in English Fiction" regarding the need for literature to depict sexuality truthfully in spite of social strictures:

> Life being a physiological fact, its honest portrayal must be largely concerned with, for one thing, the relations of the sexes, and the substitution for such catastrophes as favour the false colouring best expressed by the regulation finish that "they married and were happy ever after," of catastrophes based upon sexual relations as it is. To this expansion English society opposes a well-nigh insuperable bar. (127-8)

Hardy predicates literary verisimilitude on a physiological understanding of human sexual relations that reinforces his intellectual affinities with Ellis, who in turn explicitly links novelistic prose to the sexual sciences in his 1883 piece, by defining the novelist in general as "a psychologist who is also an

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[106] Nevertheless, Hardy's denial seems not to have dissuaded Gosse of Sue's fitness as a sexological case study. Two months later, Gosse would pen a review of Jude for *Cosmopolis* in January of 1896, in which he labels Sue a "maimed 'degenerate,' ignorant of herself and the perversion of her instincts" whose sex life is sufficiently detailed "to fill the specimen tables of a German specialist" (268-9).

[107] Contrast Hardy's assumption that inversion would render Sue Bridehead "depraved" to Ellis's stance that an "attitude of moral superiority" to inversion would be "out of place in a scientific investigation" (*Sexual Inversion* 222).

artist," and Hardy in particular as a psychologist of women (104).[108] Ellis's review of *Jude* goes even further to argue that the greatest value of Hardy's work lies in his "preoccupation with the mysteries of women's hearts" (303).

Ellis clearly construes Hardy's art as resembling the work of the sexologist: to document and explore human desires and behaviour. The parallel is unmistakable when, later in the review, Ellis describes an endemic sexual ignorance afflicting the more "ordinary wholesome-minded" novelists than Hardy, and pervading the whole of English and European culture:

> [as] a distinguished German anthropologist has lately declared, sensible and experienced men still exhibit a knowledge of sexual matters such as we might expect from a milkmaid. But assuredly the farmyard view corresponds imperfectly to the facts of human life in our time. ("Concerning *Jude*" 312)

The identity of the unnamed anthropologist is uncertain, but the reference to German innovations in the sexual sciences calls to mind the work of Ellis's sexological predecessors like Krafft-Ebing. Meanwhile, Ellis's flippant characterisation the of the sexually unaware milkmaid may allude to the heroine of Hardy's preceding novel, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, who laments that her lack of instruction in the ways of men makes her vulnerable to sexual predation.[109] Most significantly, it is in 1896, the year before *Sexual Inversion* would be published, that Ellis solidifies the link between literature and sexual knowledge that he broached only obliquely in 1883 when he equated novel-writing with

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[108] Kristin Brady notes Ellis's fascination with the "'instinct-led' primitivism" of Hardy's female characters ("Matters of Gender" 108). In another essay, Brady examines a different way in which *Desperate Remedies* implicates the medical scrutiny of women: through suggestions of hysteria in the characterisation of Cytherea ("Textual Hysteria" 91).

[109] "Why didn't you tell me there was danger in men-folk?" Tess tearfully asks her mother. "Why didn't you warn me? Ladies know what to fend hands against, because they read novels that tell them of these tricks; but I never had the chance o' learning in that way, and you did not help me!" (112; part 2, ch. 12). Through Tess's plea, Hardy meta-fictionally nods to the role of literature in distributing sexual knowledge to women.

psychology. In deeming Hardy's novels accurate representations of sexual life, Ellis situates Hardy within nascent scientific disciplines that sought knowledge about sexuality.[110]

Ellis's admiration for Hardy may account for why *Sexual Inversion* never discusses Hardy's work. Ellis does not shy away from citing cases of inversion in other literature. In a footnote listing literary examples of women's same-sex attraction, Ellis identifies novels by Diderot, Balzac, Gautier, Zola, Belot, de Maupassant, and others, as well as the poetry of Lamartine, Swinburne, and Verlaine (*Sexual Inversion* 160). Elsewhere, Ellis addresses Whitman's poetic treatment of "manly love," concluding that "it remains somewhat difficult to classify him from a sexual point of view, but we can scarcely fail to recognise the presence of the homosexual instinct, however latent and unconscious" (110-11).[111] More assertive is Ellis's identification of Verlaine as a "psychosexual hermaphrodite" (111). These citations demonstrate Ellis's greater willingness to admit sexual inversion in French literature[112] than in American or English works, which may account for his silence about Hardy in *Sexual Inversion*. French novels in particular drew frequent charges of indecency. This prejudice against French literature surfaces in the reception of English sensation fiction, which some reviewers, according to Andrew Radford, saw as "a strain of morbid naturalism, an English form of the racier French fiction" of Sand and Flaubert (3). Much of the French literature that Ellis identifies as homoerotic is associated with naturalism, which shares with sexology

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[110] Brady extends the reach of Hardy's legacy beyond the nineteenth century, relating his works to a "range of cultural discourses that continue to shape our own constructions of sexual discourse" ("Matters of Gender" 108).

[111] Note Ellis's confidence in homosexuality as hard-wired and instinctual.

[112] Marcus considers the disparity between the "horror that British [reviewers] expressed at French literature about lesbianism" and the greater investment of British literature "in representing intimacy between women" (15). Marcus concludes that the Victorians did not "see a necessary relationship between lesbianism and other types of bonds between women" (18). Whereas Rich theorises a "lesbian continuum" linking all bonds between women (51), Marcus argues that the Victorian era perceived clearer divisions between the different relationships lived out by women. Marcus's model of Victorian women's same-sex bonds thus resembles Sedgwick's reading of the various bonds between men, in which any supposed "continuum between homosocial and homosexual" is "radically disrupted" (*Between Men* 1-2). A historically astute reading of same-sex bonds in *Desperate Remedies* cannot assume that affection between women signals sexual desire. Nonetheless, I will later draw on textual and critical evidence to argue for Miss Aldclyffe's erotic attraction to Cytherea.

a deterministic view of human behaviour.[113] If Hardy, though no stranger himself to critical outcry throughout his career, wished to keep his sensational beginnings behind him,[114] then Ellis did him a favour by not listing his works alongside those of his French contemporaries. Given that Hardy already felt compelled to defend his depiction of Sue Bridehead's sexuality in the moral debates over *Jude*, Ellis may in effect have protected Hardy from the inevitable controversy that would surround *Sexual Inversion*, the second edition of which was banned for obscenity in the infamous Bedborough trial (Crozier 60).

In any case, Hardy's knowledge of sexology had perhaps retrospectively begun to colour his perception of his earliest published work. His prefatory note to the 1896 edition of *Desperate Remedies* refers to *Jude*, observing that "certain characteristics which provoked most discussion in [his] latest story were present in this [his] first—published in 1871, when there was no French name for them" (3-4). If Hardy had not initially realised the full implications of his subject matter, his clearer awareness after twenty-five years signals a shift in cultural perceptions and the accompanying linguistic labels. At least one early twentieth-century critic eventually noted the dialogue between Hardy's work and that of the sexologists. Regarding Sue Bridehead's assertion that women can live without sexual relations while "men can't, because they—won't" (*Jude* 428; part 6, ch. 3), Henry Charles Duffin wrote in 1916: "Of course, Mr. Havelock Ellis declares such ideas as this are of the usual man-made sort, and that there is practically no difference between the sexes in this respect" (223). In Duffin's view, "Hardy intended Sue to be a woman who stood out of the Havelock Ellis generalisation, whether this be sound or not" (223). Duffin's argument shows the necessity of reading Hardy with respect to Ellis, even if it is to consider them sometimes at odds.

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[113] Ellis wrote the introduction to the 1931 American edition of J. K. Huysmans's *À Rebours* (1884), a novel that represents the shift from naturalism to decadence.

[114] According to Florence Hardy in "The Early Life of Thomas Hardy," the young novelist was so discouraged by one particular negative review of *Desperate Remedies* that "at the time he wished that he were dead" (111).

Whether or not Hardy drew on Ellis's case studies, the two authors' methods coincide again in their retroactive positioning of their work. As Nemesvari argues in *Thomas Hardy, Sensationalism, and the Melodramatic Mode*, Hardy reframed his novelistic output within the realist tradition when he published the Wessex Edition of his works starting in 1912, marginalising early texts like *Desperate Remedies* (19-20). In so doing, Hardy effectively obscured his sensational past—like Lady Audley or any number of characters from sensation fiction concealing their unsavoury former lives. Ellis embarked on his own revisionist project with *Sexual Inversion*, which was originally the first volume of his massive *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, but later republished as the second. Annamarie Jagose interprets the switch as a deliberate move by Ellis to justify his study of inverted sexuality after the fact, as a *consequence* of his endeavour to study normative heterosexuality and not the other way around. Jagose explicates the overturned primacy of inverted versus "'normal' sexuality" as a problem of sequence that complicates the historical emergence of homosexual identity (*Inconsequence* 25-7). In each case, the reversal helps legitimise the author's work. The logic of inversion thus extends to the extra-textual circulation of both *Desperate Remedies*—strategically deemphasised in Hardy's oeuvre despite its chronological precedence—and *Sexual Inversion*.

Yet even without the parallels and connections between Hardy and Ellis, Hardy's first published novel stands prominently among the literary texts that helped to shape early English sexology.[115] To appreciate how *Desperate Remedies* contributed to this development, we must situate Hardy's novel within the discourse of sensation fiction and its unique genre considerations vis-à-vis gender and sexuality.

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[115] Jane Thomas attributes historical significance to *Desperate Remedies* as a text "concerned most obviously with the social formation, rather than with divine or natural law and with the constitution of subjectivity through the discourse of sexuality" (53). She credits Hardy's subsequent novel, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), with the more specific effect of illustrating "the extent to which gendered forms of subjectivity owe their construction to the discourses in the human sciences—in particular the newly formed discourse of sexuality" (Thomas 69). However, I maintain that Hardy's first novel already begins the work of linking scientific discourses with issues of gendered subjectivity.

Desperate Remedies and sensation fiction

The critical understanding of Hardy's relationship to the sensation genre has shifted over the years. As a probable result of Hardy's efforts to reframe his literary legacy, earlier critics viewed a pronounced break between *Desperate Remedies* and Hardy's later works. Lawrence Jones claimed in 1965 that the nascent Hardyan trademarks in the novel clash with the sensational genre conventions (35-50). *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy* (1928) corroborates this view, asserting that the "melodramatic situations" in the novel were "concocted in a style which was quite against [Hardy's] natural grain" (112). In *The Maniac in the Cellar* (1980), Winifred Hughes conversely appraises Hardy as a sensation writer whose "reliance on melodrama is the source of his most glaring flaws" but "also the source of his greatest power," and who "staged a conscious revolt against the strictures of the conventional realistic novel" (175). Patricia Ingham likewise maintains that sensation fiction was Hardy's natural form, which he adapted to create "the medium that became uniquely his" (xiii-xxvi). Nemesvari advances this position in *Thomas Hardy, Sensationalism, and the Melodramatic Mode* (2011) by tracing sensational elements throughout Hardy's novelistic output. Catherine Neale takes a congenial stance, focusing on how the sensationalism of *Desperate Remedies* gave Hardy "the means of treating sexuality and gender roles, inheritance both material and physiological, and versions of bourgeois identity: concerns that recur throughout his fiction" (116).[116] Sensational genre conventions thus inflect Hardy's treatment of sexuality and gender, as further illuminated by his novel's reception in the Victorian periodical press.

As with other sensation texts, the initial reception of Hardy's first novel illustrates how sexual propriety in the era mandated different expectations for male and female writers. Whereas reviewers in the 1860s found women novelists like Braddon an affront to the female gender for their

[116] Phillip Allingham likewise locates sensational elements in Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), yet he argues, in contrast to Nemesvari and Neale, that Hardy was pandering to popular tastes (Allingham 34-44).

handling of erotically charged topics,[117] early critics of the anonymously published *Desperate Remedies* often assumed that Hardy was a woman—and quite fittingly, for a text that touches on gender ambiguity. Ellis, writing in 1883, attributes the confusion to "feminine" features of Hardy's writing: the "minute observation, the delicate insight, the conception of love as the one business of life, and a singularly charming reticence in its delineation" (104).[118] While Ellis's reasoning betrays obvious gender stereotypes, the speculations of earlier critics reveal that women writers were not only presumed to have different kinds of knowledge, but also held to stricter moral standards. An unsigned review in the *Athenaeum* from April of 1871 surmises that the author's "close acquaintance" with "mysteries of the female toilette" marks *Desperate Remedies* as "the work of one of that sex," yet also finds "certain expressions" in the text "so remarkably coarse as to render it impossible that it should have come from the pen of an English lady" (1).[119]

The double standards extend to the reception of Hardy's characters. Another anonymous critic, writing for the *Spectator*, expresses a blasé attitude when it comes to the behaviour of the male villain, Aeneas Manston. While disparaging the novelist's "low curiosity about the detail of crime," the *Spectator* critic bemoans the fact that the "merest sensuality" is "the murderer's only motive," as if to dismiss it as yet another lurid detail grown commonplace through overuse in sensation novels (3-5).[120] What truly raises the reviewer's ire is rather the murderer's "*un*married" mother, Miss

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[117] See Chapter 1 for examples (62).

