

THE KISS OF DEATH:
A DEMYSTIFICATION OF THE LATE-NINETEENTH CENTURY
'FEMME FATALE' IN THE SELECTED WORKS OF BRAM STOKER,
RIDER HAGGARD, JOSEPH CONRAD AND THOMAS HARDY

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For Roger, Anne-Marie and Jacob.



Philip Burne-Jones, 'The Vampire' (ca.1897).

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DECLARATION

An earlier version of part of the chapter on Rider Haggard has been published in Feminist Review 32 (1989) as 'The Dark Continent: African Landscape as Female Body in Haggard's Adventure Fiction'.

ABSTRACT

The thesis takes its beginnings from the work of Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony and from Michel Foucault's The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1. Praz has argued that the construction of the 'femme fatale' as a recognizable type is a phenomenon of the late nineteenth century. Foucault proposes that the nineteenth century is characterised not by a repression of sexual discourses but by a multiplication of centres from which such discourses are produced. The thesis places the 'femme fatale' in the socio-historical context of the 90s and searches both for the plurality of discourses mobilised to define her, and for her presence in other non-literary discourses of the period such as those of evolutionary theory, craniology, criminology and imperialist discourses. It locates this figure in a wide range of contexts: late nineteenth-century debates about female sexuality, biological determinism, theories of decadence and degeneration, invasion anxieties and the censorship debate. It juxtaposes two 'popular' novelists (Stoker and Haggard) with two 'major' novelists (Conrad and Hardy) to demonstrate that the particular discourses mobilised to describe the 'femme fatale' are to be found in works of differing literary 'quality' and in different literary genres.

Chapter One examines the representation of the female vampires in Bram Stoker's Dracula in the context of Foucauldian theory about the production of sexual discourses in medicine and science in this period. These 'sexualised' women are contagious and must be annihilated.

Chapter Two explores the conflation of sexual and imperialist discourses in Rider Haggard's adventure fiction, particularly in She and King Solomon's Mines. Ayesha is an invading sexual being and her 'death' in the flames can be seen as a 'devolution' into a 'monkey woman': an unveiling. This chapter also examines the other female 'missing links' of Haggard's fiction.

Chapter Three continues the exploration of sexual and imperialist discourses, here in the early novels of Conrad: Almayer's Folly and An Outcast of the Islands, in particular. It explores the way in which Conrad's native women merge into jungle landscapes and into twilight; they signify the threatening 'otherness' of the jungle and of language. This chapter concludes with an examination of Winnie Verloc of the Secret Agent as female murderess and as 'free woman'.

Chapter Four focuses on Hardy's Tess as victim and as murderess. It proposes a reading of Tess of the d'Urbervilles as a response to the enforced censorship of the text (Tess) expressed via the moral censure and execution of Tess.

A short theoretical Afterword draws on feminist theory and Derridean analysis of phallogentrism to propose that the 'femme fatale' of this period is a sign signifying a multiple or conflated 'otherness': a multiplicity of cultural anxieties.

INTRODUCTION

there is no such thing as sexuality; what we have experienced and are experiencing is the fabrication of a 'sexuality', the construction of something called 'sexuality' through a set of representations - images, discourses, ways of picturing and describing - that propose and confirm, that make up this sexuality to which we are then referred and held in our lives, a whole sexual fix precisely... not a liberation but a myth, an ideology, the definition of a new mode of conformity...
(Stephen Heath, The Sexual Fix¹)

1. Beginnings

The questions from which this thesis has grown arose from a particularly unusual (and random) combination of texts: Mario Praz's The Romantic Agony² and Michel Foucault's The History of Sexuality, Vol.1³. I shall begin, then, by outlining the principal arguments of these works to indicate the unresolved questions within them to which this thesis is, in part, addressed.

Praz's work proposes that in the nineteenth century literary text, or more specifically European poetry and fiction, can be traced a shift from a preoccupation in the first half of the nineteenth century with the l'homme fatal (the Byronic seducer) to a preoccupation with the 'femme fatale' in the second half of the century. The 'femme fatale' type can, of course, he admits, be found in the earlier nineteenth century, and indeed throughout literary periods and genres, but, he argues, she is only formulated as a clear and recognizable 'type' in the late nineteenth century:

During the first stage of Romanticism, up till about the middle of the nineteenth century, we meet with several Fatal Women in literature, but there is no established type of Fatal Woman in the way that there is an established type of Byronic hero.

(Praz, The Romantic Agony, p.191)

He uses an interesting metaphor to describe the effects of this type:

the function of the flame which attracts and burns is exercised, in the first half of the century, by the Fatal Man (the Byronic hero) in the second half by the Fatal Woman; the moth destined for sacrifice is in the first case the woman, in the second the man... The male, who at first tends towards sadism, inclines, at the end of the century towards masochism. (The Romantic Agony, p.206)

The pattern is repeated, as we might expect, in the gender of the vampire figure:

We shall see how in the second half of the nineteenth century the vampire becomes a woman... but in the first part of the century the fatal, cruel lover is invariably a man. (The Romantic Agony, p.77)

The triple shift: from Fatal Man to Fatal Woman, from masculine expressions of sadism to those of masochism and from male vampire to female vampire. Furthermore Praz sees the peak of this development to be the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Praz's work is wide-ranging (he covers a huge range of European literature) and scholarly, but his methodology is limited. The emphasis is on breadth rather than depth. More importantly he does not attempt to answer or even propose the question of why this shift should occur and follow this pattern. His aim, he insists, is to 'trace the course of certain currents' (The Romantic Agony, p.xvi):

if, therefore, the history of ideas or ideals during the nineteenth century constitutes a necessary frame for the picture I have painted, it is a part which completes, rather than conditions, the whole; there was no obligation for me to examine it afresh, nor to deal with phenomena of other kinds, which in any case have been fully discussed by others. (The Romantic Agony, p.xiv)

Secondly, Foucault's work, The History of Sexuality, Vol.1, although of an entirely different kind, takes as its starting point a proposition which achieves consensus with Praz's beginnings:

In no other literary period, I think, has sex been so obviously the mainspring of works of the imagination.
(Praz, The Romantic Agony, p.xii)

