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INTRODUCTION

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A man who is born into a world already possessed, if he cannot get subsistence from his parents on whom he has a just demand, and if the society do not want his labour, has no claim of *right* to the smallest portion of food, and, in fact, has no business to be where he is. At nature's mighty feast there is no vacant cover for him. She tells him to be gone, and will quickly execute her own orders, if he do not work upon the compassion of some of her guests. If these guests get up and make room for him, other intruders immediately appear demanding the same favour. The report of a provision for all that come fills the hall with numerous claimants. The order and harmony of the feast is disturbed, the plenty that before reigned is changed into scarcity; and the happiness of the guests is destroyed by the spectacle of misery and dependence in every part of the hall, and by the clamorous importunity of those who are justly enraged at not finding the provision which they had been taught to expect.

T. R. Malthus, *Essay on the Principle of Population*
(2nd ed., 1803)¹

First published in 1798, Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* was repeatedly revised by its author, the last version appearing eight years before his death in 1834: the same year that the New Poor Law Act, a piece of legislation inspired by his theories, was passed. Malthus's key theory in the *Essay* was that while the food supply expanded arithmetically, population grew geometrically, invoking the prospect of mass starvation as well as ever-increasing demands on the public purse by the indigent. The 1834 Act tore up the old paternalistic relation between rich and poor. Under its dispensation those who could not or would not work were denied charitable relief in their own homes and sent to the parish workhouse where the less-eligibility test was applied: the standard of subsistence for workhouse paupers was to be lower than that of the respectable poor man and woman outside its walls. Not only were the poor denied the public, paternal care of the state, but their poverty was further stigmatized by the suspension of their private family relations on entry to the workhouse: husbands were separated from wives, parents from children.

Perhaps the most famous literary protest at this abandonment of social paternalism is the orphaned Oliver's polite, twice-repeated request for more gruel in Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1838): 'Please, sir, I want some more'.² Ejected from the workhouse for his challenge to authority (or, to use Malthus's terms, his 'enraged'

¹ T. R. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (London: J. Johnson, 1803), p. 531.

² Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (London: Everyman, 1994), p. 13.

and ‘clamorous importunity’), Oliver exchanges one delinquent parent for another in the form of the criminal Fagin, who continues Malthusian logic by feeding him sausages as an inducement to a career in pickpocketing.³ As my opening quotation from the second edition of the *Essay* sets out, Malthus had argued that there was no place at the table for those who could not or would not labour; the non-productive citizen had ‘no claim of *right*’ to partake of ‘nature’s mighty feast’, especially as he or she imperilled the full bellies of those who had earned their share. This passage was excised from future editions, but such was the outcry at the terms Malthus used that it was never forgotten in the ensuing controversies his ideas provoked.⁴ His aim had been to warn the reader against what he saw as misplaced charity; that to show individual compassion toward the poor was really to be complicit in a larger social cruelty. The positive checks to population, death through famine, misery and war, were insufficient and preventive checks needed to be found. Among Malthus’s answers to the population problem was the production of fewer children through a combination of sexual self-restraint and late marriage. The reconfiguration of public and private attitudes to charity was an important part of disciplining the poor: an attempt to make them understand that they should not have children until and unless they could afford to support them. To his supporters, such as the writer on political economy, Harriet Martineau, Malthus was a ‘misrepresented’ man who spoke only ‘in the spirit of benevolence and candor [sic]’, while to detractors like the poet Robert Southey he was a ‘mischievous reptile’ whose ‘perfect system [...] would be to breed slaves and regulate population by the knife of the sow-gelder’.⁵

Whether praised or denounced, the provocations of Malthusian thinking proved influential across the nineteenth century and beyond. It was fundamental to the liberalism and feminism of J. S. Mill, for example, who also became an early enthusiast for birth control (never advocated by Malthus himself) and mounted a strong defence of Malthusianism in his seminal *Principles of Political Economy* (1848).⁶ Charles Darwin also acknowledged his debt to Malthus, confirming in his autobiography that reading the *Essay* in October 1838 had been pivotal in the

³ For more on *Oliver Twist* and political economy, see Sally Ledger, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 92-105.

⁴ See Philip Connell, *Romanticism, Economics and the Question of ‘Culture’* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), chapter 1.

⁵ Harriet Martineau, *A History of the Peace: Being a History of England from 1816 to 1854. With an Introduction 1800-1915*, in *Harriet Martineau’s Writing on British History and Military Reform*, ed. by Deborah Logan, 6 vols. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2005), vol. 1, p. 199; Letters from Robert Southey to John Rickman, 12th September 1803 and 8th February 1804, *New Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. by Kenneth Curry, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), vol. 1, pp. 327, 351, 821.

⁶ See particularly Book II, Chapters 11-13 of J. S. Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, 2 vols. (London: J. W. Parker, 1848), vol 1.

development of the evolutionary theory set out in *Origin of Species* (1859).⁷ The significance of Malthus for Darwin's thought had not been lost on Karl Marx who, on re-reading the *Origin*, wrote to Friedrich Engels:

I'm amused that Darwin, at whom I've been taking another look, should say that he *also* applies the 'Malthusian' theory to plants and animals, as though in Mr Malthus's case the whole thing didn't lie in its *not* being applied to plants and animals, but only – with its geometric progression – to humans as against plants and animals. It is remarkable how Darwin rediscovers, among the beasts and plants, the society of England with its division of labour, competition, opening up of new markets, 'inventions' and Malthusian 'struggle for existence'. It is Hobbes' *bellum omnium contra omnes* [war of all against all].⁸

For Marx, Malthusian ideas were deeply implicated in the formation of the economic individualism that was the hallmark of Victorian capitalism. At the very beginning of the nineteenth century, Malthus's image of the life-or-death fight to find a 'vacant cover' at 'nature's mighty feast' put into play, brutally and indelibly, the idea that entitlement to consume should be tied tightly to the ability to produce. As a result, the individual's relation to production and consumption was the gauge with which their social value should be measured. The five essays collected here in this special issue on production and consumption range across the century: from the radical conceptions of 'the People' in the work of William Hone in the 1820s through to questions of emancipation, technology and gender in Bram Stoker and Henry James at the fin de siècle. What is absolutely central to each of them in their different interrogations of production and/or consumption, however, is a concern with the part played by producing and consuming in the formulation of identity: whether that self-definition is being enacted through notions of gender, class or community.

In her essay on collecting and masculinity in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1860), Kirby-Jane Hallum identifies a 'split distinction' within the concept of cultural capital 'between a feminine-coded consumption and a masculine-coded production' (p. 27). Using the work of Pierre Bourdieu to think through the role played by aesthetic appreciation in the novel in the formation of gender and class norms, Hallum compares the cultural capital of the wealthy upper-class art collector, Frederick Fairlie, with the middle-class artist, drawing master and art connoisseur, Walter Hartright. Both men are respectful of each another's tastes, of the other's ability to consume the beautiful object with a refined appreciation. This is the case

⁷ Charles Darwin, *Autobiographies*, ed. by Michael Neve and Sharon Messenger (London: Penguin, 2002), p. 72.

⁸ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 18th June 1862, *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Collected Works*, trans. by Richard Dixon and others, 50 vols. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975-2004), vol. 41, p. 381.

even though Fairlie's money means that he is able to accrue a collection, while Hartright cannot. Hallum argues that the novel marks, promotes and negotiates a shift in the definitions of what constituted cultural capital in the period, driven by the rise of a powerful middle class. In Hartright's particular case, his successful 'economic and social self-reinvention' (p. 43) is achieved through proofs of his potency in the arenas of consuming and (re)producing: his 'aesthetic appreciation of women' (p. 28) means he marries the beautiful Laura Fairlie and through her inherits the art collection and estate on her childless uncle's death.

Hallum also explores the more disturbing aspects of Hartright's desire to collect: where Fairlie catalogues his art objects, Hartright's obsessive tendencies are fixed on Laura, expressive of the collector's 'desire for mastery' (p. 43). The coding of consumption as feminine is troubled throughout the article, but perhaps nowhere more so than here in the image of Laura as consumed rather than consumer. The multiple meanings of women's self-definition in relation to consumption, whether through eating, fasting or a diseased wasting, are the focus of Lisa Coar's essay. Reading works such as Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* (1862), Lewis Carroll's two *Alice* stories (1865, 1871), and George du Maurier's *Trilby* (1894) as (and also against) Victorian strictures concerned to regulate the gustatory practices of nubile young women, Coar exposes the extent to which girls were snarled in a web of 'contradictory rubric regarding consumerist practice' (p. 48). What is especially striking is her establishment of a complicated relation between eating and erotic desire in the period. As we have seen, for Malthus and his followers not eating more than one's entitlement was an established social good. However, Coar describes a culture that not only associated voracious hunger with sin, 'idolised the frugal appetite' (p. 50) in children, and praised the self-restraint of the non-consuming, ethereal girl, but also went so far as to find her child-like, wasted figure sexually arousing. In Malthus's theory, the reward for sexual restraint was that it would heighten desire, making its eventual consummation more pleasurable. Here, though, the pleasure appears to belong to one sex only. Seen through a Malthusian lens, the spectacle of a vampiric Victorian male desire feeding itself by pressuring nubile young women into reducing their appetites raises intriguing questions about the gendering of sexual self-definition through consumption.

Where Coar focuses on the (non)consuming female body, for Laura James it is the producing female body that is the scene of 'staged eroticisation' (p. 93) in the theatre of the workplace. Discussing the representation of women's labour as typists and telegraphists in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and Henry James's story *In the Cage* (1898), she builds on the work of critics such as Morag Shiach to counter and complicate Friedrich Kittler's argument about the emancipatory employment opportunities for women brought about by new technologies of communication at the fin de siècle. Stoker's typist, Mina Harker, and James's unnamed telegraphist are both devourers and transmitters of other people's stories, becoming eroticized figures as

‘the sexual and the textual’ (p. 94) converge in their labour to create ‘coherent narrative’ (p. 98) from the lives of others. This meeting of machinery, literary production and employment might appear to have liberating possibilities for women but, as Laura James argues, this is undercut as the erotic potential of each working woman is safely contained within a domestic ending. A maternal future is implied for each of them by their creators because, she suggests, ‘if women are working and textually reproducing, then they are likely not to be fulfilling their “natural” function’ (p. 100). To defeat this threat, ‘sexual reproduction must replace textual reproduction’ (p. 100).

Fin-de-siècle gender norms dictated that women should substitute one type of labour for another. Jordan Kistler’s essay, by contrast, clarifies the process through which the poet Arthur O’Shaughnessy comes to redefine labour itself in his poetry. Focusing particularly on his collection, *Songs of a Worker* (1881), Kistler notes how O’Shaughnessy ‘straddles the line between a Ruskinian utility-based art appreciation and the need for art to be governed by nothing but beauty’ (p. 74). She locates his allegiance to both theories in his dissatisfaction with his tedious clerical work at the British Museum. His alienation from his labour in his day job drove his need to ‘find the act of production in the creative’ (p. 85) and so led to his redefinition of art as work. In a careful reading of the poem ‘Song of a Fellow-Worker’, Kistler considers how O’Shaughnessy compares the sculptor’s carving of stone with the poet’s carving of thought, ‘both crafting something new’ (p. 85) and both working for the greater good of society. As O’Shaughnessy positions the poet’s labour within a wider community of workers, Kistler concludes that in *Songs of a Worker* he comes closest to ‘unifying the seemingly disparate concepts of “art for art’s sake” and “art for humanity’s sake” in one productive aesthetic theory’ (p. 88). What is particularly notable about O’Shaughnessy’s forging of poetic identity here is that it seems less about gender than about class: Kistler’s discussion produces a democratic image of artistic production taking place in a communion of labour from which the elitism of the Aesthetic movement stands above and apart.

This image of communal work leads us, finally, to Lucy Hodgetts’s essay on the shared participation of the People in the making of William Hone’s *Every-Day Book* (1825-6), a calendar of English historical events, feast days, pagan customs, and more. To create this ‘antiquarian bricolage’ (p. 8), Hone drew on reminiscences and factual information provided by his readers, thereby producing a ‘collaboratively authored record of popular culture’ (p. 8). Hodgetts’s aim in this piece is to examine the radical Hone’s ‘demotic concept of the people’ (p. 8) and to present his *Book* as an innovative publishing project in which literature became a form of shared property, breaking down the distinction between high and low political culture. Her analysis of the work is thus situated in a detailed discussion of the rise of a new reading public and of mass culture in the early part of the nineteenth century. As Hodgett notes, Hone’s egalitarian conception of the book’s readership was that it

should accommodate all strata of society: parents and children; masters and servants; men and women from the mansion to the cottage. In their joint roles as contributors and readers, they were partaking in ‘the formation of their own cultural history’ (p. 14), creating a shared identity as the People. What Hodgett shows is the way in which Hone’s *Every-Day Book* embraced not just the mass, but also the heterogeneous, the miscellaneous and the eccentric. Readers’ consumption of the *Book* is allied to production, but both activities take place within a framework of collective rather than individual enterprise. Published in the period when Malthus’s *Essay on the Principle of Population* was still being revised, reprinted and hotly debated, Hone’s literary celebration of plenty and sociality thus poses a challenge to Malthusian fears of scarcity and the crowd. Malthus may have anchored individual worth to the ability to produce and consume in 1803 but, as the essays in this issue amply demonstrate, the ways and means through which ‘worth’ was constituted came to be contested and reimagined in complex ways in literature across the nineteenth century. Ending on this note, I must thank and extol the contributors and the editorial team of *Victorian Network* who, in a spirit of shared endeavour, have combined to make work a pleasure.

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WILLIAM HONE AND THE READING PUBLIC, 1825-26

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Abstract

This article will offer a detailed understanding of the cultural, literary and political space occupied by William Hone's popular anthology *The Every-Day Book* (1825-26) within the literary marketplace of the early nineteenth-century. I will be focusing on aspects of *The Every-Day Book* which contribute to Hone's notion of "the people" as a political and commercial entity, beginning by outlining the diverse literary attitudes towards the growth of the reading public at this time. The article will go on to explain Hone's attempts to combat this tension with his own egalitarian definition of the common readership and its new commercial and political character. I will detail the journalistic methods of compilation and circulation which Hone exploited in order to anchor his anthology within the tradition of print publication. The article also aims to open up a new critical discourse on literary consumption by considering pre-Victorian figures such as Hone alongside later chroniclers of popular culture, whilst also giving credence to the anthology in its own right. Comparing accounts of Greenwich Fair by Hone and Dickens will illuminate a topography of influence across the period. I also address the dearth of material on Hone's antiquarian endeavours. Critical interest in radical literary culture has surged in recent years, but there is little attempt to address the broader implications of the radical underpinnings of Hone's later work. This article aims to elevate *The Every-Day Book* beyond its current status as a footnote in literary history.

William Hone's *The Every-Day Book; or, Everlasting Calendar of Popular Amusements, Sports, Pastimes, Ceremonies, Manners, Customs and Events* (1825-26) was an antiquarian bricolage incorporating 'the manners and customs of ancient and modern times' alongside writers as diverse as Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Clare and Keats. It was structured according to the calendar and documented historical events, feast days, literary extracts, street cries, buildings, hagiography, natural history, pagan customs, fairs, local traditions, urban sports, peculiar news items and 'several seasons of popular pastime'.¹ Hone corresponded with its readers, collating their personal reminiscences and factual snippets to create a collaboratively authored record of popular culture. My purpose here is to offer a detailed understanding of the cultural space occupied by this popular and diverse anthology within the literary marketplace of the early nineteenth century.

The collaborative authorship of *The Every-Day Book* contributed to Hone's notion of "the people" as a political and commercial entity, conditioned by diverse literary attitudes towards the growth of the reading public and anxieties towards the

¹ William Hone, 'Preface' to *The Every-Day Book* (London: Tegg, 1825), p. vii. Further references are given after quotations in the text.

changing consumption of literature. Responding to these debates, Hone developed his own definition of the common readership in its new commercial and political guise. He exploited the journalistic tools of compilation and circulation to place *The Every-Day Book* within a tradition of print publication. Analysis of these methods will open up the critical discourse on literary consumption to pre-Victorian antecedents such as Hone, who had a formative impact on later concepts of mass culture and readership. A comparison of Hone's archetypal accounts of popular culture at Greenwich Fair with one of Dickens' periodical records of the same event will identify the dynamics of influence between Hone and his successors. This article will also make a claim for Hone's place in current literary criticism. In the twenty-first century, Hone is perhaps best known as a radical publisher and pamphleteer, the author of squibs and a champion of the free press.² Critical interest in Hone has surged in the past twenty years in light of renewed interdisciplinary interest in the radical politics and satire of the early nineteenth-century and post-Napoleonic period. A handful of articles have been written concerning Hone's literary interests as a publisher, but critical material on *The Every-Day Book* remains thin on the ground.³ A few biographical accounts of Hone's life exist. Hackwood's 1912 study, and more recently Ben Wilson's accessible account of Hone's life, offer comprehensive accounts of Hone's career in satire. But *The Every-Day Book* remains a footnote in these studies. Hone's work not only exerted a formative influence over later publishing practices, but was also an innovative project in its own right.

The first three decades of the nineteenth-century saw the rise of a distinctive new reading public which was the product of complex social, technological and economic conditions. The rising standards of literacy and population expansion

² In 1818 Hone published the transcripts of his trial for seditious libel and blasphemy, which demonstrated his emerging celebrity status as a defender of free speech. They remained popular publications throughout the early nineteenth century. He went on to publish a series of satirical pamphlets illustrated with wood engravings created in collaboration with the illustrator George Cruikshank.

³ Two projects have begun to address the crucial gaps in Hone scholarship by making his works more accessible to the public. *Regency Radical: Selected Writings of William Hone*, ed. by David A. Kent and D. R. Ewen (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003) is a collection of choice excerpts from Hone's works. The compilation includes essays from *The Every-Day Book* which focus upon Hone's personal concern for the demise of popular culture in its various forms in suburban London. Kyle Grimes has initiated a major online project which incorporates a 'biography, bibliography, and e-text archive' of Hone's works. The project intends to create a digitized archive of Hone's texts, including the entries for *The Every-Day Book*, see <http://honearchive.org/>. Until then, we must rely upon Mina Gorji's essay on *The Every-Day Book*'s contribution to the formation of a vernacular canon of Romantic poetry. See Mina Gorji, 'Every-day Poetry: William Hone, Popular Antiquarianism, and the Literary Anthology', in *Romanticism and Popular Culture in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Philip Connell and Nigel Leask (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 239-62. Further references are given after quotations in the text.

transformed the social landscape of reading. Literacy among the rural and urban middle classes rose from 75 per cent to 95 per cent between 1775 and 1835, with 60 per cent of the lowest social groups acquiring basic literacy by the early nineteenth century. At the same time the population of Great Britain grew from 7 to 14 million between 1780 and 1830. As a result the reading public ‘quintupled in the whole period from 1780 to 1830, from 1 ½ to 7 million’, in spite of the sustained high prices of books in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁴ Printers depended upon French paper imports, which ensured a widespread paper shortage during the Napoleonic wars and was later exacerbated by post-war austerity and conservatism in the book trade (p. 3). Most importantly, the period witnessed a fundamental change in the model of cultural production and consumption: the rise of “mass” culture.⁵ Philip Connell and Nigel Leask identify this ‘capitalization of popular culture’ as giving birth to fears of the ‘common sort of reader’ and the emergence of a national vernacular canon which was the ‘property of the communal tradition’.⁶ By the 1840s, print culture had proliferated to accommodate the new reading public, transforming public readership into a powerful political, social and commercial force. Novels, poetry and periodicals now had the potential to reach thousands of new readers across the country.

Many writers felt threatened and alienated by this new potential and were forced to re-define their relationship with their readers. The Romantic ideal of the ‘sacralization of the author’ was an attempt to resist ‘the consumerism and anonymity which characterized the publishing world’.⁷ The population boom and rise in literacy enabled publishers such as Hone to challenge the notion of ‘personal privacy’ in reading and to transform literature into a ‘shared property’.⁸ The dismantling of the sacred hierarchy of authorship left the notion of who made up the reading public uncertain and confused:

The eclipse of a writing culture of patronage based on shared humanist values and education by a commercialized, emulative culture of fashionable literary

⁴ Figures from Kathryn Sutherland, “‘Events...have made us a World of Readers’”: Reader Relations 1780-1830’, in *Penguin History of Literature, Volume 5: The Romantic Period*, ed. by David Pirie (London: Penguin, 1994), pp. 1-38 (p. 3). Further references are given after quotations in the text.

⁵ For detailed analyses of the causes of this process see Leo Lowenthal, *Literature and Mass Culture* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1984), pp. 153-65.

⁶ Philip Connell and Nigel Leask, ‘What is the People?’, in *Romanticism and Popular Culture in Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Philip Connell and Nigel Leask (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 3-49 (p. 38).

⁷ Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 14.

⁸ Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 1982), p. 131.

consumption created new uncertainties, confusions and anxieties about social and institutional control of writing and print and [...] who constituted the “reading public” and what they wanted.⁹

The ‘anxieties’ over the reading public were a fevered topic of debate and presented many interpretative dilemmas during the Romantic period. For William Wordsworth, writing in 1815, the public was the ‘small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the PUBLIC, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the PEOPLE’.¹⁰ Wordsworth anticipated Coleridge’s ‘multitudinous PUBLIC’ and both poets experienced a shared revulsion when faced with the perceived threat that mass reading posed to poetry.¹¹ Wordsworth’s anxieties, in particular, provide an accessible example of how the heterogeneous nature of the mass reading public forced writers to reconsider their relationship with their readers.

This lent a new political quality to reading. Wordsworth struggled to extrapolate an idealized poetic reader from the tangled mass of indifferent and ‘unthinking’ consumers who made up the reading public. He feared poetry was being marginalized by a readership which craved the sort of popular material that was antithetical to his own work. Lucy Newlyn equates Wordsworth’s abhorrence of mass reading with the vulnerability of his work to a readership with a new political agenda: the commodification of literature would cause readers to become ‘progressively desensitized to poetic power’.¹² According to Newlyn, the rise of the reading public imbued Wordsworth with the fear that the ‘apparent democratization of writing might bring with [it], not an enhanced collective access to poetry but the diminishment of shared appreciation’.¹³ The new definition of “popular” was a corruption of the aesthetic appreciation of “fine arts” such as poetry and was the result of a homogenized and indiscriminate production and consumption of literature.

William Hazlitt’s celebrated 1817 essay, entitled ‘What is the People?’, complicates the debate in a way which resonates with Hone’s own radical agenda:

For what is the People? Millions of men, like you, with hearts beating in their bosoms, with thoughts stirring in their minds, with the blood circulating in their veins, with wants and appetites, and passions and anxious cares, and busy

⁹ Gary Kelly, ‘The Limits of Genre and the Institutions of Literature: Romanticism between Fact and Fiction’, in *Romantic Revolutions: Criticism and Theory*, ed. by K. R. Johnston et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 158-76 (p. 159).

¹⁰ William Wordsworth, ‘An Essay Supplementary to the Preface of 1815,’ in *William Wordsworth: Selected Prose*, ed. by John O. Hayden (London: Penguin, 1988), pp. 387-414 (p. 412).

¹¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, in *The Major Works*, ed. by H. J. Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 188.

¹² Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, p. 15.

¹³ Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, p. 16.

purposes and affections for others and a respect for themselves, and a desire for happiness, and a right to freedom, and a will to be free.¹⁴

Hazlitt's essay addressed the radical readers of periodicals during a time of unparalleled political activism (the essay appeared first in the *Champion* in October 1817, and later in the *Yellow Dwarf* in March 1818). Yet Hazlitt remained acutely aware of not only the textual division between his authorial voice and the uncontainable plurality, but also the singular particularity, of the reading public. The framing prosopopoeia of the essay enacts this tension by successively eliding and dividing its object and addressee, 'you' and 'the people', envisioning a corporeal collective reading public who have 'hearts beating in their bosoms, and thoughts stirring in their minds'. The essay conveys a human understanding which escaped Wordsworth. Hazlitt created a more complex definition of the people, whilst Wordsworth characterized the people as the "other" and created 'a certain distance, a position from which the popular can be evaluated, analysed, and perhaps dismissed'.¹⁵ In contrast, Hazlitt considered popular and polite readerships as equal in the new literary marketplace. He paved the way for publishers such as Hone by exploding the distinction between high and low literary cultures which Romantic theory had so enthusiastically celebrated.

Hone fought to combat the widespread anxiety surrounding the common reader at 'the historical brink of the Victorian culture industry'.¹⁶ He accommodated every strata of society in his conception of an egalitarian readership and, in doing so, belied the homogenization of the common reader: 'It is an Every-Day Book of pleasure and business – of Parents and Children – of Teachers and Pupils – of Masters and Servants'.¹⁷ Hone intended *The Every-Day Book* for all members of society and created a product that he thought could transcend the eighteenth-century definition of the public sphere as the exclusively male domain of classical education and private wealth:

The Every-Day Book is for the mansion and the cottage – the parlour – the counting-house – the ladies' work-table – the library-shelf – the school room – the coffee room – the steam-boat – the workman's bench – the traveller's trunk and the voyager's sea-chest. It is a work of general use, and daily reference: in all places it is in place, and at all seasons seasonable. (p. 1)

¹⁴ William Hazlitt, 'What is the People?', in *William Hazlitt Selected Writings*, ed. by Jon Cook (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 3-29 (p. 3).

¹⁵ Morag Shiach, *Discourse on Popular Culture: Class, Gender, and History in Cultural Analysis, 1730 to the Present* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p. 31.

¹⁶ Connell and Leask, 'What is the People?', p. 38.

¹⁷ William Hone, 'Explanatory Address to Readers of the Every-Day Book' (1824).

This outline was circulated in a nationwide advert to ensure the book's appeal to a socially diverse audience. *The Every-Day Book* was at home everywhere. Hone anticipated the social mobility of the book in its physical and portable form: 'in all places it is in place'. The book was promoted as being of common human interest: it was a germane and profitable addition to all social scenarios, from the studious academia of the library shelf to the public debate of the coffee room.

It is clear from Hone's address that he was attempting to redefine the term "popular" in a way which, according to Mina Gorji, offered a 'fundamental challenge to the traditional distinction between commercial popularity and popular tradition' (p. 242). As Gorji outlines, the book was popular in two senses: in concerning itself with the culture of the populace, and in its broad commercial appeal. With his new definition of "popular" literature, Hone demolished the eighteenth-century aspirational model of polite literature and rendered it anachronistic. He recognized that the people were not independent of commercial interest and that they possessed the capacity to embody the commercialization of literature. Hone's readership traversed the traditional boundaries of politeness by creating their own literary product: readers across the country corresponded with Hone to author their own collective record of popular culture.

This new collaborative authorship was underpinned by Hone's demotic political concept of the people. Readers of *The Every-Day Book* were not passive consumers of literature. They contributed to the construction of their own popular culture and were unimpeded by archaic constraints upon expressions of their cultural heritage. Hone's anthology adhered to the definition of truly popular literature which would later be outlined by Arnold Kettle:

An attitude to art in which the audience is seen neither purely as consumer (the commercial relationship) nor as a superior group of like-minded spirits (the highbrow relationship) but in some sense as collaborator.¹⁸

Hone did not consider the people to be 'something amorphous and indistinguishable' but a specific cultural force which created literature from its own point of view.¹⁹

Hone gave a forum and a voice to the people's point of view by filling *The Every-Day Book* with first-hand accounts of popular customs which he had gleaned from readers across the country. Letters published during Christmas 1825 described observances in Queen's College Oxford, the Scottish Highlands, Durham, Suffolk, York and London. John Clare corresponded with Hone in 1825, describing the festivities of St Mark's Eve in his own village of Helpstone, Northamptonshire.