[118] In Hardy's *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1876), when the guests at Doncastle's dinner party discuss the sensationalism of the title character's anonymously published book of verse, the painter Ladywell refers to "the originality which such a style must naturally possess when carried out by a feminine hand" (43; ch. 7). Ethelberta's mother-in-law Lady Petherwin meanwhile condemns her poems as immoral. Nemesvari identifies distinct parallels between Lady Petherwin's reactions to Ethelberta's writing and the scandalised reactions of the periodical press to the work of female sensation writers, thus "making Ethelberta as much a sensation author as she is a sensation character" (*Sensationalism* 160-61).

[119] Biographer Robert Gittings attributes the gender confusion to Hardy's working-class background, explaining that "[a]n author who had walked out with a ladies' maid, and heard from [his cousin] Martha Sparks about her work and her employers, could hardly fail to be accurate about the 'toilette,'" whereas "for the coarseness, he had heard plenty of that, and from women of his own class" (215).

[120] According to *The Early Life*, this is the review that so upset Hardy that he wished he were dead (111).

Aldclyffe: "a miserable creation—uninteresting, unnatural, and nasty" (5). The indignation about her unmarried state betrays a distinct qualm with her having borne Aeneas out of wedlock. Whereas Aeneas's sensual qualities raise only a perfunctory objection, his unwed mother's sexual past provokes the greater displeasure, confirming that female characters, like female novelists, were held to higher moral standards than their male counterparts. Negative reactions to female sexuality and specifically Miss Aldclyffe's sexual characterisation are further at stake in the most frequently discussed sequence from Hardy's novel.

"A carnal plot": The bedroom scene

Desperate Remedies illustrates homoerotic desire between women when Miss Aldclyffe visits her maid Cytherea Graye's bedroom late at night to entreat the younger woman for a kiss (77-89; vol. 1, ch.6). The suggestive exchange recalls the intimacies between Lucy Audley and Phoebe Marks in *Lady Audley's Secret*, so much that Elizabeth Steere argues Braddon may have directly inspired Hardy (*Female Servant* 163-64). As with Braddon's novel, the depictions of female same-sex desire in *Desperate Remedies* occur in an era when women's homosocial affection was culturally accepted within certain parameters, as Sharon Marcus demonstrates in *Between Women* (61). But as I also argue of Lucy Audley and Phoebe Marks, the kiss shared between Miss Aldcyffe and Cytherea exceeds what was acceptable for women of the time.[121]

Unsurprisingly, then, critical opinion varies as to the meaning of the kiss. Michael Millgate reads the bedroom scene as indicating Hardy's awareness of homoerotic behaviour (*Career* 32), yet also cautions against "post-Freudian critics, overlooking Miss Aldclyffe's quasi-maternal relationship to Cytherea" and categorising their bond "somewhat simplistically" as lesbian (*Biography* 121). In Patrick Roberts's reading, these maternal qualities do not mitigate Miss Aldclyffe's lesbian qualities, as she functions "unequivocally as a sexualised mother-figure" to Cytherea (51). Robert Dingley

[121] See Chapter 1 for my earlier argument about female homoeroticism in Braddon's novel (65-67).

meanwhile contends that, despite Hardy's narrative efforts to equalise the two women, their class distinctions overshadow any homoeroticism: "within the relations conventional between mistresses and servants the language of 'romantic friendship'—a language which can simultaneously speak of lesbianism and camouflage it—is simply not possible" (107). Victorian responses to Hardy's novel, however, reveal alternative possibilities supported by details from the text.

While class concerns may have precluded an erotic interpretation for some readers as Dingley argues, the early reception of *Desperate Remedies* suggests that homoeroticism was apparent and objectionable to others. John Morley advised Macmillan to reject Hardy's manuscript on account of the "highly extravagant" bedroom scene (qtd. in Rimmer 450). In the *Spectator*'s damning appraisal of Miss Aldclyffe as "unnatural" and "nasty" (5), Gittings reads the reviewer's reluctance to discuss the scene, and he reasons that moral condemnation of the novel would have barred it from circulating libraries (216). By this logic, the silence of most periodical reviews about the scene frames its "unnatural" erotics as something that critics may not have known how to evaluate, or that they could not discuss without crossing the margins of sexual propriety—which may not yet have been clear in 1871, so soon after the medical coinage of homosexuality. But given how commonly the periodical press disdained the sexual excesses of sensation fiction, the evasiveness with which reviewers voiced their unease with Hardy's novel suggests that it was exceptional in its offences.

Elsewhere, the text itself implies a sexually transgressive aspect to Miss Aldclyffe's bond with Cytherea in addition to the breach of class boundaries. The following passage describes how Miss Aldclyffe's servants construe her familiar conduct toward Cytherea after the bedroom encounter:

> It was perceived by the servants of the House, that some secret bond of connexion existed between Miss Aldclyffe and her companion. But they were woman and woman, not woman and man, the facts were ethereal and refined, and so they could

> not be worked up into a taking story. Whether, as old critics dispute, a supernatural machinery be necessary to an epic or no, a carnal plot is decidedly necessary to a scandal. (111; vol. 1 ch. 8)

The fact that Miss Aldclyffe and Cytherea are "woman and woman, not woman and man" at first seems to eliminate any scandalous possibilities, reflecting a reluctance to consider any erotic potential between women. But the narrator specifies a "carnal plot" as the "taking story" that the servants are unable to concoct about their mistress and her new maid. Although the gossiping servants fail to conceive of anything sexual between two women, the narrator—and, of course, Hardy—nevertheless raises the spectre of this carnal plot and its significance.[122] Equally telling is the reference to literary critics and their "dispute" over what constitutes an epic; Hardy likens the controversies of literary interpretation to the fraught societal understanding of sexual relations.

Furthermore, the textual history of this passage flags the changing consciousness of homosexuality from the late-Victorian period to the early-twentieth century. Patricia Ingham notes a revealing variant in the 1896 edition, which replaces "a carnal plot" with "an ungodly machinery," subduing any prurient overtones that might have occurred more readily to readers in 1896 than in 1871 (Ingham 398). Additional revisions to the 1912 edition stress the maternal side of Miss Aldclyffe's affection for Cytherea (Ingham 396). Rimmer assesses these changes as "light bowdlerizing of the bed scene" (xlviii). Yet, if by the time of the latter printings, Hardy presumed

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[122] Other scholarship supports my reading. In *Inseparable: Desire Between Women in Literature*, novelist Emma Donoghue speculates that the passage may be Hardy's "sly commentary" on his "evasive presentation" of a lesbian seduction (Donoghue 10). By following Rosemarie Morgan's lead and distinguishing between the limited viewpoint of the servants and the more knowing voice of the narrator, Nemesvari comes to a compatible conclusion about Hardy's awareness:

> It is important to note the device employed here, which Morgan usefully describes as the "bystander narrator." That is, a narrative voice that describes the limited responses of certain characters, in this case the servants, and accepts the position described. This strategy establishes a distance between the naïve bystander narrator and the novel's actual narrator, who has a much more sophisticated view of things, and whose descriptions and tone are considerably more direct. The bystander's view "coheres with Victorian orthodoxies but not with Hardy's narrator who, being temporarily displaced by the interloper, has not at any point suggested that the facts do not exist." The possibility of same-sex erotic attraction is thus established by being left unspoken, at least by those who cannot imagine the possibility. (Nemesvari, *Sensationalism* 32)

that readers would be savvier to lesbian sexuality, the original wording nonetheless suggests he was already aware of the erotic potential in 1871. This awareness would put Hardy in a similar mindset as continental sexologists and ahead of the English sexologists whose work was to follow, as the next section will elaborate.

Doubled identities, difference, and desire

Desperate Remedies further anticipates the concerns of sexology by associating erotic desire with same-sex identification in the doubling of the two most prominent female characters in the text. Miss Aldclyffe's desire for Cytherea coincides with their mutual identification, which Hardy establishes through several connections between the two women. As doubles, Miss Aldclyffe and Cytherea share an unusual first name, which is another title for the goddess Aphrodite. Indeed, the younger Cytherea turns out to be the elder's namesake; her late father Ambrose Graye harboured a thwarted love for Miss Aldclyffe, then known by her maiden name of Cytherea Bradleigh. Furthermore, the text elides their class differences when Miss Aldclyffe requests to enter Cytherea's bedchamber, and the narrator observes, "It was now mistress and maid no longer; woman and woman only" (79; vol. 1, ch. 6).[123] Later, when the orphaned Cytherea learns that Miss Aldclyffe's father, too, is dead, she ponders "the strange likeness which Miss Aldclyffe's bereavement bore to her own" (95; vol. 1, ch. 6). Miss Aldclyffe, holding Cytherea "almost as a lover would," remarks, "We get more and more into one groove. I now am left fatherless and motherless as you were" (95). Miss Aldcylffe simultaneously desires and empathises with Cytherea. These links and affinities between the two characters prefigure the narrator's observation about the blurring of women's identities in the scene where Cytherea and Adelaide become "atoms of a sex" (117).

Even before the bedroom scene, the narrative begins to collapse Miss Aldclyffe and Cytherea's differences from the moment they meet, each mutually viewing and viewed:

[123] Note the same phrase, "woman and woman," in the later scene of the servants' gossip (111; vol. 1 ch. 8).

> Both the women showed off themselves to advantage as they walked forward in the orange light; and each showed too in her face that she had been struck with her companion's appearance. The warm tint added to Cytherea's face a voluptuousness which youth and a simple life had not yet allowed to express itself there ordinarily; whilst in the elder lady's face it reduced the customary expression, which might have been called sternness, if not harshness, to grandeur, and warmed her decaying complexion with much of the youthful richness it plainly had once possessed. (54; vol. 1, ch. 4)

This passage previews a subtler version of what is to come in the encounter between Cytherea and Adelaide. But in this earlier scene, instead of all differences being "abstracted" (117), only those wrought by age diminish in the warm orange light: Cytherea gains a mature "voluptuousness" while Miss Aldclyffe regains a "youthful richness." More complex than Cytherea's sexual rivalry with Adelaide is the mix of competitiveness and admiration in the gaze she shares with Miss Aldclyffe. Each displays herself to the other and is, in turn, impressed. Class distinctions overshadow this first meeting, however, as Miss Aldclyffe is interviewing Cytherea for the position of lady's maid.

Contrary to the argument that class boundaries obviate lesbian desire in the text (Dingley 107), Miss Aldclyffe expresses an attraction for Cytherea that overrides their roles as mistress and maid. Miss Aldclyffe admits from the start that Cytherea is too young and inexperienced to fulfil her requirements for a servant. Physical attraction alone compels Miss Aldclyffe to hire her: "It is almost worth while to be bored with instructing her in order to have a creature who could glide round my luxurious indolent body in that manner, and look at me in that way—I warrant how light her fingers are upon one's head and neck. . . ." (56). Thus, Miss Aldclyffe initially sees Cytherea's subordinate position, with its attendant duties requiring close physical contact, as something that she can exploit

in the interests of her desire for the younger woman, if not a power dynamic that she finds erotic in itself. Yet Miss Aldclyffe must breach the class divide to gain entry into her maid's bedroom, further complicating the relationship between difference and same-sex desire.

The same questions of identification vis-à-vis desire apply to the doubling of the male antagonists in the novel. As with Miss Aldclyffe and Cytherea, Hardy insinuates an uncanny affinity between Edward and Aeneas, but with a difference: whereas Miss Aldclyffe's desire for Cytherea is separate from their shared sense of affinity, Aeneas's desire and affinity for Edward are intertwined. On first glimpsing Edward without knowing who he is, Aeneas feels drawn to him by "a kind of magnetism" (174; vol. 2, ch. 2). Hearing that the stranger is an architect's clerk, Aeneas remarks, "My own old profession. I could have sworn it by the cut of him" (174). When he finally learns Edward's name and recalls that the man is Cytherea's lover, Aeneas thinks to himself, "But for the existence of my wife that man might have been my rival" (175)—a curious observation that prioritises homosocial contention over heterosexual desire. Rather than dwelling on his lost opportunity with Cytherea, Aeneas ponders the lost connection to Edward with a strange sense of unrequited rivalry.