Foucault argues that although the received view of the nineteenth century is one of sexual repression, censorship and prohibition (what he terms 'The Repressive Hypothesis') these mechanisms of prohibition functioned rather to incite sexual discourses rather than to silence them. I will deal with Foucault's work only briefly here as there is a much fuller account in Chapter One. He argues also that what is produced is not merely sexual discourse but many sexual discourses, corresponding to the multiple mechanisms which acted to produce discourses (in the areas of medicine, justice, pedagogy, science) in the nineteenth century:

We are dealing less with a discourse on sex than with a multiplicity of discourses produced by a whole series of mechanisms operating in different institutions.
(The History of Sexuality, p.33)

For Foucault, as is implied in the above passage, the production of sexual discourses is not centralized but dispersed. Power to produce such discourses comes from everywhere:

power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in society.
(The History of Sexuality, p.93)

Foucault's work is arguably the most important text in its field. It has influenced and informed a variety of twentieth-century studies of the cultural construction of 'sexuality' from Stephen Heath's The

Sexual Fix⁴ (1982) to detailed studies of the representation of sexuality in fiction. Critics, however, have not found the work unproblematic. Feminist critics in particular, whilst acknowledging the importance of his work and of its analysis of the construction of sexuality, have taken issue with the lack of gender analysis in its formulations. Lynda Nead⁵ is one such critic:

The most serious problem of The History of Sexuality is the absence of any differentiation between male and female sexualities. Within dominant sexual codes the definition of sexuality was and still is gender specific.
(Myths of Sexuality, p.5)

It was the conjunction of these two analyses of nineteenth-century 'sexuality' that began this investigation: that the late nineteenth century is characterised by the rise of the (vampiric) 'femme fatale' (the seductive, threatening, sexually assertive woman) and that the same period saw the multiplication of mechanisms (in science, pedagogy, psychiatry, medicine and criminal justice) for producing (not repressing) sexual discourses, an attempt to classify and to institutionalize such discourses:

an immense verbosity is what our civilisation has required and organized (Foucault, The History Of Sexuality, p.33).
a regulated and polymorphous incitement to discourse.
(Foucault, p.34)

The location of this thesis, then, can be said to reside somewhere in the void between these two works and the questions it addresses are those which fall into this gap and in the unresolved issues of the individual works. It addresses lack: the lack of socio-historical analysis in Praz's work and the lack of gender

specificity in Foucault. My method was to draw together a small number of late nineteenth-century, male-authored, British novels which represent the 'femme fatale' or rather in my analysis, a female 'type' who can be seen to bear a 'sexuality' considered 'problematic' to and/or by men, and to investigate the discourses mobilized by the individual texts to define her. The texts were deliberately chosen to cross genre boundaries and to cross boundaries of what are considered to be 'high' and 'low' art.

Furthermore, I use the term 'femme fatale' to denote a fictional 'type' who is often sexually assertive, but most often to denote a fictional type who is the cause of a particular effect upon men, bringing atrophy, physical and moral degeneration, death or associations of death and stimulating male sexual anxieties. In this sense the 'femme fatale' can be cross-class, she crosses boundaries of 'type' classification: she can be prostitute, man-hunting aristocrat, vampire, native (black) woman, or murderess.

2. Location

The decision to study texts and discourses primarily of the 1890s (although other works written slightly outside this period have been included) was for a number of reasons. Whilst a historical overview of this decade would be impossible (and unwarranted) to formulate at this point, there are certain characteristics and preoccupations of this period which I would like to draw attention to here:

'Sexuality', as Stephen Heath⁶ has observed, is a nineteenth-century word. More importantly its first usage in a recognizably modern sense (meaning 'possession of sexual powers or capability of sexual feelings', O.E.D.) is dated 1889 and is found in a sentence from Clinical Lectures on the Diseases of Women by the physician James Matthews Duncan:

in removing the ovaries you do not necessarily destroy sexuality in a woman. (quoted Heath, The Sexual Fix, p.7)

The word appears, then, in medical discourse and involves a (problematic) female sexuality. The date 'registers an historical moment and the context of a new awareness' (Heath, The Sexual Fix, p.11). It appears for the first time on the threshold of the 1890s.

Foucault, too, sees the last decades of the nineteenth century as playing a significant part in the construction of 'sexuality' (and it is unusual for Foucault to be historically specific). He states that in this period there was:

a development of the judicial and medical control of perversions, for the sake of a general protection of society and race
(The History of Sexuality, p.122)

(Presumably Foucault is alluding to the Wilde case here - 1895 - the medical and judicial systems combine to condemn Wilde's 'perversion': homosexuality.) and more specifically that:

It can be said that this was the moment when the deployment of 'sexuality', elaborated in its more complex and intense forms, by and for the privileged classes, spread through the entire social body. (The History of Sexuality, p.122)

Jeffrey Weeks, a social historian, suggests in Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800⁷, that:

a new mood is detectable from the 1880s and 1890s, and 1895 is a particularly symbolic year because the reaction to Wilde's downfall was indicative of the new mode in public discourse. (Weeks, p.92)

This period, he points out, witnessed a series of public causes and scandals: the campaigns against the Contagious Diseases Acts, the leniency to high-class 'madams', the White Slave Trade scandal (1885), the divorce of Sir Charles Dilke (1886) and of Parnell (1890) and the scandals of the Cleveland Street homosexual brothel (involving the son of the Prince of Wales) and the Tanby Croft gambling scandal (involving the Prince of Wales). Moral purity, a metaphor for a stable society, Weeks adds, was profoundly shaken by such events.

The notion that the period between the campaigns against the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1886 and the rise of militant suffragism in the early twentieth century was a period of feminist quiescence has been recently refuted by Lucy Bland⁸. She demonstrates that this period heard an 'increasingly voiced demand for a woman's right over her own body'. 1897 saw the amalgamation of different suffrage societies under the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. A suffrage bill, Bland points out, looked close to victory in 1892 and again in 1897. The 'New Woman' novel came into its own in this period. Sarah Grand is said to have invented the term 'New Woman' in an article of 1894 defined as women who were entering higher education and new areas of employment. The word 'feminism' too,

arrived in England from France in 1895. The main thrust of the Women's Movement in this period was a demand for change in male sexual behaviour, the spectre of bestial male sexuality brought into public consciousness by the revelations of the White Slave Trade articles of 1885. The demands of the Women's Movement came increasingly to be articulated in the 'New Woman' fiction of the 90s (which sold in millions) and moreover as Bland observes:

the 'new woman' novel was spot-lighting a host of horrors lurking behind the veneer of marital respectability
(Equal or Different, p.151)

(the double standard, venereal disease, incessant child-bearing and non-consensual sex).