¹⁸ Arnold Kettle, 'Dickens and the Popular Tradition', in *Marxists on Literature: An Anthology*, ed. by David Craig (London: Penguin, 1977), pp. 214-44 (p. 220).

¹⁹ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana Press, 1988), p. 194.

Hone encouraged and relied upon these first-hand accounts and contributions from his readership in order to facilitate ‘the attainment of additional particulars during its progress’.²⁰ He requested this from his readers:

Communications of local Usages or Customs, or other useful Facts, are earnestly and respectfully solicited. Extracts, or permission to extract, from scarce books and original MSS. will be highly esteemed. (p. 1)

Hone did not compromise the effectiveness of the material for the sake of adhering to a sociable model of collaborative authorship. Clear guidelines were laid down to ensure accurate and reliable content for the anthology: ‘Statements cannot be inserted without authority. Anonymous Contributors will please to accompany theirs by reference to sources of easy access, through which they may be verified’ (p. 1). Hone solicited material which was not exclusively academic and gave equal precedence to personal anecdotes and localized traditions alongside antiquarian material and national feast days. He appealed to the plethora of ‘curious’ and incidental details which formed the collected personal histories and interests of the people:

Scarcely an individual is without a scrap-book, or a portfolio, or a collection of some sort; and whatever a kind-hearted reader may deem curious or interesting, and can conveniently spare, I earnestly hope and solicit to be favoured with, addressed to me at Messrs. Hunt and Clarke’s, Tavistock-street, who receive communications for the work, and publish it in weekly sheets, and monthly parts, as usual. (p. vii)

Louis James’s short article on *The Every-Day Book* emphasizes how Hone exploited cheap printed media as a means of circulating these personal scrap-book accounts. He argues that these ‘curious or interesting’ snippets enabled the ‘recovery of an earlier England whose pastoral customs and values were becoming destroyed by an industrial and urban age’.²¹ James’s valuable observations highlight how Hone considered popular printing as a gateway to reviving and exploring the everyday history of the people. Hone unlocked the political potential of personal accounts by placing them in a forum to which the reading public had access, allowing them to partake in the formation of their own cultural history. Habermas describes how in antecedents such as the *Tatler*, *Spectator* and the *Guardian*, ‘the public held up a mirror to itself’ and came ‘to a self-understanding’ by ‘entering itself into “literature” as an object’.²² Hone achieved the same effect, not through ‘the detour of a reflection

²⁰ Hone, ‘Explanatory Address’.

²¹ Louis James, “‘A Storehouse of Past and Present Manners and Customs’: The Private Scrapbook becomes a Communal Record in the Journals of William Hone”, *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth-Century*, 5 (2007), pp. 1-6 (p. 4).

²² Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p. 43.

on works of philosophy and literature, art and science' but by bringing the individual experiences of the people into the public sphere (p. 43). He constructed a definition of popular culture and an equivalent print identity which maintained both the particularized and universalized character of the reading public and rendered it in a textually commoditized form.

Contributors to the anthology shared its authorship. This collaboration fed a collective sense of civic duty and an imagined form of community which pervaded all classes of readers. For Benedict Anderson, newspapers represent 'the kind of imagined community that is the nation', a solidarity of the populace which Hone's anthology was crucial in generating.²³ Hone safeguarded the new sense of literary community through distribution of the anthology, ensuring that *The Every-Day Book* was ubiquitous and accessible to all. Even isolated rural readers were catered for. They could buy the book 'by ordering it of any Bookseller, Postmaster, Newsman, or Vender of Periodical Works, in any of the towns or villages throughout the United Kingdom' (p. 1). Each weekly number was published on a Saturday and cost merely three pence and a further monthly part was published at a price of one shilling.²⁴ Each sheet of thirty two columns was designed to be bound into a book, ensuring the preservation of individual numbers. It also created a product which could later be re-circulated back into the literary marketplace as a reputable anthology. A collected two-volume edition was reissued throughout the nineteenth century. Hone made sure the storehouse of knowledge could be accessed well beyond 1826 and he was successful in securing this legacy. A copy of this 'very scarce book' was put up for sale in Middlesbrough in 1897 and copies can still be procured today.²⁵

Hone had already set himself a precedent for this nationwide network of distribution. His popular political pamphlet, *The Political House that Jack Built* (1819), sold a total of 100,000 copies and 47 editions in one year.²⁶ The total sales for all five of Hone's political squibs illustrated by George Cruikshank exceeded 250,000.²⁷ Hone perfected a model for a cheap serially published weekly that cumulated both monthly and annually and drew upon an eighteenth-century precedent:

²³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 24. David Vincent argues that mass literacy enabled an 'enhanced consciousness of the national culture', breaching the 'isolation of the uneducated community'. Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England, 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 186.

²⁴ In contrast, the quarterly *Edinburgh Review* cost six shillings. Hone's publication had more in common with John Limbird's *Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction* (1822-47) which cost two pence for sixteen pages of 'reprinted miscellaneous contents'. See Sutherland, "Events...have made us a World of Readers", p. 28.

²⁵ *The North Eastern Daily Gazette* (24th June 1897), p. 1.

²⁶ Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 382.

²⁷ Altick, *The English Common Reader*, p. 382.

The *Grub Street Journal* said of serial publication on 26 October 1732: ‘This method of weekly Publication allows Multitudes to peruse Books in which they would otherwise never have looked’.²⁸

The longevity of the project was important to Hone. He conceived a product which was ideologically self-sustaining. The success of the anthology relied upon three factors: the availability of suitable anthology material, the continued interest of the reading public and the funds which were generated through purchasing. Hone encouraged the populace to invest in their popular culture. The public contributed to, and funded, the circulation of cultural material which endorsed Hone’s notion of a shared popular culture, the relevance of which was commensurate with the reading public’s interest in preserving it. The reading public were not independent of commercial interest but propelled by it. Habermas claimed that the public sphere descended into a two-tier system of production and consumption. I argue that Hone saw the potential for an anti-hierarchical model of publication which created and sustained its own supply and demand.

Hone ensured this demand through marketing ploys. He maximized the impact of *The Every-Day Book*’s initial publication by keeping it a secret until the end of December 1824, at which point he unleashed a series of adverts across the national press:

The Every-Day Book was not announced in London, or anywhere else, nor was it known to any one, either publicly or privately, until three days before the publication of the First Number, on the 1st January, 1825. Its immediately great sale, and its rapidly increasing circulation, fully justify the expectation that it will become one of the most popular publications ever issued from the press. (pp. 1-2)

Hone utilized a short term tactic to ensure the immediate impact and long lasting popularity of *The Every-Day Book*. Although the book relied upon a number of traditional journalistic conventions, his decision to minimise the build-up of anticipation or hype surrounding the book imbued it with a sense of newness. This initial shock to the literary marketplace, combined with a regular publication, ensured a unique combination of modernity and longevity for the anthology’s readers. It also enabled Hone to predict the book’s success in rather optimistic terms: ‘it will become one of the most popular publications ever issued from the press’ (p. 2).

²⁸ Joss Marsh, *Word Crimes: Blasphemy, Culture, and Literature in Nineteenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 335. According to Marsh, approximately one hundred and fifty works were published in numbers before 1750, including *Robinson Crusoe* and the works of Shakespeare. Prior to *The Every-Day Book*, the most memorable serially published works were Pierce Egan’s *Life in London* (1820-21) and Thomas Rowlandson and Charles Pugin’s collaborative effort, *Microcosm of London* (1808-10).

Hone exploited the periodicity of newspapers and the predictability of regular accounts of news published and distributed in print form.²⁹ This regularity allowed readers to anticipate the arrival of *The Every-Day Book* as they would a newspaper, which enabled them to structure their 'reactions to the changes in the world'.³⁰ The newspaper's periodicity was 'a mechanism for structuring the flow of time, which thus became broken into predictable segments', making the reportage of threatening events a 'comforting' and 'manageable' framework through which to view the world.³¹ Hone added an extra dimension to the temporal character of *The Every-Day Book*. Whilst numbers were published both weekly and monthly, the content of each issue was a combination of historical and contemporary events and practices. Some entries were more general accounts of traditions from 'ancient times', such as the making of straw figures symbolizing the death of winter and the triumph of spring on the fourth Sunday of Lent (p. 179). These practices did not belong to a particular historical narrative. Newspapers provided highly regularized and stereotypical frameworks through which readers could apprehend the world. Hone's book offered a similar periodical structure that provided the same opportunity to read the world through a simultaneously retrospective and contemporary format. The fluid timeframe of the book, combined with its periodicity, enabled readers to apprehend both the past and present: to consider the present through the lens of the past, or vice versa.

Because *The Every-Day Book* was a retrospective take on the newspaper form, and did not rely upon a constant stream of news for its content, the publication was reminiscent of the 'spotty, eccentric, and discontinuous flying sheet of the seventeenth century'.³² The book's collaborative authorship reflected the cultural memory of the public from various angles. Individual entries were decontextualized views of isolated events, in which traditions were sometimes generalized without reference to specific historical instances. A few entries were records of individual occurrences from that day in history. Some were sensational anecdotes such as the Somerstown Miracle, in which a crippled man miraculously summoned the strength to leap from the path of a ferocious bull, or the mysterious winter rainbow in Ireland (pp. 237, 54). Others were historical records of battles such as Waterloo, or moments extrapolated from literature and attributed to the event they referenced, such as Hone's invocation of Shakespeare's *Henry V* for the entry of 25th October, St. Crispin's Day (p. 700). Hone's book did not reflect the 'distinct journalistic sense of time' characteristic of newspapers, but rather the eclectic and fragmented

²⁹ Jeremy D. Popkin, *News and Politics in the Age of Revolution: Jean Luzac and the 'Gazette de Leyde'* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 7.

³⁰ Popkin, *News and Politics in the Age of Revolution*, p. 7.

³¹ Popkin, *News and Politics in the Age of Revolution*, p. 7.

³² Leonard J. Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* (New York: Columbia Press, 1983), p. 71.

accumulation of memories from various sources which made up the cultural history of the reading public.³³

The layout of *The Every-Day Book* followed the predetermined narrative of the Gregorian calendar, but its content was arbitrary and decontextualized. It adhered to what Richard Terdiman later described as organicism, a mode of thought which 'sought the forms which might accommodate within imaginative representation growing experiences of dissonance in social and political existence' but also 'sanctioned expression of those experiences', whilst prescribing their 'containment and reharmonization'.³⁴ Hone's book revelled in its multifarious content, which could be reorganized and contained within the calendar system. But Terdiman's description of newspaper articles as 'detached, independent, reified, decontextualized' pieces of text presents something of a challenge to my conception of Hone's project. Terdiman highlights the ambiguity of the term 'article'. The term might refer to an 'element of newspaper format', in other words a 'news item'. It might also refer to 'an element of commercial transaction', or a 'commodity'. These two aspects of a newspaper's functionality, imparting information, selling goods, cannot be disengaged. In this sense, the newspaper can be considered 'the first culturally influential *anti-organicist* mode of modern discursive construction'.³⁵ The newspaper is built with 'discrete, theoretically disconnected elements which juxtapose themselves only in response to the abstract requirements of "layout", thus of a disposition of space whose logic, ultimately, is commercial'.³⁶ Perhaps Hone could be accused of the commodification of culture. It could be suggested that Hone's anthology was an artificial and illustrative account of popular culture which reduced experiences into readable and marketable extracts adhering to a homogenized print form, with a disregard for the origin and context of these records. On the contrary, Hone exploited print circulation to comment upon and form a concept of popular culture, which came directly and organically from its authorship: the people. It was not merely the kind of commercial venture Terdiman describes, but an egalitarian project which utilized print circulation to reinforce its collaborative ethos. Hone exposed the broad capacity of the calendar format, and created a levelling structure which anchored popular observances in the quotidian everyday world.

Having addressed the political agenda of Hone's new definition of the reading public, it is important to consider the content of the anthology alongside later works which share a seemingly similar concern for popular culture. Critics including Joss Marsh and Sally Ledger have mapped the influence of Hone's *The Every-Day Book*

³³ Davis, *Factual Fictions*, p. 72.

³⁴ Richard Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 122.

³⁵ Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse*, p. 122.

³⁶ Terdiman, *Discourse/Counter-Discourse*, p. 122.

essays onto the periodical works of Charles Dickens.³⁷ Hone's diverse accounts of popular urban pastimes anticipated Dickens's own urban sketches, particularly in *Master Humphrey's Clock* (1840-41), *Household Words* (1850-59) and *All the Year Round* (1859-95). The final section of this article will set Hone's account of Greenwich Fair against a later account in *Sketches by Boz* (1836). Greenwich Fair was a traditional leisure event for the migrating urban working classes, a paradigm of the notion of popular culture propagated by Hone and crucial to his concept of a living tradition of the culture of the populace. Juxtaposing two accounts of the same phenomenon illuminates the dynamics of influence between the instinctively Romantic mode of Hone's work and a later Victorian formulation of the reading public.

At first glance, there are many similarities between Hone's and Dickens's notions of the reading public. Ledger and Marsh consider Hone to have been part of Dickens's 'popular radical genealogy', his forgotten 'subliterary father'.³⁸ Dickens was the 'beneficiary' of an egalitarian urban 'literary inheritance' and had perfected Hone's model of a cheap weekly serial publication.³⁹ This success rested upon Dickens's 'persistence of 'the People' as a social and political category', much in the same vein as Hone's appeal to the new reading public in its new political and commercial character.⁴⁰ Ledger notes that, like Hone, Dickens focused on the notion of democracy as opposed to class conflict in his depictions of the lower urban classes, a throwback to the popular radicalism of the early 1800s.⁴¹ Hone engaged more directly with the welfare of popular culture, as opposed to Dickens's passive attitude to change.

Hone's account of Greenwich Fair in the suburbs of London foreshadowed Dickens's 'knowledge of the expanding city' which 'was never confined'.⁴² Greenwich Fair began on Easter Monday each year and was visited by 'thousands and tens of thousands from London and the vicinity' (p. 218). 'Working men and their wives; 'prentices and their sweet-hearts; blackguards and bullies; make their way to this fair. Pickpockets and their female companions go later' (p. 218). The spectacle of the unruly urban multitude was a cause for governmental concern: 'Frequently of late this place has been a scene of rude disorder' (p. 218). The Fair was closed down in 1857 after a petition to the Home Secretary, complaining about the swarming crowds of in excess of 200,000 Easter revellers.⁴³ But to Hone, and to later authors too,

³⁷ Joss Marsh, *Word Crimes*; Sally Ledger, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³⁸ Ledger, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination*, p. 2; Marsh, *Word Crimes*, p. 51.

³⁹ Marsh, *Word Crimes*, p. 51.

⁴⁰ Ledger, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination*, p. 4.

⁴¹ Ledger, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination*, p. 4.

⁴² Dennis Walder, 'Introduction to Charles Dickens', *Sketches by Boz* (London: Penguin, 1995), p. xxi.

⁴³ It was resurrected in June 2011. See Dominic Cavendish, 'Greenwich Fair: Where Dickens Let

Greenwich Fair encapsulated a microcosm of urban life, a living tradition of working-class leisure in line with the agenda of Hone's *The Every-Day Book*. The event was defined by the lifeblood of the populace: 'Greenwich fair, of itself, is nothing; the congregated throngs are everything' (p. 219).

The superficially similar tone of Hone and Dickens's accounts of Greenwich Fair highlights a class division, but also masks an underlying variance in the writers' attitude to popular culture. Hone describes the cross-London migration of holiday makers making their cultural pilgrimage to Greenwich, communing in an act of worship:

The greater part of the sojourns are on foot, but the vehicles for conveyance are innumerable. The regular and irregular stages are, of course, full inside and outside. Hackney-coaches are equally well filled; gigs carry three, not including the driver; and there are countless private chaise-carts, public pony-chaises and open accommodations. Intermingled with these, town-carts, usually employed in carrying goods, are now fitted up, with board for seats; hereon are seated men, women, and children, till the complement is complete, which is seldom deemed the case till the horses are overloaded. (pp. 218-19)

Hone's description is a close precursor of Dickens's account, just over ten years later, of a similar phenomenon of urban migration via 'Cabs, hackney-coaches, "shay" carts, coal-waggons, stages, omnibuses, sociable, gigs, donkey-chaises'.⁴⁴ The very act of travelling from the inner city of London to Greenwich symbolizes the mercurial nature of the urban populace: a mobile body of workers and thrill seekers who seemingly posed a threat to order in their state of leisure and abandon: 'this turmoil, commonly called pleasure-taking'.⁴⁵

The conflict at the heart of these early nineteenth-century depictions of Greenwich Fair is the highly problematic relation between elite and popular cultures. Peter Burke's influential study *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (1978) identifies the split in the social body of the people: a 'little tradition' of the people 'disseminated in marketplaces, taverns, and other places of popular assembly' and the scholarly and learned 'great tradition'.⁴⁶ 'There were two cultural traditions [...] but they did not correspond symmetrically [...] The elite participated in the little

His Hair Down', *The Daily Telegraph*, 18th June 2011

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/8581929/Greenwich-Fair-Where-Dickens-let-his-hair-down.html> [accessed 14 February 2012].

⁴⁴ Charles Dickens, 'Greenwich Fair', in *Sketches by Boz*, ed. by Dennis Walder (London: Penguin, 1995), pp. 135-45 (p. 137).

⁴⁵ Pierce Egan, *The Pilgrims of the Thames in Search of the National!* (London: W. Strange, 1828), p. 219.

⁴⁶ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1994), p. 28.

tradition, but the common people did not participate in the great tradition'.⁴⁷ In the case of Greenwich Fair, the main point of conflict was to position the polite notion of etiquette: '*etiquette* is entirely lost sight of – and *character* not an object of enquiry!'⁴⁸ Class difference was used to navigate between leisure and etiquette, and to suppress urban unruliness. Dickens characterizes the revelry of Greenwich Fair as an irrational and uncontrollable urge for debauchery: 'a sort of spring-rash: a three days' fever, which cools the blood for six months afterwards'.⁴⁹ 'The hill of the Observatory, and two or three other eminences in the park, are the chief resort of the less experienced and the vicious. But these soon tire' (p. 62) notes Hone. Dickens recounts the most popular pastime of 'tumbling', a sport which flies in the face of more respectable pleasures:

The principal amusement is to drag young ladies up the steep hill which leads to the Observatory, and then drag them down again, at the very top of their speed, greatly to the derangement of their curls and bonnet-caps, and much to the edification of lookers-on from below.⁵⁰

Hone describes a similarly disrespectable race:

the dishonesty of the stakeholder, who, as the parties had just reached the goal, scampered off with the stakes, amidst the shouts of the by-standers, and the ill-concealed chagrin of the two gentlemen who had foolishly committed their money to the hands of a stranger. (p. 221)

Hone's accounts reflect the general anxiety towards the segregation of class-distinct practices. The curtailment of working-class leisure customs was considered a result of the dual definitions of polite and plebeian behaviour. But as we have seen, his solution was to preserve the spirit and ethos of the Fair, rather than the event itself.

Hone's main concern was for the sanctity of popular culture. As Walter Bagehot once claimed, Dickens recorded London life 'like a special correspondent for posterity'.⁵¹ Hone, conversely, wrote to keep the ethos of popular traditions alive, even if the events themselves faded into obscurity. While Dickens sought to preserve his speculative perspective as an urban observer, Hone struggled to keep the last vestige of a dying urban spectacle alive. Wary of its imminent demise at the hands of conservatism, Hone captured the ennobling spirit of a popular custom which imbued

⁴⁷ Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, p. 28.

⁴⁸ Egan, *The Pilgrims of the Thames*, p. 73.

⁴⁹ Dickens, 'Greenwich Fair', p. 135.

⁵⁰ Dickens, 'Greenwich Fair', p. 138.

⁵¹ Walter Bagehot, 'Charles Dickens', *National Review*, 7 (October 1858), pp. 390-401 (p. 394).

the urban London landscape with its character:

Greenwich, however, will always have a charm; the fine park remains – trees, glades, turf, and the view from the observatory, one of the noblest in the world – before you the towers of these palaces built for a monarch’s residence, now ennobled into a refuge from life’s storms for the gallant defenders of their country, after their long and toilsome pilgrimage – then the noble river; and in the distance, amidst the din and smoke, appears the ‘mighty heart’ of this mighty empire; these are views worth purchasing at the expense of being obliged to visit Greenwich fair in this day of its decline. (p. 221)

Hone may have bemoaned the premature decline of Greenwich Fair, and the concern for popular urban culture which this entailed, but he was still willing to accept the inevitability of change within tradition. The documentation of the fair was not a cursory act of posterity, but an attempt to situate the event within an entire national narrative of change, as part of a living history and tradition of popular culture. Within *The Every-Day Book*, Greenwich Fair took on a renewed relevance. Hone recognised that the material deterioration of the Fair as an event was a separate phenomenon to the decline of its egalitarian ethos. Greenwich Fair had a seismic impact upon the nature of London popular culture and was a landmark event for the urban populace. The spirit of a Fair which provided a site of cultural commune amongst the lower classes was captured in Hone’s depictions of the multifarious populace. While he could not prevent the eventual closure of the fair, Hone could keep the ennobling effects of it alive within the pages of his book. Greenwich Fair is the perfect emblem of *The Every-Day Book*: an event which, although declining, still held monumental relevance to the nature of popular culture, imprinting its impact of change upon the ‘mighty’ and ‘ennobled’ landscape of urban London.

My discussion here raises several important points that enable us to situate Hone within the critical debates of the early nineteenth century. Firstly, it is clear from Hone’s compilation and marketing of *The Every-Day Book* that he was addressing the emerging reading public in radically new terms. Hone exploited his experience as a publisher, and the tradition of print publications, to create a commoditized record of popular culture. He was able to negotiate between an older eighteenth-century political conception of “the People” as a class-category, while anticipating a ‘distinctly mid-nineteenth century modern conception of a mass-market “populace”’ which foreshadowed later writers, including Dickens.⁵² In addition to this, we can see that *The Every-Day Book* was a complex model of self-sustaining popular culture, which in turn revealed the dynamics of the role of the people in creating this culture. Hone’s reliance upon readers’ contributions, and the continuing interest of the public, to create his shared archive of everyday customs is new

⁵² Ledger, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination*, p. 3.

evidence to support Gramsci's notion of 'a system of shared meanings, attitudes and values' presented in 'the symbolic forms (performances, artefacts) in which they are expressed'.⁵³ The egalitarian framework underpinning Hone's notion of an enveloping popular culture privileged the communal customs of the masses and individualized personal recollections. In doing so, Hone resisted the influence of pedagogy. *The Every-Day Book* has been woefully neglected in debates on literary consumption and production in the long nineteenth century. New appraisal of his work offers a radical turn to this crucial discourse which can no longer be overlooked.

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⁵³ Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, p. xi.

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COLLECTING MEN: MASCULINITY AND CULTURAL CAPITAL IN *THE WOMAN IN WHITE*

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Abstract

This essay seeks to extend the study of male consumption in the Victorian period, focusing specifically on the practice of aesthetic collecting in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1860). I compare male characters in this text, in terms of class and gender identity, in order to offer a pre-Wildean understanding of the Victorian male consumer. The novel's treatment of the aristocracy and the middle classes offers substantial textual evidence of a relationship between consumption and masculinity, especially with regard to the collection of art as the acquisition of cultural capital. Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, I clarify the connection between class position and the possession of cultural capital in nineteenth-century Britain, and explore other cultural assumptions concerning aesthetic proficiency, social status and consumer behaviour. I consider the theory of cultural capital in its relation to practices of collecting by taking into account the aesthetic tastes and cultural goods ascribed to the nineteenth-century collector figure. In this way, a collector's embodied cultural capital translated into a capacity to identify the aesthetic properties of artistic objects. The recognised ownership of such culturally-valued works of art represents the collector's objectified cultural capital. How a collector comes to be in the position to distinguish, or indeed to own, art objects reflects his own social situation in terms of his class status, education and access to economic capital. My argument, in brief, is that the very notion of the collection differs between the classes. I argue that the practices of aesthetic collection carried out in *The Woman in White* validate the notion of cultural capital.

Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* (1860) demonstrates a prescient understanding of what Pierre Bourdieu, over one hundred years later, would term cultural capital. Through a mapping of Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital onto two main characters from the novel, Walter Hartright and Frederick Fairlie, my aim is to show how conflicting discourses of the male collector compete for hegemony in the novel. The bourgeois collector, Hartright, with whom the authorial perspective clearly identifies, attempts to establish himself as the hegemonic male identity. Obstructing this is the aristocratic collector, Fairlie, whose most powerful ideological weapon is his possession of cultural capital. The problem facing Hartright is that he needs to capture that cultural capital, and the only way to do this is to redefine what it is and how it can be acquired. These two distinct models for the collector, the aristocratic and the bourgeois, who are at the same time effeminate and normatively masculine, reflect a split distinction of cultural capital between a feminine-coded consumption and a masculine-coded production. Fairlie, through his possession of old money, has the wealth to buy the quality goods he wants, and so becomes consumerist and

feminised. Thus, his cultural status is negated. By contrast, Hartright, the bourgeois hero, does not possess old money, but earns it through his skills and abilities. He is able to acquire cultural capital not as something to be bought and consumed, but as an element of his productive abilities as an artist figure. That this is the case will be reflected in my accompanying discussion of sexual objectification and masculine gender identity. The aristocrat is asexual while the bourgeois man's aesthetic appreciation of women has an ultimately productive aim: it enables him to marry and have children. The disparity between these two characters is well rehearsed by critics. The connection between gender and sensation fiction has served both the novel and the critics well, generating a range of influential and edifying readings.¹ However, the critical tendency to focus on the differences between Fairlie and Walter on the grounds of their gender identity has also deflected attention away from the ways in which they are similar, notably in their affirmation of each other's aesthetic tastes. I begin with an overview of Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital as well as the historical context of collecting as a specific form of consumer behaviour in the nineteenth century.

The Culture of Capital

Recent work in Victorian studies has demonstrated that using Bourdieu to think about the Victorian period leads to identifying, through cultural analysis, the development of the modern form of cultural capital that he describes.² The phenomenon of taste is central to the study of the mid-nineteenth-century male collector figure in the novel because 'taste functions as a marker of class'.³ Bourdieu frequently concerns himself with the entrenched connection between cultural capital and social position since 'a work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded'.⁴ In other words, exposure to the high culture associated with elevated familial origin is expected to manifest itself through acquired aesthetic tastes, which consequently reinforce social difference. Factors such as education, wealth, and the possession of certain cultural objects affect the development of aesthetic disposition, social mobility and cultural capital. Bourdieu offers a description of cultural capital, which he divides into three forms. Firstly, the *embodied* state refers to the cultural capital personified in the individual,

¹ See for example Patrick Brantlinger, 'What is "Sensational" about the "Sensation Novel"?', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 37:1 (June 1982), pp. 1-28 and Walter M. Kendrick, 'The Sensationalism of *The Woman in White*', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 32:1 (June 1977), pp. 18-35.