Edward's characterisation likewise allows for same-sex attraction. Hardy details the young man's propensity for multiple affinities and desires in a narrative digression that has ramifications for other characters as well:

> An impressible heart had for years—perhaps as many as six or seven years—been distracting him, by unconsciously setting itself to yearn for somebody wanting, he scarcely knew whom. Echoes of himself, though rarely, he now and then found. Sometimes they were men, sometimes women, his cousin Adelaide being one of these; for in spite of a fashion which pervades the whole community at the present

> day—the habit of exclaiming that woman is not undeveloped man, but diverse, the fact remains that, after all, women are Mankind, and that in many of the sentiments of life the difference of sex is but a difference of degree. (173; vol. 2, ch. 2)[124]

The nod to scientific discourse recalls the narrator's earlier remarks about the differences between women being "abstracted" (117), but the observation about the two sexes opens up greater complexities than the previous statement about women alone. Hardy's premise that "women are Mankind"—and presumably vice versa—suggests a continuum between the two sexes rather than a strict divide.[125] The implications for sexual desire are provocative. Judith Wittenberg attributes Hardy's notion that "the sexes differ only in degree" to the same line of thought that inspired his depiction of the "androgynous" and "latently lesbian" Miss Aldclyffe (Wittenberg 47-8). Miss Aldclyffe's illegitimate son Aeneas has inherited her androgyny: his lips are "full and luscious to a surprising degree, possessing a woman-like softness of curve, and a ruby redness so intense, as to testify strongly to much susceptibility of heart where feminine beauty was concerned" (128; vol. 1, ch. 7).[126] Despite the emphasis on his heterosexual "susceptibility," Ingham notes the sexual ambiguity that his androgynous looks would have signified for Victorian readers versed in physiognomy (xv).

More surprising than the gender-transgressive appearance of the villain and his mother are the ambisexual affinities of the hero Edward, which underscore the homoerotic overtones of his rivalry with Aeneas. In the scene of their physical struggle, Hardy amplifies the violence with ambiguously erotic details: the "sharp panting" as they wrestle, "rolling over and over, locked in

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[124] The proclamation that "women are Mankind" unsettles the narrator's earlier assumption of a unique "essence of woman" (116). Hardy also indirectly raises the question of whether the downplaying of sex differences demeans women as "undeveloped" men, or promotes equality. The sexist notion of women as incomplete or undeveloped men circulated among Victorian thinkers including Ellis and Herbert Spencer, as I discuss in the introduction (22).

[125] As mentioned in the introduction and Chapter 1, Ellis's *Man and Woman* (1894) refutes a comparable notion that women are undeveloped men (22, 54).

[126] Aeneas's heroic Roman namesake is appropriately the half-mortal son of Venus, the Roman equivalent of Aphrodite. See Bowser for a full discussion of the Classical parallels (120).

each other's grasp," and the "stroke of their heels and toes, as they smote the floor at every contortion of body or limbs" (360; vol. 3, ch. 7).[127] Aeneas's attraction to Edward is as pronounced, in its own way, as Miss Aldclyffe's to Cytherea, and arguably more intense, given the violence that consummates it.[128] The depictions of Miss Aldclyffe, Aeneas, and Edward thus preview the association of same-sex desire with the blurring of sex distinctions.

In effect, the erotic characterisations in *Desperate Remedies* prefigure the sexological tenet, advanced by Ellis, Symonds, and Carpenter, that homosexual attraction derives from a blending of the two biological sexes within a single person.[129] Showalter's *Sexual Anarchy*, as cited in the preceding chapter, recounts how this idea effected a *fin-de-siècle* crisis of masculinity (9). But Edward in *Desperate Remedies* expresses no such anxieties, reflecting the fact that this crisis had yet to take hold when the text was published, and leaving open the possibility that Hardy's novel influenced the thinking of at least one major English sexologist. If nothing else, Hardy's ideas resonate with Ellis's, in that both theorise "sex" as a continuum of masculinity and femininity rather than a binary.[130]

Both Ellis and Hardy thus anticipate later queer theoretical concepts of gender indeterminacy and sexual fluidity, yet Hardy, like Reade and Collins, keeps gender variance separate from same-sex desire. Whereas Ellis's congenitalist thinking necessarily essentialises sexuality to a degree, Hardy's characterisations of Aeneas and Miss Aldclyffe conversely draw no conclusive links between gender and sexual object preference.[131] For instance, Aeneas possesses androgynous features, but his attraction to Edward does not in itself feminise him. Nor do Aeneas's feminine

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[127] Compare this scene to Sedgwick's homoerotic reading of the fatal struggle between Bradley Headstone and Rogue Riderhood in Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* (1865) (*Between Men* 169; *Mutual Friend* 781; vol. 2, ch. 15). Riderhood, locked in Headstone's grip, seems "to be girdled with an iron ring" (781); Aeneas and Edward grasp each other "like the jaws of a gin" (*Desperate* 360).

[128] In this respect, I differ with Bowser's reading of the novel, which deemphasises Aeneas and Edward's rivalry as less dynamic than Aeneas's bonds with the two Cythereas (120).

[129] See my discussion of intermediate sex theories in the introduction to this dissertation (19-20).

[130] As shown, Charles Henry Duffin found Hardy at odds with Ellis in the characterisation of Sue Bridehead in *Jude*.

[131] But as I will later show, the construction of Edward's masculinity *does* depend on a heterosexual attraction to the opposite—thus restoring him to a more normative gender and sexuality, arguably reflective of his status as hero.

qualities signal a hard-wiring of his same-sex tendencies; indeed, the text states that the "woman-like softness" of his lips evinces his "susceptibility" to "*feminine* beauty [my emphasis]" (128; vol. 1, ch. 7), similarly to how Alfred Hardie's feminine qualities endear him to women in *Hard Cash*. As for Miss Aldclyffe, her desire for Cytherea makes her "as jealous as any man could have been" when she learns that Cytherea already has a suitor (84; vol. 1, ch. 6). According to Nemesvari, Miss Aldclyffe's "attempt to 'rival' Springrove as a lover symbolizes her attempt to rival men in their patriarchal power" (*Sensationalism* 33). But rivalling men is not the same as becoming masculine. Miss Aldclyffe herself makes the distinction when she tells Cytherea, "I love you better than any man can" (82). Miss Aldclyffe's face may have a "masculine cast" (55; vol. 1, ch. 4), but her love for Cytherea is not a masculine love. Whereas Ellis assumes a causal link between gender and sexual desire in accordance with his scientific methodology, Hardy's characters reflect the more shadowy uncertainties of literature.

Even Hardy's depictions of same-sex affinity do not imply a necessary cause for same-sex desire. In *Desperate Remedies*, likenesses between women emphasise competitiveness more than desire. Cytherea and Adelaide's rivalry draws out their similarities, while Miss Aldclyffe's attraction to Cytherea is *independent* of their similarities. Affinities between men in the novel provoke competition, attraction or both; male rivalry itself tends toward the erotic. Affinities between women perform a different textual purpose, manifested through another kind of doubling in Hardy's novel: the substitution of one character for another.[132]

Sensational substitutions and restricted female agency

As explored at the beginning of this chapter, Hardy complicates the sensation genre's substitution motif by emphasising same-sex interchangeability and couching it in scientific terms.

[132] Patrick Roberts also discusses substituted identities in *Desperate Remedies*, but without contextualising them as part of a larger trope from the sensation genre (57).

But *Desperate Remedies* features other substitutions at the level of plot, with thematic significance for the role of women in the text. When Aeneas conceals the murder of his first wife Eunice by persuading Anne Seaway to impersonate her, the substitution is criminal as in other sensation texts, but it is not a woman's duplicitous exercise of agency as in the case of Braddon's Lady Audley or Collins's Lydia Gwilt. Rather, it is a man's exploitation of a helpless woman to resolve his own unlawful plight, much as Sir Percival Glyde exploits Laura Fairlie and Anne Catherick in *The Woman in White*.[133] In his suicide letter, Aeneas confesses to taking advantage of Anne Seaway's vulnerability as a "friendless, innocent" housekeeper in "rather a precarious position, as regarded her future subsistence" after the death of her mistress (369; vol. 3, ch. 8). In this respect, Anne also mirrors Cytherea, whose similarly precarious circumstances after her father's death necessitate her employment with Miss Aldclyffe.

The expedience of Anne's recruitment, however, does not make her an ideal substitute for Eunice Manston. As Aeneas concedes, "[s]he was not the best woman for the scheme; but there was no alternative" (369). Anne recognises herself as doubly a substitute: she is also a replacement for *Cytherea* in Aeneas's affections, albeit a deficient one in her own eyes. When Aeneas tries to praise her beauty, Anne contends that she is "not nearly so good-looking as Cytherea, and several years older" (323). Compounding her degradation as the phony Eunice, Anne inadequately replaces a woman of already depreciated value from Aeneas's perspective. Eunice had grown repugnant to Aeneas as "one whose beauty had departed, whose utterance was complaint, whose mind was shallow, and who drank brandy every day" (364; vol. 3, ch. 8). Aeneas's suit for Cytherea's hand, then, is an effort to replace an unwanted and estranged wife with a new and superior object of

[133] Similarly noting the attenuation of female agency in the substitution plot, Jane Thomas puts Anne Seaway's charade as Aeneas's wife on the same level as Eunice's marriage to him: both perform "a highly unsatisfactory means of achieving the illusion of full female subjectivity—the chance to act the part of wife in the patriarchal power play" (56).

desire. When his wife returns and foils his plan, he kills her but still cannot be with the woman he wants. The titular "desperate remedies"[134] may thus refer to Aeneas's attempted replacement of Eunice with Cytherea as well as his substitution of Anne for Eunice. The misogynist implications of Aeneas's schemes are clear. In Catherine Neale's words, Hardy seizes "the sensational and ideological possibilities" of the substitution motif to "demonstrate the anonymity and interchangeability of women" (Neale 120), or what Helena Michie calls "female iterability" (63).[135]

Countering Aeneas's criminal substitutions of women is a detective plot equally motivated by masculine agency. Cytherea's brother Owen hopes to see her righted by bringing Aeneas "to ruin as a bigamist," whereas Cytherea herself discourages Owen from pressing his case (284; vol. 3, ch. 2). As if aware that her brother's campaign against Aeneas is invested in purely homosocial enmity, she protests, "It is beneath my dignity as a woman to labour for this" (288; vol. 3, ch. 3). Cytherea, the one most affected by Aeneas's treachery, has no interest in antagonising him, yet Owen frames the detective plot as "an act of justice to [Cytherea] and other women, and to Edward Springrove" (284). Despite his insistence on acting in her best interests, Owen's disdain for Aeneas and allegiance to Edward outweigh his professed sense of duty to his sister, in accordance with Sedgwick's model of homosociality.[136]

Undermining the men's efforts, however, is Cytherea herself, who ultimately discovers the substitution. She detects Anne and Eunice's difference in eye colour by comparing a photograph of

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[134] Note as well the medical connotation of "remedies," especially in light of the ineffectuality of doctors in the novel, which Tony Fincham studies at length in *Hardy the Physician*. After Mr. Aldclyffe's doctor accurately confirms the time of his death, the medical practitioners in the novel "fail at every turn" (Fincham 79), most unfortunately in misidentifying the remains of Eunice Manston in the debris of the fire at Three Tranters Inn, which leads to the jury finding her death accidental. Thus, it is a medico-scientific oversight compounded by legal error that enables Aeneas to conceal the murder of his wife via the substitution plot. Where science and law fail to apprehend the truth, the "desperate remedy" of a sensational crime momentarily succeeds.

[135] While Neale connects this interchangeability to Hardy's de-individualisation of women as "atoms of a sex," her analysis stops at the social obliteration of women's identities (Neale 119-21) rather than exploring the scientific connotations of Hardy's diction and its implications for gender and sexuality.

[136] I also cite Sedgwick's ideas throughout my discussions of *Hard Cash* and *Armadale* in Chapter 2.