This period saw also the 'founding of learned societies, journals, and academic institutions for medicine, anthropology, geography and linguistic studies' as Joanna de Groot⁹ has shown, concentrating on the study of human characteristics, differences or cultures and bringing them firmly into the area of science, rationalism and professional expertise. The various sciences of Darwinism, craniology, criminology and anthropology were powerful and well-published in this period, fixing racial and gender characteristics, defining anybody resisting their consigned place as abnormal and unnatural. The same, of course, was characteristic in medicine (with the entry of the sexual into the medical domain) for as Foucault has shown the late nineteenth century saw a multiple 'implantation of perversions' (The History of Sexuality, p.37): a clear and indisputable separation of the normal from the abnormal. It was a period, then, for all the reasons outlined above, that in the areas

of science and rationality, was obsessed with gender and racial classification of all kinds, urgently seeking a hierarchical definition of superior/ inferior races and, in medicine, the definition of normal and abnormal sexualities; in Foucauldian terms what we are witnessing is a process engaged not in stamping out illicit sexuality but producing and regulating it.

Degeneration was, too, an increasing preoccupation of the late nineteenth century. E. Ray Lancaster's Degeneration, published in 1880, argued that some species represented not advanced versions of their earlier selves but atrophied forms of higher species, atrophy being defined as:

a gradual change in the structure, in which the organism becomes adapted to less complex and more varied conditions¹⁰.

From this position, Jenny Bourne Taylor adds, Lancaster argued that the 'unfit' could flourish in a degraded environment in ever increasing numbers, above all in the 'residuum' expanding at the heart of London's 'nether world'. Indeed both Taylor and Greenslade¹¹ propose that this period produced a discourse of degeneration easily assimilated into biological, psychological and social theory. Max Nordau's Degeneration¹², published in English translation in 1895, took the discourse of degeneration further, taking as its focus decadent European literature and concluding that the writer of such texts could only be classified as of degenerate type. The definition of the degenerate type was, of course, a means to classify abnormality or perverseness, a means to enforce prescriptive normality. Degeneration becomes a means to define

abnormalities of all kinds (criminal, prostitute, aesthete, decadent artist) and inversely a means to articulate the imagined spread of degenerate characteristics threatening moral purity and moral stability. Moreover, as Boumelha¹³ argues:

The spectre of 'degeneration' - a concept given particular prominence in and after Max Nordau's Degeneration (translated in 1895) - was an effective threat to hold over feminists who could not predict with 'scientific' certainty the effects of higher education or the vote upon the physiology of future generations... This kind of sociobiology, with its direct and unmediated connection between zoology and politics, dominated the sexual ideology of the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

(Thomas Hardy and Women, p.22)

Christian morality gives way to the 'incontrovertible authority' (Boumelha, p.24) of biological law.

As Foucault and Heath would remind us there is no such thing as a given sexuality, only an historical and cultural construction of 'sexuality'. It is this fabrication of sexuality in the multiplying areas of the production of discourse in this period that we are witnessing. The debates on sexuality and female sexuality (normal and abnormal, safe for men and threatening to men) were very much in circulation in the 90s, a period haunted by fears of cultural degeneration, anxieties about empire and the decline of empire and preoccupations with moral purity and its definition, as Lynda Nead¹⁴ has put it:

It is surely significant that the language of moral and dynastic degeneration is the same: decline and fall; the terms plot both a moral and an imperial narrative and a fall from virtue can symbolize the end of an empire.

(Myths of Sexuality, p.94)

3. Structure

The thesis is clearly organized into four chapters each dealing primarily with one central text and other writing by the same author where relevant. It begins with 'popular' texts of the period (written by Bram Stoker and Rider Haggard) and is followed by two 'major' texts (written by Joseph Conrad and Thomas Hardy).

The thesis is structured in this way to bring out a particular thematic pattern which emerged in the research for this period. Stoker's Dracula seemed an appropriate beginning, illustrating as it does Praz's contention that the gender of the fictional vampire undergoes a change in the late nineteenth century. The anxiety about the invasion of the vampire woman articulated in Dracula is followed by an analysis of the other great fictional female invader of the 90s: Rider Haggard's She (a white African queen plans her invasion of Europe from the centre of deepest and most impenetrable Africa). This chapter inevitably involves an analysis of racial and imperial discourse of the period and of masculine fears of bestial and powerful sexual impulses projected both onto Africa itself and the figure of woman. Chapter Three moves into an exploration of Conradian texts similarly dealing with male imperialist responses both to Africa and to the Orient and to the problematic (sexual), native woman. It examines the 'otherness' both of landscape, woman and ultimately language itself. Chapter Three concludes with a somewhat later Conrad novel of 1907, The Secret Agent, to make links between Conrad's representation of the native woman and Winnie

Verloc (a move from the jungle to the heart of the London underworld), the murderess of The Secret Agent. Chapter Four moves from the Conradian murderess to the Hardyean murderess - Tess - to link the two types: both are forced to make sexual contracts and finally to murder when these contacts are broken, to murder to 'free' themselves from economic dependency on men and the exploitation of men. Thus the thesis is organised 'thematically' rather than chronologically. My aim was to search for patterns rather than literary developments in this decade and to use these patterns to explore the multiple discourses of female sexuality in other non-literary fields.

The decision to organise the thesis into pairs ('popular' and 'major' texts) was not to inscribe these critical classifications of literature (the Great Tradition), but to challenge them. The effect will be I hope not to demonstrate homogeneity between high and low art or to level these texts by means of socio-historical analysis; it will not ~~seek to~~ prove that these texts are in effect one text (a composite cultural document), but its opposite: that in the Foucauldian sense of a multiplication of mechanisms producing sexual discourses in this period, literary texts of all genres play an important part in the inscription, production, reproduction and questioning of an infinite number of historical and cultural ideologies.

My aim was not to centre the chapters around authors but around texts; the chapters are text-centred rather than author-centred. In

a post-structuralist age, an age in which Barthes has announced the death of the author¹⁵ he also warns of the tendency to close texts in this way:

Once the author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile. To give a text an author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing. ('The Death of the Author', p.147)

The aim of this thesis is not to close these texts, but to open them up, to reveal the multiplicity of discourses, to show by following 'patterns' that individual texts sealed by the attribution of an author, in effect run over these boundaries, interact with each other and with other non-literary discourses of the period.