² See Simon Gunn, 'Translating Bourdieu: Cultural Capital and the English Middle Class in Historical Perspective', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 56:1 (March 2005), pp. 49-64.

³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 2.

⁴ Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, p. 2.

in the form of ‘long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body’.⁵ More specifically, embodied cultural capital is the taste, skills, knowledge and attitude that the aesthetically accomplished individual exhibits. Secondly, the materiality of *objectified* cultural capital, or ‘cultural goods’ acquired by the individual indicates aesthetic competency.⁶ Additionally, Bourdieu notes, ‘cultural goods can be appropriated both materially, which presupposes economic capital, and symbolically, which presupposes cultural capital’.⁷ Such a notion articulates the potential economic convertibility of a collection of art, and consequently the social prominence and financial worth of a collector’s objects. Thirdly, *institutionalised* cultural capital, educational qualifications which confirm the cultural capital of the individual and secure the ‘certitude of cultural competence which confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value with respect to culture’.⁸

The discourse of consumer preference emerged in a specific historical and cultural context during the nineteenth century. Patrick Brantlinger takes into account the effect of nineteenth-century developments such as industrialism, romanticism and liberalism on patterns of consumption, and he suggests that taste, ‘the faculty or process of qualitative discrimination’, functioned as both a private and public phenomenon.⁹ Individual consumers, as a collective, generate patterns of economic demand which could be perceived outwardly as ‘national taste’.¹⁰ Aside from exposing the gap between high and mass culture, nineteenth-century industrial art and the commodification of ornamental household products undoubtedly affected the *quantity* of consumption as modern industry intruded especially on the private and domestic sphere.¹¹ The societal changes in commercial activity that allowed individuals a growing access to mass-produced goods were responsible for the perception of the diminishing quality of national art in the Victorian period.¹²

The emergence of a politically-empowered industrial middle class in the early nineteenth century also had dramatic implications for Britain’s art industry. At the height of their power, the bourgeoisie commanded influence over the circulation of industrial capital, all the while contributing to a reshaping of Victorian class relations and the growth of industrial culture.¹³ The middle-class contribution to the art market

⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The Forms of Capital’, trans. by Richard Nice, in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. by John G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp. 240-58 (p. 243).

⁶ Bourdieu, ‘The Forms of Capital’, p. 243.

⁷ Bourdieu, ‘The Forms of Capital’, p. 247.

⁸ Bourdieu, ‘The Forms of Capital’, p. 248.

⁹ Patrick Brantlinger, ‘Household Taste: Industrial Art, Consumerism, and Pre-Raphaelitism’, *The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies*, 9 (Spring 2000), pp. 83-100 (p. 83).

¹⁰ Brantlinger, ‘Household Taste’, p. 83.

¹¹ Brantlinger, ‘Household Taste’, pp. 84-85.

¹² Brantlinger, ‘Household Taste’, p. 91.

¹³ John Seed and Janet Wolff, ‘Introduction’, in *The Culture of Capital: Art, Power and the*

modified the common perception of the collector figure as an aristocrat, instead taking into account the increased economic and cultural capital of the middle-class gentleman. Thus, the rise of the bourgeois gentleman collector in Victorian Britain complicated the traditional links between taste and the aristocracy. The social ascension of the Victorian bourgeoisie also had ramifications for masculine identity, especially for the idea of the gentleman. The two different types of gentleman identifiable with this period, the traditional gentleman of noble birth and the modern self-made man, were strongly connected to their respective class positions.¹⁴ Around the mid-Victorian period the term had extended beyond aristocratic social lineage to include those who possessed a moral standing from the middle classes as well.¹⁵ The growing flexibility of the gentleman's position paralleled the advent of increased bourgeois economic capital. No longer did the aristocracy's inherited wealth dominate gentlemanly status. The new middle-class gentleman, or the man of trade, emerged, idealising the qualities of his class, such as 'industry, piety, integrity, business acumen'.¹⁶

The effect of a shifting political climate on the new models of masculinity in Victorian England was matched by the middle-class consumer's access to economic and cultural capital. Bourgeois masculinity may be contextualised within the rise of industrial capitalism and the new-found ability to participate in parliamentary politics and the art market.¹⁷ Middle-class men began to define themselves against the older aristocratic values of inherited land and wealth, instead asserting a self-made type of male identity. Once considered to be a marker of gentlemanly status, a man's leisure time now became indicative of idleness: 'the degeneracy and effeminacy of the aristocracy focused on its softness, sensuousness, indolence, luxuriousness, foppishness and a lack of a proper sense of purpose and direction'.¹⁸ In this period idealised masculine identity meant contributing to the public world as an active generator of capital, as well as demonstrating qualities of strength and independence.¹⁹ Moreover the possession of economic wealth and a new found sense of freedom of choice entitled both the gentleman and the bourgeois producer to

Nineteenth-Century Middle Class, ed. by John Seed and Janet Wolff (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), pp. 1-16 (p. 12).

¹⁴ Robin Gilmour, *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), p. 1; Arlene Young, *Culture, Class and Gender in the Victorian Novel: Gentlemen, Gents and Working Women* (London: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 5-6.

¹⁵ Young, *Culture, Class and Gender*, p. 5.

¹⁶ Young, *Culture, Class and Gender*, p. 14.

¹⁷ The Reform Act of 1832 gave middle-class men the right to vote. See Catherine Hall, 'Competing Masculinities', in *Polity Reader in Gender Studies*, ed. by Anthony Giddens et al. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), pp. 280-98 (p. 280).

¹⁸ Hall, 'Competing Masculinities', p. 281.

¹⁹ Hall, 'Competing Masculinities', pp. 282-83.

function as legitimate consumers in a market-driven society.²⁰

Although the parameters of what constituted gentility shifted during this period, the differing ideas of the gentleman collector figure were united by the expectation that they could live without manual labour: 'for it was leisure which enabled a man to cultivate the style and pursuits of the gentlemanly life'.²¹ This notion will prove fundamental to my examination of Fairlie and Walter as collectors because economic capital both enables and restrains their pursuit of gentlemanly lifestyles. The new perception of the gentleman figure shifted class boundaries and allowed a form of social mobility between Britain's middle and upper classes.²² This phenomenon is potentially replicated when collectors surround themselves with the artistic markers of an upper-class lifestyle. Despite its connection to a new way of achieving greater social mobility, however, the simulation of an aristocratic way of life through aesthetic collecting proves problematic in *The Woman in White*. Moreover, the shift in what makes cultural capital is linked to the historical context of a rising middle class, and the novel is both an expression of that shift, a text supporting and promoting it, and an attempt to negotiate the anxieties it causes. We see a new construction of cultural capital emerging as part of a general cultural transformation driven by socio-historical change.

Before beginning a literary investigation of collecting, it is essential to situate the practice within a cultural and historical framework. From the second half of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, the classificatory nature of the Victorian age, with its emphasis on 'organising individual things into groups of things', manifested itself through the figure of the individual collector.²³ The 'classificatory impulse' of the Victorian collector was the idiosyncratic feature of this mode of collecting.²⁴ In organising a collection, the collector was imbued with the power to classify his objects into an appropriate system that relied on a particular object's temporal, spatial and internal qualities.²⁵ The Victorian collector's principles of organisation produced an overall aesthetic and economically valuable collection of carefully chosen art objects.²⁶ The Victorian collector systematically acquired objects of cultural value and aggregated them according to how they fitted within the overall collection.²⁷ The historical practice of collecting, in particular, the symbolic

²⁰ Hall, 'Competing Masculinities', p. 281.

²¹ Gilmour, *The Idea of the Gentleman*, p. 7.

²² Young, *Culture, Class and Gender*, p. 34.

²³ Tim Dolin, 'Cranford and the Victorian Collection', *Victorian Studies*, 36:2 (Winter 1993), pp. 179-206 (p. 179).

²⁴ Judith Pascoe, *The Hummingbird Cabinet: A Rare and Curious History of Romantic Collectors*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2006), p. 60.

²⁵ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), pp. 151-55.

²⁶ Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 154.

²⁷ Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 154.

relationship between collectors and their collections, is related both to self-understanding and the presentation of the self. An object signifies something *to* its collector as well as something *about* its collector. The way in which the Victorian collector organised his collected objects reflected his particularised persona. Although the manner of classification separated these representatives from both phases of collecting, it would appear that they shared an obsession with acquiring objects of personal significance.²⁸ The relationship between personal meaning and value, however, reflected shifts in the economic climate of nineteenth-century Britain.

In my reading of collecting as a subsidiary of consumer behaviour in *The Woman in White* I do not mean to overlook the challenge posed by the Aesthetic movement, which can be traced to as early as the 1860s. Studies into the processes of male consumption have tended to concentrate on the relationship between masculine social/political status and men's consumption of fashionable clothing and commodities.²⁹ The historical example of Oscar Wilde, for instance, has been important in the critical analysis of male consumption and decadent masculinity.³⁰ Equally, sensation fiction, the genre to which the novel under consideration belongs, and its hereditary connection to later Aesthetic novels puts a separate pressure on my treatment of the pre-Wildean male consumer. *The Woman in White* as precursor to texts like *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) and the connection between the sensational and the Aesthetic novel, are perhaps outside the scope of this essay. However I acknowledge that a character like Fairlie could be said to prefigure later examples of the satirical aesthete in literature, such as George Meredith's Sir Willoughby Patterne or Henry James's Gilbert Osmond.³¹ The Aesthetic movement, with its emphasis on beauty, has implications for the study of *The Woman in White* because it advocated an Aesthetic sensibility that was not limited to art. One of the

²⁸ Pascoe, *The Hummingbird Cabinet*, p. 60.

²⁹ David Kutcha, 'The Making of the Self-Made Man: Class, Clothing, and English Masculinity, 1688-1832', in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, ed. by Victoria de Grazia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 54-78 (p. 71).

³⁰ British Aestheticism, with its emphasis on beauty, had implications for gender and class identity because the aesthete was able to affect aristocratic dress and manner. The movement invokes a number of cultural meanings pertaining to literature, art, fashion and lifestyle. Major works in the area include Regenia Gagnier's *The Insatiability of Human Wants: Economics and Aesthetics in Market Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) and Gagnier's *Idylls of the Marketplace: Oscar Wilde and the Victorian Public* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986) as well as Rachel Bowlby's *Shopping with Freud* (London: Routledge, 1993).

³¹ This interpretation is indebted to the work of Talia Schaffer, Nicholas Daly and Noel B. Jackson. See Schaffer's 'Aestheticism and Sensation', in *A Companion to Sensation Fiction*, ed. by Pamela K. Gilbert (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), pp. 614-26 and Daly's *Sensation and Modernity in the 1860s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Jackson, in particular, advocates a reading of Collins in which sensation is an integral part of aesthetic experience in 'Rethinking the Cultural Divide: Walter Pater, Wilkie Collins, and the Legacies of Wordsworthian Aesthetics', *Modern Philology*, 102:2 (November 2004), pp. 207-34.

tenets of the movement, the “art for art’s sake” dictum, referred not only to the creation of art without moral, religious or narrative considerations, but also to the belief in bringing a quality of attention to the structure and execution of one’s life. Fairlie’s pattern of collecting is a significant, and figurative, anticipation of Aestheticism because he typifies the more harmful values that came to be associated with the movement: his indolent lifestyle combined with his narcissism places him very much in the Aesthetic tradition or what Kathy Alexis Psomiades calls ‘life-style aestheticism’.³² My understanding of the relationship between masculine identity and cultural capital does not invalidate the significance of Aestheticism, rather my difference in focus leads to an alternative interpretation of Fairlie as a Victorian male collector.

Frederick Fairlie: The Gentleman’s Collection

Frederick Fairlie, Hartright’s employer and a character who would appear to be on the periphery of the plot, is the novel’s foremost collector figure. Fairlie functions in a contradictory manner because, although lacking in title and nobility, as a member of the gentry he adopts the bearing and manner of the British aristocracy. Accordingly his collecting habits also align with this class identity: he imitates the aesthetic qualities of the aristocracy. Even more problematic is the way in which Fairlie exhibits behaviour consistent with aristocratic masculinity: Collins repeatedly portrays him as effeminate and insubstantial, qualities that became sharply associated with nobility by the mid-Victorian period.³³ Fairlie represents the typical mid-Victorian impression of aristocratic masculinity in his weak, effeminate and non-procreative conduct.

First, his delicate condition signals a weakened mind and body, and by proxy, a weakened authority. Indeed his fragile condition undermines the authority tied to his class position, and casts into doubt his ability to manage the family’s welfare. Second, his influence as head of the household is not taken seriously by the other characters in the house:

Mr. Fairlie is too great an invalid to be a companion for anybody. I don’t know what is the matter with him, and the doctors don’t know what is the matter with him, and he doesn’t know what is the matter with him. We all say it’s the nerves.³⁴

³² Kathy Alexis Psomiades, *Beauty’s Body: Femininity and Representation in British Aestheticism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 168.

³³ Hall, ‘Competing Masculinities’, p. 281.

³⁴ Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* [1860] (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 37. Further page references will be given parenthetically in the text.

In this description by Marian Halcombe, Collins establishes Fairlie's self-indulgent and infantile temperament. In fact, when Marian advises Hartright to humour him, she involuntarily represents her uncle as a child, rather than as a respected member of Britain's gentry. The reference to his nerves, a condition more commonly associated with the hysterical female, also reinforces his effeminate, and hence ineffectual, command of the household.

Fairlie's peculiar priorities are what essentially create his collecting personality, which is also inextricably tied to his social standing. At the outset, as a member of the gentry and a wealthy landowner, Fairlie possesses the financial means to acquire valuable objects. His consumption corresponds naturally with his social situation. The supposition that he has inherited cultural capital along with his economic wealth forms a natural parallel with his gentlemanly rank. His privileged access to experiencing legitimate culture evokes Bourdieu's understanding of cultural capital, in terms of the effect of one's upbringing on matters of taste. Fairlie holds two types of cultural capital. First of all, his embodied cultural capital, or aesthetic familiarity, is highlighted by references to eminent painters (pp. 43, 44, 46). Fairlie also makes continual allusions to his taste (pp. 44, 159, 339, 347). Second, his 'highly appreciative feeling towards Art and its professors' is materialised in a collection of cultural goods that are financially valuable and intrinsically beautiful (p. 11). His 'coins, prints and water-colour drawings' serve as objectified cultural capital which support his aesthetic and economic superiority in the novel (p. 37). Fairlie's aspirations to the aristocracy, with its associations of inherited cultural nobility, ground his possession of cultural capital. He collects in a manner that is consistent with the aristocratic social milieu he strives to imitate, acquiring items of legitimate artistic worth. For example, he recognises the value of a number of unspecified drawings at an art sale, 'really fine specimens of English water-colour Art' (p. 45), and obtains them in order to restore their worth. His acquisition of the drawings with the intention of having them preserved by straining and mounting illustrates his awareness of the economic benefit of collecting, although his taste is not strictly governed by this principle. When Fairlie exclaims, 'Do let me teach you to understand the heavenly pearliness of these lines', it is clear he adores his objects because of their aesthetic quality as well (p. 159).

Fairlie is under no obligation to justify his penchant for collecting, because it was regarded as a conservative pursuit for a member of his class. His declaration that he is improving national taste is especially relevant, particularly within the context of the Great Exhibition, held in the same year *The Woman in White* is set, and the cultural fears it generated about the decline in the quality of British art (p. 347). Its exhibits were equally appreciated and criticised for connecting high art and industrial art, a cultural panic that may be signalled in Fairlie's desire to collect objects of traditional artistic merit. His propensity for objects of historical significance, such as his Raphael pieces, removes him from the realm of industrial taste and mass

consumption, instead situating him as an aesthetic connoisseur.³⁵

In *The Woman in White* the symbolic relationship between the collector and his objects is characterised by the type of objects he collects. It follows that Fairlie's collection of various artworks and ornaments show a great deal about his aesthetic taste:

On the opposite side stood two antique cabinets; and between them, and above them hung a picture of the Virgin and Child, protected by glass, and bearing Raphael's name on the gilt tablet at the bottom of the frame. On my right hand were chiffoniers and little stands in buhl and marquetterie, loaded with figures in Dresden china, with rare vases, ivory ornaments, and toys and curiosities that sparkled at all points with gold, silver and precious stones.
(p. 41)

Hartright's use of words like 'gilt', 'antique', 'rare' and 'precious' connote high cultural value. Above all, these objects appear to be of significant monetary worth, and consequently are well looked after and 'protected'. Fairlie's sense of ownership involves privacy and restricted access to his collection.

Categorising and classifying and other related activities of aesthetic collecting are just as important as the objects themselves for uncovering what a collection discloses about its collector. Fairlie organises his collection in both an aesthetic and classificatory manner. In particular, the decorative items that Fairlie chooses to display adhere to a system of recurring regulation:

One side of the room was occupied by a long bookcase of some rare inlaid wood that was quite new to me. It was not more than six feet high, and the top was adorned with statuettes in marble, ranged at regular distances one from the other. (p. 41)

Hartright's description neatly illustrates the order and regularity that Fairlie imposes on his collection. Likewise, Fairlie systematises his compilation of etchings and drawings into several different coloured portfolios which he keeps in his rooms (pp. 44-45). He also catalogues his objects with 'ostentatious red-letter inscriptions underneath. "Madonna and Child, by Raphael. In the possession of Frederick Fairlie"' (p. 199). Fairlie not only labels the material core of his objects, he draws attention to his *possession* of them in identifying both the artist and his own name.

Fairlie's collection of 'matchless Rembrandt etchings' denotes his social status through their artistic and economic value (p. 129). The presumed social implications of collecting are supplemented further by what the activity reveals about Fairlie as an individual subject. Through the consumption of art and other items of value, Fairlie

³⁵ Brantlinger, 'Household Taste', p. 91.

exercises a form of agency over his possessions. He is imbued with the power to collect, arrange and dispose of his belongings, a power that he fails to execute over human beings. He fills the void of his self-engrossing existence by attaining inorganic things that he can control and organise, thus he creates a 'closed dialogue with himself'.³⁶ Instead of asserting his authority over other members of the household, he remains isolated and prefers to commune with his collection. Such a fixation with collected objects is shown to be harmful because it supplants fundamental human contact. Fairlie predominantly preoccupies himself with cultural goods instead of social and familial dealings. Baudrillard points to the instability of 'normal human relationships' as a reason for the archetypal collector preferring the company of inanimate objects:

Ordinary relationships are such a continual source of anxiety: while the realm of objects, on the other hand, being the realm of successive and homologous terms, offers security.³⁷

Operating solely as a collector, Fairlie's unfamiliar relationships with his family and servants do not allow him to partake in the social duties associated with being the head of household.

In *The Woman in White*, Fairlie's simulation of aristocratic social behaviour evokes the distinct cultural assumptions about gender associated with noble rank during this period. His overall physical appearance connotes effeminacy. In particular, Hartright's account of his first meeting with Fairlie again explicitly specifies his effeminate appearance and manner:

His feet were effeminately small, and were clad in buff-coloured silk stockings, and little womanish bronze-leather slippers. Two rings adorned his white delicate hands [...] Upon the whole, he had a frail, languidly-fretful, over-refined look—something singularly and unpleasantly delicate in its association with a man, and, at the same time, something which could by no possibility have looked natural and appropriate if it had been transferred to the appearance of a woman. (p. 42)

The adjectives in this passage more often correspond with a female subject. However, Hartright does not go so far as to label Fairlie as feminine or masculine; rather he alludes to a more androgynous condition, as Lyn Pykett notes, 'Frederick Fairlie

³⁶ Jean Baudrillard, 'The System of Collection', trans. by Roger Cardinal, in *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. by John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (London: Reaktion Books, 1994), pp. 7-25 (p. 19).

³⁷ Baudrillard, 'The System of Collection', p. 10.

seems to belong to an intermediate sex or gender'.³⁸

In addition to an effeminate physical appearance, Frederick Fairlie also displays nervous tendencies throughout the novel (pp. 37, 39, 43, 78, 110). His masculine identity is depicted as sensitive and bordering on the hysterical. He is equated with, and defined against, Laura and Anne Catherick, the novel's other nervous characters. In perpetuating a state of nervous sensitivity he occupies a fundamentally feminine position. Whereas both Laura and Anne have justified cause for their delicate conditions, both women undergo distressing experiences that result in institutionalisation, Fairlie's tortured nerves are assumed to be exaggerated: according to Hartright, 'Mr. Fairlie's selfish affectation and Mr. Fairlie's wretched nerves meant one and the same thing' (p. 43). Although Fairlie mostly feigns his weakened nerves in order to have things his own way, he is without a doubt incapacitated, both mentally and physically. As Gabrielle Ceraldi argues, 'Mr. Fairlie's sufferings may not be as intense as he pretends, but clearly he is not psychologically healthy either'.³⁹

In terms of ideal masculinity, Fairlie's diseased body, oversensitivity and high-pitched and languid voice denote a disintegration of the natural gender order.⁴⁰ Collins's representation of Fairlie embodies the cultural association between effeminate behaviour and passive asexuality, as evidenced by his perpetual state of bachelorhood. One of the integral expectations of Victorian society was that man progress from bachelorhood to married life in order to fulfil his civic responsibilities.⁴¹ Marriage was an institutionalised arrangement that allowed men and women to legitimately produce a nuclear family, which had a rightful claim on any inheritance. Against standard practice, Fairlie explicitly rejects matrimony:

I considerably remain single; and my poor dear brother, Philip, inconsiderately marries. What does he do when he dies? He leaves his daughter to *me*. She is a sweet girl. She is also a dreadful responsibility. Why lay her on my shoulders? Because I am bound, in the harmless character of a single man, to relieve my married connexions of all their own troubles. (p. 345)

Strangely, Fairlie feels that by not marrying he is being considerate to his family. By

³⁸ Lyn Pykett, 'Collins and the Sensation Novel', in *The Cambridge Companion to Wilkie Collins*, ed. by Jenny Bourne Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 50-64 (p. 55).

³⁹ Gabriel Ceraldi, 'The Crystal Palace, Imperialism, and "The Struggle for Existence": Victorian Evolutionary Discourse in *The Woman in White*', in *Reality's Dark Light: The Sensational Wilkie Collins*, ed. by Maria K. Bachman and Don Richard Cox (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003), pp. 173-94 (p. 186).

⁴⁰ Tamara S. Wagner, 'Overpowering Vitality: Nostalgia and Men of Sensibility in the Fiction of Wilkie Collins', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 63:4 (December 2002), pp. 471-500 (p. 483).

⁴¹ John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (London: Bath Press, 1999), p. 108.

now the reader is prepared for Fairlie's selfish and peculiarly negative viewpoints: in this case, remaining single prevents him from burdening his relatives. The absence of interest in sex, in combination with the androgynous description of Fairlie, implies a state of asexuality and a failure to reproduce, which compromises his masculine status.

Just as Fairlie's 'shattered condition' (p. 620) makes him an unfavourable model of Victorian masculinity, so too does his preference for objects over human company, which leaves him without successors. He therefore falls short of satisfying the expectations required by his class and gender identity. It is significant that he is absent from the closing pages of the novel. Collins makes room for the ascent of a true gentleman by removing the physically and morally-weaker male from the narrative: '[Fairlie] had been struck by paralysis, and had never rallied after the shock' (p. 626). Fairlie's death results in Limmeridge House descending through the family line: Laura's child, a boy, inherits the property. We can assume that the inheritance includes Fairlie's immense and valuable collection of art, coins and ornaments as well, to be guarded by Walter Hartright until his son reaches maturity. While individual characters rise and fall, their objects of collection remain to be absorbed into the family estate, but that estate has been newly invigorated by the entry of the middle-class hero, Hartright: the subject of the following section.

Walter Hartright: Embodying Cultural Capital

Walter Hartright represents an alternative model of Victorian masculinity. He embodies many of the paradigms of self-help and ideal manliness that permeated nineteenth-century Britain, in which class and gender identities were mutually involved.⁴² Hartright is not a collector in the sense of the word that applies to Fairlie. However, Hartright exhibits patterns of collecting behaviour, and the possession and increased acquisition of cultural capital plays an important role in the construction of his masculine identity.

To prepare the reader for Hartright's eventual social ascension, Collins surrounds his male protagonist with gentlemanly attributes on a number of occasions in *The Woman in White* (pp. 19, 20, 54, 114, 128, 155, 503, 533). All of these references indicate a 'natural' gentlemanly disposition. In particular, Marian recognises Hartright's discipline and integrity in his initial meeting with 'the woman in white'. She tells him 'your management of the affair [...] showed self-control, the delicacy, and the compassion of a man who was naturally a gentleman' (p. 71). The word 'naturally' is important because it assumes an authentic gentlemanly nature, as opposed to the affected mannerisms of Fairlie or Sir Percival Glyde. These frequent

⁴² Hall, 'Competing Masculinities', p. 281.

references to Hartright's well-mannered character augment his moral status and reassure the reader of his capacity to act with authority and power. Furthermore, his association with a gentlemanly standing emphasises a competent masculine identity that is in direct contrast to Fairlie, the novel's gentleman figure in terms of rank.

Hartright's achievement as a 'thoroughly competent drawing master' derives from his capacity as an artist, a position he shares with his late father (pp. 10, 19). In terms of the possession of cultural capital, the drawing master has an advantageous position. On one hand, Hartright inherits embodied cultural capital in the form of an intellectual discernment of cultural objects (p. 484). From his father, he additionally obtains social capital in the form of reputation and artistic relationships (p. 11).⁴³ Hartright inherits both intrinsic and extrinsic aesthetic abilities that he converts into a profitable income when he takes up residence as a drawing master at Limmeridge House. On the other hand, Hartright's cultural capital is institutionalised through his formal artistic training; his 'accomplishment in art' and 'sufficiently educated taste' (pp. 44-45) implies a temporal commitment to the acquisition of cultural capital.⁴⁴ When Professor Pesca informs Hartright that he is 'to be treated there on the footing of a gentleman', it becomes apparent that his respectable amount of cultural competence, combined with his 'most exceptional references to character and abilities', allows him to be easily regarded as a gentleman (p. 19).

It is necessary to the narrative of *The Woman in White* that the profession of its middle-class hero carries with it a satisfactory amount of embodied and institutionalised cultural capital. However, Hartright's competency with upper-class culture and specialised knowledge of art does not mean that he collects in the traditional sense. Indeed he does not initially possess the necessary economic capital to enable him to collect valuable artistic objects. As an alternative he cultivates his aesthetic persona through his efforts as a hired drawing master and artist. Although he exhibits an artist's eye for beauty, he initially lacks the economic and social capital required to have an artistic collection of his own. However, Hartright sometimes displays the motivations and actions that are identifiable with the Victorian collector figure, because he effectively collects information and experiences throughout the novel. While Hartright and Fairlie are related through their shared collecting motives, Hartright's collecting personality can be read in more symbolic terms. At the end of the novel, the collection that reflects his character consists of experiences, not of artistic objects.