Aeneas's supposed wife with a love poem that he once wrote. The poem rhapsodises over Eunice's "azure eyes," while the photograph shows the woman's eyes to be black (308; vol. 3, ch. 4). When Owen dismisses the discrepancy as Aeneas's error in writing the verse, Cytherea responds with a truism about masculine behaviour: "Say a man in love may forget his own name, but not that he forgets the colour of his mistress's eyes" (309). Owen's continued disbelief melodramatically draws out Cytherea's dawning revelation:

> "But look at this, Cytherea. If it is clear to us that the woman had blue eyes two years ago, she *must* have blue eyes now [. . .] Anyone would think that Manston could change the colour of a woman's eyes, to hear you."
>
> "Yes," she said, and paused.
>
> "You say yes, as if he could," said Owen, impatiently.
>
> "By changing the woman herself," she exclaimed. "Owen, don't you see the horrid—what I dread?—that the woman he lives with is not Mrs. Manston—that she was burnt after all—and that I am HIS WIFE!" (309)

The exaggerated delay of Owen's comprehension and the heightened tone of Cytherea's outburst are arguably excessive even for a sensation novel.[137] The overstatement stresses how Cytherea's unravelling of the mystery plot is bound up in her consciousness of what Aeneas's deception implies

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[137] For comparison, consider the revelation that Laura is still alive in *The Woman in White*, when Walter sees her standing at the grave that bears her name but contains the body of her half-sister Anne Catherick (420). Collins exploits the scene for its shock value, but to more restrained effect than Cytherea's realisation of Aeneas's crime. In *East Lynne*, Wood wrings out the pathos of Archibald's discovery that his children's governess is actually their mother and the wife that he had presumed dead (680; ch. 61). But even in this scene, the melodrama of Isabel's confession ("Oh, forgive me, forgive me! I did not die") is never as histrionic as Cytherea's exclamation. Charles Reade, however, surpasses Hardy's melodramatic tone with what Winifred Hughes calls the "notorious capitals—'HE IS NOT YOUR SON'" (Hughes 22; Reade 213; ch. 37)—of *A Terrible Temptation* (1871), published the same year as *Desperate Remedies*. Reade's "typographic signs of extremity" (Hughes 22), even more so than Hardy's, exaggerate the emotional bombast characteristic of the sensation genre. Each of these authors pulls out the melodramatic stops to reveal a troubled identity. Yet Reade's hyperbolic capitalisation extends as well to less sensational moments of emotion. For instance, in *Hard Cash*, when Julia Dodd expresses her devotion to her mother ("ALL—THE——DAYS—OF HER LIFE") the narrator meta-fictionally acknowledges "the poor device of capitals" (87). As I maintain in this chapter, Hardy's novel is similarly self-reflexive about its own narrative devices.

for her own identity.[138] Owen is slow to realise the truth because its stakes are not as severe for him, invested though he may be in righting his sister. As a woman, Cytherea possesses insights into being the exchangeable object of a desiring male gaze, which inform her ability to solve the crime where her brother and suitor fail.

The mystery element of Hardy's sensation novel thus dramatises shifts of power between the genders. The substitution plot represents one man's misdeeds against three women, but the heroine trumps both the male villain's machinations and the detective efforts of her male protectors. Solving the crime entails an awareness of the precarious position occupied by women. Once again, the substitutions in *Desperate Remedies* support Michie's notion of "female iterability" (63) by exposing a misogynist economy of gender in which women vie for men who treat them as replaceable commodities—much as the protagonist of *Lady Audley's Secret* claims of men in general: "I thought that one pretty face was as good as another pretty face to them, and that when number one with blue eyes and fair hair died, they had only to look out for number two with black eyes and hair, by way of variety" (120; ch. 11).[139] As if to illustrate this bitter sentiment from Braddon's novel, Aeneas's once-loved wife becomes an inconvenient harridan, displaced in affection by Cytherea only to be replaced in identity by Anne. Whereas Lucy Audley is vilified for exploiting similar knowledge in her schemes, Cytherea, by taking on a detective function, achieves a more sympathetic position than Braddon's heroine is allowed. That Cytherea exposes the same truths about gender construction for which Lucy is punished suggests a more progressive social order than that which underlies the textual universe of Braddon's novel nearly a decade earlier.

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[138] Accordingly, Jane Thomas reads the title of *Desperate Remedies* as the women characters' "attempts to reconcile themselves to the limited number of female subject positions available to them" (53).

[139] Nemesvari likewise asserts that masculinity in the text is "established and solidified through the male traffic in women" ("Constructing Masculinity" 68).

Alongside the exchanges of women, *Desperate Remedies* introduces another variant on the substitution motif: the replacement of one character by another of the opposite sex. As previously demonstrated, Hardy posits interchangeability not only between women, but also between women *and* men, according to the logic that the sexes differ in degree. The text realises this potential for opposite-sex substitution in Miss Aldclyffe's scheme to unite her son Aeneas with Cytherea, and again in the sexually charged fight between Edward and Aeneas. In the first instance, Miss Aldclyffe, after her unsuccessful advances toward Cytherea, redirects her efforts toward the union of Cytherea and Aeneas, in what Jones terms a kind of "substitute gratification" ("Sensation Novel" 39). Having failed to recreate her love for Ambrose Graye through the homoerotic pursuit of his daughter, Miss Aldclyffe seeks to recreate it in a heterosexual marriage between *his* daughter and *her* son. The chain of substitutions in the text grows increasingly complex as Miss Aldclyffe first tries to replace Ambrose with Cytherea, and then substitutes Aeneas in her own place.

The substitution in Edward's fight with Aeneas is less obvious. Male-on-male violence displaces an act of heterosexual assault, as the skirmish with Edward interrupts Aeneas's attempted rape of Cytherea. Aeneas breaks into the house and chases Cytherea in order to claim his "right" as her husband, only to find himself rolling around on the floor with his rival for her love. The scene ends, of course, with heterosexuality reaffirmed; Edward rushes to Cytherea's side and takes her in his arms, but is dissuaded from kissing her by the "distressing sensation of whose wife she was" (361; vol. 3, ch. 7). Thus, in both cases, the substitution of a man for a woman is resolved in the reinforcement of heterosexual bonds over homoerotic desire, whether overtly stated as between Miss Aldclyffe and Cytherea, or sublimated in homosocial violence as between Aeneas and Edward. Moreover, one heterosexual bond ultimately wins out over the other, the union of Aeneas and Cytherea giving way to Cytherea's reunion with Edward.

These two instances of opposite-sex substitution aside, *Desperate Remedies* is in line with other sensation texts that primarily depict substitutions of women so as to convey the limited positions allowed them. As cited, Michie analyses *Lady Audley's Secret* and *East Lynne* in terms of women's "inevitable replacement" within the Victorian system of marriage (63). Even in these sensation narratives and others such as *Armadale*, which all hinge on women's duplicities, the female deceivers are motivated by the need to survive in a male-dominated world. In Braddon's novel, rather than allowing the men in her life to replace her with other women, Helen Talboys ensures that she is "the only one to replace herself" (Michie 64), changing her identity first out of self-preservation after her husband disappears, and later for social advancement when Sir Michael Audley's hand in marriage elevates her from governess to lady. *Armadale*'s Lydia Gwilt likewise capitalises on the shared name of the two Allan Armadales to exploit the marriage system that has disadvantaged her in the past. Like these earlier female schemers, Hardy's Cytherea Bradleigh must negotiate a restrictive world, reinventing herself as Miss Aldclyffe after illegitimate motherhood prevents marriage to her true love, and then plotting to unite her son with the daughter of her lost suitor. When male characters carry out the substitution, it is usually at a woman's expense, as when the twin brothers in Collins's *Poor Miss Finch* exploit their identical appearance and Lucilla Finch's blindness. Aeneas in *Desperate Remedies* manipulates a total of three women in his substitution plot.

Yet Hardy's first novel also demonstrates a woman's ability to counteract her treatment as replaceable and interchangeable. Undermining Edward's power to choose between the two women vying for him, Cytherea and Adelaide end their rivalry over Edward by marrying other men. The narrative does not construe this exercise of women's prerogative as a positive thing, however. The prolonged contention between Cytherea and Adelaide catches the interest of the parish gossips, as does the bond between Cytherea and Miss Aldclyffe. Whereas the intimacy between Cytherea and

her mistress fails to become a "taking story," however, the feud between Cytherea and Adelaide prompts several theories about their behaviour, as if to suggest that women's mutual animosity is more comprehensible and interesting than their mutual affection. Clerk Crickett speculates that Adelaide hastened to marry in the spirit of one-upmanship when she learned that Cytherea had rejected Edward in favour of Aeneas: "I expect that when Addy Hinton found Miss Graye wasn't caren to have [Edward], she thought she'd be beforehand with her old enemy in marrying somebody else too. That's maids' logic all over, and maids' malice too" (231; vol. 2, ch. 5). The narrator reflects ironically on this "logic," remarking that women "who are bad enough to divide against themselves under a man's partiality are good enough to instantly unite in a common cause against his attack" (231-32). Adelaide's efforts to outdo Cytherea paradoxically constitute a kind of solidarity between them, once again echoing the scene in which they are united as "atoms of a sex." As in this earlier scene, the narrator emphasises how a common heterosexual desire renders the two women alike, which again implies that women's commonalities are not necessarily a basis for same-sex desire. Cytherea and Adelaide are alike in their feelings toward Edward; their likeness does not entail a desire for one another.

Cytherea and Adelaide's heterosexual interests thus outweigh their motives of homosocial rivalry. Accordingly, Miss Aldclyffe's cook adds to the gossip by affirming that a woman's love for a man will override her disdain for another woman: "Whatever maids' logic is and maids' malice too, if Cytherea Graye even now knows that young Springrove is free again, she'll fling over the steward as soon as look at him" (232). Though the cook does not foresee the difficulties wrought by Aeneas's deception, her prediction comes true with the reunion of Cytherea and Edward at the end of the novel. Thus, for all the ways in which the text destabilises normative femininity, it ultimately reaffirms the primacy, if not the naturalness, of women's heterosexual desires. But Hardy exposes

this heterosexual primacy as a social construction that thrives in public discourse, as exemplified by the servants' gossip, whereas the private space of Cytherea's bedroom conversely permits the expression of same-sex desire.

Hardy reveals the gender and sexual dynamics underlying the substitution motif throughout *Desperate Remedies*. By depicting substituted women but emphasising their plight, Hardy appropriates sensation tropes to another end that will be unpacked in the following section: to reinforce his construction of a feminine ideal while acknowledging its constructedness, a feat of narrative self-reflexivity with further implications for his ties to English sexology.

The feminine ideal and same-sex competition

Hardy's representations of women, as interpreted by Ellis, tend toward a masculinist concept of the ideal feminine, the restrictiveness of which troubles the reading of *Desperate Remedies* as a gender-progressive text, but which elucidates the concepts of gender identity underlying Ellis's later sexological writings. In his 1883 review of Hardy's fiction, Ellis suggests that Hardy's female characters reflect a male perspective, maintaining that "no woman could have created a series of heroines of so persistently narrow range and such consummate fascination within that range" (104). Ellis's review of *Jude* in 1896 elaborates on his reading of Hardy's heroines, developing his understanding of Hardy as a psychologist of women—and, more troublingly, an anthropologist:

> The type of womanhood that Mr. Hardy chiefly loves to study, from Cytherea to Sue, has always been the same, very human, also very feminine, rarely with any marked element of virility, and so contrasting curiously with the androgynous heroines loved of Mr. Meredith.[140] The latter, with their resolute daring and energy,

[140] According to *The Life of Thomas Hardy*, George Meredith directly influenced Hardy's turn toward the sensation genre after he abandoned his manuscript for the never-published *The Poor Man and the Lady*, a social satire subtitled "A Story with no Plot" (*Biography Revisited* 100-3). Meredith purportedly read the manuscript and advised Hardy to write a more plot-oriented novel with a "purely artistic purpose" (*Life* 82). Nemesvari has recently contested this claim, observing the

> are of finer calibre and more imposing; they are also very much rarer in the actual world than Mr. Hardy's women, who represent, it seems to me, a type not uncommon in the south of England, where the heavier Teutonic and Scandinavian elements are, more than elsewhere, modified by the alert and volatile elements furnished by earlier races. (306)

Much of Ellis's literary criticism assesses the correlation between fictional representations and actual human life, a thread that continues throughout his sexological work, as shown by his citations of literary texts as evidence in *Sexual Inversion*. By contrasting the rarity of Meredith's "androgynous" heroines with the proliferation of Hardy's "feminine" women in everyday life, Ellis anticipates his own later classification of female sexual inverts according to their "more or less distinct trace of masculinity" (*Sexual Inversion* 167). In both cases, Ellis deems the mixing of masculine and feminine traits a real but exceptional phenomenon. Whereas *Sexual Inversion* validates alternative gender and sexual identities by grounding them in biological reality, Ellis's literary analysis champions Hardy's idealistic female characterisations by representing them as consistent with the norms of social reality. These norms do not allow for the sexual variety that Ellis would later bring to light in his sexology. Just as Ellis's 1883 review avoids Miss Aldclyffe's androgyny and same-sex attraction to Cytherea, so his 1896 piece denies gender or sexual deviance in Hardy's women overall. Ellis's normalisation of the Hardyan heroine suggests that, if she is a model of desirability for the male reader as much as an object of fascination for the author, then their heterosexual masculine desires must be normative. The normalisation is consistent with Hardy's break from his sensational roots, thereby securing his acceptance by realist standards of properly gendered and sexualised characterisation.

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unlikelihood of Meredith advising Hardy to write a sensation novel when Meredith himself was a detractor of plot-heavy melodrama who had rejected Wood's *East Lynne* for publication by Chapman (*Sensationalism* 25-26).