The boundaries of the thesis have excluded many other important writers of the 'femme fatale', the writers of the decadence for instance. To open up the range of the thesis to include these other writers would, of course, have been a different project entirely and would, to some extent have been covering ground already examined by other works such as Joseph Claybourne Nunnally's thesis, 'The Victorian "Femme Fatale": Mirror of the Decadent Temperament'¹⁶ and indeed Praz's work. The investigation of literary works of this kind and the analysis of sexual discourses of the period outside literary works, necessitated a systematic and close reading of the material involved. My arguments are therefore not absolute but, I hope, suggestive of the ways that sexual discourses and debates of the period interact within the texts themselves and with non-literary texts of different kinds. It was to avoid the 'tracing of certain currents', the methodology of Praz's work, and to disentangle the

complexities of the texts themselves and their relation to the sexuality debates of the 90s that the thesis is constructed in this way.

4. Methodology

In the multiplicity of writing... everything is to be disentangled, nothing deciphered...
(Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', p.147)

Barthes' words and the post-structuralist poetics behind it, inform the entire methodology and approach of this thesis. My aim, as I have stated, is not to furnish a final signified, nor to close these texts, but to open up new channels of interaction between literature and ideology and to reveal the multiplicity of languages and discourses mobilized to speak about sex and about the sexual woman. I am searching for plurality not closure.

As Nelly Furman has observed in 'The Politics of Language: Beyond the Gender Principle?'¹⁷ :

In the last few years, however, critical approaches influenced by structuralism and deconstruction have challenged the view that language is a stable, predictable medium, and have put into question the notion that writing merely 'represents' speech, thought or experience. Language, from a post-structuralist position, is not an empirical object but a structuring process; and questions concerning women and literature will be broached differently according to whether we apprehend language as a stable medium or a continuous process. ('The Politics of Language', p.64)

And later:

in a post-structuralist world there is no place that is conceivable outside culture and safe from its ideology. (p.74)

It is from this position that the thesis takes its methodological beginnings. It is from a conception of literature, not as a reflection of 'real life' or ideology, but as one of the mechanisms which not only reinforce ideology but inscribe and produce it:

literature does more than transmit ideology; it actually creates it - it is a 'mediating, moulding force in society'¹⁸.

There have been many recent attempts to define ideology and its effects¹⁹, most taking as their framework Althusser's formulation²⁰. Of these definitions my use of the term ideology in this study concurs most closely with Boumelha's summary²¹ which I quote below:

[ideology] will be used in the sense made familiar by Althusser and some subsequent marxist theorists: that is a complex system of representations by which people are inserted as individual subjects into the social formation...

But ideology is not a homogenous and overarching unity which is somehow imposed upon a passive or acquiescent working class or female sex. Such categories are themselves constituted in ideology. There is, at any historical moment and in any domain of discourse, at least the possibility of a number of ideologies that may stand in contradiction or even conflict with one another, and it is in the interrogation of these contradictions within and between ideologies that there inheres the possibility of change, as the primacy of the unified subject is unsettled by their evident partiality.

(Thomas Hardy and Women, p.5)

To accept the proposition that literature both inscribes and moulds ideology as the basis for the investigation of certain texts of a specific period necessitates an appropriate methodology. The Introduction to the recent work Sexuality and Subordination²², addresses the same methodological problematic. Given, the authors state, an acceptance of Foucault's notion of the 'multiplicity of

discourses about sex':

By adopting a multidisciplinary approach we hope to reveal this multiplicity: to show how, in different contexts (religious, philosophical, literary, medical). different languages of sexuality operated. (Sexuality and Subordination, p.1)

It was with the aim of maintaining the multiplicity of writing and of discourses that this thesis began: to resist closure and to resist reduction or simplification. The aim is, to use Barthes' phrase, to disentangle such discourses as might be identified in certain texts, rather than to decipher them. The thesis avoids, then, separation of chapters into convenient thematic unities, but as far as possible to begin solely with the texts themselves and to disentangle the discourses articulated within them, to identify the articulation and questioning of collective social and cultural structures. This, I repeat, is the result of the need to leave the texts intact and interacting, not to separate parts of texts into parts of chapters, but to observe and disentangle the interactions and patterns in each.

Finally Lynda Nead's recent work Myths of Sexuality, Representations of Women in Victorian Britain²³, shares a similar methodology to this thesis (except in that her work is primarily an examination of visual representation). She does, however, make a different methodological decision:

To examine the definitions of femininity and female sexuality across a number of official discourses and to establish the relationships between these different forms of representation. (Myths of Sexuality, p.9)

In other words she begins with an analysis of what she terms

'official discourses' and then traces their inscription in visual representations. I have avoided this method of prefacing to avoid privileging 'official discourses'. Given that Foucault insists that such discourses are produced from a multiplying number of power centres and that production is not centralized; given a post-structuralist acceptance of the way that literature does not merely transmit ideology but creates and moulds it (and in this case is taken as one of the multiple mechanisms, part of the cultural definition and formation of female sexuality and ideology), I have chosen to begin the process of disentanglement with the texts themselves.

CHAPTER 1

THE SEXUAL DISCOURSES OF BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA.

1. 'GOOD WOMEN TELL ALL THEIR LIVES': DRACULA AND THE MEANS OF
PRODUCTION

all the records chosen are exactly contemporary, given from the standpoints and within the range of knowledge of those who made them¹.

Stoker's prefacing note makes explicit the radical structure of this narrative. It is an anarchic text, dispensing with an omniscient narrator and putting in its place a series of contemporary records given from the 'standpoints' of those who have experienced the history of Dracula. A 'history' is produced, standing forth as 'simple fact'. These simple facts emerge from the carefully written accounts of many people: a democratic 'hotchpotch', or so Stoker would have us believe. Yet even within these short lines, however, one senses a tension. The papers have 'been placed in sequence'. 'All needless matters have been eliminated' and all records have been 'chosen' (emphasis mine). There is, then, a controlling, ordering, censoring presence in the text and, as I will show, an inciting presence too: an incitement to discourse and a simultaneous ordering and censoring of discourse. This inciting presence (the incitement to articulate or to write) is not centralized, but is dispersed at various points throughout the text.

Dracula depends, then, upon such diverse contemporary records for its very existence. There is no other discursive presence. It needs such discourses (written and spoken) both to fill out its bulk as a

text and to discover the truth about Dracula - to gain knowledge. The final text (although merely a 'mass of typewriting') is the sum of all that is to be discovered about Dracula's intentions, history, movements, attacks and habits. The text, then, becomes the record of a will to knowledge.