Although Hartright does not collect objectified cultural capital, he certainly holds sufficient cultural capital in its embodied form. The tastes of the aesthetic collector figure are fundamental to the study of collecting practices, and Hartright's

⁴³ According to Bourdieu, social capital exists in the form of a network of symbolic relationships 'of mutual acquaintance and recognition' that are socially instituted and guaranteed through a familial connection. Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', p. 250.

⁴⁴ Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital', p. 235.

aesthetic tastes often align with those of his employer. The affirmation of a legitimate collector's embodied cultural capital, then, verifies his own aesthetic sensibilities. Hartright comments on items from Fairlie's collection:

Although my nerves were not delicate enough to detect the odour of plebeian fingers which had offended Mr. Fairlie's nostrils, my taste was sufficiently educated to enable me to appreciate the value of the drawings, while I turned them over. (p. 45)

In this passage, Hartright's overt remark about Fairlie's amplified sensitivity underlines the differing class and gender status between the two characters. However, their shared artistic appreciation of the drawings connects the two men in terms of embodied cultural capital. Hartright recognises the value of Fairlie's collection, whilst Fairlie continually avows their shared artistic tastes (pp. 44-45). It is a reciprocal relationship in which one character endorses the other's embodied cultural capital, and vice versa.

As a collector Hartright is in other ways similar to Frederick Fairlie as both men share a desire for mastery. Fairlie's desire for mastery over his objects is consistent with his domination over his servant, Louis (pp. 157-58). Equally, the 'unrelenting need, even hunger' associated with collecting as an activity can be witnessed in Hartright's desire for knowledge to gain power over the novel's villains.⁴⁵ The ongoing search for the truth, by any means necessary, demonstrates the obsessive potential of his personality. His underlying motives for wanting to vindicate Laura 'being robbed of her station' (p. 414) are clear. He wants to own her: 'in the right of her calamity, in the right of her friendlessness she was mine at last. Mine to support, to protect, to cherish, to restore' (p. 414). Without doubt, the possessive implications of this statement suggest a sense of ownership, and are certainly comparable to the language Fairlie uses in relation to his treasured possessions. Hartright's desire to have possession of Laura, and the lengths to which he goes to secure this possession, show his obsessive tendencies. In effect, it bears a striking resemblance to the urges of the typical systematic collector, whose collection will always be incomplete if it does not include a particularly significant object.

Collins establishes a relationship between Hartright and Laura, as subject and object, right from their first meeting. Hartright, because he is male, a narrator and has an artist's eye, is invested with the power to perceive Laura. He objectifies her by referring to her through his painting: 'the water-colour drawing that I first made of Laura Fairlie, at an after period, in the place and attitude in which I first saw her, lies on my desk while I write' (p. 51). In his distanced admiration of Laura's appearance, most notably 'the charm of her face and head, her sweet expression' (p. 53), Hartright

⁴⁵ Werner Muensterberger, *Collecting: An Unruly Passion: Psychological Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 3.

embodies the power that the subject wields over the object: 'the (masculine) gaze re-creates the visible body of a (feminine) other precisely as it wishes'.⁴⁶ Essentially Laura is an ideal 'representation, sculpted by a male hand' and her absorption into a structure of power is normalised by Hartright's seemingly innocent sketch.⁴⁷ Hartright concedes that his drawing does not suffice to communicate Laura's beauty: 'Does my poor portrait of her, my fond, patient labour of long and happy days, show me these things?' (p. 52). His painting merely diminishes her to an object to be collected, or, 'a fair, delicate girl in a pretty light dress' (p. 52). Hartright's artistic objectification of Laura, combined with Collins's use of possessive pronouns and active verbs – 'How can I see her again as she looked when my eyes first rested on her?' (p. 51) – further accentuates Hartright's position of power as a male collector figure and an aesthetic evaluating subject.

The power that the collector exerts over his objects is also replicated through the deceptive system of patronage that exists between Hartright and Laura. Under the pretence that she is contributing financially to the household, Laura sincerely believes that she is earning a profit: she unknowingly sells her 'poor, faint, valueless sketches' to Hartright (p. 479). He purchases and retains control over Laura's pictures, which is akin to collecting them. He ascribes a great deal of sentimental value to them: 'I have all those hidden drawings in my possession still; they are my treasures beyond price' (p. 479). Looking back in time, his collection of priceless drawings materially represents his bond with their artist. I use the word priceless in a dual sense. The drawings are priceless because they have very little economic value in the Victorian art market, and concurrently they are priceless in the eyes of Hartright because no amount of money would make him part with them (p. 479). Through keeping hold of these emotionally important items, he is able to commune with significant events of his past and to tangibly reinforce his connection with Laura. These sketches (deemed to be aesthetically valuable by their collector) authenticate a particular experience in Hartright's past.⁴⁸

Hartright's gradual acquisition of social and cultural capital is one of many factors that shape his masculine identity. Undoubtedly, Hartright demonstrates nervousness and sensitivity, particularly in the earlier stages of the novel (pp. 33, 72 and 81), and his position as the hero of *The Woman in White* is at once destabilised by the shades of femininity suggested by these transitory states of hysteria, especially in his curious encounter with Anne Catherick (p. 23). On the lonely London road

⁴⁶ Michèle Le Doeuff, *The Sex of Knowing*, trans. by Kathryn Hamer and Lorraine Code (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 79.

⁴⁷ Le Doeuff, *The Sex of Knowing*, p. 79.

⁴⁸ William R. McKelvy usefully points out that the purchasing of art from Laura, or as she is also known, Lady Glyde, confirms Hartright's 'social arrival' because it makes him a patron of aristocratic art: 'Hartright's evolution from aesthetic employee to industrious collector is an intriguing change of role'. McKelvy, 'The Woman in White and Graphic Sex', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 35:1 (March 2007), pp. 287-308 (p. 299).

Hartright displays heightened anxiety, and his disturbed state of mind results from the shock and thrill of this meeting, a sensation that Collins's readers are thought to have replicated upon reading this passage. The 'accelerated heart rate' and 'increased blood pressure' experienced concurrently by Hartright and the reader are sensations that are more typically associated with the female subject.⁴⁹ In order to regain authority and to represent the expectations of manliness, and the cultural capital associated with this role, he must reshape his masculine identity from sensitive and bordering on hysterical. Collins counters Hartright's effeminate disposition by dispatching him on a dangerous foreign expedition (p. 156). Hartright survives the perils of Central America and returns to the narrative as a man of action, or as Rachel Ablow has described him, a figure of nineteenth-century 'strength and self-reliance'.⁵⁰ He confirms his manliness and social competence and shows his ability to cope in physically and intellectually challenging situations (p. 406).

Hartright's masculine identity, especially his sexuality, is significantly tied to his aesthetic awareness. I have already referred to Hartright's consuming male gaze and his objectification of Laura, but there are other examples linking sexual desire and aesthetic appreciation. Most striking is his viewing of Marian:

The instant my eyes rested on her, I was struck by the rare beauty of her form, and by the unaffected grace of her attitude [...] perfection in the eyes of a man [...]. She had not heard my entrance into the room and I allowed myself the luxury of admiring her for a few moments. (p. 34)

Hartright's gaze is both aesthetic and erotically charged: he exhibits the refined judgment of a drawing master, and the sexual admiration of a male.⁵¹ His admiration is a mixture of erotic and aesthetic gratification and both of these dispositions are reinforced when Hartright catches a glimpse of Marian's face (pp. 34-35). He continues to notice the artistic beauty of her form, yet he is repulsed by her masculine facial features and cannot 'reconcile the anomalies and contradictions' of her appearance (p. 35). Neither his aesthetic nor his erotic tastes endorse Marian as an

⁴⁹ D. A. Miller, 'Cage aux folles: Sensation and Gender in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*', in *The Making of the Modern Body*, ed. by Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 107-36 (pp. 107, 110). Tamara S. Wagner has written about the issue of effeminacy in Collins's fiction. Wagner observes that the representation of Victorian manliness in *The Woman in White* is both sensitive and restored, and discusses its implications within the context of sensation fiction, where heightened emotional drama is typically present in both male and female characters. See Wagner, 'Overpowering Vitality'.

⁵⁰ Rachel Ablow, 'Good Vibrations: The Sensationalization of Masculinity in *The Woman in White*', *Novel*, 37:1-2 (2003), pp. 158-80 (p. 163).

⁵¹ Richard Collins, 'Marian's Moustache: Bearded Ladies, Hermaphrodites, and Intersexual Collage in *The Woman in White*', in *Reality's Dark Light: The Sensational Wilkie Collins*, ed. by Maria K. Bachman and Don Richard Cox, pp. 131-72 (p. 152).

object of desire. In this instant, it is clear that Marian will not become the hero's love interest. Like a collector magnetised by an aesthetic object, Hartright is instead drawn to Laura Fairlie's beauty and vulnerability. Hartright's attraction to Laura encompasses three forms of desire: aesthetic, erotic, and the desire for mastery over her that I alluded to earlier. Hartright's aesthetic sense and taste is shown to be linked to his virile sexuality, which is a significant difference between him and Fairlie. Hartright achieves a socially-sanctioned claim on Laura and creates a legitimate space to act out his heterosexual desires, through marriage. He also gains a higher social class, with its related benefits of social and economic capital. As Rachel Ablow notes: 'Hartright represents a fantasy of a middle-class male power to reinvent the self'.⁵² The marriage seals his economic and social re-invention.

Hartright proves that he is deserving of that status with his defeat of the novel's aristocratic villains. His individual conduct reflects the Victorian paradigms of self-help and true gentlemanliness. He further fortifies this position by producing a male heir (p. 625). The baby, 'kicking and crowing in [Marian's] arms' (p. 625), introduced in the last chapter of the novel, represents Hartright's virility as well as a triumphant social ascension consistent with Victorian values and culture. In this final chapter, which concludes the collection of narratives, all of the false and immoral aristocrats are removed, leaving way for Hartright and his son to inaugurate a new line of honourable gentlemen (p. 626). Collins subscribes to the conventions of Victorian fiction by concluding his novel with a contented image of 'normative, naturalised heterosexual domesticity'.⁵³ The performance of his social duty allows Hartright to achieve ideal Victorian manhood and to be convincingly referred to as the new head of the Limmeridge household.

In the final chapter, this scene of paternity and tenderness also reveals much about Victorian inheritance patterns and their consequences for collecting practices. The Limmeridge estate, which includes the property and the items contained in it, is conferred on the new head of Limmeridge. Although Laura and her baby are the familial connection to the estate, Hartright, being an adult male, must assume the responsibility of property and its holdings. This leaves him in possession of all of Fairlie's treasured artistic objects, thereby making him an aesthetic collector, in the sense of the word as it applies to the ownership of cultural goods. Hartright acquires the objectified cultural capital to match the embodied cultural capital he has displayed throughout the novel. The possession of so many valuable objects is left to an aesthetically cultivated and ideally masculine individual. Collins uses gender to discredit aristocratic methods for acquiring cultural capital and to privilege a bourgeois model based on productive talent rather than consumption.

Although taste is a fundamental power of the aesthetic collector, money is also an essential tool of collecting, and it serves as a key element in the materialistic and

⁵² Ablow, 'Good Vibrations', p. 174.

⁵³ Ablow, 'Good Vibrations', p. 176.

capitalist world of the novel. Money is the ultimate power that constitutes collecting aesthetics. It is not by chance that the novel incorporates patterns of inheritance in its narrative framework. In its framing of inheritance, *The Woman in White* sits within the conventions of sensation fiction.⁵⁴ Mr. Gilmore, the Fairlie family's solicitor, warns the reader 'Miss Fairlie's inheritance is a very serious part of Miss Fairlie's story' and the 'comfortable little fortune' that Laura Fairlie stands to inherit is very sought-after in the novel (pp. 147, 149). Both Count Fosco and Sir Percival Glyde gain access to her personal estate on her marriage to Glyde. With the death of both these characters, as well as Fairlie, her inheritance eventually transfers to Hartright and elevates him to a position of increased social and cultural capital. The plot of *The Woman in White* hinges on the transference of inheritance, and the related economic and social power it provides to the male characters.

The 'forces of circulation in the Victorian novel' and the notion of inheritance also play a significant part in the representation of the collection in the novel.⁵⁵ The endurance of the material object in the world of the novel affords the collector figure a certain hope of an afterlife. The act of bequest transfers the original collector's embodied and objectified cultural capital to another consciously chosen successor. In *The Woman in White*, the fact that Hartright's tastes endorse Frederick Fairlie's makes him the ideal heir to Fairlie's collection. Hartright will preserve the aesthetic value of the collection, whilst exercising his own moral sensibilities. In this instance, the collector's objects survive him and are re-circulated. If, then, the collected objects endure in a material sense through their re-circulation, the collectors also continue to signify, through their metonymic association with their collections. Whether signifying something *to* the collector, or signifying something *about* the collector, the collected objects of "collecting men" in *The Woman in White* reveal distinctive cultural meanings pertaining to the social identity of their owners.

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⁵⁴ Pykett, 'Collins and the Sensation Novel', p. 50.

⁵⁵ Jeff Nunokawa, *The Afterlife of Property: Domestic Security and the Victorian Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 18.

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SUGAR AND SPICE AND ALL THINGS NICE: THE VICTORIAN WOMAN'S ALL-CONSUMING PREDICAMENT

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Abstract

Haunted by the hunger of Eden's infamous apple-eater, women have long had to contend with condemnatory attitudes towards female patterns of consumption. Nineteenth-century conduct writer Elizabeth Pennell was certainly eager to assert that when Eve stretched forth to taste the Forbidden Fruit, she unconsciously thrust the female appetite into 'ill-repute'. 'Foolish fasting,' she argued, was suddenly 'glorified,' until 'a healthy appetite [...] passed for a snare of the devil, and its gratification meant eternal damnation'.¹ With the devil presiding over the dinner-table to consume, or not to consume, became a question which plagued angelic house-dwellers troubled by a grumbling stomach. However, the uneasiness surrounding women's hunger was far more than a mere dinner-table phenomenon. It entered the boudoir, becoming an indicator of sexuality, and saturated the social domain. With the birth of a consumer-crazed culture, it was assumed that women were hungry for *things*, corsets and crinolines, diamonds and dinner-plates, tea-cups and carriages, commodities galore.

This article analyses nineteenth-century variations on the notion of consumption and all its lexical derivatives. Using Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* (1862) and Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) as literary stimuli, this article ultimately exposes the perils of allowing consumer curiosity and hunger to collide in the public sphere. I broaden the discussion to include Rossetti's other 'consumer' skewed works and, more briefly, George Du Maurier's *Trilby* (1894). My analysis charts the dissolution of the boundary between consumer and consumed, contemplates visual consumption and its specular economies and, finally, traces 'vampiric' veins throughout the era's consumptive corpus, focusing on the Pre-Raphaelites.

In this paper I will argue that the Victorian woman faced an all-consuming predicament. But what exactly does this mean? Certainly, in its verb form, 'to consume' was a notion which infiltrated every social capillary of Victorian civilisation. From dinner-table dining through the advent of supermarket shopping sprees to the emergence of sartorial emporia, the Victorians loved to consume. However, in spite of this love for consumption, the era's females were faced with a highly contradictory rubric regarding consumerist practice. The nineteenth-century female was urged to curb her consuming tendencies, a prohibition I draw on in my discussion of Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* (1862) and Lewis Carroll's *Alice* (1865-71). Through her adherence to the era's non-consumer code of conduct, I argue, the non-hungry heroine of Victorian culture eventually became a titillating

¹ Elizabeth Robins Pennell, *The Feasts of Autolycus: The Diary of a Greedy Woman* (London: John Lane, 1896), p. 9.

treat for male voyeurs and, ironically, an object of visual, sexual and gustatory consumption herself. Through an examination of popular periodicals, Rossetti's 'In an Artist's Studio' (1856) and George Du Maurier's *Trilby* (1894), I will further demonstrate that the woman who wasted away through non-consuming endeavours unnervingly spurred male hungers for, and preoccupations with, pale, seemingly consumptive young women. Thus, moving full circle from consumer to consumed, this article will expose the dangers surrounding Victorian (non)consumerism, and, ultimately, attempt to untangle the Victorian woman from her all-consuming threads.

In 1899 Thorstein Veblen diagnosed Victorian culture as being conspicuously consumptive.² The symptoms of commercial consumption, however, were proliferating long before the epoch's close. According to Krista Lysack, 'the dangers and delights' of rampant 'consumerism' were infecting the corpus of Victorian Britain from about 1851.³ London's Great Exhibition was described by Charlotte Brontë as a 'magic bazaar [...] majestically conjured up by Eastern genii [and] supernatural hands [who concocted] a blaze [...] of colours [with] marvellous powers of effect'.⁴ In the aftermath of such a spectacle, dreary markets and rundown shops quickly transmogrified into dazzling sites of spectacular consumption. Like Dame Margaret's 'village fancy shop' in Christina Rossetti's *Speaking Likenesses* (1874) window displays meretriciously 'put forth extra splendours, and, as it were, blossomed gorgeously' luring the locals through visual means.⁵

Surrounding this consumptive pandemic there lingered putrid moral miasmas: when maidens went to market, or wandered through shops, they risked being (mis)led along the path to prostitution, or into the hands of goblin men. Moreover, when women wallowed in alimentary wonderland they were in danger of encountering the dietary devil. To consume or 'to be hungry, in *any* sense, was a social faux pas'. Accordingly, valiant 'denial became a form of moral certitude' and refusal of fetishised foodstuffs and consumerist yearnings were, in the words of Joan Jacobs Brumberg, 'a means of advancing in the moral hierarchy'.⁶

Aware of this 'moral hierarchy' from an untimely age, the Victorian child soon became waylaid with a rich flow of dietary didacticism and admonitory consumer advice. In 1895, Victorian psychologist James Sully remarked that 'the child is little

² Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* [1899] (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

³ Krista Lysack, *Come Buy, Come Buy: Shopping and the Culture of Consumption in Victorian Women's Writing* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2008), p. 2.

⁴ Charlotte Brontë, 'To Reverend Patrick Brontë, June 7th 1851', in *Selected Letters*, ed. by Margaret Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 190-91 (p. 190).

⁵ Christina Rossetti, *Speaking Likenesses* (London: Macmillan, 1874), p. 71. Further references will be given after quotations in the text.

⁶ Joan Jacobs Brumberg, 'The Appetite as Voice', in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 141-61 (p. 153).

more than an *incarnation of appetite which knows no restraint*'.⁷ It was thought that children, in general, like Lewis Carroll's Alice, 'always took a great interest in questions of eating and drinking'.⁸ However, in a culture which idolised the frugal appetite and the saintly slender over the voraciously hungry and a thickset figure, the child's carnality became a contentious issue. Nineteenth-century culture promoted a fierce 'anorexic logic',⁹ and under this rubric 'eating too much – or sometimes wanting to eat at all' was, in the words of Jacqueline Labbe, emblematic of the 'child's inherent viciousness, the residue of Original Sin'.¹⁰ Thus, schooled from an early age in self-restrictive protocol, Victorian girls' dietary destiny was to be fed on air.

In a profusion of short stories and fairy-tales, girls were 'taught that they must control their appetites and, by implication, their desires and bodies, in order to be "good"'.¹¹ In Carol Gilman's *The Little Wreath* (1847) a mischievous child protagonist is warned not to 'spoil a pretty mouth by cramming it with food'.¹² Similarly, in the anonymously written *Little Glutton* (1860), the author scorns every 'young lady' who exhibits 'so lively a pleasure at the sight of anything to eat'. She scolds them for disclosing so strong a 'disposition to what is called gluttony – an ignoble fault which condemns us to the level of mere brute beasts'.¹³ 'Don't be Greedy' became the catchphrase of Victorian girlhood.¹⁴

This conflation of restrained consumption with "goodness" is further highlighted by Elizabeth Gaskell when she records the recollections of one of the Brontë family's servants:

there was never such *good* children [...] they were so different to any other children I had ever seen. I set it down to a fancy Mr Brontë had [...] he thought that children should be brought up simply and hardly: so they had nothing but potatoes for their dinner; but they never seemed to wish for anything else; *they*

⁷ James Sully, 'Studies in Childhood', *Popular Science Monthly*, 47:48 (September 1895), pp. 648-64 (p. 650) [emphasis mine].

⁸ Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* [1865] (London: Penguin, 1998), p. 65.

⁹ Leslie Heywood, *Dedication to Hunger: The Anorexic Aesthetic in Modern Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. xii. See also Anna Krugovoy Silver, *Victorian Literature and the Anorexic Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 27.

¹⁰ Jacqueline M. Labbe, 'To Eat and be Eaten in Nineteenth-Century Children's Literature', in *Critical Approaches to Food in Children's Literature*, ed. by Kara K. Keeling and Scott T. Pollard (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 93-104 (p. 93).

¹¹ Silver, *Victorian Literature and the Anorexic Body*, pp. 54-55.

¹² Carol Gilman, *The Little Wreath of Stories and Poems for Children* (New York: C. S. Francis and Co., 1847), p. 161.

¹³ Anonymous, 'The Little Glutton', in *The Girl's Birthday Book: A Collection of Tales, Essays and Narratives, Especially Designed for Girls* (London: Houlston & Wright, 1860), pp. 315-33 (p. 315).

¹⁴ Oscar Pletch and M. Richter, *Child-Land: Picture Pages for the Little Ones* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1873), p. 18.

*were good little creatures.*¹⁵

Because nineteenth-century child-rearing regimes prescribed a bland diet bereft of sugary sweetness ‘food fantasies’ became, according to Carolyn Daniel, ‘a traditional ingredient in children’s stories’. The British classics, in particular, she suggests, ‘are a rich source of fictional feasting’.¹⁶ The sensually intense *Goblin Market* is certainly no exception: lush lemons, mouth-watering melons, brilliant berries and rotund cherries infiltrate Rossetti’s tantalising market terrain:

Apples and quinces,
Lemons and Oranges,
Plump unpecked cherries,
Melons and raspberries,
[...]
Swart-headed mulberries,
Wild free-born cranberries,
Crab-apples, dewberries,
Pine-apples, blackberries,
Apricots, strawberries
[...]
Taste them and try.¹⁷

As Kathryn Burlinson has suggested, such an abundantly rousing opening immediately betrays the sensuality of the poem and its infinite powers of seduction: its ‘*rich feast* of repetition’ which whets ‘the reader’s appetite’, activating ‘the mouths and tongues of any who read it aloud’.¹⁸ As readers, then, we are tempted by Rossetti to literally consume the text, albeit at the risk of growing dependent upon the pleasure it provides. Like the readership who gorge upon the poem’s dainty delights, Laura and Lizzie too, are aroused by Rossetti’s rampant fruit frenzy. Despite their ‘cautioning lips’ (l.38), and their desperate attempts to mask ‘veiled [...] blushes’ (l.35), they betray their ‘tingling cheeks and fingertips’ (l.39). In a culture that used

¹⁵ Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* [1857] (London: Penguin, 1997), p. 41 [emphasis mine].

¹⁶ Carolyn Daniel, *Voracious Children: Who Eats Whom in Children’s Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 2.

¹⁷ Christina Rossetti, ‘Goblin Market’, in *Christina Rossetti: The Complete Poems* [1862] (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 5-20 (p. 5), ll.5-25.

¹⁸ Margaret Reynolds, ‘Speaking Unlikenesses: The Double Text in Christina Rossetti’s “After Death” and “Remember”’, in *The Culture of Christina Rossetti: Female Poetics and Victorian Contexts*, ed. by Mary Arseneau, Anthony H. Harrison and Lorraine Janzen Kooistra (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1999), pp. 3-21 (pp. 5-6). Kathryn Burlinson, *Christina Rossetti* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1998), p. 42.

the blush to infer erotic stimulation, such symptoms were undoubtedly markers of a sexually awakened body. Positioned in a semantic field of sexually allusive lexicon, ‘plump’ (l.7), ‘wild’ (l.11), ‘ripe’ (l.15), ‘blushes’ (l.63), Rossetti’s goblinised cuisine becomes akin to the fruitful flesh of the corpulent woman, whose curvaceous body denotes active sexuality.

In a vast array of Victorian writing food acted as an indirect metaphor for sexuality. Rossetti’s specifically erotic equation between *fruit* and fallen-nature is made further explicit in Elizabeth Pennell’s *Feasts of Autolycus: The Diary of a Greedy Woman* (1896). In Pennell’s Eden ‘winter’s fruits [are] most delicious and suggestive’. Oranges become orgasmic: ‘the fragrant, spicy little Tangerine [...] is a magic pass to the happy land of *dreams*.’ Pears are ‘set [...] to *blushing* a rosy red’ by the warm ‘*kisses*’ of ‘a *passionate lover*’. Grapes are ‘*voluptuous*’; figs overflow with ‘*exotic* sweetness;’ peaches are ‘tender and juicy and *desirable*’. The succulent strawberry is exclusive ‘creator of *pleasure* [...] cool, scarlet and *adorable*’. Moreover, ‘the strawberry,’ she suggests, ‘has been proven fickle in its loves: a very Cressida among fruits: it *mates*’ with Cream; ‘offers *ecstatic* welcome’ to Kirsch; ‘*coquettes*’ with Champagne; and swells under the ‘hot *embrace* of Maraschino’.¹⁹ It is perhaps not surprising, then, that the mouth-watering mayhem of *Goblin Market*, a text which is ‘neurotically focussed [on] the consumption of fruit’, becomes an apt site in which to explore the fallen woman’s fate.²⁰

Lizzie is acutely aware of the sexual dangers the goblin’s exotic produce emits. She immediately cautions Laura ‘not [to] peep at goblin men’ (l.49): ‘Their offers should not charm us, / Their evil gifts would harm us’ (ll.65-66). However, for ‘sweet-tooth Laura’ (l.115) the ‘sugar-baited’ (l.234) succulence of these fruits proves too tempting to resist. Anticipating her fall, she ‘rear[s] her glossy head’ (l.52) until all ‘restraint is gone’ (l.86): ‘She sucked and sucked and sucked the more / Fruits which that unknown orchard bore’ (ll.134-35). Like the Greedy Woman of Pennell’s diary, Laura, in what Herbert Tucker refers to as a ‘nigh bulimic buzz’,²¹ rapaciously indulges in ‘the love-apples that not the hardest heart can resist’.²² She trades her luscious locks, invoking the traditional literary trope of sexual deflowerment, for the goblin’s ‘fruit globes’ (l.128). As a result she treads the startlingly thin line between consumer and consumed.

Indeed, Laura’s ‘anomalous position’, according to Catherine Maxwell, ‘aligns or even conflates her with [...] the prostitute [...] whose sole economic power

¹⁹ Pennell, *The Feasts of Autolycus*, pp. 48-49, 56, 233, 236 [emphasis mine].

²⁰ Susan Honeyman, ‘Gingerbread Wishes and Candy(land) Dreams: The Lure of Food in Cautionary Tales of Consumption’, *Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies*, 21:2 (2007), pp. 195-215 (p. 205). See also Alison Chapman, *The Afterlife of Christina Rossetti* (London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 131.

²¹ Herbert F. Tucker, ‘Rossetti’s Goblin Marketing: Sweet to Tongue and Sound to Eye’, *Representations*, 82 (Spring 2003), pp. 17-133 (p. 118).