Tellingly, Ellis aligns the normative model of female desirability in Hardy's literature with a Nordic strain of Englishness, conflating a gendered ideal with a racialised one. By generalising Hardy's women as a regional "type," Ellis hints at a racist gender stereotyping that predates his anthropological generalisations in *Sexual Inversion*. In 1896, Ellis links "Teutonic and Scandinavian elements" to the essential femininity of Hardy's heroines, but in 1897 he speculates a link between four case studies of sexual inversion and their shared Germanic heritage (181). Brickell reads Ellis's apparent ethnologisation of sexuality not as an essentialist move, but rather as an acknowledgement that some expressions of same-sex desire "were the result of cultural context" (433). This interpretation may be true of Ellis's ethnological statements in *Sexual Inversion*, but his 1896 review of *Jude* refers unambiguously to Nordic "elements" being "modified by the alert and volatile elements furnished by earlier races" (314). Ethnic origins would preoccupy Hardy himself in his late novels, as evinced by the significance of Tess's ancient Norman name and ancestry in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and the concern with cultural tradition on the Isle of Slingers in *The Well-Beloved* (1897).

Desperate Remedies, published two decades before *Tess*, hierarchically elevates certain types of womanly beauty without yet ethnologising them. Hardy establishes ideal femininity as an essence or "type" early in the text, when he first describes young Cytherea Bradleigh (later Miss Aldclyffe) through the eyes of Ambrose Graye (who will become the father of the second Cytherea):

> In truth she was not so very unlike country girls of that type of beauty, except in one respect. She was perfect in her manner and bearing, and they were not. A mere distinguishing peculiarity, by catching the eye, is often read as the pervading characteristic, and she appeared to him no less than perfection throughout — transcending her rural rivals in very nature. (7-8; vol. 1, ch. 1)

In Hardy's construction of the feminine, a woman achieves distinction not by diverging from the standard but by embodying it to the fullest. Any differing mark is a "mere distinguishing peculiarity," save for the only difference valued: that of superior degree. The narrative sounds its first note of female competitiveness when Cytherea "transcend[s] her rural rivals" by performing the ideal of feminine comportment to an extent beyond them. The trope of exceptionality approaching the superlative recurs in the introduction of Cytherea Bradleigh's namesake, Cytherea Graye: "an exceptional young maiden who glowed amid the dulness like a single bright-red poppy in a field of brown stubble" (11; vol. 1, ch. 1). These visual perceptions of female beauty align with a heterosexual masculine perspective, which the text openly admits when the narrator contemplates "that men love with their eyes; women with their ears" (39; vol. 1, ch. 3).

The desiring male gaze connects directly to the substitution motif. Ambrose Graye sees Cytherea Bradleigh as "by far the most beautiful and queenly thing he had ever beheld" (7), and he pines for her even after she is lost to him. When he marries another woman, this "second young lady" can never live up to the memory of his first love, and she remains unnamed in the text, even though she becomes the mother of his children, one of whom he names after his long-lost beloved (8).[141] The narrative presents Ambrose's wife as an unloved replacement for the first Cytherea, anticipating Aeneas's treatment of Anne Seaway as an inadequate substitute.

Hardy's narrative gaze continues to typify femininity when he describes the "[c]oncentrated essence of woman" that "pervaded the room" during the contentious encounter between Cytherea and Adelaide (116; vol. 1, ch. 8). The text compares the two women's "plentiful" hair and the "regularity and whiteness" of their teeth while contrasting Adelaide as "much paler," with a "mouth [that] expressed love less forcibly than Cytherea's," a "less elastic" tread, and a "more self-

[141] Maria DiBattista explores the theme of first loves and the yearnings they inspire in *First Love: The Affections of Modern Fiction* (1991), which examines novels by Hardy, Lawrence, and others.

possessed" demeanour (113; vol. 1, ch. 8). The contrast of corresponding features and comportment, differing in degree or quantity rather than quality, exemplifies femininity as an essence that some women embody or possess in certain respects more than others: in brief, an ideal by which each woman is to be measured. As explored in my first chapter, the emphasis on hair is a common motif in sensation fiction,[142] which *Desperate Remedies* takes a step further as a token in the hierarchy of femininity. In addition to the passage about Adelaide, Hardy's narrative dwells on the comparative fullness of hair in an earlier exchange between Miss Aldclyffe and Cytherea, who possesses "at least five times as much of that valuable auxiliary to a woman's beauty" as does her employer (68; vol. 1, ch. 5).

Hardy emphasises women's physical traits—such as Cytherea's hair or the azure eyes that distinguish Eunice Manston from Anne Seaway—to an extent approaching biological essentialism in his conception of femininity. Rachel Malane, observing how Hardy alternates between progressive representations of women and reductive generalisations, argues that his opinion "tends to divide along lines of culture and nature, in that he challenges gender norms that he perceives as 'man-made,'" but "bolsters gender norms that he believes have a biological basis" (159). But the text of *Desperate Remedies* cannot sustain this naturalisation of femininity. The narrator's seemingly inconsistent observations undo any certainties about the fixity of binary gender, and by extension the stability of Hardy's feminine ideal.

Indeed, Hardy's novel destabilises its own ostensible assumption that a heterosexual male gaze elevates the ideal woman. Miss Aldclyffe, herself once the object of the desiring male gaze, looks with desire at Cytherea, deriving from her loveliness "a palpable pleasure [. . .] yet a pleasure

[142] See my discussion of hair in *Lady Audley's Secret* in Chapter 1 (66-7). Galia Ofek comments that "Victorian critics found the representation of hair in sensation novels excessive and exaggerated, and thought that it testified to the poor quality of both characterization and descriptive power in such fiction" (102). Peter Coxon traces the preoccupation with women's hair throughout the whole of Hardy's oeuvre (95-144).

which appeared to partake less of the nature of affectionate satisfaction than of mental gratification" (130-31). The latter clause belies other statements in the text that indicate Miss Aldclyffe's physical interest in Cytherea. Yet to read Miss Aldclyffe's "mental gratification" as evidence that her regard for Cytherea cannot be that of a hopeful lover is to misinterpret Hardy's depiction of desire. Tony Fincham describes the recurring pattern of idealised love in Hardy's novels as the "Fitzpierston Syndrome," coined after Edred Fitzpiers from *The Woodlanders* (1887) and Jocelyn Pierston from *The Well-Beloved* (1897) (Fincham 161-63).[143] The main criteria of this syndrome include "instantaneous visual fascination" and being "in love with an image—a product of the imagination" (163). So focused is this desire on a visual and mental concept of the beloved that there is a "[g]eneral denial of [a] sexual element in the attraction" (Fincham 164). Like many a male lover in Hardy's fiction, Miss Aldclyffe loves with her eyes and her mind, so that even her yearning for physical touch she often expresses in highly imagistic ways, as in her wish for "a creature who could glide round [her] luxurious indolent body in that manner, and look at [her] in that way" (56).[144] Ellis would later define the female invert similarly as "an enthusiastic admirer of feminine beauty, especially of the statuesque beauty of the body, unlike in this the normal woman whose sexual emotion is but faintly tinged by aesthetic feeling" (176-77).

That Miss Aldclyffe enacts a desire usually embodied by male figures in Hardy's later novels not only suggests that the sensation form more readily permitted depictions of same-sex attraction than Hardy's subsequent literary modes would; it also flags a transitional period preceding but

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[143] In keeping with the aims of my study, I borrow Fincham's concept not as a literal diagnostic category, but a useful descriptor for a textual pattern in Hardy's novels.

[144] In the bedroom scene, the discovery of Cytherea's love for Edward instantly tarnishes Miss Aldclyffe's idealised image of Cytherea: "You are not, after all, the innocent I took you for," she says (82), anticipating Angel Clare's reaction upon learning of Tess's past in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Seeing Tess as transformed in his eyes, Angel proclaims that he has been in love not truly with her but with "[a]nother woman in [her] shape" (257; pt. 4, ch. 34). DiBattista regards Miss Aldclyffe's similar disappointment as the "primal scene of Hardy's erotic dramas," the "moment when the amatory quest, the pursuit of the well-beloved, is both fulfilled and metamorphosed" (243). DiBattista attributes the primacy of first love to the initial subjective experience of romantic desire, whereas my argument concerns the purportedly objective traits that render the beloved a superlative figure, and the implicit doubling of identity.

anticipating the sexological definition of inverted desires. As per Marcus's argument, female same-sex desire was compatible with mid-Victorian femininity, but Hardy's characterisation of Miss Aldclyffe, like Braddon's portrayal of Lady Audley, depicts an early association of female homoerotic desire with transgressively inverted gender. A contrast with Hardy's later novels further helps us trace the development of Victorian gender and sexuality. The advent of sexology, as shown, would necessitate Hardy's defence of Sue Bridehead against charges of inversion in 1895. But in 1871, Miss Aldclyffe, while disparaged in vague terms by periodical reviewers as "unnatural" and "nasty," escapes the more specific castigation to which Sue would be subjected two decades later, although the critics' discomfort with Miss Aldclyffe already hints at an imminent stigma around female homoerotic desire, prescient of cultural attitudes post-sexology.

Also striking in *Desperate Remedies* is the same-sex variation on idealised love that later novels would render in heteronormative terms. Miss Aldclyffe's attraction to Cytherea recreates her love for Cytherea's father Ambrose, prefiguring Jocelyn Pierston's pursuit of three generations of women named Avice Caro in *The Well-Beloved*. Whereas the cross-generational desire for an elusive ideal extends to both sexes in Hardy's first published novel, it remains strictly heterosexual in his last, perhaps reflecting Hardy's desire to distance his fiction from its sensational origins.

Hardy's implicit acknowledgment that attraction depends on a mental construct further complicates the representation of desire in *Desperate Remedies*. Like Miss Aldclyffe, Edward exhibits the "Fitzpierston Syndrome," although he is fully aware that his strongest desire resides in the realm of the ideal, more likely to be realised in literature than in the flesh:

> He grew older, and concluded that the ideas, or rather emotions, which possessed him on the subject, were probably too unreal ever to be found embodied in the flesh of a woman. Thereupon, he developed a plan of satisfying his dreams by wandering

> away to the heroines of poetical imagination, and took no further thought on the earthly realization of his formless desire, in more homely matters satisfying himself with his cousin. (173; vol. 2, ch. 2)

This passage challenges the reader to reconsider other narrative statements in the novel that appear to essentialise gender, whether by legitimising it as biological sex or by mystifying it as an eternal essence. The revelation of Edward's feelings about his cousin Adelaide ostensibly settles the competition between her and Cytherea. As a diminished version of Edward's ideal, Adelaide fulfils the "homely" aspects of his need for companionship. His subsequent preference for Cytherea implies that she fulfils his more ethereal romantic yearnings.

Cytherea's apparent embodiment of an abstraction exposes how Edward's heterosexual masculinity is itself abstract and only reified in contradistinction to Cytherea's femininity. According to Jane Thomas,

> The inadequacy of Adelaide lies in the fact that she represents for [Edward] Springrove an aspect or 'echo' of his conscious self in material form. Springrove's masculine subjectivity is dependent on the isolation of an object—something that will define his masculinity through opposition. Cytherea is constructed as the visible manifestation of 'the indefinable helpmate to the remoter sides of himself', a negative image. (59)

Edward desires Cytherea more than he does Adelaide because Cytherea's difference from him affirms his maleness. For Adelaide, Edward conversely feels an attraction based on affinity, which is distinct from his desire for an opposite. The text explicitly states that he feels the same kind of affinity "sometimes for men" as for women. Thus, his feelings for Adelaide do not properly masculinise him, as his masculinity depends on a heterosexual attraction to difference. Hardy

resolves Edward's sexual ambiguity by ultimately aligning his "true" desire with a properly masculine gender, befitting a conventional hero. In contrast, the villainous Miss Aldclyffe and Aeneas remain ambiguous, their desires fluid and unaligned with the "proper" genders, necessitating their expulsion from the text to secure a conventional conclusion.[145]

Yet, by suggesting that only literary convention could enable Edward to find his elusive beloved and realise his "formless desire," Hardy's narrative meta-fictionally interrogates its own depictions of gender. If women and men differ in degree more than in kind, then femininity and masculinity as pure and discrete essences are fictions. Also illusory is the notion, implicit elsewhere in the text, that one woman can be more feminine than another, for the earlier scene in which Cytherea and Adelaide are reduced alike to "atoms of a sex" (117) undermines any real ascendancy of one over the other. Only in the literary imagination can a fully distinct feminine gender take hold.[146] Literature accordingly allows for greater nuance than science in representing the facets of human experience that are constituted linguistically.

Hardy expounds his views on the interrelationship and comparative values of science and literature in his 1891 essay "The Science of Fiction." He likens fiction to a science only inasmuch as it must derive from "human nature and circumstances," and he states that scientific methods

> can have no part or share in the construction of a story, however recent speculations may have favoured such an application. We may assume with certainty that directly the constructive stage is entered upon, Art—high or low—begins to exist.
>
> The most devoted apostle of realism, the sheerest naturalist, cannot escape, any more than the withered old gossip over her fire, the exercise of Art in his labour

[145] As shown earlier, Miss Aldclyffe's desire for Cytherea is not masculinised; nor are Aeneas's feminine features connected to his desire for men.