Dracula does not merely depend upon accounts from journals and letters (such texts were not new in 1897), but is made up from almost any form of written material: ship's logs translated from the Russian, cuttings from newspapers, memoranda, telegraphs, undelivered notes, doctor's reports, as well as letters, journals and diaries. The analogy of a collage would not be inappropriate for the text in the first stages of its production. It would have been a visual and aural collage: different handwritings and dialects, scraps of newspaper cuttings pasted into journals, printed telegrams and would even have included non-written material: Seward's phonograph. As the production team progresses this collage effect is removed. It is transcribed, making it a uniform type-written script under the expert control of Madam Mina. Seward's voice on the phonograph is similarly transcribed from oral to written (it is perceived to be safer, less emotive, in written form). All is assimilated into uniformity ².

The production team (and by this I mean specifically the vampire-hunters) are relentless in such transcribing when there is sufficient material to work on:

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. Mrs Harker says they are knitting together in chronological order every scrap of evidence they have... Harker has gone back, and is again collating his material. He says that by dinnertime they will be able to show a whole connected narrative.

(Dracula, Seward's diary, p.225)

There is enormous relief evident in the production team as the processes of exchange and collation begin. Mina assures Seward that:

I have copied out the words (of Seward's phonograph) on my typewriter and none need ever hear your heart beat as I did.

(Dracula, Seward's diary, p.222)

Jonathan Harker expresses his relief at the validation of his experience by Van Helsing in terms of potency:

She showed me in the doctor's letter that all I wrote down was true. It seems to have made a new man of me. It was the doubt as to the reality of the whole thing that knocked me over. I felt impotent and in the dark, and distrustful.

(Dracula, Harker's journal, pp.187-88, emphasis mine)

As the text moves from fragmentation to uniformity, even from the oral to the written, the group gains strength, virility and knowledge. Each group member is strengthened through the process of group validation.

All relevant contributions go into the hotchpotch - the text - but there does seem to be a division made between which of these sources of information are public and which are private. All the explicitly 'sexual' passages of the text are confined to such confidential, private modes of writing. They are all contained in journals. The transmitting of such uncomfortable material to others is almost always painful and needs to be encouraged. It gives Harker great pain to hand over his journal (sealed) to his wife, Mina, and,

correspondingly, it takes Mina some time to decide to hand it over to Van Helsing. Mina's account of her 'seduction' by Dracula is not confided at first, but is kept safe in her journal until she is forced by Van Helsing to articulate the previous experiences. Above all, sexual discourse is to be kept within the band, for the band's attention, to be kept in confidence, to be kept safe:

It is not well that [Lucy's] very thoughts go into the hands of strangers.
(Dracula, Seward's diary, p.163)

Stoker's Dracula is a confessional novel. It relies on its labour force of contributors in order to fill out its bulk. It will take information from anybody and everybody, anywhere and everywhere. It consumes voraciously and then submits its discourses to an ordering, censoring process. Money is sometimes an essential part of the production process: the working classes always need to be paid in order to produce the right date or piece of information. Those from the middle-classes offer their information voluntarily, after a little pressure. The text, then, depends on all these people transforming their private experiences into communicated discourse. It will produce the truth about Dracula - the text itself - only by these means. Inciting discourse, by any means, then, becomes an absolute necessity for the production of 'truth' and the production of 'text'.

For this reason, devices for recording, transcribing, ordering and storing of such personal discourses are essential to the text. Stoker's emphasis on the modern means of recording and transmitting

information is not, then, merely to emphasize the modern moment in which such mystery occurs, but it is also the means that the text deploys for drawing attention to the means of its own production. Rosemary Jackson in Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion³ sees this device as characteristic of fantasy as a genre:

A reluctance, or an inability, to present definitive versions of 'truth' or 'reality' makes of the modern fantastic a literature which draws attention to its own practice as a linguistic system (Fantasy, p.37).

A whole series of such devices are mentioned in Dracula: shorthand, travelling typewriters, phonographs for recording, and telegrams, letters, ship's logs, and press articles for transmitting information.

Foucault's History of Sexuality⁴, vol. 1, traces the history of the 'discursive explosion' of sexuality in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century:

Incitements to speak were orchestrated from all quarters, apparatuses everywhere for listening and recording, procedures everywhere for observing, questioning and formulating (The History of Sexuality, pp.32-33).

It is Foucault's thesis that sexuality, far from being repressed in the nineteenth century:

was driven out of hiding and constrained to lead a discursive existence. From the singular imperialism that compels everyone to transform their sexuality into a perpetual discourse, to the manifold mechanisms which, in the areas of economy, pedagogy, medicine, and justice, incite, extract, distribute, and institutionalize the sexual discourse, an immense verbosity is what our civilisation has required and organized (The History of Sexuality, p.33).

Stoker's text, as we have seen, demands such verbosity for its very existence. What is the excuse for such verbosity? To incite, extract, distribute, and institutionalize Dracula. Because of the structure of the narrative, Dracula is never able to appear or speak for himself. He surfaces through the accounts of the contributors. He is always the product or content of another's discourse. He is exploited as absence, or as the secret. Discourse alone produces him and to produce him, as the excuse for the text's existence, such discourses must be incited.

There is a further analogy to be made between Foucault's 'manifold mechanisms' and the mechanisms for producing discourse in Stoker's Dracula. For Foucault, the power of incitement to discourse is not centralized. It is produced at every moment in the relation of one point to another. It comes from everywhere. In searching for the mechanisms of incitement, we must look for the immediate local power at work in a particular type of discourse and discover in what ways these power relations are linked together, to form, what seems like an overall strategy ⁵.

Foucault also writes of the production of the confession:

The motivations and effects it is expected to produce have varied, as have the forms it has taken: interrogations, consultations, autobiographical narratives, letters; they have been recorded, transcribed, assembled into dossiers, published and commented on. (The History of Sexuality, p.63)

Foucault's 'confessional dossier' also describes the production and assembly of Dracula based as it is on interrogations, consultations, autobiographical narratives and letters: a 'mass of typewriting'.