²² Pennell, *The Feasts of Autolycus*, p. 132.

consists in selling her body, in making herself into an object of consumption'.²³ Although the resolution of the poem suggests that Laura is clearly no prostitute, at least according to the dictates of a society wherein the fallen woman would be condemned to death, 'found drowned' somewhere in her own immoral quagmire, she does come perilously close to endorsing prostitute-like politics. Despite Lizzie's advisory input – 'you [...] should not loiter in the glen / In the haunts of goblin men', 'twilight is not good for maidens' (ll.144-46) – 'Curious' Laura's choice 'to linger' (l.69) in the marketplace after hours eerily recalls the midnight meanderings of street-walking women who were *on* the market, rather than browsing *within* it.

In nineteenth-century society a maiden's trip to the market was ideally driven by necessity rather than urged by desire. As Lori Anne Loeb has demonstrated, in this period the female flowers were expected to be content in the 'walled-garden' of their domestic haven, sheltered from dangerous 'confrontation with the outside world'.²⁴ On the whole, they stayed at home, away from commercial encounters. As the following nineteenth-century nursery-rhyme suggests, the desire to venture into the marketplace is always supplanted by a more urgent need to return home: 'To market, to market to buy a plum bun, / Home again, home again, market is done'.²⁵ The hoof-clipping rhythm of this rhyme denotes the small space a maiden's trip to market should occupy. The syllable stress on the word 'home' emphasises the requirement to swiftly move back into the domestic province. Yet, as we have seen, Laura's 'linger[ing]' evokes a prolapsed span of time, again suggesting her venture into the marketplace is a transgressive and dangerous one.

Lizzie's tale of Jeanie, another maiden who 'met [men] in the moonlight' (l.148), further emphasises the perils of the market sphere. After frolicking with Rossetti's fruit men, Jeanie 'pined and pined away [...] dwindled and grew grey' (ll.154-56), an image which evokes the syphilitic stains of moral and pathological consumption. Rossetti's anxieties surrounding moonlight-marketeering were reinforced by the government's implementation of early closing hours. Associating late-night loitering with prostitution the Early Closing Movement, instigated in 1842, emerged, in part, as a corrective means to stifle 'the frivolous practices' of flirtatious 'night shoppers' who, as the *Daily Telegraph* put it in 1858, go "gallivanting about the streets after nightfall [...] making purchases which there is no earthly reason for them not to have made hours before".²⁶ The satirical periodical *Punch* was certainly

²³ Catherine Maxwell, 'Tasting the "Fruit Forbidden": Gender, Intertextuality, and Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market*', in *The Culture of Christina Rossetti: Female Poetics and Victorian Contexts*, ed. by Mary Arseneau, Anthony H. Harrison and Lorraine Janzen Kooistra (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1999), pp. 75-102 (p. 88).

²⁴ Lori Anne Loeb, *Consuming Angels: Advertising and Victorian Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. vii.

²⁵ *Songs for the Nursery* (London: Darton & Clark, c. 1805), p. 10.

²⁶ Lysack, *Come Buy, Come Buy*, p. 34. *Daily Telegraph* article qtd. in Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven: Yale University

quick to pick up on the ulterior motives of the Early Closure schemes:

Only think what a dreadful thing it must be for a young lady, in the bloom of health and beauty, to get her blood infected with fever or *consumption*, or *goodness knows what*, and fall sick, and very likely become disfigured, or perhaps die, by venturing, incautiously, into the tainted atmosphere of late-closing linen-draper's horrid shops!²⁷

As early as the late 1840s, newspapers were crammed with stories of the marketplace and its dangers. The *Lady's Newspaper* warned of numerous women 'being *forcibly* compelled to purchase an article which she did not want', presumably by sexually virile merchant men.²⁸ According to the *Girl's Own Paper*, 'a prudent shopper [would] *keep her eyes from straying* amongst the tempting array [...] *turn a deaf ear* to the insinuations of the shopkeeper'.²⁹ Lizzie, certainly fits the prototype of the periodical's prudent shopper. As Elizabeth Helsinger has demonstrated, Lizzie limits the meaning of consumption: shopping purely with pennies, rather than the counter-currency of desire.³⁰ Drawing upon the article's visual polemics, she understands the perils of 'peep[ing]' at goblin men; furthermore, she 'thrusts a dimpled finger / In each ear' (ll.67-68), sheltering her auditory senses from the goblins' cries. Laura, however, with her incessant desire to 'peep', and her naïve succumbing to 'elementary pleasures [...] to sound [...] to the hypnotic, sing-song effect of the lush opening lines', is far from prudent in her shopping.³¹ Her defiant consumer conduct, as we have seen, leads to her fall. *Goblin Market*, then, is a text which neatly illustrates just how tangled the Victorian female became within the web of consumer practice. With its prominent focus on Laura's childish curiosity, the poem demonstrates how commercial spaces often became breeding-grounds for a hodgepodge of desire: for food, for sex, for new shopping sensations. It exemplifies just how easy it was for the female consumer to be consumed. But, perhaps most

Press, 2005), pp. 86-87.

²⁷ 'Caution in Shopping,' *Punch* (March 12th 1853), p. 109 [emphasis mine]. Lewis Carroll also commented upon the undesirability of maidenly shopping excursions, particularly to 'bazaars' which brought a woman into contact with the unfamiliar. For instance, in a letter to Emily Wyper, dated November 10, 1892, he wrote: 'My dear Emmie, I object to *all* bazaars on the general principle that they are very undesirable schools for young ladies, in which they learn to be "too fast," and forward, and more exposed to undesirable acquaintances than in ordinary society'. *The Letters of Lewis Carroll*, ed. by Morton Cohen, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1979), vol. 2., p. 932.

²⁸ 'Shopping and its Dangers,' *Lady's Newspaper*, 147 (October 20th 1849), p. 213.

²⁹ Mary Selwood, 'The Art of Shopping,' *Girl's Own Paper* (July 16th 1881), p. 660 [emphasis mine].

³⁰ Elizabeth K. Helsinger, 'Consumer Power and the Utopia of Desire: Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market"', *ELH*, 58:4 (Winter 1991), pp. 903-33 (p. 923).

³¹ U. C. Knoepfelmacher, *Ventures into Childland: Victorians, Fairy Tales, and Femininity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 323.

importantly, *Goblin Market* reveals that Victorian ‘curiosity’ came at a high price.

Alice falls into Wonderland ‘burning with curiosity’, instantly ‘peep[ing]’ at her seductive surroundings.³² As she enters the fantastic realm where ‘objects and mysterious creatures titillate her senses’, Alice, like Laura, ‘represents the dangers that women run when roaming the streets in search of pleasure’.³³ Lysack has shown how Britain’s new shopping emporia, which sprung up rapidly in the 1860s, were designed to map ‘the continuity between home and marketplace’, specifically recalling a *mélange* of ‘domestic comforts’.³⁴ Outlets for light luncheons and tasty tea-breaks, in particular, became a rudimentary part of consumerist activities. If, as Nancy Armstrong suggests, Alice flaunts the behaviour of a typical shopper in Wonderland – picking up and putting back a jar of ‘orange marmalade’, and succumbing to such ‘unsubtle advertising ploys’ as ‘EAT ME’ and ‘DRINK ME’ – her rest-stop at the Mad Hatter’s Tea-Party becomes as dangerous as Laura’s commercial venture into goblin grounds.³⁵

In a similar way to Laura, whose golden curls fall into the greedy paws of goblin men, Alice is threatened in an archetypal, Rape-of-the-Lock-fashion. Looking ‘at Alice for some time with great *curiosity*’, the Hatter rudely, and somewhat suggestively, remarks: ‘your hair wants cutting’.³⁶ Undoubtedly, this statement has sexual resonances. It is not the only allusion Carroll made in his lifetime to threatening young girls with phallic potency. Carina Garland has noted that ‘Carroll once sent a small knife to Kathleen Tidy, a child friend, as a birthday present’.³⁷ A critical look through Carroll’s letters suggests that the knife was intended to curb the cravings of this voraciously consuming girl. Carroll instructed Kathleen in using the knife to cut her dinner. ‘This way’, he asserts, ‘you will be safe from eating too much [...]. If you find that when the others have finished you have only had one mouthful, do not be vexed about it’.³⁸ Carroll’s logic resembles the self-restrictive eating protocol of the age at large.

As the above anecdote suggests, Carroll felt unease regarding gustatory

³² Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, pp. 10, 9.

³³ Laurence Talairach-Vielmas, *Moulding the Female Body in Victorian Fairy Tales and Sensation Novels* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 53.

³⁴ Krista Lysack, ‘Goblin Markets: Victorian Women Shoppers at Liberty’s Oriental Bazaar’, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 27:2 (2005), pp. 139-65 (p. 144).

³⁵ See Nancy Armstrong, ‘The Occidental Alice’, *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 2 (Summer 1990), pp. 3-40; Mary Wilson Carpenter, ‘“Eat Me, Drink Me, Love Me”: The Consumable Female Body in Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin Market”’, *Victorian Poetry*, 29:4 (Winter 1991), pp. 415-34 (p. 415).

³⁶ Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, p. 60.

³⁷ Carina Garland, ‘Curious Appetites: Food, Desire, Gender and Subjectivity in Lewis Carroll’s Alice Texts’, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 32:1 (January 2008), pp. 22-39 (p. 26).

³⁸ Lewis Carroll, ‘To Kathleen Tidy, March 30th 1861’, in *The Letters of Lewis Carroll*, vol. 1, p. 49.

rigmarole, and was particularly disgusted by the ravenous appetite of his female acquaintances. Carroll's nephew, Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, wrote in 1899 that 'the healthy appetites of his young friends filled him with wonder, and even [...] alarm'.³⁹ In light of this, the Mad Hatter's Tea-Party seems to fit a paradigm of Carrollian abstention: the focus of the feast is on 'tea', which, as Carol Mavor suggests, is 'a drink free of calories'. Moreover, being caffeine-suffused, tea is 'ascetic: it masks hunger, it feeds *without* food'.⁴⁰ Indeed, contrary to what one might expect from the classic, mid-century 'High-Tea', be it the basic staples of bread and butter or the more extravagant fare of cream-filled cakes and jam, Carroll's spread consists of not so much as a crumb. His guests (if the text's accompanying illustrations are anything to go by) are apparently to make do with hot air. Yet, according to Anna Krugovoy Silver, Alice is 'no ethereal fairy, but a serpent and a hyena whose appetite *needs* food to be fed'.⁴¹

Silver diagnoses Alice as having an 'enormous appetite', which, she suggests, 'clearly and hilariously subverts the conventional Victorian heroine's lack of hunger'. She claims that Alice's fervent appetite sets 'Carroll apart [...] from most Victorian writers of children's literature'.⁴² However, Carroll's book is not, as Silver suggests, 'set apart' from iconic children's literature at all. Like the authors discussed at the outset of this article, he is constantly schooling Alice in the ways of dietary denial, and he punishes her when her calorie counting lapses. Rather than using Alice's hunger as a counter-narrative to the iconic literary trope of the non-hungry heroine, Alice becomes, I believe, a malnourished marionette, driven by Carroll's alimentary instructions.

In Wonderland, the *White Queen* (whose majestically pallid complexion symbolises the lily-like anorexic) proclaims: "the rule is, jam tomorrow and jam yesterday – but *never jam to-day*".⁴³ Alice might be compulsively concerned with 'questions of eating and drinking' but her 'enormous appetite' is never satiated.⁴⁴ Under Carroll's weight-watching eye, her food fantasies, "I *wish* they'd [...] hand round the refreshments!"", seem more on par with the anorexic's obsessive, but nevertheless *unfulfilled*, desire for food, than a greedy girl's overindulging.⁴⁵ Like the anorexic, Alice is burdened with two selves; a bloated, bingeing self and a dietary-

³⁹ S. D. Collingwood, *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll* (New York: Century, 1899), p.134.

⁴⁰ Carol Mavor, 'For-getting to Eat: Alice's Mouthing Metonymy', in *The Nineteenth-Century Child and Consumer Culture*, ed. by Dennis Denisoff (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 95-118 (p. 103).

⁴¹ Silver, *Victorian Literature and the Anorexic Body*, p. 73.

⁴² Silver, *Victorian Literature and the Anorexic Body*, p. 71.

⁴³ Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* [1871] (London: Penguin, 1998), p. 143.

⁴⁴ Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, p. 65.

⁴⁵ Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, p. 95.

denying self: ‘this curious child was very fond of pretending to be two people’.⁴⁶ At times, Alice does threaten to flaunt voracious hunger; the narrator comments that she had once ‘really frightened her [...] nurse by shouting suddenly in her ear, “Do let’s pretend that I’m a *hungry hyena*, and you’re a bone!”’.⁴⁷ However, even in these instances the foodstuff she envisages is barely a satiating fuel: a bone is for ‘chewing and gnawing [...] picking and licking. It’s really not much to eat’.⁴⁸ If Alice’s eating is about anything, then, it is about diminutive morsels and titbits, not gluttonous gorging.

Cast by Carroll in the role of pre-pubescent apprentice, and tutored in the ways of being a self-controlled, pretty little girl, it comes as no surprise that the food which most captures the alimentary attention of Alice is the mushroom: a magical provision which remarkably allows her to *regulate* her body’s fluctuations in size. The brilliance of this magnificent fungus lies in its powers of theoretically preventing her body becoming any larger. The fact that Alice turns to the mushroom (that is, a source of food) as a means of preventing her body becoming bigger may seem paradoxical, if not nonsensical. Yet, certain foodstuffs (as will be revealed later) were, in fact, thought to possess metabolic boosting properties which, in turn, were thought to aid the body in its fat-burning capacities. Nonetheless, it is often the case that within the *Alice* texts our pretty little heroine’s body does swell out of control, becoming preposterously massive and grotesque. It would appear, at times, that Carroll forces Alice to eat in order to feed his *own* hedonistic hunger for imposing patriarchal punishment on greedy little girls.

Like the Victorian physician, Carroll wants to experiment with Alice’s body, mould her into what he pleases, shrink her back down to an inferior size. Peppared with ‘potions [...] ointments, and references to medicines of all kinds’ from cooling ‘camomile’ to energy-sustaining ‘treacle’, Wonderland, as Talairach-Vielmas confirms, becomes ‘a male laboratory’, a sterile sphere in which Alice is ‘to be cured of her uncurbed desire [...] her fallen nature’.⁴⁹ Under the influence of Carroll’s medicinal malpractice, Alice is not able to predict her body’s fluctuations, and this loss of control is an acutely distressing experience for her. Eating becomes a laborious form of trepidation: she ‘anxiously [...] sets to *work*’ on the cake that Carroll displays under the performative label: ‘EAT ME’, all the while worrying what effect it will have on her body’s constitution.⁵⁰

Yet, by the time we reach Alice’s more mature years in *Through the Looking Glass* (1871), she no longer requires Carroll’s doctoring. Alice is seemingly cured of what Carroll might call her nutritional neurosis. This later text opens with Alice

⁴⁶ Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, p. 14.

⁴⁷ Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*, p. 124.

⁴⁸ Mavor, ‘For-getting to Eat: Alice’s Mouthing Metonymy’, p. 96.

⁴⁹ Talairach-Vielmas, *Moulding the Female Body*, p. 56.

⁵⁰ Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, p. 15.

musings over how she herself can discipline her naughty kitty. Her punitive pattern of thinking leads Alice to think about her own behavioural disciplines: ‘suppose each punishment was to be going without dinner [...]. Well, I shouldn’t mind *that* much! *I’d far rather go without them than eat them!*’⁵¹ Furthermore, when offered biscuits by Carroll’s *Red Queen*, whose scarlet complexion symbolises the erotically corpulent woman, Alice, ‘though it wasn’t at all what she wanted’, forces down one biscuit out of politeness (in case it might ‘not be civil to say “No”’) but emphatically refuses a second helping: “No, thank you [...] one’s *quite* enough!”⁵² As both of these instances suggest, by the end of her alimentary apprenticeship the logic that informs Carroll’s fat-fearing gaze has wholly penetrated Alice’s psyche: the book’s panoptical endeavours have sufficiently curbed her juvenile carnality.

The oppressive weight-watching of Carroll’s *Wonderland* is a phenomenon which also infiltrates Rossetti’s *Speaking Likenesses*. Numerous critics have already marked the similarities between these two texts and Rossetti herself cannily admitted that the book is ‘merely a Christmas-trifle, would-be in the *Alice* style with an eye to the market’.⁵³ As the child protagonist of Rossetti’s first tale falls into a fantasy land of refracted mirrors, she squirms uncomfortably under the ‘very rude and ill-natured [...] *staring*’ of the dinner guests who surround her. The narrator informs us that Flora ‘felt shy at having to eat with *so many eyes upon her*’, but nevertheless ‘she was hot and thirsty, and the feast *looked* most tempting’ (p. 23). Like Laura, in *Goblin Market*, Flora eats with her eyes; the visual power of the tempting treasures set before her prove to be perilously appealing.

However, Rossetti’s extraordinary powers of repression and denial are far stronger than Carroll’s. Whilst Alice pecks at magic-mushrooms and nibbles currant-laden cakes, Rossetti’s heroine is starved of all. By the end of the story, she has still ‘not tasted a morsel’ (p. 27) and, moreover, has been repeatedly ‘reduced to *look hungrily on* while the rest of the company feasted’ (p. 38). Again, her gloomy gaze stresses the visual polemics surrounding consumer desire. Despite her abstention, Flora finds it ‘tantalizing to *watch* so many good things come and go without taking even one taste [...] to *see* all her companions stuffing without limit’ (pp. 38-39, emphasis mine). In the second story of Rossetti’s fairy-tale trilogy, such visual ploys take on a more ominous stance. Like the ‘cat-face[d],’ ‘rat-pace[d]’ (ll.71-73) merchants of *Goblin Market*, the monstrous Mouth-Boy of *Speaking Likenesses* evokes a sense of voyeuristic intrusion. Reminiscent of the ‘genii’ of Brontë’s description of the Great Exhibition, this threatening figure is conjured up as if by

⁵¹ Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*, p. 124 [emphasis mine].

⁵² Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*, p. 143.

⁵³ Christina Rossetti, ‘To Dante Gabriel Rossetti, May 4th 1874’, in *The Family Letters of Christina Rossetti*, ed. by William Michael Rossetti (London: Brown, Langham, & Co., 1908), p. 44. For critical readings see, for instance, U. C. Knoepfelmacher, ‘Avenging Alice: Christina Rossetti and Lewis Carroll,’ *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 41:3 (December 1986), pp. 299-328.

magic. Lurking in the shadowy woodlands, he encroaches on his female prey with a 'wide mouth [...] full of teeth and tusks' (p. 85), a mouth which 'could doubtless *eat* as well as speak, grin [...] and accost her' (p. 84). In close proximity to this famished fiend, the 'little girl's' body, which, if true to nursery-rhyme tradition, is made of 'sugar and spice and all things nice' becomes precariously edible.⁵⁴

Rossetti proceeds to inform us that this menacing antagonist's face 'exhibited only one feature' (p. 84): that is, unsurprisingly, his saliva-infested mouth. In the same way that Flora and Laura eat with their eyes, Mouth-Boy sees, stares, glares with his mouth: a notion which conflates visual and gustatory consumption. Rossetti's popular lyric, 'In an Artist's Studio', exposes another startling instance of this troubling conflation. The artist of the poem's title vampirically '*feeds* upon' his model's 'face by day and night', seeking out his prey from her 'hidden' safe-place 'just behind those screens'.⁵⁵ The model's instinctual 'hiding' evokes the impression of stolen glances, and furthermore suggests that she is acutely alert to his all-consuming capacity.

'In an Artist's Studio' tampers with the verb 'to consume', linguistically playing with the word's more disconcerting counterpart, 'consumption'. Throughout the poem Rossetti teases out consumption's allied meanings of 'wasting', 'doing away with' and 'causing to vanish'. As the model dwindles '*wan* with waiting', her youthful glow becoming '*dim*' (l.13), the reader is prompted to read her figure as being infected with the ravages of pathological consumption: her pale, lustreless visage resembles the stereotype of a tubercular aesthetic. A brief encounter with Edward Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (1871) allows us to better understand the consumptive logic that might inform the poem's mingling of insatiable vampirism and bodily wasting. Tylor writes:

[Consumptive] patients are seen becoming day by day, without apparent cause, thin, weak and bloodless [...] a satisfactory explanation [is] that there exist certain demons which eat out the souls [...] or suck the blood of their victims [...] [*Vampires* are not mere creations of groundless fancy, but cases conceived [...] to account for specific facts of *wasting disease*.⁵⁶

Here, Tylor boldly claims that the figure of the vampire is the prime cause of consumption. Whilst Tylor's assertions might seem rather fanciful, I would argue that

⁵⁴ See Iona and Peter Opie, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 77.

⁵⁵ Christina Rossetti, 'In an Artist's Studio', in *Christina Rossetti: The Complete Poems* [1856] (London: Penguin, 2005), p. 796, ll.9 and 3. Further references are given after quotations in the text.

⁵⁶ Edward Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom* [1871] (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 175.

the ideas which inform his declarations do, in fact, reverberate throughout the literature of the period, if only in a metaphorical sense. We can use Tylor's assumptions to suggest that the Victorian male, with his generic Carrollian love for dainty eating and a correspondingly slight figure, was in fact draining the Victorian female of her vitality: wilfully urging her, and at times forcing her, to waste away under the burning stare of his weight-watching eye.

Certainly, the vampiric feeding and reciprocal wasting of Rossetti's poem have often been read as a reflection of her brother's amatory felonies; critics frequently cast the personae of this poem into the roles of Dante Gabriel and his "consumptive" lover, Lizzie Siddal. Lizzie suffered from a 'mysterious illness' that 'long baffled medics and scholars'.⁵⁷ She remained 'unhealthily thin' throughout the entirety of her time with Rossetti.⁵⁸ In the latter years of her life, Lizzie rapidly deteriorated until she resembled the fragile victims of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). In 1854, Rossetti's peer, Ford Madox Brown, described Lizzie as 'looking thinner and more deathlike and more beautiful [...] than ever',⁵⁹ an unnerving image which pre-empts the 'ghastly, chalkily pale' complexion of the Count's emaciated victim, Lucy Westenra.⁶⁰

This concept of the male artist as a vampire, habitually feeding upon the face of his wasting lover is also central to George Du Maurier's pre-Raphaelite inspired novel, *Trilby*. At the outset of Du Maurier's text his gargantuan heroine, with her 'mouth too large' and her 'chin too massive', appears to be more emblematic of Rossetti's Mouth-Boy than the consumptive beauty, Lizzie Siddal.⁶¹ By the end of the novel, her striking figure has melted away and Trilby, like Siddal, has grown, 'day by day [...] more beautiful [...] in spite of her increasing pallor and emaciation' (p. 266). Trilby has become a fervent member of the 'aesthetic cult'. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar claim that Victorian culture obliged its women to "'kill'" themselves, to become 'art objects: slim, pale, passive beings whose "charms" eerily recalled the snowy, porcelain immobility of the dead'.⁶² Such fatally feeble 'art objects' soon acquired celebrity status (not to mention hordes of adolescent admirers). Victorian culture was innately obsessed with woman's flower-like fragility, chastity and correspondingly *non-consuming* body. As such it became tasteful for healthy females

⁵⁷ Lucinda Hawksley, *Lizzie Siddal: The Tragedy of a Pre-Raphaelite Supermodel* (London: Carlton Publishing Group, 2008), p. 69.

⁵⁸ Hawksley, *Lizzie Siddal*, p. 69.

⁵⁹ Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Ruskin, Rossetti: Pre-Raphaelitism Papers 1854 to 1862*, ed. by William Michael Rossetti (London: George Allen, 1899), p. 75.

⁶⁰ Bram Stoker, *Dracula* [1897] (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 130.

⁶¹ George Du Maurier, *Trilby* [1894] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 13. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

⁶² Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd edn. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 25.

to acquire the frail physique that was symptomatic of the wasting diseases of the time.⁶³

The pre-Raphaelite adoration of malnourished models and muses meant that consumption, a painful, debilitating and ultimately fatal disease, rapidly became a sought-after illness. It was, in many respects, the paintings of the pre-Raphaelite Movement which instigated the cultivation of such frailty: depicting its posers as ‘ethereal rather than emaciated, graceful rather than ghostly’.⁶⁴ What is more, an increasingly popularised cult of literature, spawned by works such as the hugely successful stage adaptation of Alexandre Dumas’s novel, *La Dame aux Camélias* (1848), also induced a widespread male passion for, and preoccupation with, ‘pale young women apparently dying of consumption’.⁶⁵ Following its 1852 stage premiere at the Théâtre du Vaudeville, the *Westminster Review* declared that *La Dame* had ‘set all [of] Paris running after’ its highly romanticised ‘picture’ of ‘hectic sentiment’.⁶⁶ The *New Monthly Magazine* went on to pronounce that the work’s consumptive heroine, Marguerite Gautier, was ‘the [...] preoccupation of a whole nation’.⁶⁷ She was, according to Jules Janin, an enchanting woman who ‘attracted all eyes’ (note the compelling visuality of such frailty) ‘and was followed everywhere by universal homage’.⁶⁸ In the words of Dumas himself ‘those who [...] loved Marguerite were too numerous to be counted’.⁶⁹

Undoubtedly, with Dumas’s dying heroine being depicted as veritably ‘*spirituelle*’, an ‘angel’ who was ‘exquisitely beautiful’, it is perhaps not surprising that men were ‘smitten’ with her and ‘that invisible malady which was inevitably dragging her down to the tomb’.⁷⁰ Thus, as Bram Dijkstra has suggested, upon the realisation that a ‘consumptive look’ denoted ‘a *saintly* disposition’, flocks of females, who may have hitherto ignored the period’s ascetic urgings, began to pursue a ‘look of tubercular virtue by starving themselves’. Women ‘everywhere had acquired a taste for “slow suicide” and all foolishly heralded the rise of the ‘Consumptive Sublime’.⁷¹ Through a rigorous adherence to the period’s non-

⁶³ See Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English, *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts’ Advice to Women* (London: Pluto Press, 1979), p. 98.

⁶⁴ Katherine Byrne, *Tuberculosis and the Victorian Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 7.

⁶⁵ Thomas Dormandy, *The White Death: A History of Tuberculosis* (London: Hambledon Press, 1999), p. 91.

⁶⁶ ‘Contemporary Literature of France’, *Westminster Review*, American Edition, 57:112 (April 1852), pp. 370-73 (p. 372).

⁶⁷ ‘Parisian Literary and Political Chit-Chat’, *New Monthly Magazine*, 96:383 (November 1852), pp. 323-45 (p. 327).

⁶⁸ Jules Janin, ‘Prefatory Notice’ to Alexandre Dumas, *La Dame aux Camélias* [1848] (Philadelphia: E. J. Hincken, 1857), p. 13 [emphasis mine].

⁶⁹ Dumas, *La Dame aux Camélias*, p. 87.

⁷⁰ Janin, ‘Prefatory Notice’, p. 13.