[146] Hardy would continue to complicate his notions of a feminine ideal in later texts such as *Tess* and *The Well-Beloved*. The latter, published in the same year as Ellis and Symonds's *Sexual Inversion*, is a heavily revised version of *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved*, which had been serialised in 1892.

> or pleasure of telling a tale. Not until he becomes an automatic reproducer of all impressions whatsoever can he be called purely scientific, or even a manufacturer on scientific principles. If in the exercise of his reason he select or omit, with an eye to being more truthful than truth (the just aim of Art), he transforms himself into a technicist at a move. (134)

Hardy concedes that realism is limited by "the impossibility of reproducing in its entirety the phantasmagoria of experience with infinite and atomic truth" (135). He further defends the added value of creative license, which allows literary representation to surpass scientific data:

> What cannot be discerned by eye and ear, what may be apprehended only by the mental tactility that comes from a sympathetic appreciativeness of life in all its manifestations, this is the gift which renders its possessor a more accurate delineator of human nature than many another with twice his powers and means of external observation, but without that sympathy. (137)

By suggesting that literary art transcends what can be experienced by the senses, Hardy presupposes a complex interiority that empirical observation alone cannot fathom. Moreover, the interior reality intuited by an artistic sensibility is not necessarily a fixed and stable inner essence, such as the sexual sciences presume to seek. Hardy's literary medium further eschews essentialism through self-reflexive narrative techniques by which the author interrogates his own statements, as I will illustrate through Hardy's descriptions of gendered clothing in *Desperate Remedies*.

The clothed and gendered body

Hardy's narrative observations about clothing and gender strongly imply that femininity is constructed. His concomitant narrative anxieties about the stability of the idealised feminine image derive from the sensation genre's tropes of female duplicity and the deceptive manipulation of

physical appearances, as exemplified by such characters as Lady Audley and Lydia Gwilt. Whereas Collins depicts Lydia's cosmetic and sartorial enhancements in service of her scheming, however, Hardy un-sensationally suggests that the careful construction of a beautiful appearance is much more benign: an everyday practice that becomes so routine as to feel instinctual.

A memorable example of sartorial commentary punctuates Aeneas and Cytherea's initial meeting, when he invites her inside his porch to avoid the rain. As they brush against each other, "the touch of clothes, which was nothing to Manston, sen[ds] a thrill through Cytherea," and the narrator generalises the significance of clothing for men and women respectively:

> His clothes are something exterior to every man; but to a woman her dress is part of her body. Its motions are all present to her intelligence if not to her eyes; no man knows how his coat-tails swing. By the slightest hyperbole it may be said that her dress has sensation. Crease but the very Ultima Thule of fringe or flounce, and it hurts her as much as pinching her. Delicate antennae, or feelers, bristle on every outlying frill. Go to the uppermost: she is there; tread on the lowest: the fair creature is there almost before you. (128-29; vol. 1; ch. 8)

Generating erotic frisson from Victorian fashion, Hardy renders clothing more than a sensual metonym for the female body: fabric becomes a physical extension of the woman who wears it, endowed with tactile feeling. Hardy's sentiments once again coincide with notions from sexology. In Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*, case study 129 reports, "Female dresses do not annoy the feminine-feeling man; for he, like every woman, feels them as belonging to his person, and not as something foreign" (211). These ideas further dovetail with Butler's much later theories about drag in *Gender Trouble*, according to which there is no interior essence of gender, and clothing is a crucial component of the outward performance of femininity (186-89).

In *Jude the Obscure*, however, Sue conversely protests that women's clothes are mere "sexless cloth and linen" (198; pt. 3, ch. 3), a statement which ostensibly presupposes an essential, physically constituted gender apart from the immaterial trappings of attire. It would seem that the later text entertains a different understanding of clothing and gender than voiced by the narrator of *Desperate Remedies*. But Sue's remark is a reaction to her own kneejerk feelings of modest embarrassment at Jude seeing her undressed while her rain-soaked clothing hangs to dry. As with the incident in the earlier novel, the salient point is that clothing is bound up in social conventions governing gender behaviour, which Hardy interrogates in both cases.

In *Desperate Remedies*, when Hardy figures a woman's clothes as a part of her corporeal being, he undermines the essentialist location of sex traits in the subject's biological makeup. According to the narrator's logic, the artifice of attire is as real a manifestation of gender as any physical feature. A woman's dress, in other words, is equally constitutive of her gender as is the body underneath. If Hardy seems to essentialise gender differences by generalising that women are more sensitive than men about their attire, what he actually exposes is a disparity in stereotyped social behaviour: a greater self-consciousness about the clothed body that results from the policing of genteel feminine conduct, betraying a woman's heightened sensitivity in accordance with Victorian gender ideology. Men wear their garb with relatively unthinking ease because it is "exterior" to their bodies and therefore not as constitutive of masculinity as women's clothing is of femininity. Clothes, in Hardy's reckoning, make the woman more than they do the man.

Hardy's diction in the passage bears out the self-reflexivity of his narrative. The erotic connotations of "sensation" reinforce Hardy's meta-knowledge about the lurid appeal of his chosen genre for the novel and the somatic effects it supposedly induces in readers' bodies—especially those of women, whom Oliphant deemed susceptible to the arousing "physical attractions"

purveyed by sensation novels ("Novels" 175). The "sensation" that Cytherea feels when her dress brushes against Aeneas's clothes thus parallels the experience to which women readers, according to disapproving critics of sensation fiction, were most vulnerable.

After gesturing to Classicism with the Latin "Ultima Thule," which denotes distant geographic boundaries, Hardy deploys the language of scientific enquiry, detecting "[d]elicate antennae, or feelers" on the textile surface of a garment. The first metaphor maps the female body to incorporate clothing as an intimate part of its geography, while the second continues Hardy's pattern of anatomising women, this time as a species of animal. Imbuing his figurative constructions with a biological "reality," Hardy subverts the distinctions between the physical and the social, the scientific and the literary.

The text elaborates upon the relationship between clothing and gender in the scene of Cytherea's wedding to Aeneas. The narrator conveys the bride's lack of enthusiasm in the ceremony, morbidly calling it "the termination of Cytherea's existence as a single woman":[147]

> Yet she was prettily and carefully dressed; a strange contradiction in a man's idea of things—a saddening, perplexing contradiction. Are there any points in which a difference of sex amounts to a difference of nature? Then this is surely one. Not so much, as it is commonly put, in regard to the amount of consideration given, but in the conception of the thing considered. A man emasculated by coxcombry may spend more time upon the arrangement of his clothes than any woman, but even then there is no fetichism in his idea of them—they are still only a covering he uses for a time. But here was Cytherea, in the bottom of her heart almost indifferent to life, yet possessing an instinct with which her heart had nothing to do, the instinct to

[147] Michie reads marriage in sensation fiction as a kind of doubling: "the transformation of a young girl into another person" (58).

> be particularly regardful of those sorry trifles, her robe, her flowers, her veil, and her gloves. (233; vol. 2, ch. 5)

The comparative lack of male interest in clothing—or rather, in Hardy's words, the lack of "fetichism," even for "emasculated" dandies enamoured of dressing up—coheres with Marcus's research on women's fashion in *Between Women*. Marcus argues that Victorian women's clothing provided a focal point for women's shared gaze more than the gaze of Victorian men, which the clothes were often intended to attract. Marcus writes:

> To help them marry men, mothers willingly draped daughters in clothes that exposed or accentuated breasts, waists, and hips. But the gaze solicited by women's fashionable dress belonged most often to women, for Victorian manliness directed men to admire women's bodies while deriding the fashions that clothed them. (117)

No wonder, then, that Hardy's male authorial gaze perceives women's attire as being at one with their bodies. Moreover, Cytherea is motherless, and thus the spectacle of her on her wedding day lacks the female homosocial aspects that Marcus theorises. Perhaps this lack exacerbates Cytherea's unease: she is decked out for the gaze of a man whom she does not love, and she lacks a mother or close female companion with whom to enjoy her bridal finery.

Observing the disparity between Cytherea's crafted performance of a perfect bride and her private despair at being married, Hardy is less a "psychologist" than a critic of socialised behaviour. The narrator gestures once more to scientific diction, asking whether a "difference of sex amounts to a difference of nature," but Hardy's tone is more ironic than confident in scientific facts. As with the earlier passage, the suggestion that wearing clothes constitutes a natural tendency is paradoxical, troubling the notion that male and female natures differ in their mental "conception" of things. If Hardy figures clothing as a part of the natural body, how literally can we read his statement that

mental concepts are also natural? Hardy qualifies Cytherea's "instinct to be particularly regardful" of her dress as an inclination "with which her heart had nothing to do." In other words, because Cytherea is not marrying Aeneas wholeheartedly, her "feminine" fastidiousness about her wedding dress is at odds with her real feelings, and thus no more "natural" than her garments are literally a sensate extension of her body. Cytherea goes through the motions of her expected gender performance because it is socially ingrained. Although Hardy adopts the terminology of science, his literary knowingness subverts any scientific claims, instead nodding slyly to the persistence of social scripts. Hardy's portrait of Cytherea thus exemplifies Hughes's assertion in *The Maniac in the Cellar* that sensation fiction posits "a new view of character as an unstable process rather than a finished entity" (187), while further demonstrating how this instability affects the representation of gender.

Yet Hardy repeatedly depicts male shock at the discovery of female deception in his final two novels that take up the motif. In *Jude the Obscure*, Jude is disgusted to learn that his first wife Arabella wears false hair, and he uneasily ponders the possibility that some women "ha[ve] an instinct towards artificiality in their very blood, and bec[o]me adepts at counterfeiting" (53; pt. 1, ch. 9). In Hardy's subsequent and final published novel, *The Well-Beloved*, the Pygmalion-like sculptor Jocelyn Pierston spends decades pursuing his female ideal in three generations of women named Avice Caro, only to reunite at the age of sixty with Marcia, another woman from his past. Marcia initially appears to have retained her youth and beauty but surprises Jocelyn with the revelation that she is "as skilled in beautifying artifices as any *passée* wife of the Faubourg St. Germain" (331; ch. 8). Without makeup, Marcia is "the image and superscription of Age—an old woman, pale and shrivelled, her forehead ploughed, her cheek hollow" (332; ch. 8). Lamenting of her lost looks that "the moth eats the garment somewhat" over time (332), Marcia brings full-circle the metaphorical equation of women's bodies with their attire that Hardy initiated twenty-six years earlier in his first

novel. In *Desperate Remedies*, Hardy thus acknowledges the artifices instrumental in constructing ideal feminine beauty, even as his narrative gaze takes pleasure in its image and mourns its loss. Hardy's insights about the social performance of femininity proceed from the sensation tradition with its trope of the duplicitous woman who dresses, coifs, and makes herself up to manipulate her appearance toward unsavoury goals.

Further evincing Hardy's relationship to sexology, the connection between clothing and bodies also preoccupied Ellis, who takes up the theme in *The New Spirit* (1890) when he observes the French naturalist painter Jean-François Millet's expression of Classical aesthetic ideals:

> One little incident mentioned by Madame Millet to a friend is suggestive, "of Millet compelling her to wear the same shirt for an uncomfortably long time; not to paint the dirt, as his early critics would have us believe, but that the rough linen should simplify its folds and take the form of the body, that he might give a fresher and stronger accent to those qualities he so loved, the garment becoming, as it were, a part of the body, and expressing, as he has said, even more than the nude, the larger and simpler forms of Nature." There is the genuine Hellenic spirit, working in a different age and under a different sky. Millet felt that for him it was not true to paint the naked body, and at the same time that the body alone was the supremely interesting thing to paint. (106)

Ellis also attributes the "genuine Hellenic spirit" to Whitman, whose work exhibits the thinly veiled homoeroticism that found a public outlet in the late-nineteenth-century fascination with Classical Hellenism, which Hardy and Ellis shared with Symonds, Carpenter, and other Victorian men of letters. As shown in my discussion of *Hard Cash*, the Victorian Classical revival is often associated

specifically with homoerotic celebrations of male beauty, but Hardy, beginning with *Desperate Remedies*, draws on Classical imagery to idealise representations of feminine beauty in his novels.

Classical ideals and sexological constructions of women

As the sexologists derive their inversion theories from Classical precepts, so does Hardy deploy Classical allusions in *Desperate Remedies* to help illuminate an essentialist logic of gender difference that ostensibly governs his characters' behaviour. But, while the allusions to Classical myth reinforce Hardy's intellectual ties to sexology, his narrative commentary continues to undermine its own evocation of essentialist ideas about gender and sexuality.