It would be useful to summarize some of Foucault's work at this stage to test its application to Stoker's Dracula⁶. Foucault contests that before the 'discursive explosion' of the early eighteenth century onwards, the management or organization of sexuality had been engineered by law: canon law, Christian pastoral teaching and civil law. It centred upon marital relations: everything outside this was described as 'unlawful'. At the end of the eighteenth century the reverse trend set in: the 'unlawful' becomes the centre of interest, with a new concept of the 'unnatural' rather than unlawful. The management of sexuality is taken over by science and medicine. New labels are conceived: 'moral insanity', 'genital neurosis', 'aberration of the genetic instinct' and so on.

What caused this shift? Foucault believes that at some point near this juncture, sexuality entered the public domain with the discovery that populations fluctuated. 'Population' became an economic and political 'problem': population as wealth, population as manpower or labour capacity. The 'people' became the 'population' and at the centre of the population problem was sex. It became necessary to know details of birthrates, age of marriage, number of legitimate and illegitimate births, the frequency of sexual relations and contraceptive practices. These results must then be processed and analysed in order to produce the 'truth about sex'. Such research could be handled most successfully by science and medicine, rather than by law. There developed, then, a scientific

interest in the study of perversions, nervous disorders, and psychiatry, seeking the origin of mental illness in sexual excesses.

The old systems (principally law) treating perversions or anti-social sexualities, were concerned with acts. The new systems, governed by science, were concerned with inventing a new species, or sub-species, of pervert. The new form of medical power proceeds by examination and interrogation.

A 'scientia sexualis' is thus formed, confined to Western civilisation (the Eastern civilisation, according to Foucault's plan has the 'ars erotica' which proceeds by initiation). The scientia sexualis' has, as its main tool for producing 'truth', the confession, which had been used as an instrument for producing truth since the Middle Ages, often accompanied by torture. Foucault traces its history back to 1215 when the Lateran Council laid down its rules for the sacrament of penance. From this time the ritual of confession has played a part in law, education, medicine, family relationships, sexual relationships and solemn rites: 'Western man has become a confessing animal'. We no longer see confession as the effect of a constraining power, for it has been so well absorbed into our culture. We even see it as a liberating power.

The medical model, then, inherited the means of producing discourse - confession - from the legal model. The legal model was concerned with crimes and the medical model with sicknesses, deviations, perversions. But the entry of sexuality into scientific discourse

was not easy. How could science, concerned with proveable facts, be based upon discourse from below - from individuals? The only possible validation lay in the insistence that truth can only emerge through the interpretation of the doctor or psychiatrist.

Confession had, of course, been a device used in Catholicism and other religions long before its uses in law or in medicine. The practice of confession became more important after the decrees of the Council of Trent. What seemed to be a method of restriction proved to be a method of increasing discourse. Annual confession was no longer enough. More attention was paid to 'the sins of the flesh' than to any others, with a view towards locating and examining every sin in thought, word or deed. The task became endless; once started on tracking impure thoughts one is besieged by them. The penitent must not only confess to sin but also transform every desire into discourse.

Four great strategies make up this 'machinery of sexuality'. The first is the 'hystericization of the female body'; the second is the 'pedagogization of children's sexuality'; the third is 'the socialization of procreation' (policies designed to control the birthrate); the fourth is 'the psychiatrization of perverse pleasure' (deviations are catalogued and categorized for which a technology of correction is developed and applied).

All these strategies make up a machinery of sexuality which did not struggle against sexuality but actually produced it. Its main focus

was on the family, using parents and spouses as the principle agents of this 'machinery', with doctors, teachers, and psychiatrists as secondary agents. If this interest in sexuality was designed to produce a more intensive labour force, it would be aimed at the working classes. It is not; it is aimed at the bourgeois family.

Thus it becomes for the bourgeoisie a means of distinguishing itself. Before the interest in sexuality, Foucault demonstrates, the bourgeoisie had distinguished itself by means of the symbolics of blood or the blood of alliances between ancient lineages. With the discursive explosion the bourgeoisie became obsessed with medical, biological and eugenic doctrines of all kinds. The 'health' of the bourgeoisie could thus be maintained by such careful scrutiny and kept free from any taint of mental instability. The blood of the bourgeoisie was its sex, and such blood must be kept pure.

Dracula, the vampire, is the secret to be discovered, the silence to be articulated in the text. He must be perpetually transformed into discourse in order to be present at all. In this sense he corresponds to Foucault's secret-to-be-discovered: sexuality. But this in itself would not be enough to justify reading Dracula as signifying sexuality or sexual discourse.

Dracula signifies sexuality in another sense by virtue of his compulsive act: vampirism. In no other vampire novel, except perhaps Le Fanu's Carmilla⁷, is the act of vampirism made so explicitly erotic or focused on with such relish. Dracula attacks only women.

He is difficult to resist. Vampirism is contagious; it sexualizes its victims. On an unconscious level 'it yields plain indications of most kinds of sexual perversions'⁸. Dracula represents a threat to the bourgeois family, monogamy, sexual restraint. He threatens cultural stability via the sexualization of women. He is insatiable and makes others insatiable. He is dangerous and must be 'sterilized'. Wherever there is erotic content in the text, Dracula is present. Dracula can then be seen to represent the silent presence of anarchic sexuality in the text. The text exploits the vampire as the sexual secret-to-be-discovered.

Having established the hunted, we may now turn our attention to the hunters, or in Foucault's terms 'the local power centres' who compel the hunted into discourse. Here again we may test the usefulness of the application of Foucauldian theory, by drawing attention to the 'professions' of the main vampire hunters. (I do not include Mina in this group although she is sometimes a member; her relationship with the alliance is not consistent.) Here we find Jonathan Harker (lawyer), Seward (medical man specializing in the treatment of the insane), Arthur Godalming (aristocrat), Quincey Morris (rich American and adventurer) and Van Helsing (combination of lawyer, philosopher and medical man as well as being a Catholic). These then fulfil almost all of Foucault's 'manifold mechanisms' in the areas of 'economy, pedagogy, medicine and justice'.

Twitchell, in The Living Dead⁹, shows how in earlier versions of the vampire myth there was primarily a single vampire hunter, usually a

priest or a 'dhampire' (a son of the vampire who intuitively understands how the parent will act). In Stoker's Dracula, we have not one, but several vampire hunters corresponding to the Foucauldian theory of the proliferation of power centres in the nineteenth century: the manifold mechanisms. Such 'manifold mechanisms' in this text, the producers of information, are primarily medical men and lawyers backed up by the financial resources of an aristocrat and a rich American.