⁷¹ Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (Oxford:

consuming code of conduct, the angel in the house was rapidly on her way to becoming 'an angel in earnest'.⁷²

Moreover, as Thomas Dormandy has aptly demonstrated, in order to ensure that they were conforming to man's portrait of beauty, and subsequently securing their spot in the increasingly competitive marriage market, young women took to wilfully consuming harmful foodstuffs in order to 'make themselves look more alluring'.⁷³ In the same way that Alice experiments with the metabolic properties of Wonderland's magic-mushrooms, and, just as Laura is drawn to the bitter-sweet seductiveness of Rossetti's lemons in *Goblin Market*, many took to testing the fat-burning properties and appetite-quashing abilities of bizarre wares such as lemon juice and vinegar, chalk and charcoal, rice and soda. In 1874, for instance, Dr John Fothergill proclaimed:

Two very ruinous practices are commonly resorted to by girls who are becoming alarmed by their plumpness, and upon whom the dread of being fat weighs like an incubus; and these are the consumption of vinegar to produce thinness, and of rice, to cause the complexion to become paler.⁷⁴

Effectively, then, a morbid aesthetic thrived in a culture where sickly slenderness had become a cultural shorthand for beauty.

Society began to warn young girls against the dangers of "consuming". However, this time, their pleas were against the ludicrousness of ingesting foul substances as a means of making themselves consumptively slender. For instance, in response to numerous letters written by fat-fearing females, the *Girl's Own Paper* gave the following advice:

you are doing a very rash thing in trying to thin yourself by taking carbonate of soda in daily doses [...] your being stout is a great advantage, *if not excessive*. You have some substance to waste safely in case of illness. Do you wish to look like the poor scarecrows with pipe-stopper waists?⁷⁵

As the above quotation indicates, Victorian culture was becoming increasingly torn between amending the physical and psychological harm done through its non-consuming philosophy, and endorsing further, yet perhaps a little more cautionary, continuations of its restrictive eating advice. However, the editors of popular

Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 29.

⁷² Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity*, p. 23.

⁷³ Dormandy, *The White Death*, p. 91.

⁷⁴ J. Milner Fothergill, M.D, *The Maintenance of Health: A Medical Work for Lay Readers* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1874), pp. 80-81.

⁷⁵ 'Answers to Correspondents,' *Girl's Own Paper* (February 26th 1887), p. 351.

periodicals, such as the *Girl's Own Paper*, were undeniably baffled by the outrageous lengths a girl might go to in order to become part of this consumptive cult. After receiving another letter from the appropriately named 'Hyacinth', (whose name, whether pseudonym or not, bespeaks the petal-like flimsiness so glorified by the period) the editor pertly responded: 'We cannot recommend any method of blanching your cheeks. Why do you desire to look sickly and woe-begone?'⁷⁶

The answer to this last question was perhaps, because 'wasting was in style' and to be stylish, of course, was every girl's ambition.⁷⁷ Indeed, before 1882 (when the tubercule bacillus was discovered), the highly "stylish" modes of corsetry and tight-lacing were also widely held by doctors to be a principal cause of tuberculosis and respiratory consumption.⁷⁸ In the words of Patricia Branca, 'the lament was constant: women were sacrificing their health for fashion's sake'.⁷⁹ This, in some respects, brings us back to Mr. Punch's declarations, whereby sartorial consumerism, a woman's 'venturing, incautiously, into the tainted atmosphere of late-closing linen-draper's horrid shops', was thought to prompt her physical downfall: placing her not only in a dangerous, market environment but also in inappropriate garments which could infect 'her blood [...] with fever or *consumption*'.⁸⁰ Certainly, as Branca goes on to note, one common medical complaint was that 'consumption resulted from low-cut dresses and thin shoes'. Yet, more popular still 'on the subject of health v. fashion' was, as has already been suggested, 'tight-lacing and its evils'.⁸¹ As early as 1839, *Cleave's Gazette of Variety* had announced:

Tight lacing! – bear it not! Lass!
 Throw thy busk away –
Consumption fills it up
With sickness and decay;
 Then shun the snare, sweet girl,
 Lest it should be thy doom,
 To close thine eyes upon the world
 And find an early tomb!⁸²

Yet, in the same way that advising against vinegar drinking and the like was pointless, all attempts to eradicate the corset were also futile. Even towards the close

⁷⁶ 'Answers to Correspondents,' *Girl's Own Paper* (May 15th 1880), pp. 319-20 (p. 320).

⁷⁷ Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *Fasting Girls: The Emergence of Anorexia Nervosa as a Modern Disease* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 171.

⁷⁸ Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 71.

⁷⁹ Patricia Branca, *Silent Sisterhood: Middle Class Women in the Victorian Home* (London: Croom Helm, 1975), p. 66.

⁸⁰ 'Caution in Shopping', p. 109.

⁸¹ Branca, *Silent Sisterhood*, p. 66.

⁸² 'Tight Lacing,' *Cleave's Gazette of Variety*, 2:36 (June 15th 1839), p. 3 [emphasis mine].

of the century, troops of females were still venturing into horrid linen-drapers shops, and non-consuming consumptives were still helplessly bound to the charming snare of the corset. Victorian Britain was overrun with scantily clad invalids, and infested with what Henry T. Fink called 'Wasp-Waist Mania'.⁸³

Given their vehement distaste for this consumptive craze, Gilbert and Gubar would undoubtedly delight in the early sections of Du Maurier's novel, where the voluptuous, un-corseted, care-free Trilby is, in the words of Katherine Byrne, 'the very picture of physical health'.⁸⁴ Trilby splatters Du Maurier's literary canvas with an 'almost too exuberant joyousness and *irrepressible vitality*' (p. 90). As a 'full-bosomed young grisette' (p. 30). Trilby, to begin with, is perhaps more like the coquettishly crude, pre-Raphaelite model, Fanny Cornforth, 'a curvaceous and loose-living "stunner"', than the skeletal Elizabeth Siddal.⁸⁵ Entering the artistic-alcove of Du Maurier's 'musketeers of the brush' (p. 27) Trilby's vibrant corporeality immediately dazes her spectators. She sits 'herself down *cross-legged* on the model-throne' (an inappropriate posture to choose in a period where women's legs were expected to be camouflaged with hefty skirts and puffed-up petticoats). As the artistic audience gawks at Trilby 'curious and half embarrassed' she pulls out 'a paper-parcel containing food', exclaiming: "'I'll just take a bite, if you don't object; I'm a model you know'" (p. 15). Such behaviour instantaneously emphasises her social and moral failings.

Firstly, Trilby proudly declares that she is a model; and, like moonlight-marketeering, modelling was virtually synonymous with prostitution. Fully shameless and 'quite unconcerned' (p. 16) about her career choice, Trilby delights in the select committee of gentleman-painters who feed upon her figure as she poses *naked* in 'the altogether' (p. 16). Unlike *Goblin Market's* Laura, who manages to escape a watery deathbed, Trilby, the narrator informs us, would even agree to sitting, like a 'dirty tipsy old hag', for Taffy's 'Found Drowned' (p. 65), an idea which sordidly compounds the relations between artistic posing and prostitution. Secondly, like Elizabeth Pennell's *Greedy Woman*, the novel goes on to imply that Trilby's ardent appetite for food is equivalent to sexual desire. Trilby's measly 'bite' burgeons into innumerable luncheons, and each time she dines, she titillates the men who leer at her. As she devours a 'sandwich of [...] *fromage à la crème* [...] lick[ing] the tips of her fingers clean of cheese' her virile voyeurs stare 'at her in open-mouthed *admiration* and *delight*' (p. 16). The scene's erotic overtones become, as Byrne suggests, a problematic 'source of [...] fascination and fear' (p. 27).

Of course, such attitudes towards food and sex are curiously improper for a Victorian heroine, and society cannot tolerate them for long. Under the mesmeric sway of vampiric forces, Trilby is 'forced out of innocence' and a 'slimy layer of

⁸³ Henry T. Fink, *Romantic Love and Personal Beauty* [1887] (London: Macmillan, 1902), p. 381.

⁸⁴ Byrne, *Tuberculosis*, p. 111.

⁸⁵ Byrne, *Tuberculosis*, p. 107.

sorrow and shame' (p. 31) begins to seep through the crevices of her character. Before long, the musketeers 'noticed a gradual and subtle change in Trilby' (p. 88). Her 'mouth, always too large, took on a firmer and sweeter outline', she grew 'thinner, especially in the face, where the bones of her cheeks and jaws began to show themselves. [...] The improvement was astonishing, almost inexplicable' (pp. 88-90). No longer hungry, Trilby consumptively wastes into the ideal heroine: a woman who prepares and serves food for her male companions, but keeps her own lips pertinently sealed.

Significantly, Trilby's withering begins after she becomes acquainted with the sinister Svengali, 'a big hungry spider' who makes Trilby 'feel like a fly!' (p. 52). Once under the hypnotic influence of Svengali, Trilby 'lost weight daily; she seemed to be [...] fading away from sheer general atrophy' (p. 264). Moreover, while Trilby retreats into thinness, Svengali grows fat. His once 'long, lean' (p. 73) figure becomes 'stout and [...] splendid in appearance' (p. 208), perhaps suggesting that the source of his corporeal nourishment is the vampirically-drained Trilby herself. Svengali is certainly equipped with the 'big yellow teeth', the 'canine snarl' and the 'insolent black eyes' (p. 92) of a vampire. Furthermore, the narrator describes Svengali as 'a [...] *haunting* [...] *uncanny*, black spider-cat, if there is such an animal outside a bad dream' (p. 72). These allusions to mystical vampire-lore become even more prominent when he growls: "I am *thirsting* for those beautiful chest notes! Come" (pp. 73-75). As Byrne suggests, the 'truly pathological force' of *Trilby* is, in fact, Svengali's 'hungry masculinity', a potent hunger that 'wishes to consume, possess and transform the beloved object'.⁸⁶ Svengali, then, is Tylor's consumption causing vampire, the unruly masculine power who metaphorically drains the Victorian female of her own consuming capacities. Like Carroll from his domineering position in *Wonderland*, Svengali contentedly watches Trilby wither as he mystically shrinks her back down to inferior size.

Indeed, as Du Maurier's 'fast-fading lily' (p. 271) rapidly disintegrates, Svengali remarks: "'how beautiful you are [...] I adore you. I like you thinner; you have such beautiful bones!'" (p. 91). His declarations make it perfectly clear that the source of Trilby's visual appeal seeps beyond her flesh: this is an unnerving exploration of beauty to the bone. Appointing himself as a hybrid conductor-surgeon, Svengali stands before his theatre of companion voyeurs, repeatedly running through 'a ghoulish pantomime', taking 'stock of the [...] bones in her skeleton with greedy but discriminating approval' (p. 91). In Svengali's eyes, Trilby's wasting enhances her beauty because it displays more clearly the object of his desire: 'the fetishised female skeleton'.⁸⁷ It would appear that, for Svengali, the female skeleton is a sign of masculine triumph: devoid of the supporting tissues formally attached to her bones, the skeletally wasted woman is rendered powerlessly immobile, muscularly inept.

⁸⁶ Byrne, *Tuberculosis*, p. 114.

⁸⁷ Byrne, *Tuberculosis*, p. 116.

Certainly, as we have seen time and again, Victorian culture found the consuming woman threatening; her voracity aligning her with rampant sexuality. Yet, the woman who was herself consumed, be it by a vampire-like artist or the ravages of tubercular illness, was viewed as being endlessly appealing, primarily because she posed less of a threat. Because of the consumptive woman's invalid-status, the predominantly patriarchal society of Victorian Britain idolised her immobility; it preferred, as Dr Thomas Trotter had proclaimed long before the coronation of Queen Victoria, 'a sickly sallow hue of [...] countenance to the roses of health'.⁸⁸ Thus, reincarnated as the near-invalid la Svengali by the end of the novel, Trilby has metamorphosed into a sought-after, phthisical beauty whose photograph is permitted to adorn glitzy 'shop windows' (p. 90). This last image conflates the various notions of consumption – commercial, visual, pathological – that this article has sought to explore. Perilously placed on display, Trilby loses subjectivity, becoming objectified and exposed to consumer desire. Moreover, the art of photography crystallises its 'subject', an unsettling concept which implies that Trilby's countenance is open to voyeuristic violation *ad infinitum*.

With 'the taste of the original apple' eternally lingering in women's mouths, the inclination to consume was always imminent, and therefore in urgent need of being stifled.⁸⁹ Yet, with the proliferation of colonial goods and the ever-expanding horizons of commodity culture, the temptations facing Victorian women were unremittingly multiplying: 'an apple is an excellent thing – until you have tried a peach!' (p. 169) – or a pear, or a pineapple; not to mention a variety of non-edible goods. Certainly, the era's newfound taste for sartorial shopping sprees could very well have been the catalytic agent which impelled Robert Southey to alter the generic girl's composition from the eerily edible 'sugar and spice and all things nice' to being made of 'ribbons and laces and sweet pretty faces'.⁹⁰ Yet, as this article has hopefully demonstrated, a woman composed of 'ribbons and laces', or, more specifically, ribbon-suffused *corsets* and laces, was no less "edible" than her sugary predecessor. With vampire-like men hungering for "little" women with minuscule waists, the female consumer of sartorial goods was just as likely to be devoured, be it visually, sexually, metaphorically, or even matrimonially, as the sugar-plum fairy taken straight from the pages of fairy-tale fiction. Thus, eternally caught up in the consumer-consumed cycle that has remained omnipresent throughout this essay, the hunger haunting the Victorian woman became the fuel which fired a toxic, deadly *consumptive* pandemic.

⁸⁸ Dr Thomas Trotter, *A View of the Nervous Temperament* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme, 1807), p. 57.

⁸⁹ Stoker, *Dracula*, p. 195.

⁹⁰ See Iona and Peter Opie, *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, p. 77.

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“I CARVE THE MARBLE OF PURE THOUGHT”’: WORK AND PRODUCTION IN THE POETRY OF ARTHUR O’SHAUGHNESSY

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Abstract

In this article I consider the concepts of “work” and “production” in the life and poetry of Arthur O’Shaughnessy, viewed in terms of the conflicting aesthetic theories of Socialist art-for-society and Aesthetic art-for-art. In order to express his discontent with his “day job” as a naturalist at the British Museum, O’Shaughnessy embraced the revolution of non-work offered by the Aesthetes, as they affected an aloof aristocracy of art, removed from the bourgeois concerns of the consumerist public. Adopting this self-aggrandising language, O’Shaughnessy undermined the importance of the ordinary world, and with it the significance of his own failures in his work at the museum.

However, his most famous poem, which begins ‘we are the music makers’, evinces a commitment to socially engaged literature, a desire rebuked by the Aesthete’s emphasis on “useless” art. In his support of “art for humanity” O’Shaughnessy aligned himself with the aesthetic theories of men such as William Morris. The tension between these two conflicting aesthetic theories is expressed in moments of surprising violence in O’Shaughnessy’s verse, in which the Aesthetic figure of the solitary artist is persecuted for his difference. It is only in his final volume of poetry that O’Shaughnessy was able to reconcile these theories and resolve this tension by redefining art as ‘work’, with an emphasis on the act of production. In this act of redefinition he finally accepts himself as a worker: not a mere cog in the bureaucratic system, but a producer of beauty. It is in the act of production that O’Shaughnessy found use, and in the redefinition of art as his career, he was able to come to a middle ground between art for humanity and art for art’s sake.

In contemporary criticism, Arthur O’Shaughnessy is most often classed as a Pre-Raphaelite, but during his lifetime he was seen as being far more influenced by French aesthetic theory than the practices of his English contemporaries.¹ Thus, *The Academy* noted in a review of his first volume, ‘the influences to which we should be inclined chiefly to refer it are those of a section of the French Romantiques, Baudelaire and Gautier at their head, who set themselves [...] a conscious purpose of art, and with an immense care for the technical execution, finish, and symmetry of their art’.² In reality, the divide between Pre-Raphaelitism and the later Aestheticism in England was a fluid one, and O’Shaughnessy’s work embodies both movements. In 1882, Walter Hamilton included O’Shaughnessy as one of the seven ‘principal

¹ See Inga Bryden, *The Pre-Raphaelites: Writings and Sources*, 4 vols. (New York: Routledge / Thoemmes Press, 1998), vol. 1; Valentine Cunningham, *The Victorians: An Anthology of Poetry and Poetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000); Florence Saunders Boos, ‘The Pre-Raphaelites’, *Victorian Poetry*, 45:3 (Fall 2007), pp. 321-30.

² ‘Review: An Epic of Women and Other Poems’, *The Academy* (November 15th 1870), p. 33.

poets' of the Aesthetic school, a list that also included Dante Gabriel Rossetti, nearly always categorized as a Pre-Raphaelite in contemporary criticism, and Oscar Wilde, traditionally considered the embodiment of the Aesthetic Movement.³ This article will consider the ways in which these two schools interact and come into conflict in O'Shaughnessy's own aesthetic theory, by focusing on his notions of work and utility. It will demonstrate that O'Shaughnessy allied himself with what he perceived as the "non-work" culture of the anti-bourgeois Aesthetic movement as a reaction to his dissatisfaction with his daily working life as a naturalist at the British Museum. A pervasive desire for utility in his art, however, left him at odds with aspects of Aesthetic theory, creating a source of tension in his early poetry. It is only in his final volume of poetry, I will suggest, that he was able to ease this tension by a redefinition of "work" and "production" in relation to poetry.

In a letter written shortly before his death, and published as part of the preface to his posthumous collection *Songs of a Worker* (1881), O'Shaughnessy attempted to define himself in relation to contemporary artistic labels, saying:

I have been represented as saying with Baudelaire, 'Art for Art', and laying myself open to all the unfavourable limitations which that dictum is unjustly supposed to imply. Truly I think that a little 'Art for Art' has already done a great deal of good in England, and that a little more is needed, and would be equally beneficial. But with Victor Hugo I do not say, 'Art for Art,' but 'Art for humanity', and my meaning is that Art is good – is an incalculable gain to man; but art in itself equally perfect, which grows with humanity and can assist humanity in growing – is still better.⁴

This passage shows the main point of contention for O'Shaughnessy within the aesthetic theory of the late-Victorian period: the utility of art. Here he straddles the line between a Ruskinian utility-based art appreciation and the need for art to be governed by nothing but beauty, as promoted by men like Baudelaire.⁵ I contend that O'Shaughnessy's allegiance to both of these theories was based less on his

³ Walter Hamilton, *The Aesthetic Movement in England* (London: Reeves & Turner, 1882).

⁴ Arthur O'Shaughnessy, 'Preface' to *Songs of a Worker* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1881), p. viii. This collection was published only a few months after O'Shaughnessy's death in January 1881. It was assembled by his cousin, Alfred Newport Deacon, but it seems clear that Newport Deacon had little to do in the way of compilation, as the manuscript was almost complete at O'Shaughnessy's death.

⁵ See, for example, Linda Dowling's discussion of Ruskin's post-"unconversion" utilitarian theory of art, in Dowling, *The Vulgarization of Art: The Victorians and Aesthetic Democracy* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996). For Charles Baudelaire's rejection of utilitarian beauty, see Baudelaire, 'The Universal Exhibition of 1855: the Fine Arts', in *Baudelaire: Selected Writings on Art & Artists*, trans. by P. E. Charvet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 115-39.

engagement with specific artistic theories and more on the way he related art to the rest of his life: specifically his “day job” as a naturalist.

The Aesthetic movement of the late-Victorian period is often considered to have been ‘an engaged protest against Victorian utility, rationality, scientific factuality, and technological progress – in fact, against the whole middle-class drive to conform’.⁶ That is, an anti-bourgeois movement, associated with the French literary idea of *l’art pour l’art*, made famous by Théophile Gautier.⁷ Buried within the idea of “art for art” is the rejection of art for anything else. Aestheticism can be seen as a cultural retreat from social or political engagement, into the ivory tower of art.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the presumed audience of art had become the consumerist and religious middle class, the newly rich bourgeoisie, which feigned shock at all art that could not be ‘lispied in the nursery or fingered in the schoolroom’.⁸ The middle class wielded new, but considerable, power over the arts during this period: with disposable income to spend and a desire for a culture of their own, they had become independent of the aristocracy for the first time. Their patronage of the arts was, in part, shaped by a desire to flaunt their new wealth, but often in a way that made it clear they were different from the dissolute upper classes they saw themselves as supplanting. Rather than following the standards of “taste” as set by the upper classes, the middle class demanded standards of their own, which were often shaped by decorum and morality as much as, if not more than, beauty or skill.⁹

This newly created audience placed a burden on the artist to conform to the market and to create art that matched bourgeois demands. One of these demands, indicated by Swinburne’s complaint quoted above, was for a standard of morality in art. This demanded a narrative – in both literary and pictorial art – that supported and reinforced Victorian middle-class moral values. Beyond that, however, in a utilitarian culture, in a class that had founded itself on values of industry and labour, art that was merely beautiful seemed to have very little “use”. While philosophers of aesthetics had, for over a century, been arguing for a disconnect between use and beauty, the middle class refused art that had no higher moral or social purpose.¹⁰ Reinforcing

⁶ Regenia Gagnier, *Idylls of the Marketplace: Oscar Wilde and the Victorian Public* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1987), p. 3.

⁷ See Théophile Gautier, ‘Preface’ to *Mademoiselle de Maupin* [1835], trans. by R. & E. Powys Mathers (London: Folio Society, 1948).

⁸ Algernon Charles Swinburne, *Notes on Poems and Reviews* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1866), p. 20.

⁹ See Linda Dowling’s suggestion that the drive for realism (as promoted by John Ruskin and his “truth to nature”) can be traced to middle-class religious faith, and a conflation of “truth to nature” and “truth to God”, bringing Christian morality to bear on an even degree of representational skill, Dowling, *The Vulgarization of Art*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁰ See, for example, Kant’s distinction between free and adherent beauty, in his *Critique of*

religious and moral ideals became an acceptable “use” of art.¹¹

To negate the consumerist culture of art, which pandered to middle-class respectability, the Aesthetes attempted to render art autonomous, to remove it from the demand for utility by declaring it “useless”. As Gautier, perhaps the first Aesthete, declared, ‘There is nothing really beautiful but that which is useless; everything useful is ugly, for it is the expression of some want, and man’s needs are ignoble and disgusting, like his poor infirm nature. The most useful part of the house is the toilet’.¹² In these lines Gautier degrades utility to the level of filth, undermining the belief that it could have any connection to art or beauty. Here he rejects Kant’s adherent beauty, suggesting that utility actively negates aesthetics. These attitudes culminate in the ultimate Aesthete, Oscar Wilde, declaring, ‘Art never expresses anything but itself’¹³. Regenia Gagnier, in her *Idylls of the Marketplace* (1986), suggests that this attitude is merely a posturing of the Aesthetes to reject a market culture that was rejecting them in turn.¹⁴ While this may certainly be a factor in the Aesthetes’ withdrawal from popular culture, I am more interested in the narrative they created for themselves, figuring themselves as an artistic elite, separate from the public and consumerist spheres. This is particularly important for artists on the outskirts of the movement, like O’Shaughnessy, who were not creating these narratives, but merely making use of them.

Gagnier argues that the Aesthetes’ rejection of utility manifested itself in a glorification of a culture of non-work which would be inaccessible to the middle-class public.¹⁵ Utility, as expressed by Gautier in the quote above, becomes associated with necessity, the fulfilment of a need. The ultimate necessity of working- and middle-class life is that of earning a living. This necessity, Henri Lefebvre posits, robs work of its creative possibilities and transforms it into a societal punishment: ‘[the worker’s] labour, which ought to humanize him, becomes something done under duress instead of being a vital and human need, since it is itself nothing more than a means (of earning a living) rather than a contribution to man’s essence, freely

Judgment (1790), in which free beauty, that which is not tied to purpose or use, is privileged over adherent beauty, that is, beauty in utility. For a discussion of Kant within the wider aesthetic/utilitarian debate, see Paul Guyer, *Values of Beauty: Historical Essays in Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

¹¹ See Eric Warner and Graham Hough’s discussion of morality in nineteenth-century art in Warner and Hough, *Strangeness and Beauty: An Anthology of Aesthetic Criticism: 1840-1910, Vol. 1, Ruskin to Swinburne* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹² Theophile Gautier, ‘Preface’ to *Mademoiselle de Maupin* [1835]. reprinted in Warner and Hough, *Strangeness and Beauty*, p. 163.

¹³ Oscar Wilde, ‘The Decay of Lying: A Dialogue’, *The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review*, XXV (January-June, 1889), pp. 35-56 (p. 50).

¹⁴ Gagnier, *Idylls of the Marketplace*, p. 12.

¹⁵ Gagnier, *Idylls of the Marketplace*, p. 10.

imparted'.¹⁶ Work, then, is useful, fulfilling the need of earning a living: therefore, in the language of the Aesthetes, it is inherently opposed to art and beauty. Charles Baudelaire insisted artists must 'possess, to their hearts' content, and to a vast degree; both time and money, without which fantasy, reduced to the state of ephemeral reverie, can scarcely be translated into action'.¹⁷ A man must be 'freed from any profession' in order to 'cultivate the idea of beauty'.¹⁸ The Aesthetes adopted a stance outside of the productive system of labour and earning, creating the figure of the withdrawn, solitary genius that often characterizes the Aesthetic movement.

In this article I would like to consider O'Shaughnessy in relation to Aestheticism and its assumed stance outside the world of production and consumption. I suggest that O'Shaughnessy was particularly drawn to this 'revolution of non-work' as Gagnier describes it, not as a rejection of work / utility in itself, but of his *own* specific work, and the lack of utility he felt in his own career.¹⁹ O'Shaughnessy appropriated the language and self-aggrandising narratives of Aestheticism as an antidote to the frustrating lack of utility which he saw as symptomatic of his own bourgeois existence.

O'Shaughnessy worked in the Natural History Departments of the British Museum from 1863 until his death in 1881. He was appointed as a Junior Assistant in the Zoology department amid a storm of controversy; Henry Walter Bates, a renowned entomologist, had also applied for the position.²⁰ The disparity in qualifications between the two candidates is almost laughable. O'Shaughnessy was a nineteen-year-old boy who had worked in the Department of Printed Books for two years as a transcriber, and had shown no interest in natural history up to that point. Bates had recently returned from an eleven-year expedition in the remotest parts of South America, accompanied by Alfred Russell Wallace, the co-discoverer of evolution by means of natural selection. Furthermore, the same year the appointment took place, Bates published his popular *Naturalist on the River Amazons* (1863), with Darwin's encouragement.²¹ However, despite his obvious qualifications, Bates' application was non-standard. The Museum favoured promotion from within its own

¹⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *The Critique of Everyday Life*, trans. by John Moore, 3 vols. (London: Verso, 1999), vol. 1, p. 166.

¹⁷ Charles Baudelaire, 'The Painter of Modern Life', in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. by Jonathan Mayne (New York: Phaidon Press, 1964), pp. 1-40 (p. 27).

¹⁸ Baudelaire, 'The Painter of Modern Life', p. 27.

¹⁹ Gagnier, *Idylls of the Marketplace*, p. 10.

²⁰ British Museum Standing Committee Minutes (July 11th 1863), C.10372.