Hardy's fascination with Classical imagery is most evident in his naming of Cytherea and Aeneas to invoke ideals of female vis-à-vis male beauty. Cytherea, as discussed, is an alternative name for Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, while the Trojan warrior Aeneas is her son.[148] Whereas Victorian homophile culture generally deployed Classical mythic tropes to champion male homoeroticism, implicit in Aeneas's androgynous beauty, Hardy also cites Classical symbolism in his constructions of femininity. This latter facet of Hardy's gender representations drew early critical notice from Ellis, who perceives throughout Hardy's oeuvre a mythologised feminine essence, a "type of womanhood [. . .] in all its delicate variations," characterised by "something elemental, something *demonic*." For Ellis, Hardy's women are "Undines of the earth," who, in their "delicate moods and caprices," embody "the elemental purity of nature" ("Hardy's Novels" 106-7). These mythological tropes paint Hardy as less progressive than I have been arguing him to be, and evince a basic contradiction in his treatment of gender. In *Desperate Remedies*, as I have shown, the fluidity of Hardy's implicit female continuum depends on women's proximity to a mythological archetype whose essentialist fixity supports binary gender and promotes female hierarchy rather than feminist

[148] Richard Sylvia's reading of *Desperate Remedies* notes that the mythic Aphrodite "has been considered a double figure," and a "polarized image of good and evil" (104). However, I will emphasise how Hardy's allusion connotes the duality of *Pandemos* and *Ouranious*—carnal versus ethereal love.

solidarity or same-sex affection. Whereas Ellis deploys Classical myth and modern science toward a coherent goal of defending sexual inversion, Hardy's mythological and scientific allusions are ultimately inconsistent. Yet this very inconsistency bespeaks the fragmented worldview that Hardy's self-reflexive literary medium exposes.

Hardy's Classical imagery emphasises thematic questions that sexologists would also explore. Carpenter and Symonds share Hardy's fascination with the dual personae of Aphrodite, which in Carpenter's *Sex-Love and its Place in a Free Society* (1894) and Symonds's "A Problem in Greek Ethics" (1883) represent two mutually supportive desires: *Aphrodite Ouranios* and *Aphrodite Pandemos* (Symonds 233-4; Carpenter 8), corresponding precisely to the relationship between ethereal ideal and physical embodiment that Hardy first contemplates in *Desperate Remedies* and later revisits in *The Well-Beloved.*[149] Carpenter's suggestion that "corporeal amatory instinct" and "ethereal human yearning" are one and the same (*Sex-Love* 8) provides an answer to Edward Springrove's previously cited concern that "the ideas, or rather emotions, which possessed him" are "probably too unreal ever to be found embodied in the flesh" (173; vol. 2, ch. 2).

Hardy returns to this theme throughout his novels, most poignantly in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, which calls explicit attention to Angel Clare's perception of Tess as an embodiment of a mythical feminine. Note the consistency with *Desperate Remedies* in the narrative observation that men "love with their eyes" and in the atomisation of the entire female sex to a single specimen:

> Tess was the merest stray phenomenon to Angel Clare as yet—a rosy warming apparition which had only just acquired the attribute of persistence in his consciousness. So he allowed his mind to be occupied with her, deeming his

[149] As shown in Chapter 2, Reade resolves a similar Cartesian divide in the characterisation of Alfred Hardie in *Hard Cash*. Refer as well to the earlier discussion of *Ouranios* and *Pandemos* in the introduction (32-34)

> preoccupation to be no more than a philosopher's regard of an exceedingly novel, fresh, and interesting specimen of womankind. (159-60; pt. 2, ch. 20)

The narrator elaborates on what Tess signifies for Angel and on her response to his perceptions:

> She was no longer the milkmaid, but a visionary essence of woman—a whole sex condensed into one typical form. He called her Artemis, Demeter and other fanciful names, half-teasingly, which she did not like because she did not understand them. (161; pt. 2, ch. 20)

The text frames Classical nomenclature as male-dominated and inaccessible to the woman whose very being it purports to describe. In contrast to Ellis's belief that a return to Classical forms was coherent with scientific progress and thus healthy for Victorian society, Hardy quietly acknowledges the exclusionary drawbacks of Hellenic aestheticism and its reduction of women to beautiful symbols. These implications of Tess's diminishment prompt Andrew Radford to reject the aesthetic value of idealised forms, arguing that Angel's

> visual strategies and recurrent posturing make it impossible to entertain traditional mythological representation as a means of invigorating a desiccated late Victorian milieu. He converts Tess's sensuous reality into the abstract essence of a tritely mythologized Nature. ("Making of a Goddess" 203)

Angel, of course, abandons Tess after he discovers just how different she is from his ideal vision, only to return to her when he realises his errors in judgment. Angel succumbs to the "Fitzpierston Syndrome," to borrow Fincham's term once again. The implicit condemnation of his thinking is easy to read as Hardy's self-censure of his own Classical idealism. This awareness on Hardy's part goes a long way toward recuperating his work from Ellis's assessment of him as a "psychologist" of women, implicitly chauvinist in his homogenisation of the female sex.

Hardy's self-reflexivity and common ground with Symonds and Carpenter become clearer in *The Well-Beloved*. Hardy's evocation of Classical ideals reaches its apotheosis in this novel, with Pierston pursuing an ideal woman of "no tangible substance" but "many embodiments," whom he sometimes envisions as "the implacable Aphrodite herself" (184-85; pt. 1, ch. 2). The contrast between this novel and *Desperate Remedies* underlines the greater extent to which Hardy's first novel acknowledges same-sex desire and gender variance. Whereas the feminine essence of Pierston's well-beloved migrates only between bodies biologically sexed as female, Cytherea Aldclyffe tries to relocate the beloved essence of Ambrose Graye in the daughter that he has named for her. The elder Cytherea's sexual interest in the younger suggests that the same ethereal essence might be transported from a male to a female body, with the result of same-sex desire supplanting a heterosexual love. Thus, Hardy's first novel posits a kind of sexual inversion, predating Ellis's coinage of the term and predicated on the doubled identities of sensation fiction. Hardy's abandonment of this inverted sexual logic for the comparatively gender-essentialist reincarnations of *The Well-Beloved* parallels his disavowal of the sensation label. By this time, he had also downplayed his ties to sexology by discrediting the perception of Sue Bridehead as an invert.

Ellis's summation of the women in Hardy's fiction as reducible to a single type may thus apply more accurately to his final novel than his first. It also calls to mind the arguments raised by feminist and queer critics that Ellis's work in turn is limited in its representations of the female sexual invert.[150] But as shown in my introduction, Ellis's notions warrant reassessment as much as Hardy's. While Halberstam contends that Ellis ultimately "reduce[s] sexuality to binary systems of difference" (76), it might be fairer to say that Ellis's model of gender variance tried but failed to transcend the already entrenched sex binary. Halberstam further disputes that Ellis, "rather than simply being guilty of stereotyping lesbian behaviors on a heterosexual model, fail[s] to render the

[150] See my overview of these perspectives in the introduction (26-31).

full range of perverse sexual behaviors in women in all their complexity" (77). This appraisal echoes Ellis's own claim that Hardy exhibits a masculine perspective by sketching female characterisations of "persistently narrow range" (*Novels* 104). Crozier's contention that Ellis be evaluated in his own historical context (78-80), however, should apply equally to the reading of Hardy.

Ellis's relative progressiveness as a sexologist becomes apparent by comparison to Krafft-Ebing. Rather than singling out Ellis's work for misrepresenting women, Jonathan Ned Katz attributes greater influence to Krafft-Ebing in putting forward an essentialist concept of sex difference that "makes women separate and unequal" (Katz 31). Krafft-Ebing caters his studies to the perspective of a male readership, while relegating women readers "to another, purer sphere, out of earshot of his disturbing case histories" and sheltered "from the world's exciting, dangerous sensuality" (Katz 31). Krafft-Ebing's treatment of women thus mirrors the views of Victorian literary reviewers, such as Oliphant, who condemned sensation fiction for exposing female readers to gross carnality. Quite a different attitude to women and their sexuality emerges in Ellis's case study of "Miss M.," who "can see nothing wrong in her feelings," and whom Ellis credits with wishing to "help bring light on the subject [of sexual inversion] and to lift the shadow from other lives" (*Sexual Inversion* 170).[151] That Ellis conveys Miss M.'s subjectivity is in itself remarkable; he further reports her perception of her own sexual being and her motivations for participating in his study. The faithfulness to her viewpoint and her sexual frankness contrasts with how Krafft-Ebing's text positions female subjects, and how critics of sensation fiction tried to deny women's desires. Ellis's intellectual collaboration with major feminists of his generation, such as Eleanor Marx and Olive Schreiner, bears out his dedication to their cause of validating women's sexuality.[152]

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[151] See the introduction for a full discussion of this case study (25).

[152] Showalter credits Marx, Schreiner, and Ellis with championing together "a future of mutual desire" (*Sexual Anarchy* 46), in which women's sexual desires would be recognised equally with those of men.

Even if Ellis's chosen medium of scientific discourse is still restricted in ways that Hardy's literary medium transcends, Ellis's willingness to acknowledge female interiority is a revealing similarity with Hardy's novel, and one which returns us to the theme of doubles. Ingham marks *Desperate Remedies* as the beginning of Hardy's sympathy for women's experiences: a "turning-point in Hardy's view of women" in which "he comes to see the mismatch between the outer life imposed on women and the inner life they experience," a disparity that would "become the main focus of his novels" (xx). As the preceding chapters have shown, the schism between inner and outer lives is a major facet of the sensation genre's principle of doubling, so it is appropriate that this watershed in Hardy's treatment of women occurs in his most explicitly sensational novel. That both Hardy and Ellis revert at times to "narrow" conceptions of women certainly reflects the Victorian mindset that restricted female subjects to the stifling binary of the selfless angel and the depraved fallen woman. But revisionist critics of Hardy contend that he often challenges these gender roles, in keeping with the patterns of increased female agency that Radford and other modern critics find in sensation fiction (*Sensation* 92-3). Rosemarie Morgan reads Hardy as eschewing the Victorian polarisation of women by instead combining "moral seriousness and sexiness together in the single female form," thus "removing the paragon from her pedestal" and "raising the fallen woman from the gutter" (xii-xiii). Morgan's praise of Hardy casts in a feminist light the "new view of character" that Hughes attributes to the sensation genre in its exploration of dualities (187). Thus, the limitations of Hardy's fiction and Ellis's sexology should not preclude an appreciation of the ways in which their writings, in their shared fascination with doubleness, challenged the oppressive dichotomies of their time.

Conclusions

Sometimes complicit in normative constructions and other times sceptical of them, neither Hardy nor Ellis cleaves to a monolithic view of gender or sexuality. Their shared willingness to

conceive of "sex" outside a binary system leads them both to posit a continuum between masculinity and femininity. They both acknowledge same-sex desire, but Hardy, like other sensation novelists, refrains from binding it to an essentialist identity. If Hardy sometimes nods to scientific fixities in *Desperate Remedies*, it is with a slyly voiced awareness of societal workings—hinting, for instance, that femininity derives no more from nature than the clothes women wear, and that the idealised woman is a fictional construct. As shown in my first chapter, Braddon exhibits a similar awareness of feminine gender construction through the schemes of her titular protagonist in *Lady Audley's Secret*, albeit within a narrative framework that punishes the heroine for exploiting this knowledge. Hardy's novel presents comparable insights into gender as acceptable truths that do not condemn the heroine but ultimately free her, signaling a discursive shift toward legitimising the pursuit of knowledge about the sexes. But despite the ties between English sexology and literature in the period, Hardy's sensation novel entails a more social understanding of sexuality and gender than sought by the sexologists.

As a novelist rather than a scientist, Hardy entertains a more complicated sense of character than implied by either the coherent specimens of his scientific diction or the flattened characterisation that critics deemed typical of the sensation novel. Hardy re-thinks the genre's reputedly superficial view of character by linking the substitution motif to scientific notions that blur sex distinctions. By playing with sensational conventions in this way, Hardy lays the groundwork for his later fiction, which remains invested in creating types—especially embodiments of a singular "ideal" woman, as Ellis observes of his novels. To be sure, the characters in *Desperate Remedies* derive from stock figures, often exaggeratedly so in the exteriorisation of their traits: the young ingénue and her heroic lover, the tormented seducer and the scheming woman with a dark past. Yet even in his first novel, Hardy offers glimpses into individual subjectivities that negotiate the schism between

internal compulsions and external conditions. Cytherea's struggle with an interior division, "an instinct with which her heart had nothing to do" (233; vol. 2, ch. 5), anticipates the dilemmas of later heroines like Tess, whom Hardy would realise with greater depth than Cytherea. And with the depictions of Miss Aldclyffe and Aeneas, Hardy represents fluid homo- and heterosexual inclinations without fixing the sexuality of either character.