The most powerful of the vampire hunters is Van Helsing, described here by his student, Dr Seward:

[he] knows as much about obscure diseases as anyone in the world... He is a seemingly arbitrary man, but that is because he knows what he is talking about better than anyone else. He is a philosopher and a metaphysician and one of the most advanced scientists of his day.
(Dracula, pp.111-112)

Van Helsing remains largely silent in the text; that is he produces few written accounts by his own hand. His speech, like Dracula's, is reported by others. He functions as a still centre, organizing and controlling the other hunters to go out and find information and to bring it back. He is one of many such characters in Stoker's work.

In The Jewel of the Seven Stars¹⁰ of 1912, Stoker uses a character called Corbeck, an adventurer, but also similarly a jack-of-all-trades with doctorates in law, surgery, science, languages and Egyptology. Like Van Helsing he enters the text one third of the way in and immediately speeds up the process of discovery, contributing his unique knowledge of the thing-to-be-discovered. Like Van Helsing

he initiates the process of the exchange of information, and it is he who articulates the importance of such collaboration:

'If we all go on working in the dark we shall get in one another's way, and by hampering each other, undo the good that any or each of us working in different directions might do.'
(Stoker, The Jewel, p.105)

In The Lair of the White Worm¹¹ of 1911, Van Helsing's place is filled by Sir Nathaniel de Salis. He, more than Van Helsing or Corbeck, remains almost entirely the still centre. He does little of the information gathering himself. He remains in his study and the principle researcher, Adam Salton, carries out all the explorations and reports back to this study to present his material and have it interpreted. Sir Nathaniel's 'special knowledge is of the peak and its caverns'. He is devoted to history, is a local geologist and a natural historian (hence although not a medical man he is a scientist). He functions as the perfect analyst:

Sir Nathaniel's voice was soft and soothing, nothing of contradiction or overdone curiosity in it - a tone eminently suited to win confidence.
(Stoker, The Lair, p.32)

Again like Corbeck and Van Helsing he speeds up the process of discovery, and it is he who articulates the necessity for collaboration of knowledge:

'our confidence had better take the shape of a mutual exchange of ideas. Let us both ask questions as they may arise; and I do not doubt that we shall arrive at some enlightening conclusions.'
(The Lair, p.101)

For these characters to have an ordering, organizing function in these texts, they must encourage the other members of the respective

'alliances' to produce material. They must have material to work on. Again the analogy of the analyst and patient is most evident in The Lair of the White Worm in the interaction between Sir Nathaniel and Adam Salton. Sir Nathaniel is constantly interrogating Adam:

'I see, Adam, that something has occurred and that you have something to tell me...'

(The Lair, p.101)

'Go on! Tell me all...'

(The Lair, p.111)

'Now', said Sir Nathaniel, and settled down to listen, looking at Adam steadily and listening attentively, that he might miss nothing, even the inflection of a word...

(The Lair, p.57)

He takes notes whilst Adam is speaking and pushes him to go further in his confession, by means of cross-examination. He asks: "Adam, are you heart-whole... in the matter of Lady Arabella?", to which Adam replies:

'Lady Arabella, sir, is a charming woman and I would have deemed it a privilege to meet her - to talk to her - even - since I am in the confessional - to flirt a little with her.'

(The Lair, p.102)

Van Helsing functions similarly as a confessor. He is both a Catholic and a medical man, so that confessor here has the overtones of both religious confession and psychiatric confession: the two main uses for the ritual of confession. In Foucault's terms, confession produces sexual discourse whilst appearing to repress sexuality. Van Helsing, as confessor, produces Dracula whilst appearing to try to stamp him out.

Mina Harker too, is an integral part of the production process. Whilst Van Helsing incites discourse, Mina processes the results,

placing the material in sequence. We must remember that power is not centralized in Foucault's analysis: Van Helsing is one part of a strategy of production. Van Helsing articulates the insatiable need of the will to knowledge for more and more discourse. Group strength, he insists, depends on constant recording, constant confession:

'Good women tell all their lives...'

(Dracula, p.184)

'Nothing is too small, I counsel you, put down in record even your doubts and surmises'.

(Dracula, p.118)

'Go on, friend Arthur, we want no more concealment. Our hope now is in knowing all. Tell freely'.

(Dracula, p.285)

Foucault traces a line between the Catholic injunction to confess through the examination of conscience:

Tell everything, not just consummated acts, but all sensual touchings, all impure looks, all obscene remarks, all consenting thoughts (The History of Sexuality, p.21)

to the scandalous literature of later centuries: Sade's injunction to confess in The One Hundred and Twenty Days of Sodom: 'to recount the most numerous and searching details'. Such confessional novels include the anonymous pornographic volumes of My Secret Life of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Here the narrator announces his intentions:

to write my private life freely as to fact and in the spirit of the lustful acts done by me or witnessed; it is written, therefore, with absolute truth¹².

Later he writes: 'a secret life should have no omissions'¹³. Furthermore, he believes his writing constitutes a 'secret history' as a contribution to science, and more specifically psychology:

This secret history which bears the imprint of truth on every

page [is] a contribution to psychology¹⁴.

Stoker's prefacing note, too, makes a similar claim: that such detailed personal accounts constitute a 'simple history'.

For Foucault, however, the author of My Secret Life far from being a 'courageous fugitive from "Victorianism"' is instead a naive representative of 'a plurisecular injunction to talk about sex'. Although we may believe we are exercising personal freedom in confessing our innermost desires, we are in fact compelled to do so in almost every sphere of our lives.

This returns us to the symbolic exchange structure of Dracula and of Stoker's other novels mentioned above. Emphasis is placed on the collaborative enterprise of shared personal knowledge in order to engender greater knowledge about the respective 'secrets' of each text. The main vampire-hunter initiates this process and in two of the three texts, the exchange is given such detailed description that a diagram can be drawn from it. Such a diagram shows, in Dracula, how the alliance is made around a table with the main vampire-hunter at its head, and the others making up the circle. This, then, appears to be a 'democratic exchange', as Stoker's prefacing note indeed claims, but what is actually happening beneath the surface is the incitement to discourse by each member, but most specifically by the main vampire-hunter, Van Helsing. It is here that the principle of 'no omissions' is made explicit. Hence what appears to be a democratic, voluntary exchange is actually a cover for group confession around a central confessor.