²¹ Bates writes in his Preface: 'At that date I became acquainted with Mr Darwin, who, having formed a flattering opinion of my ability for the task, strongly urged me to write a book, and reminded me of it months afterwards, when, after having made a commencement, my half-formed resolution began to give way.' Henry Walter Bates, *The Naturalist on the Amazons: A Record of Adventures, Habits of Animals, Sketches of Brazilian and Indian Life, and Aspects of Nature under the Equator during Eleven Years of Travel* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1863), p. v.

ranks: to receive an initial appointment a candidate had to be recommended by a member of the Board of Trustees. O'Shaughnessy earned his place in the Department of Printed Books at the recommendation of Lord Lytton, an influential friend of the O'Shaughnessy family, and was poised for promotion within the museum's ranks.²² Even more importantly, it is quite likely that the Departments, headed by Richard Owen and J. E. Gray, did not want such a staunch Darwinist as Bates in their midst. This is the conclusion W. D. Paden reaches in his consideration of the matter, stating, 'Darwin was Bates' other supporter, but he was also the man who, by suggesting the transmutation of species, had shaken the foundation of Dr. Gray's concept of zoology as taxonomy'.²³ It is likely, therefore, that the choice of O'Shaughnessy over Bates was ideological in nature. Nonetheless, Bates came to the museum with the backing of the most eminent naturalists of the day, and there was uproar in the naturalist community when O'Shaughnessy was granted the position instead.

To make matters worse, O'Shaughnessy was not well suited for the position. He had extremely poor vision, which prevented him from conducting the kind of minute observations essential for a naturalist.²⁴ He was unable to work on the smaller specimens in the collection, which led to an initial transfer from entomological research to the Geology Department. Eventually he returned to Zoology, but his defective vision barred him from a large portion of the work normally required of a man in his position. He found little enjoyment in his work, as his superiors constantly reminded him of his shortcomings. His correspondence demonstrates his longing to be able to support himself through his poetry alone, and to leave a job in which he felt like an incompetent outsider. In this sense, his friend and mentor Dante Gabriel Rossetti probably represented his ideal of the figure of the artist. Rossetti was in some ways the ultimate non-worker, a 'marginal within the productive system', as Gagnier puts it.²⁵ Unlike Morris and Swinburne, who were both independently wealthy, and thus had the freedom to pursue their artistic careers, Rossetti had no inherited wealth. This left him at a disadvantage, but also meant that in his artistic life he was situated outside of class boundaries, as well as the world of commerce. He published little and nearly always refused to show his paintings. He supported himself almost entirely through private commissions, forging a network of like-minded artists and art connoisseurs, the ultimate artistic aristocracy.²⁶ This was, in many ways, the ideal

²² W. D. Paden, 'Arthur O'Shaughnessy in the British Museum: Or, the Case of the Misplaced Fusees and the Reluctant Zoologist', *Victorian Studies*, 8:1 (September 1964), pp. 7-30 (p. 11).

²³ Paden, 'Arthur O'Shaughnessy in the British Museum', p. 11.

²⁴ See the letter from the Keeper of the Department of Zoology, J. E. Gray, to the Principal Librarian of the British Museum, John Winter Jones, dated November 2nd 1870, British Museum Original Papers, C.11280.

²⁵ Gagnier, *Idylls of the Marketplace*, p. 10.

²⁶ See Lionel Stevenson, *The Pre-Raphaelite Poets* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1972), as well as *The Correspondence of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. by William E. Fredeman, 8 vols. (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002-2012).

lifestyle of the Aesthete, and one O'Shaughnessy longed for. It is important to remember that among his artistic circle, only O'Shaughnessy held a "day job". I suggest the impact of this was far-reaching in his poetry.

For O'Shaughnessy his career at the museum was "work", his way of earning a living, and his poetry could never be categorized as such. It was these distinctions, art *v.* science, poetry *v.* work, which drew him to the language of the Aesthetic movement. In his poems about the nature of art (of which there are many) O'Shaughnessy categorizes poetry as an act of spontaneous genius, a moment when an artist gains access to another world, another plane of being. This is a kind of access that is only granted to a special breed of person, the artist.

A thousand thrilling secrets lived in me;
 Fair things last whispered in that land of mine,
 By those who had most magic to divine
 The glowing of its roses, and to see
 What burning thoughts they cherished inwardly;
 Yea, and to know the mystic rhapsody
 Of some who sang at a high hidden shrine,
 With voices ringing pure and crystalline.²⁷

Here O'Shaughnessy appropriates the language of the Aesthetic movement to privilege the special status of the artist. This language is evident in Baudelaire's essay 'The Painter of Modern Life' (1863), in which he describes the artist as 'a singular man, whose originality is so powerful and clear-cut that it is self-sufficing' – a man who has access to vision greater than the average man and can distil life into something better and more beautiful. 'Things seen are born again on the paper, natural and more than natural, beautiful and better than beautiful, strange and endowed with an enthusiastic life, like the soul of their creator'.²⁸ As Eric Warner and Graham Hough note of Baudelaire, '[he] develops the romantic line of Rousseau by conceiving of the creative process as an entirely subjective matter; art, he claims, is born out of the solitary artist fathoming his own mind and tracing the design of his own thought: which is why every true artist is unique, *sui generis* as he puts it'.²⁹ O'Shaughnessy appropriates the image of the solitary artist so common in Aestheticism in order to distance himself from "ordinary" men, in his poetry represented by his scientific colleagues. By undermining the importance of the ordinary world, he undermines the significance of his own failures at the museum. He adopts a stance outside of society, not to reject utility or consumerist claims on

²⁷ Arthur O'Shaughnessy, 'Nostalgie des Cieux', in *Music and Moonlight* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1874), p. 151.

²⁸ Baudelaire, 'The Painter of Modern Life', pp. 5, 12.

²⁹ Warner and Hough, *Strangeness and Beauty*, p. 170.

art, but to downplay his own inability to successfully participate in the productive system.

In his “art poems” O’Shaughnessy regularly contrasts art with science.³⁰ But rather than science as a whole, it is really the work of a museum naturalist in particular that he rejects. The root of his discontent was in the professionalization of science taking place in the mid-nineteenth century. As science became a career, it took on the tedium of everyday working life, and was imbued with all the bureaucracy that comes with any profession. For O’Shaughnessy science was inextricably linked with the Museum and the problems he had there. For many, the British Museum was a place of discovery, but for O’Shaughnessy it was an office, with paperwork to file and superiors to appease. Thus, O’Shaughnessy appropriated Aestheticism and its anti-consumer narratives to express the discontent of the lowly worker, the office drone. He glorifies the useless precisely because of the frustrating lack of utility he found in his everyday life.

We can see this attitude summed up in his 1870 sonnet ‘A Discord’:

It came to pass upon a summer’s day,
 When from the flowers indeed my soul had caught
 Fresh bloom, and turned their richness into thought
 That – having made my footsteps free to stray –
 They brought me wandering by some sudden way
 Back to the bloomless city, and athwart
 The doleful streets and many a closed-up court
 That prisoned here and there a spent noon-ray.
 O how most bitterly upon me broke
 The sight of all the summerless lost folk! –
 For verily their music and their gladness
 Could only seem like so much sadness
 Beside the inward rhapsody of art
 And flowers and *Chopin*-echoes at my heart.³¹

Here O’Shaughnessy adopts the posture of the alienated, enlightened artist observing city life, as represented in Baudelaire’s ‘The Painter of Modern Life’, in which he says the artist is ‘at the very centre of the world, and yet remain[s] hidden from the world’.³² He is a ‘solitary mortal endowed with an active imagination, always

³⁰ See, for example, Arthur O’Shaughnessy, ‘A Discord’, ‘A Neglected Harp’ and ‘Exile’, in *An Epic of Women and Other Poems* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1870), and ‘Azure Islands’, in *Music and Moonlight*.

³¹ Arthur O’Shaughnessy, ‘A Discord’, in *An Epic of Women and Other Poems*, p. 174.

³² Baudelaire, ‘The Painter of Modern Life’, p. 9.

roaming the great desert of men'.³³ Although in O'Shaughnessy's own life he was one of the workers in the 'bloomless city', here he adopts a stance that is both in the midst of, and yet distant from, those workers: observing rather than participating. This way of conceiving of the artist as separate from mankind, even when in their midst, became central to O'Shaughnessy's own view of the artist in his early poetry.

O'Shaughnessy's allegiance to Aesthetic theory, however, became complicated by his investment in the idea of utility, in the form of "art for humanity". As I have suggested, for the Aesthetes utility became tied to the productive system of work culture and the consumerist / capitalist mindset of the bourgeois middle class. Thus, they turned to a "non-work" culture as a way of rejecting the demand for utility in art. O'Shaughnessy was drawn to the language of non-work, but we can see in his poetry the desire to be of some use to society, and therefore an inability to fully commit to the idea of a "useless" art. This conflict plays out in O'Shaughnessy's best-known poem, his 'Ode' (1874). In this poem, O'Shaughnessy's conception of the relationship between the artist and society is very different from the one expressed by the Aesthetes. Baudelaire, and the Aesthetes after him, posited the fundamental alienation of the artist from society, an attitude O'Shaughnessy echoed in 'A Discord'. In contrast, the 'Ode' depicts the artist as integral to society.

In this 'Ode', O'Shaughnessy rejects the Aesthetes' idea that art's only responsibility is to itself, a fundamental tenet of Aestheticist theory. Rather, the 'Ode' firmly declares that the artist has a duty to aid society. In this poem, O'Shaughnessy trumpets the power that lies in a poet's words:

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample a kingdom down.

However, with this power comes the responsibility to guide public opinion in order to bring about a better future:

The soldier, the king, and the peasant
Are working together in one,
Till our dream shall become their present,
And their work in the world be done.³⁴

³³ Baudelaire, 'The Painter of Modern Life', p. 12.

³⁴ Arthur O'Shaughnessy, 'Ode', in *Music and Moonlight*, p. 2.

The alienation that Baudelaire posited is still evident here. The disconnect between the artist and society is obvious in the language he uses: ‘*our* dream’ becomes ‘*their* present’. The artist does not share in this present or this society, but nevertheless should feel a responsibility towards it, a responsibility born of the artistic gift he has been given. There is an uneasy tension evident here, between the kind of social engagement of the artist propounded by poets like William Morris, and the alienation of the Aesthetes, who believed that art did not answer to society.

However, it appears O’Shaughnessy had difficulty fulfilling his own expectations of the artist. Although he declares that artists should shape society, he rarely tries to do so himself. Unlike poets such as Morris or Swinburne, O’Shaughnessy’s verse, as well as his private correspondence and papers, do not suggest any interest in political or social concerns.³⁵ He was an ordinary man, with an ordinary job, but extraordinary ambition. Evident in his poetry is not only the desire to be a great poet, but to say something *important*. Thus, his famous ode speaks of poets as ‘movers and shakers’, influential and important to society.³⁶ It appears, however, that O’Shaughnessy had no notion of what direction this influence might take. His attempts at political poetry lack conviction. They are vague and underdeveloped, suggesting the attempt is little more than a gesture.³⁷ He can conceive of the use that *artists* can be to society, but not the specific purpose *he* might serve.

For O’Shaughnessy, it was a desire for autonomy from bourgeois working life which caused him to ally himself with the Aesthetes and their language of non-work. O’Shaughnessy appears to have taken comfort in his status as poet in the face of his troubles at the museum, relying on the Aesthetes’ conception of the artist as special, and superior to the ordinary man.³⁸ However, the self-aggrandising language O’Shaughnessy appropriated from the Aesthetes denies art a political or social use; the very use we see O’Shaughnessy searching for in his poetry. In this disparity we

³⁵ See, for example, William Morris’s socialist utopia depicted in *News from Nowhere* (1890), or his encouragement of a working class uprising in *A Dream of John Ball* (1888). Swinburne’s 1871 volume *Songs before Sunrise* expressed the poet’s support of the Italian politician Giuseppe Mazzini and his support of Italian unification.

³⁶ O’Shaughnessy coined the term ‘movers and shakers’ in the first publication of this poem in 1873.

³⁷ In ‘Europe’ O’Shaughnessy makes vague reference to the goal of a ‘grand unanimous Europe’, but does not back up this vision with any reasons why he thinks unifying Europe is a good idea, or any idea of how Europe will achieve this goal. This poem in particular makes it clear that while he likes the idea of artists shaping public thought, he personally lacks the knowledge or political engagement to have much to say to the public.

³⁸ In the face of a disciplinary hearing regarding his inadequate work at the museum O’Shaughnessy declared that ‘a clerk in the Secretary’s Office told me “*it was all about my book*”. I am told it is probably owing to some such jealousy’, Qtd. in Paden, ‘Arthur O’Shaughnessy in the British Museum’, p. 18. His special status as a poet negates any failings he might have as a naturalist.

find a source of tension in O'Shaughnessy's early verse, as the figure of the alienated artist is at odds with O'Shaughnessy's desire to be a useful part of society. This tension is revealed in the surprising violence of his depictions of that alienation:

They set themselves to maim frail, unfelt wings,
That used to be the fellows of swift will,
And bring me softly to each glittering sill
Of joyful palaces, where my heart clings
Now faintly, as in mere fond hoverings,
About a distant dreamwork. Wretched things,
Cold wraiths of joy, they chained me to, to kill
My soul, yet rich with many a former thrill.³⁹

Here we see a very different conception of the alienated artist than the one found in Baudelaire's section on 'The Artist, Man of the World, Man of the Crowd, and Child' in his essay 'The Painter of Modern Life'. Baudelaire described the state of the artist as 'to be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home'.⁴⁰ O'Shaughnessy, on the other hand, sees the artist as an 'exile' in his own life, forever persecuted for his differences.⁴¹ Rather than an invisible observer of the world, as Baudelaire suggested, O'Shaughnessy's artist is not only visible, he is visibly *different*, and therefore subject to attacks.

I suggest this violent imagery, of maiming, chaining and killing, stems from O'Shaughnessy's difficulty reconciling the equally influential aesthetic theories of artists such as William Morris (in his appreciation of utility) and Charles Baudelaire (in the figure of the enlightened, distant artist).⁴² Unlike Baudelaire, O'Shaughnessy could not easily conceive of an artist who is both separate from, and at the centre of, the world. As we saw in the 'Ode', if the artist is to be a part of the world, O'Shaughnessy felt they needed to *do* their part, to serve some purpose. This, then, is the source of the violence in O'Shaughnessy's verse: the incongruity of being different from the rest of the world, and yet a part of the greater community.

This tension is eased, however, in O'Shaughnessy's final volume of poetry, *Songs of a Worker*. In the titular poem of the collection, 'Song of a Fellow-Worker', the synthesis of O'Shaughnessy's seemingly conflicting aesthetic theories is achieved in a very simple way: redefining art as work. The division between "art" and "work"

³⁹ 'Nostalgie des Cieux', in *Music and Moonlight*, p. 153.

⁴⁰ Baudelaire, 'The Painter of Modern Life', p. 9.

⁴¹ See O'Shaughnessy's 1870 'Exile', in *An Epic of Women and Other Poems*, pp. 9-12.

⁴² Morris's aesthetic theories centre on the "decorative", or useful, arts. That is, household arts such as furniture, dishes, wallpaper, etc. He was interested in bringing beauty into everyday life, infusing the utilitarian with the aesthetic. See Morris's 'The Decorative Arts, Their Relation to Modern Life and Progress' (1877).

at the time was so widespread that even William Morris, so invested in the artistry of labour, conceived of them as separate. In *Signs of Change* (1888), he classes art as ‘leisure’, something to be pursued primarily outside of the workday.⁴³ In considering this divide, so prevalent in O’Shaughnessy’s life and poetry, Lefebvre’s notion of the divided man becomes very useful. Lefebvre suggests that under a capitalist system, man becomes alienated from his own life, because work is external to him (something merely performed as part of the necessity of ‘earning a living’).⁴⁴

Thus at the same time a distinction was made between man ‘as man’ on the one hand and the working man on the other (more clearly among the bourgeoisie, of course, than among the proletariat). Family life became separate from productive activity. And so did leisure. [...] The discreteness of the elements of the everyday (work – family and ‘private’ life – leisure activities) implies an alienation.⁴⁵

O’Shaughnessy clearly fits Lefebvre’s idea of the divided man. He viewed naturalism as merely the way he earned a living, and poetry as a part of his essential self. This, according to Lefebvre, leads to the feelings of alienation that we see expressed in O’Shaughnessy’s verse: a negative, violent alienation, as compared to the privileged position outside of society adopted by the Aesthetes. Lefebvre posits that work is external to man because he is not working ‘for himself’.⁴⁶ In contrast, a man working ‘for himself’, ‘perceives and becomes conscious of his own self. If what he makes comes from him, he in turn comes from what he makes; it is made by him, but it is in these works and by these works that he has made himself’.⁴⁷

O’Shaughnessy is able to reconcile art with work, and therefore, in Lefebvre’s terms, reconcile himself with his work, by a focus on “making”, the act of production (and, in Lefebvre’s terms, the making of himself). In the nineteenth century “production” was inherently associated with industrial work culture and factory life, which, as Morris argued, was devoid of creativity.⁴⁸ However, in the notion of being productive, I suggest we can find a dual meaning of “being useful” and “making something new”. Here, again, we see O’Shaughnessy’s conception of his career as a poet shaped by his career as a naturalist. His work at the museum was predominantly clerical: even in his scientific work he was not generating new information, but merely reassessing the work of those who came before him. His taxonomic papers

⁴³ William Morris, *Signs of Change* [1888] (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1913), p. 25.

⁴⁴ Lefebvre, *The Critique of Everyday Life*, p. 59.

⁴⁵ Lefebvre, *The Critique of Everyday Life*, pp. 31-32.

⁴⁶ Lefebvre, *The Critique of Everyday Life*, p. 39.

⁴⁷ Lefebvre, *The Critique of Everyday Life*, p. 163.

⁴⁸ This association is reflected in the language Morris uses in ‘How We Live and How We Might Live’, in *Signs of Change*.

largely confirm previous species identification, or record details of specimens of known species. Most frequently, O'Shaughnessy performed organizational or secretarial work for his superiors. He produced, in the sense of making or creating, nothing at the museum.⁴⁹

Thus, it is in the act of creation itself that O'Shaughnessy finds a "use" for poetry. I have already demonstrated the way that utility and work become conflated in aesthetic theories of the period, and thus it is in conceiving of art as work that O'Shaughnessy finally found the utility of his poetry. In his final volume O'Shaughnessy focuses on the physical act of creation, and is therefore, in nineteenth-century terms of production, able to shift the label of "work" from his non-productive museum career to that of his poetry. He was finally able to reject the bourgeois culture of the middle class: not by conceiving of himself as a part of an artistic aristocracy, but by aligning himself with the working class, as a physical labourer. Here we see obvious similarities with Morris, who also adopted the voice of the working class. However, while Morris was attempting to infuse production with creativity, O'Shaughnessy needed to find the act of production in the creative.

The unifying symbol of *Songs of a Worker* is stone, as O'Shaughnessy couches his artistic theory in the form of the most physical of the visual arts: sculpture. Like a sculptor carves stone, he carves thought, both craft something new. This act of carving is then equated with the work of the 'lowly' stonemason in 'Song of a Fellow-Worker.' In this poem, the poet speaks of his 'toil': 'my toil was fashioning thought and sound, and his was hewing stone'. In their shared labour, the two men are made equal. Here O'Shaughnessy rejects the language of the alienated artist in favour of aligning himself with a community of workers, in which the work they do, though different, is all performed for the greater good for society.

At the beginning of the poem, the poet speaks of the 'burden of [his] loneliness'. Alienation had dominated O'Shaughnessy's early poetry; this burden is eased by the stoneworker, who demonstrates to the poet that they are both part of a larger fellowship of workers.

I went forth hastily, and lo! I met a hundred men,
The worker with the chisel and the worker with the pen –
The restless toilers after good, who sow and never reap,

⁴⁹ The superintendent of the department, Richard Owen, reports: 'The only work in which I have had occasion to avail myself of the services of Mr. O'Shaughnessy has been that of a transcriber', British Museum Original Papers (November 2nd 1870), 11328. Albert Günther listed O'Shaughnessy's duties as 'to name and enter into the Catalogues those of the recent additions which could be easily determined by comparison with previously named examples; to prepare a list of duplicate specimens and the alphabetical Index to the Catalogue of Fishes; to look over the first proof sheets; & to do other miscellaneous work of the same nature', British Museum Original Papers (November 4th 1870), 11400.

And one who maketh music for their souls that may not sleep.⁵⁰

The stonemason creates the streets all men travel down, but the artist creates as well: he crafts beauty and pleasure, soothing the other workers in their toil. For O'Shaughnessy, in this poem, both are equally important and serve a purpose in society. Morris would express a similar "use" of art a few years later in his *Signs of Change*, in which he writes:

And I may say that as to that leisure, as I should in no case do any harm to any one with it, so I should often do some direct good to the community with it, by practising arts or occupations for my hands or brain which would give pleasure to many of the citizens; in other words, a great deal of the best work done would be done in the leisure time of men.⁵¹

The "use" of art is the production of pleasure, and for O'Shaughnessy the "work" is the careful craft of poetry. Thus, he unites the desire for utility we find in Morris and other mid-Victorian artists with the craft of poetry, the careful formalism that was a hallmark of the Aesthetic movement. Unlike Morris, whose focus on craft meant championing every man as a potential artist, or at least artisan, O'Shaughnessy continued to depict the artist as privileged with access to a kind of divine realm: the world of art. But this privilege no longer separates the artist from the rest of mankind. Rather, it is their particular gift, or skill, that they bring to their work, just as the stonemason's strength is the innate skill he brings to his own work.

O'Shaughnessy always conceived of art as beautiful and pleasurable; it is the language of work and production that distinguishes this final volume from his earlier poetry. This linguistic shift can be illustrated by comparing a stanza detailing the act of writing from an 1870 poem, 'Seraphitus', with that of 'Song of a Fellow-Worker' (1881):

But all about that house he set
A wondrous flowering thing – his speech,
That without ceasing did beget
Such fair unearthly blossoms, each
Seemed from some paradise, and wet
As with an angel's tears, and each
Gave forth some long perfume to let
No man forget.⁵²

⁵⁰ Arthur O'Shaughnessy, 'Song of a Fellow-Worker', in *Songs of a Worker*, p. 5.

⁵¹ Morris, *Signs of Change*, p. 25.

⁵² O'Shaughnessy, 'Seraphitus', in *An Epic of Women and Other Poems*, p. 29.

I said, O fellow-worker, yea, for I am a worker too,
 The heart nigh fails me many a day, but how is it with you?
 For while I toil great tears of joy will sometimes fill my eyes,
 And when I form my perfect work it lives and never dies.
 I carve the marble of pure thought until the thought takes form,
 Until it gleams before my soul and makes the world grow warm.⁵³

The former focuses on the special status of the poet: here he is like a heavenly being, with access to unearthly things. The act of writing poetry is compared to a ‘flowering plant’ – that is, self-generating. The language is of inspiration, not work. In the second poem he ‘toils’, he ‘works’, he ‘carves’ and he ‘forms’. There is effort depicted here, and the frustration of potential failure. The former is focused on generation, he ‘begets’ his poetry, the latter on creation, the act of making. ‘Song of a Fellow-Worker’ marries the Aesthete’s language of the special poetic gift to ideas of work and utility.

Art as the creation of beauty and pleasure can be contrasted with O’Shaughnessy’s work at the museum, in which he merely catalogued knowledge, creating nothing. These ideas clearly tie in to the changing world of production and business in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when “work” was no longer about what one made, and business became abstracted from the realities of production or consumption. This was the age of the clerk, the creation of the pencil-pusher, where a man could go to an office every day, and create nothing, change nothing, affect nothing. It was this life, that of the ordinary office worker, that O’Shaughnessy tried to combat in his poetry. Here we find the distinction that Morris would make in *Signs of Change*, between ‘useful work’ and ‘useless toil’, in which he defines the middle class as ‘non-producers’, employed uselessly as mere ‘wage earners’.⁵⁴

The designation “worker” had, by the end of his career, become an integral part of O’Shaughnessy’s identity. Instead of conceptualizing art as “non-work” in order to distinguish it from his scientific career, he shifted his focus to production and the creation of something new. In this way, he was doing more “work” as a poet than as a naturalist, and was able to privilege his art as his career. He accepted the fact that he was a “worker” – with its entomological signification of being one of the drones, the lower order – but the fact that he is not a ‘mover and a shaker’ does not mean that his work is unimportant. The nineteenth century is responsible for defining a worker as ‘one who is employed for a wage’, distinguished from a capitalist or a producer of wealth.⁵⁵ O’Shaughnessy, then, rejected this non-productive definition and returned

⁵³ ‘Song of a Fellow-Worker’, p. 4.

⁵⁴ Morris, ‘Useful Work versus Useless Toil’, in *Signs of Change*, pp. 141-73. Morris defines the middle class as such in ‘The Hopes of Civilization’, pp. 109, 112.

⁵⁵ ‘worker, n.’, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, online version September 2011 <http://oed.com/view/Entry/230228> [accessed November 2011]. The first use of ‘worker’ under this

to an older model. In Biblical language, a worker is ‘one who makes’ and is synonymous with God the Creator.⁵⁶ In this act of redefinition, naturalism, the urban office environment and poetry all coalesce under one new heading: work and the worker.

In O’Shaughnessy’s early poetry, particularly the ‘Ode’, we can see a longing for communion with his fellow man, but the separatist posturing of the Aesthetes’ language, central to his conception of a work / art divide, denied that communion. By turning his back on this language and redefining art as work, he was able to join with the rest of humanity. In this way, he finally fulfilled his commitment to “art for humanity”, quoted earlier. This did not come in the form of great ideas, or political or social reform, but in the acknowledgement that every worker makes a minute difference in the world, and that the artist is no different.

And so we toil together may a day from morn till night,
I in the lower depths of life, they on the lovely height;
For though the common stones are mine, and they have lofty cares,
Their work begins where this leaves off, and mine is part of theirs.

And tis not wholly mine or theirs I think of through the day,
But the great eternal thing we make together, I and they.⁵⁷

Thus, O’Shaughnessy not only creates *for* humanity, but *with* humanity. In this way, he comes the closest in his career to unifying the seemingly disparate concepts of “art for art’s sake” and “art for humanity’s sake” in one productive aesthetic theory.

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definition is attributed to Charles Kingsley in 1848.

⁵⁶ ‘worker, n.’, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, online version September 2011 <http://oed.com/view/Entry/230228> [accessed November 2011].

⁵⁷ ‘Song of a Fellow-Worker’, p. 7.

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**TECHNOLOGIES OF DESIRE: TYPISTS, TELEGRAPHISTS AND THEIR
MACHINES IN BRAM STOKER'S *DRACULA* AND HENRY JAMES'S *IN
THE CAGE***

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Abstract

Focusing on Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) and Henry James's *In the Cage* (1898), this paper examines the eroticising of the female typist and telegraphist during the fin de siècle and the linkages between female sexuality and the female labourer's textual productions. I aim to trouble the easy connections made by theorists such as Friedrich Kittler between the advent of the typewriter and female emancipation. To conjoin the two unproblematically is to overlook the ways in which such female figures are erotically staged when working. Both *Dracula* and *In the Cage* highlight this relationship, as well as the intersections between the female worker and her roles as wife and mother. This paper also suggests a reading of the typist and telegraphist as new types of authors, and concludes by examining the multifarious ways in which the female worker's body is presented in both texts in relation to their writing machines.