Ellis, in the interests of medical science, conversely seeks and finds psychological totalities in Hardy's characters, demonstrating the confluence of literary and scientific writing in the nineteenth-century development of sexual identities. Ellis ultimately upholds congenital determinism whereas Hardy explores sexuality as a mutable construct. Instead of uncritically idealising a mythical femininity, Hardy subtly concedes his authorial complicity in its mythologisation, even as his narrative gaze takes pleasure in its image. Ellis essentialises the gendered behaviour of Hardy's heroines, but Hardy has it both ways, his inconsistency evincing the flexibility of his literary form and the doubleness that his novels inherit from the sensation genre. Rather than truly being the psychologist of women that Ellis deems him to be, Hardy exhibits a consciousness of his own literary constructions that transcends the sexological ideas his work influenced, while continuing the exploration of indeterminacy begun by his sensational forerunners.

CODA:

The Legacies of Sensation Fiction

> "Oh, the new ideas! the new ideas! [. . .] The old morality's all wrong, the old ways are all worn out. [. . .] The wife in England and the husband in Spain, married or not married, living together or not living together—it's all one to the new ideas. [. . .] Let's go and get crammed with ready-made science at a lecture—let's hear the last new professor, the man who has been behind the scenes at Creation, and knows to a T how the world was made, and how long it took to make it. There's the other fellow, too: mind we don't forget the modern Solomon, who has left his proverbs behind him—the brand-new philosopher who considers the consolations of religion in the light of harmless playthings, and who is kind enough to say that he might have been all the happier if he could only have been childish enough to play with them himself. Oh, the new ideas! the new ideas!—what consoling, elevating, beautiful discoveries have been made by the new ideas! We were all monkeys before we were men, and molecules before we were monkeys!"
> (*The Law and the Lady*, ch. 39, pp. 299-300)

In the above passage from Collins's *The Law and the Lady* (1875), the minor character of Benjamin sarcastically greets the encroachment of modernity with its shifts in sexual morality and advancements in scientific knowledge that challenge entrenched social values and roles. His anti-progressive tirade suggests a parodic ventriloquism of Collins's critics, the Victorian periodical reviewers who disparaged sensation fiction as symptomatic of a cultural malaise. The reactionary thrust of this critique evinces an underlying implication of my dissertation: that the sensation genre, in its dialogue with the burgeoning sexual sciences, heralded subversive "new ideas" about gender and sexual desire that unsettled the hierarchic and dichotomous systems of Victorian culture.

As I have shown, these disruptions occur through the dualistic structures that define both sensation fiction and sexology. My readings of various texts illuminate the sensation genre's characteristic deployment of divided identities, complementary pairings, inversions, oppositions, and substitutions that both reflect and respond to the paranoia around embattled gender boundaries and sexual mores in the period. Sexology would take up the cultural dialogue surrounding these themes, theorising them in scientific terms that similarly took shape in a discourse of dualisms: of gender inversions and same-sex desires predicated on notions of similarity and difference. Thus, in its

English iteration, the putatively clinical field of sexology derives from the literary culture of sensation as well as from medical antecedents.

In its prefiguration of sexology, the sensation novel's obsession with doubles provides an instructive focal point for examining the fraught relationship between gender and sexuality in the period prior to the division of homo- and heterosexuality, through which sexology would construct sexual desire in terms of gender object preference. By exploring these topics vis-à-vis Victorian femininity, masculinity, and transgressions thereof, I place my analysis in the context of gender inequalities and definitional uncertainties that still trouble the equivalent cultural discourses in our own time.

Both sexology and Victorian sensation fiction privilege male over female same-sex bonds while often reiterating narrow essentialist notions of femininity, yet they simultaneously open up possibilities for constructionist approaches to gender. In the latter regard, sensation novels surpass the writings of sexology. As I suggest in the previous chapter, the genre allows for a more fluid representation of gender variance and same-sex attraction that avoids the fixities in which sexology is nominally invested.

The structural feature of doubling is not strictly gendered in sensation novels, however, in that the different types of doubles are not exclusive to one gender or another. In *Lady Audley's Secret* and *East Lynne*, the main female characters multiply their respective identities, but Isabel Vane also has an oppositional double in Barbara Hare, who replaces her as wife, mother, and mistress of East Lynne. The plots of *Hard Cash* and *Armadale* depend on two oppositional male doubles, but the hero of the latter novel also doubles his own identity. *Desperate Remedies*, finally, deploys a motif of two same-sex rivals undifferentiated through the intensity of their antagonistic opposition, while suggesting that a homoerotic attraction of one woman for another elides their differences in class

and age. Throughout these five sensation novels runs a generic fascination with the slipperiness of male and female identities, and with the interplay between difference and sameness.

But if the many iterations of the double motif are not restricted by gender, they nonetheless reflect gender asymmetries rooted in societal power dynamics. Despite the patriarchal privileging of male over female same-sex bonds, for instance, the novels studied in the preceding chapters depict same-sex physical affection more overtly between women than men. The asymmetry likely results on one hand from the cultural acceptance of women's affection that Sharon Marcus chronicles, and on the other from the criminal stigma around male homoerotic activities since the buggery laws of the sixteenth century. An affectionate touch between two male characters in *East Lynne* stands out by hinting at the latitude for men's physical affection before homophobic attitudes would make such gestures less acceptable. The novel's mystery subplot hinges on the murderer Levison's concealment of his crime under the false identity of a man named Thorn, yet the wrongly-accused Richard Hare believes them to be two different men after seeing Thorn "walking arm in arm with a gentleman" mistakenly identified as Levison (561; ch. 49). While this incident becomes the key to uncovering Levison's guilt, it casts no aspersions on the two men's sexual behaviour or gender propriety, as a passerby innocuously observes, "They are often together; a couple of swells, both" (561; ch. 49). This lack of surprise at their casual display of physical familiarity suggests that it was permissible behaviour for privileged men of leisure at the time, perhaps because acts of homosocial affection were not coded as sexual.

Conversely depicting the kind of public affection forbidden between men, Marryat's *Her Father's Name* (1876) underlines the encroaching normalisation of heterosexuality as a requirement for proper gender conduct. Marryat's text is a rare case of a Victorian novel in which a central

character's cross-dressing is pivotal in the plot.[153] In one scene, the safety of the heroine Leona's male disguise is jeopardised when her friend and sometime-suitor Christobal comforts her with a kiss after an argument. The narrator remarks, "It was well for the success of Leona's reputation, as one of the masculine gender, that there were no spectators to their reconciliation" (63; ch. 6). While a kiss between men might have drawn notice in 1861, when the sight of two men linking arms in *East Lynne* escaped comment, Marryat's novel, published fifteen years later, signals the dangers of compromised masculinity and thus flags the changing discourse about gender norms vis-à-vis new concepts of sexual identity. To be sure, the text does not confirm whether Leona risks being unmasked as a woman or shunned as an effeminate man—although I would argue the latter, given the emphasis on the success of her "reputation" and not her *performance* as a man. Men kissing, at the time of Marryat's novel, may or may not yet signify definitively as the behaviour of a particular homosexual or inverted type, but it registers as distinctly un-masculine.[154]

The consequences of this discursive evolution are perceptible in English fiction after the Victorian era. The depiction of male same-sex bonds henceforth had to avoid the spectre of sexual inversion to remain within the pale of normative masculinity. With a firmer dividing line in place, the subsequent "pansy" stereotype thus emerges as an unmistakable figure of sexual inversion in twentieth-century modernist novels: the flamboyant Anthony Blanche in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), for instance, or Cedric Hampton in Nancy Mitford's *Love in a Cold Climate* (1949).

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[153] Another significant example occurs late in Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an Africa Farm* (1883), when Gregory wears women's clothing to take on the role of Lyndall's nurse, in a chapter titled "Gregory's Womanhood" (250-69; ch. 12). Minor examples of cross-dressing in Victorian fiction include Rochester's charade as a gypsy woman in *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Alfred Hardie's momentary disguise in women's garb in *Hard Cash* (1863), the latter of which I briefly discuss in Chapter 2 (120-21). Instances of female-to-male cross-dressing include Irene Adler's disguise to evade Sherlock Holmes in Conan Doyle's "A Scandal in Bohemia" (1891), for which Constance Crompton offers a valuable analysis. French literature of the nineteenth century, of course, presents the example of Theophile Gautier's *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835), while George Sand famously drew attention for donning men's apparel in real life.

[154] Katz's *Love Stories: Sex Between Men Before Homosexuality* sheds light on the complexities of permissible affection for men to share in this era. He cites American journalist Charles Warren Stoddard's 1875 recollection of men in Italy kissing each other on the cheek and expressing great shows of emotion upon parting. According to Katz, Stoddard had to explain these public displays to "nonkissing Americans" as an Italian custom, which he felt reflected "a ubiquitous male eros, not one limited to men of a special, unique, man-loving temperament" (Katz 206).

These characters represent a type not easily found in Victorian novels, bearing little resemblance to the likes of Alfred Hardie, Ozias Midwinter, or Aeneas Manston, who, as I have argued, prefigure sexology's treatment of gender transgression while not quite fitting the category of the invert.

Yet portrayals of female masculinity seem to evolve at a different rate. As I have shown, Braddon's Lady Audley and Reade's Edith Archbold are gender transgressors who anticipate inversion discourse while defying categorisation as inverts. But Edith Eliza Lynn Linton's *Rebel of the Family* (1880) readily yields a masculinised lesbian figure in Bell Blount, predating Radclyffe Hall's treatment of female inversion in *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) by nearly five decades.

The reasons for the disparity are obvious. Just as sexologists like Symonds and Carpenter strategically deemphasised the physical side of love between men, so novelists had to tread carefully in associating male gender transgression with homosexual desire given the criminal prohibitions still in effect. As lesbian sexuality was never outlawed, writers of fiction had greater leeway for depicting female gender transgression and same-sex attraction, even if they still invoked negative connotations in certain contexts, as I explain in my analysis of Lady Audley and Phoebe Marks's intimacies in Chapter 1, and Miss Aldclyffe's overtures to Cytherea Graye in Chapter 3. It is no accident that Reade's "Androgynism; or Woman Playing at Man" could achieve posthumous publication without controversy as early as 1911, while there is no equivalent literary text by an author of the era exploring male performances of femininity or depicting overtly erotic male same-sex love—save for the pornographic *Teleny*, often attributed to Wilde, which received limited distribution in 1893. Forster's frank account of homosexual love in *Maurice* could only be published in 1970, a year after his death. My reading of sensation fiction sets the groundwork not only for a full-length survey of the genre including many lesser-known authors and texts, but also a comparison with early twentieth-century novels and their representations of gender inversion and same-sex desire.

Meanwhile, my efforts to historicise the changing attitudes toward male and female gender deviance and same-sex attraction can help unpack several complexities of Victorian social construction, with further ramifications for the limits of fictional representation. Male same-sex love could be valorised, even to the extent of lauding male physical beauty (hence the celebration of athleticism in *Hard Cash*) as long as it avoided association with the "gross indecency" of sodomy. Discussion of sodomy could even secure the banning of a medical text, as shown by the publication history of Ellis's *Sexual Inversion*. Although female same-sex love was never subject to legal prohibition, its social acceptance and fictional portrayal—which could countenance physical affection—were circumscribed by its compatibility with heterosexual marriage, as Marcus shows in *Between Women*. Transgressive female masculinity, as with other forms of doubleness, could likewise be excused according to its consistency with essentialist notions of feminine nature.

Because novelists had to tread carefully when depicting types of deviance that anticipated male sexual inversion, it follows that the gender-transgressive behaviour which could acceptably be depicted in men would exclude any that warrants punishment in the narrative—even in *Desperate Remedies*, the text in my study that most closely previews the kinds of deviance later examined by sexologists. Therefore, feminised men like Alfred Hardie and Ozias Midwinter are sympathetic, while the wicked Aeneas Manston is rendered attractive to women by his feminine beauty and vilified for his *heterosexual* transgressions, such as his spousal murder of Eunice and his attempted assault of Cytherea.[155] The erotic undercurrents of Aeneas's desire for Edward are permissible within the narrative of male homosocial rivalry that Sedgwick argues is conventional in English literature, while Edward's own ambiguous desires reside safely within the realm of the non-corporeal, intuited

[155] In *Thomas Hardy's Legal Fictions*, Trish Ferguson points out that Manston's threat of sexual violence is all the more horrific because it is legally sanctioned, given that Cytherea is his wife (96). Hardy thus complicates Manston's villainy by circumscribing it within the normative realms of heterosexual desire and legal marriage.

as vague "[e]choes of himself" in people of both sexes (173). Notwithstanding the many cultural edifices oppressing women, it was the lack of criminal restrictions on lesbian sexuality that allowed novelists to veer further into realms of female sexual and gender transgression, necessitating narrative retribution against deviant women from Lady Audley to Miss Aldclyffe, whose physical expressions of same-sex desire skirt the fault-lines of acceptability for affection between women.

These examples thus belie the Victorian view of sensation fiction as wildly immoral and anti-realistic, as practitioners of the genre were ultimately beholden to standards of verisimilitude delimited by the boundaries of social acceptability, even as they courted infamy in their time by flouting convention. Like the sexological discourse that it influenced, the literary culture of sensation operated within an intricate double-bind.

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