Machines do away with polar sexual difference and its symbols. An apparatus that can replace Man or the symbol of masculine production is also accessible to women [...] A writing apparatus that does not represent an erotic union of script and voice [...] is made to order for coeducational purposes. The typewriter brought about [...] a completely new order of things.¹

Friedrich Kittler views the typewriter as a neutraliser of gender that compels a complete re-ordering of female employment from the late nineteenth century onwards. This perspective exemplifies the recently emerging critical discourse circulating around female emancipation, the typewriter and the workplace. To disregard the tensions that arise from the relationships made between women, labour and the typewriter, as Kittler does, is to misunderstand and reduce what is at play within a number of fin-de-siècle texts which concentrate on the figure of the female textual machinist.

Critics such as Morag Shiach and Rita Felski have begun to challenge the allegedly seamless link between women's entry into the workplace and female emancipation. Shiach and Felski argue that to conjoin women's employment with her emancipation is to ignore the 'clear sexual segregation in employment in the early twentieth century' and the fact that women were 'paid significantly less than men'.²

¹ Friedrich Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* [1985], trans. by Michael Metteer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 351-52.

² Morag Shiach, 'Modernity, Labour and the Typewriter', in *Modernist Sexualities*, ed. by Hugh

Indeed, as Margery Davies points out, ‘the central fact of working-class life’ was that ‘most women worked because they had to’.³ Such conditions, Shiach argues, prevent an easy connection between the emancipation of women and the secretarial labour opportunities that flooded the market in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The number of female clerical workers and typists increased dramatically: from 1851 to 1911 the number of female clerks rose from two thousand to one hundred and sixty-six thousand.⁴ Many female clerks and typists may have discovered that ‘participation in the labour force afforded psychological benefits such as increased independence and self-reliance’.⁵ For many, however, working did not necessarily offer the type of independence needed to carve a route away from the expected destination of matrimony and motherhood, especially since the marriage bar ‘which forced women to resign’ from their jobs once they were married, continued until the 1940s.⁶

Depictions of the female typist act as sites where a locus of anxieties specific to the fin de siècle are rehearsed, particularly within Bram Stoker’s 1897 novel *Dracula*, which focuses on a female typist, and Henry James’s 1898 novella *In the Cage*, which focuses on a young, female telegraphist. Both texts, I will argue, expose the ambiguities and anxieties surrounding the woman worker in relation to technology, writing, subjectivity and the female body. *Dracula* and *In the Cage* rehearse the tensions inherent in the relationship between sexuality and textuality and thereby reveal the reductive qualities of Kittler’s notion that the typewriter is ‘a writing apparatus that does not represent an erotic union between script and voice’.⁷ Whilst Kittler attempts to establish that the advent of the typewriter does ‘away with polar sexual difference’ and that this ‘desexualization allows women access to writing’, such a reading of the emancipatory possibilities of the typing machine ignores the explicit sexualisation of typists, secretaries and telegraphists in some

Stevens and Caroline Howlett (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 114-29 (p. 117).

³ Margery W. Davies, *Woman’s Place is at the Typewriter: Office Work and Office Workers 1870-1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), p. 70.

⁴ Meta Zimmeck, ‘Jobs for the Girls: the Expansion of Clerical Work for Women, 1850-1914’, in *Unequal Opportunities: Women’s Employment in England 1800-1918*, ed. by Angela V. John (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), pp. 153-78 (p. 154).

⁵ Davies, *Woman’s Place is at the Typewriter*, p. 70.

⁶ Shiach, ‘Modernity, Labour and the Typewriter’, p. 117. The marriage bar was a convention in employment introduced in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It was designed to keep married women from entering professions, such as banking and teaching, as well as working for the Civil Service, amongst other occupations. In the twentieth century, there were several pieces of legislation passed locally around England that enshrined this convention in law. See Shani D’Cruze, ‘Women and the Family’, in *Women’s History: Britain, 1850-1945: An Introduction*, ed. by June Purvis (London: UCL Press, 1995), pp. 44-71 (p. 63).

⁷ Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, p. 352.

literature.⁸ Kittler overlooks the theatre of staged eroticisation in which these specific types of female workers become actors as they enter into circulation as marketable bodies in the workplace. I will argue that in both Stoker's and James's work, sexuality and textuality become intrinsically conjoined; the female body, the circulation and exchange of text and (in certain instances) financial capital, all enter into a narrative surrounding the anxieties of Victorianism, modernity and gender.

In recent years critics of *Dracula* have begun to relocate their focus away from themes of repressed Victorian sexuality (both male and female) and imperial desire. The text is evolving into a site of modernist discussion; one which has begun to examine the character of Mina, whose body represents a nexus of increasingly explicit *modernist* anxieties compared to that of Lucy, a young woman who has become a receptacle of *Victorian* unease regarding female sexuality. Indeed, Jennifer Wicke argues that these newly emerging readings can permit *Dracula* 'to be read as the first great *modern* novel in British literature'.⁹ Whilst this is certainly valid, to an extent, ambiguities remain prevalent throughout the novel as to how far Mina may be read as a New Woman.

Mina types, performs secretarial duties and learns shorthand; she accumulates skills which could potentially become, as Carol A. Senf puts it, 'a means of economic independence'.¹⁰ Stoker continually emphasises Mina's intelligence, with Dr. Van Helsing noting how 'wise' she is and praising her as the group's 'teacher'.¹¹ Stoker, however, troubles a simple reading of Mina as a New Woman. For instance, Mina reveals to Lucy that she has been 'working very hard [...] to keep up with Jonathan's studies' so that when she is 'married [she] shall be able to be useful to Jonathan' (p. 62). Mina does not, as Senf argues, have a 'career'.¹² Rather, Mina's role as secretary and typist become an extension of her wifely duties. Indeed, upon deciding to read Jonathan's journal, she writes:

I shall get my typewriter this very hour and begin transcribing. And if it be wanted; then, perhaps, if I am ready, poor Jonathan may not be upset, for I can speak for him and never let him be troubled or worried with it at all. (p. 192)

Mina believes that to be a good wife she must assume the role of her husband's secretary. Mina's conflation of her typing duties and her expected role as family nurturer is wrapped up in her belief that through her transcription of Jonathan's

⁸ Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, pp. 351, 199.

⁹ Jennifer Wicke, 'Vampiric Typewriting: *Dracula* and its Media', *ELH*, 59:2 (Summer 1992), pp. 467-92 (p. 467, emphasis in original).

¹⁰ Carol A. Senf, '*Dracula*: Stoker's Response to the New Woman', *Victorian Studies*, 26:1 (Autumn 1982), pp. 33-49 (p. 45).

¹¹ Bram Stoker, *Dracula* [1897], intro. by Maurice Hindle (London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 348, 376. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

¹² Senf, '*Dracula*: Stoker's Response to the New Woman', p. 35.

journal she can protect him from further danger and anxiety. It is in the figure of wife and secretary, then, that the sexual and the textual begin to converge, assembling perhaps most interestingly at the interstices of the woman and vampire.

These connections continue as we excavate the etymology of the word 'vamp'. To 'vamp' is to 'adapt, compile, compose, [or] put together a book [or] composition'.¹³ In assuming the role of typist and creator of the 'mass' of manuscript, Mina performs the act of vamping, or more precisely, vampirism itself (p. 402). When coupled with the second meaning of 'vamp', to 'behave seductively', Mina's vamping is further sexualised.¹⁴ Both meanings construct Mina as simultaneously a sexy compiler and an erotic consumer. Far from 'doing away with polar sexual difference' the typewriter eroticises the body of the female typist.¹⁵ This sexuality is inscribed by, and under, the male gaze and constructs female typists as 'beauties, threats to wives, and flirts'.¹⁶ At first glance, it appears to be Lucy who is presented as the sexually wanton and promiscuous female, declaring to Mina, 'why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her?' (p. 67). We are informed by Jonathan, however, at the close of the novel, that his and Mina's son's 'bundle of names links all [their] little band of men together' (p. 402). There is something strangely uneasy within this statement, as though the textual discourses of the 'band of men' that have circulated within Mina's body have resulted in an act of sexual reproduction (p. 402).

Critics have been keen to focus on the links between Mina as a typist and 'the feminization of the workplace'.¹⁷ Little has been made of the way in which the (albeit traditional) sexual focal point of the house, the bedroom, has been transformed in *Dracula* into a site of typewriting frenzy. Dr Seward writes in his diary: 'After lunch Harker and his wife went back to their own room, and as I passed a while ago I heard the click of the typewriter. They are hard at it' (p. 240). Whether Stoker intended the final sentence as a sexual pun or not, it certainly points to the act of typing as inextricably bound up with a discourse of erotics; sexual and textual reproduction become strangely interchangeable within the marital bedroom.

The bedroom becomes a location in which the male texts and discourses of the

¹³ 'vamp, v.1', *The Oxford English Dictionary*, online version March 2012 <http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2277/view/Entry/221290> [accessed April 2012].

¹⁴ 'vamp, v.3', *The Oxford English Dictionary*, online version March 2012 <http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2277/view/Entry/221292> [accessed April 2012].

¹⁵ Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, p. 351.

¹⁶ Carol Srole, "'A Blessing to Mankind, and Especially to Womankind': The Typewriter and the Feminization of Clerical Work, Boston, 1860-1920", in *Women, Work and Technology: Transformations*, ed. by Barbara Drygulski Wright (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1987), pp. 84-100 (pp. 94-95).

¹⁷ Jennifer L. Fleissner, 'Dictation Anxiety: The Stenographer's Stake in *Dracula*', in *Literary Secretaries/ Secretarial Culture*, ed. by Leah Price and Pamela Thurschwell (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 63-90 (p. 73).

group of vampire hunters permeate and circulate through Mina's mind and body. It is within the space of the bedroom, and in the role of the typist, that she simultaneously becomes both a consumer and producer of texts: both vampire victim and vampiric typist. When listening to Dr. Seward's phonograph, Mina consumes his 'grief' and reproduces his 'anguish[ed] [...] words on [her] typewriter' (p. 237). Mina and Jonathan's marital bed is hijacked by Dracula in one of the most overtly sexual and disturbing scenes of the novel. The very room in which sexual reproduction between husband and wife is legitimated, and where Mina textually reproduces, is selected as the room in which Dracula 'forc[es] [Mina's] face down on his bosom', causing a 'thin stream' of blood to trickle 'down the man's bare breast which was shown by his torn-open dress' (p. 300). This moment presents an inversion of assumed gender roles: Mina, as woman, 'drink[ing]' from the male breast of Dracula (p. 300). Mina is presented here as a corporeal entity that can be permeated by both male discourse and male blood.

Whilst it is the consumption of male discourses and Dracula's blood that render Mina a victim, she utilises both as mechanisms to save and "redeem" herself. Lucy's only definitive chance of safety and "redemption" is the circulation of male blood within her, but this method fails. For Mina to survive, however, she must consume the discourses of the men who surround her; the circulation of their texts within her serves to keep her alive. She realises that she will be "safer" with the group of men: not so much due to their physical protection, but because they will provide her with the discourses that she needs to consume, type and collate (p. 347). Essentially, she is only truly safe when she is, in a rather Lacanian sense, inscribed on and constructed by male discourses that she then circulates *within* her.¹⁸ Mina also utilises her consumption of Dracula's blood to aid her along her trajectory of survival, through becoming a medium. Mina asks Dr. Van Helsing to 'hypnotise' her, as she believes a telepathic link has been created through the exchange of fluids (p. 332).

By consuming Dracula's blood and seemingly rendering herself telepathic, Mina comes to embody certain depictions of woman as the unconscious consumer: she declares that she was in a 'half swoon' during her encounter with Dracula (p. 306). Mina's unconscious but dangerous consumption of Dracula's blood speaks to an emerging anxiety of the period which focuses on woman as a constant and avaricious consumer; an anxiety further illustrated by Mina's voracious devouring of all manner of male texts. Lucy behaves in a similar manner by deliriously, and almost constantly, consuming a variety of male blood that proves fatal. The sense of woman as unconscious consumer is also important, I would argue, in relation to Henry James's typist Theodora Bosanquet's notion of typewriting being 'the business of

¹⁸ See Jacques Lacan, 'The Circuit', in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. by Sylvania Tomaselli (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1988), pp. 77-90.

acting as a medium between the spoken and the typewritten word'.¹⁹ The word 'medium' links the typist and telegraphist with unconscious communication, and the possibility of the machine with which they work dislocating the self, or 'I', from the physical act of writing. Such issues construct a dichotomous position for the telegraphist and typist: should such female workers be responsive authors, who engage with the substance of the words they type or translate? Or, conversely, should they convert mind and body into an extension of the machine, thus becoming a hybrid of human and machine?

Bosanquet writes that James bemoaned his 'previous amanuenses' for 'their apparent lack of comprehension of what [he] was driving at'.²⁰ James clearly desired a typist who would engage with the substance of his words, rather than one who became a passive vessel for his prose. Stoker's Mina appears to veer between two such positions. In one instance, she transcribes Jonathan's journal, which includes her husband's revelation of his 'burning desire' that the three female vampires should 'kiss [him] with [their] red lips' at Castle Dracula (p. 45). Mina makes no mention of this, only desiring that she may 'comfort him' if he ever 'gets over his nervousness' (p. 192). She seems either to have ignored the 'confession' or, more interestingly, she remains unaffected by it. Perhaps this is an instance in which Stoker misreads Mina's emotions within her simultaneous roles of wife, transcriber, reader and typist. However, if we read this moment as Mina's emotionally distanced method of transcription, this would seemingly point to the dislocation between the eyes and the mind from the hands and the typewriter. In another instance, however, Mina is presented as 'more than touched by [Dr. Seward's] grief' as she transposes his oral account of Lucy's death onto the typed page. She also adds that through the 'wonderful machine' of the phonograph she hears the doctor's 'heart beat' (p. 237). Here Mina indicates she is clearly influenced by Dr. Seward's narrative and is presented as an affected transcriber of a male text. *In the Cage* complicates such a dichotomy even further, in that 'our young lady', the telegraphist, is simultaneously knowing and un-knowing: both an active author and a passive body within the theatre of her workplace.²¹

Linkages between the sexual and the textual emerge repeatedly within James's novella. The telegraphist is literally caged 'in framed and wired confinement' and under the gaze of both her male co-workers and customers (p. 9). Her sole 'function' is to serve customers, in processing and circulating their words (p. 9). The economies of sex and text are united within the confines of the protagonist's duties as a telegraphist:

¹⁹ Theodora Bosanquet, *Henry James at Work* (London: Hogarth Press, 1924), pp. 6-7.

²⁰ Leon Edel, *Henry James: The Master 1901-1916* (London: Avon Books, 1972), p. 363.

²¹ Henry James, *In the Cage and Other Stories* [1898], intro. by S. Gorley Putt (Middlesex: Penguin, 1972), p. 96. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.

And here it occurred, oddly enough, that if, shortly before, the girl's interest in [Everard's] companion had sharpened her sense for the messages then transmitted, her immediate vision of himself had the effect, while she counted his seventy words, of preventing intelligibility. (p. 17)

We are never quite certain as to whether her sexual interest in Captain Everard (and possibly his lover, Lady Bradeen) originates from her curiosity over his textual transmissions, or whether her increasingly obsessive inquisitiveness about his telegrams is a result of her attraction to him. Nonetheless, the way in which she transcribes Everard's messages is laden with distinctly sexual overtones: 'She indeed felt her progressive pencil, dabbing as if with a quick caress the marks of his own, put life into every stroke' (p. 18). The act of writing and the inscribed marks themselves become sexualised here, with the use of words such as 'caress' and 'stroke'. Her customers purchase both words and the ability to transmit them. She, in effecting this transaction, becomes intrinsically bound up within what Wicke has termed 'the erotics of knowledge.'²² The telegraphist becomes part of the circulation of capital and words, and thus a hint towards prostitution is forged. Indeed, when the heroine meets with Everard on the park bench, the narrator notes that she sits with a 'heap of gold in her lap' (p. 55). Their conversation is described as 'bargaining' (p. 61), whilst elsewhere, we see that their 'relationship' consist of 'transactions' (p. 77). Another meaning of the word 'medium' becomes relevant here, in its use within financial trading systems and the circulation of money.²³ If the telegraphist's role involves mediating text between customers, she also becomes caught up within networks of financial exchange.

Knowledge becomes a marketable product, circulated and withheld, as well as contained within the body of the telegraphist. Her knowledge of Everard becomes information capital, which in turn becomes eroticised via the hints of prostitution implicit in such transactions. Pamela Thurschwell argues that a potential economic or sexual relationship between the heroine and Everard is 'replac[ed]' by 'a sense of intimacy which springs from her knowledge of [him]': producing a desire in her, 'not for sexual contact but to do something for him [...] by means of sending or receiving information.'²⁴ Thurschwell's use of the word 'replace' here seems to discount the notion that knowledge, information and sex are inextricably enmeshed. To put it slightly differently, knowledge and sex can alternatively, and perhaps more convincingly, be constructed as at interplay with each other, rather than one replacing

²² Jennifer Wicke, 'Henry James's "Second Wave"', *The Henry James Review*, 10:2 (Spring 1989), pp. 146-51 (p. 147).

²³ 'medium, n. and adj.', *The Oxford English Dictionary*, online version March 2012 <http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2277/view/Entry/115772> [accessed April 2012].

²⁴ Pamela Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 98.

the other, as Thurschwell reads it.

The telegraphist herself acknowledges that ‘the harmless pleasure of knowing’ is what she ‘get[s] out of’ her aiding Everard (p. 62). Her conflation of pleasure and knowledge is telling here, as is the way in which she speaks those words in her conversation with Everard on the park bench. The exchange becomes a flirtatious encounter, with her declaring “‘I know, I know, I know!’” whilst ‘breath[ing] it ever so gently’ (p. 62). Furthermore, her revelation that knowing that Everard realises she is helping him has endowed her with a knowledge, “‘that has been for [her] as if there were something [...] between us’” (p. 57). This is followed by ‘a movement that has the result’ of Everard ‘placing his hand on her own’, whilst at the same moment she is thinking about ‘a satin sofa in a boudoir’ (p. 58). The fact that she has ‘never seen a boudoir, but there had been lots of boudoirs in the telegrams’ further illustrates the complicated intertwining of sexual knowledge and her roles as a telegraphist and medium (p. 58). We see that she acquires a great deal of her sexual knowledge whilst being confined in the telegraph cage. This speaks to the relationship between the passive and active female worker and “author”.

Seemingly, the novella’s heroine is far from passive, as she constantly attempts to construct a coherent narrative from the various telegrams she fields between Everard and his lover. She continually remembers minute details to aid the lovers as they despatch their telegrams, believing she ‘[holds] the whole thing in her hand’ (p. 83). Just as Mina’s collating and typing of documents leads to the destruction of the vampire, so too does James’s heroine save the day, as she ‘obligingly complete[s]’ the number code for Everard, thus prompting his realisation that he and his lover are safe from exposure (p. 86). With both *Dracula* and *In the Cage*, we can read the typist and telegraphist as unexpected authors. Indeed, Michel Foucault describes ‘writing [as] unfold[ing] like a game’.²⁵ The narrator of *In the Cage* constantly presents the heroine’s relationships with the telegrams and Everard as such, with even Mr Buckton enquiring ‘what game’ she is playing (p. 87). Foucault also sees writing as becoming ‘linked to sacrifice, even to the sacrifice of life’.²⁶ The heroine regards her relationship with Everard in the context of such sacrifice, declaring she would ‘do anything’ for the man (p. 58), telling her fiancé, Mr Mudge, that she ‘must just keep on as long as [Everard] may want [her]’ (p. 68). She refuses to move to Chalk Farm or to get married to Mr Mudge until the narrative is complete. In such a sacrifice of her own life’s journey, she believes the narrative she is constructing through the telegrams of Everard and his lover ‘beat[s] every novel in the shop’ (p. 43).

The telegraphist as author is, however, further problematised as she is, like Mina, placed in a position of information quarantine. Yet Mina’s position is more consensual, given that she initially believes her lack of knowledge is her safety. The

²⁵ Michel Foucault, ‘What is an Author?’ [1984], in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rainbow (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 101-8 (p. 102).

²⁶ Foucault, ‘What is an Author?’, p. 102.

heroine of *In The Cage* meanwhile '[feels] how much she [has] missed in the gaps and blanks and absent answers - how much she had had to dispense with' (p. 82). Not only is she missing a great many pieces of the textual narrative she attempts to collate but, at times, her body is gazed upon as, and described as little more than, an automaton attached to the machinery of telegraphy. Early in the novella the narrator tells us that, in the course of her working day, the telegraphist is:

Equally unconscious and unerring in each of [the] particulars, and not, as the run on the little office thickened with the afternoon hours, looking up at a single ugly face in the long sequence, nor really hearing the stupid questions that she patiently and perfectly answered. (p. 18)

This episode seems to point towards the telegraphist as an unconscious mediator between the customer and language. She interacts 'unconscious[ly]' and does not need to listen to her customers in order to perform her duties (p. 18). In this sense then, she becomes a medium; an unknowing and passive vessel for the discourses that circulate around her mind and body.

Such an episode also points to wider anxieties concerning the relationship between the female worker and the machine. For instance, the very word 'typewriter' speaks of both the machine and its operator. At the beginning of the twentieth century, female typists were encouraged to read various typewriting manuals, one of which was published by Remington for the Stenographic Efficiency Bureau. This manual includes the chapter entitled 'Making Your Body an Efficient Machine'.²⁷ Similarly, the methods that many companies marketing the typewriter employed implied that the machine was not complete without a (specifically) female typist. The novella's narrator highlights this link between body and machine by remarking that the 'memorable lady [...] pushed in three bescribbled forms which the girl's hand was quick to appropriate' (p. 13). Under the gaze of Lady Bradeen, the protagonist is reduced to a single body part: her hand. In the sphere of typewriting and telegraphy the hand becomes an important visual signifier that links the machine and the female body. Such a positioning also situates the hand in an increasingly liminal space, as it allows it to exist within both the realm of the female body and the machine or, alternatively, neither.

The marked and complex relationship between the female body and her machine was not solely reserved for the didactic literature aimed at typists who wished to enhance their abilities; as the role of female typists rose to prominence, so too did the market of 'typewriter erotica'.²⁸ This niche area of erotica features photos

²⁷ Cited in Fleissner, 'Dictation Anxiety: The Stenographer's Stake in *Dracula*', p. 68.

²⁸ Paul Robert's website contains a number of these pictures, see Paul Robert, *The Virtual Typewriter Museum*, 2001 <http://www.typewritermuseum.org/index.html> [accessed September 2011]. Paul Robert's book *Sexy Legs and Typewriters* (Netherlands: The Virtual Typewriter

which range from a typist's bare ankle, seductively strewn across her writing machine to naked models with their typewriters. Many pictures depict the typist as having some form of a sexual encounter with her (male) employer, in which their proximity to the typewriter seemingly adds a further dimension of allure. These images serve to remind the viewer of the fundamental role of the female typist; most obviously, that she is part of an erotic performance within the workplace. Indeed, Kittler remarks that 'typewriter keyboards' are 'derived from pianos': speaking to the idea that, in earlier periods, women were invited to display their femininity and charm through performing a piano recital for an audience of family and guests.²⁹ Both piano and typewriter offer the female participant the chance to perform her femininity and sexuality. They also render the woman's body and sexuality inextricably bound up with her instrument or machine; the machine cannot function without its female worker, but how can the typist work without her machine? Each seemingly gives the other its sexuality, its allure and its essence of desire.

The complexities of the relationship between the female body and the writing machine connote wider and prevalent anxieties about women in the workplace during the fin de siècle. That is to say, if women are working and textually reproducing, then they are likely not to be fulfilling their "natural" reproductive function. *Dracula* and *In the Cage* both mediate the notion, albeit to varying extents, that sexual reproduction must replace textual reproduction. Indeed, many commentators saw clerical work as preparing women for the sphere of domesticity and motherhood. The majority of female clerical workers followed the common trajectory of only working until they were married (the law, as discussed above, prevented women from secretarial and clerical labour once they were married). An 1891 magazine article about female clerical workers highlights this intended narrative for a woman's life, when it declares that 'the [clerical] girls make good wives'.³⁰

Both Mina and the protagonist of *In the Cage* save the day. Mina's typing leads to the destruction of Dracula, whilst the telegraphist aids Everard in his search for the intercepted telegram. It would seem though, much more is at stake. As Fleissner points out, 'the fruit of [Mina's] womb constitutes an appropriate substitute' for the 'mass of typewriting' (p. 402).³¹ Indeed, Dracula must be killed, not only for the physical safety of those hunting him down, but because he allows Mina to access a form of female sexuality that is outside of the strict sexual code of the society she inhabits. This occurs both explicitly, through Mina's and Dracula's bodily and telepathic encounters, and in other ways, such as through her secretarial work. All point towards the way in which Dracula has instigated Mina's vampiric sexuality,

Museum, 2003) brings together a further assortment of images related to this topic.

²⁹ Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 195.

³⁰ Qtd. in Fleissner, 'The Stenographer's Stake in *Dracula*', p. 70.

³¹ Fleissner, 'The Stenographer's Stake in *Dracula*', p. 84.

which is brought to the fore when she connects with her erotic unconscious and we see her in a ‘half swoon’ on the marital bed with Dracula (p. 306). Significantly, Dr. Van Helsing’s attempt to keep Mina safe from Dracula by ‘touching a piece of Sacred Wafer [...] on her forehead’ results in it being ‘burned into [her] flesh’, due to her previous encounter with the vampire (pp. 315-16). The shame she is conjured into feeling, indicated by her screams of ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ may represent the figurative disgrace and guilt she should be experiencing because of her excessive and explicit displays of sexuality; a sexuality, in fact, that has nothing to do with female reproduction (p. 316).

The patriarchal metanarratives of authority, such as medicine and the law, embodied by both Dr. Van Helsing and her husband, constantly warn Mina of the dangers of transgressing the established boundaries of female sexuality and labour. When Dr. Van Helsing declares that Mina should ‘say goodbye to this work’ he tellingly adds: ‘Besides, [Mina] is a young woman and not so long married; there may be other things to think of some time, if not now’ (p. 250). Whilst Mina’s stitching together of the narrative patchwork saves everyone involved, not least herself, if she wishes to remain within the rigid boundaries of accepted female sexuality it is made abundantly clear that her continued textual labour must stop. Her erstwhile vampiric sexuality is presented as an excess productive of nothing but text. Once Dracula is staked these excesses will vanish along with him, for there will be nothing more to write about and Mina will be expected to follow the customary trajectory of sexual reproduction.

Similarly, following James’s heroine’s success in aiding Everard, she decides that she must begin her “natural” function of wife, and perhaps in time, mother, revealing that she wishes to begin her domestic career ‘not [...] next month, but [...] next week’ (p. 101). Whilst both women rescue men, they are eventually shown to have also retained inherently masculine inscriptions on their bodies; inscriptions that propagate and normalise the idea that women’s “natural” function is to inhabit the domestic sphere and to give birth, not to type or write. Such a reading of *Dracula* and *In the Cage* debunks Kittler’s myth that ‘the typewriter brought about [...] a completely new order of things’, and that the emergence of the machine prompted a solely emancipatory possibility for the female worker.³² Instead, both texts reveal the typewriter and the telegraph as aids to the distinctly masculine modern world, which circulates and inscribes itself both within and upon the female body.

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³² Kittler, *Discourse Networks*, pp. 351-52.

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