Many of the numerous articles on Stoker's Dracula concentrate on the similarity between the good (the alliance of men) and evil (Dracula and the female vampires) in the text. Theories range from the contention that Dracula enacts all the repressed desires of the alliance of men¹⁵, to the theory that these men are confronting their own reflections in Dracula¹⁶. Indeed any detailed study of the novel reveals that almost all the on-stage killing is executed by the 'good men', who may also be considered responsible for the death of Lucy, through risky blood transfusions. They are certainly responsible for the 'deaths' of Dracula and the female vampires. They are present at the sadistic, overtly sexual staking of Lucy. Lastly whilst Dracula is scrupulous about staying within the law, the 'good men' frequently travesty it, breaking into tombs and private houses, forging death-certificates, and resorting to bribery.

Van Helsing not only incites discourse but also incites action. He initiates almost all the action and makes sure that it is carried out 'correctly'. Furthermore, he is almost the only character who is not stricken with doubts about his own sanity. Almost half of the novel takes place in a lunatic asylum. Several characters are emotionally unstable: Renfield is a madman; Harker suffers mental breakdown; Lucy shows signs of schizophrenia. Even Seward voices doubts about the group's sanity. The novel, then, is sceptical about the reliability of its own narrators, who cannot be sure even of their own sanity. Van Helsing, I repeat, is the only character free from such doubts. Rosemary Jackson in Fantasy: The Literature of

Subversion sees this problematising of vision as characteristic of the genre of fantasy associated with its device of drawing attention to its practice as a linguistic system:

the fantastic problematises vision (is it possible to trust the seeing eye?) and language (is it possible to trust the recording, seeing 'I'?). (Fantasy, p.30)

Van Helsing is also the figure most like Dracula. As Christopher Craft has observed about Van Helsing's insistence on blood transfusions:

A perverse mirroring occurs, as puncture for puncture the Doctor equals the Count ¹⁷.

He is Dracula's opposite number in the structure of the text, but is also, in many ways, his mirror-image. Like Dracula his origins are obscure. Like Dracula he is 'foreign' and has problems with the English language. Like Dracula he is a kind of father figure. Like Dracula he can hypnotise and uses his power to gain control over Mina.

If, then, we have good reason to doubt the testimonies of the main narrators, we also have good reason to doubt the motives of Van Helsing, who initiates so many sadistic rituals. His entry into the novel works as a catalyst to the production of Dracula, forcing him out of hiding and into discourse.

If Dracula is vampiric, needing new blood to sustain his 'life', then Van Helsing is similarly vampiric as confessor needing new discourse to maintain his creation: the text. I use Van Helsing here

to include the other members of the alliance, or production-team, with Van Helsing as the principle force behind it. It is Van Helsing who articulates the text's thirst for discourse with his insistent injunctions to confess. He demands more and more words. His desire, like Dracula's, is insatiable.

Like the other similar characters in Stoker's texts (most particularly Sir Nathaniel from The Lair of the White Worm), Van Helsing is a kind of still centre, constantly available for consultation and interpretation. He is an analyst (particularly so when one remembers that he is Catholic, a hypnotist and a medical man) and, as we have seen in Foucault's work, psychoanalysis plays an important part as one of the 'manifold mechanisms' for producing sexual discourse or the 'truth about sex'. Psychoanalysis, Foucault reminds us, depends upon discourse from below to maintain its existence, to produce its theories.

In psychoanalysis the production of words is from the patient to the largely silent analyst. In Stoker's Dracula the flow of words is from below, through Van Helsing and into the text. Van Helsing insists on discourse, whilst contributing few of his own words directly. Whilst Dracula is the vampire of blood, Van Helsing is the new vampire of discourse. The confession or (neurotic) discourse is the blood of the text and Van Helsing draws it out to render it into knowledge, to transubstantiate it into text (via Mina as transcriber and recorder), into the final interpretation. Such is the medical power over the body, insisting on more discourse in order to render

its own theories strong. Neurotic discourse is the blood which will feed the new monster, the science of sexology. Power over the body is maintained by the blood of confession and such incitement is powerful because it takes such blood for its own, to transubstantiate it into new forms. Confession, or discourse, in Dracula comes from unlimited sources (ship's captains and zoo-keepers as well as the band of vampire-hunters) so that there is a huge blood or confession transfusion, transfused into the 'body' of the text.

At issue is not a movement bent on pushing rude sex back into some obscure and inaccessible region, but on the contrary, a process that spreads it over the surface of things and bodies, arouses it, draws it out and bids it speak, implants it in reality and enjoins it to tell the truth: an entire glittering, sexual array, reflected in a myriad of discourses, the obstination of powers and the interplay of knowledge and pleasure. (Foucault, The History of Sexuality, p.72)

Similarly the movement of the text is not to silence Dracula, but to arouse him, draw him out, and bid him speak. The vampire-hunters become the vampire-producers, drawing out the blood of discourse to render the text strong: the manifold mechanisms of the incitement to discourse.

2. A BAT BEATS AGAINST THE WINDOW: DRACULA AND THE FRONTIERS OF
MORALITY

Dracula, as Geoff Wall has put it, is 'a persistently anxious

text'¹⁸. Its central action dramatises the prevention of invasion by a foreign threat and the corresponding protection of frontiers. Its anxieties are focused on the filling of even the smallest gaps to prevent such an invasion. As such it forms an early part of a particular genre categorized by Samuel Hynes in The Edwardian Turn of Mind as 'invasion literature'¹⁹. Such invasion stories increased in numbers from the early 1870s, reaching a peak in the years between 1906 and 1909, and declining thereafter. The anxieties expressed in such texts are, writes Hynes, of two kinds:

a growing awareness of England's isolation from continental alliances and a conservative fear that radicals, by transferring power from the traditional ruling classes to the lower classes, would weaken England's will to defend herself.
(Hynes, The Edwardian Turn of Mind, p.34)

Defence was the key issue of the years preceding the peak of invasion literature of 1906-1909. The Boer war had undermined Britain's confidence in her military strength and superiority. In 1902 General Sir Frederick Maurice, in an article in the Contemporary Review, stated that sixty percent of Englishmen were unfit for military service. In response, the British Government formed an Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration to look into the causes of such deterioration. Its report directed most of its attention to the conditions of life in city slums, but concluded that there were insufficient grounds to support the possibility of widespread physical deterioration of the scale suggested by General Maurice.

Deterioration, however, had become part of public consciousness, easily interchangeable with the notions of degeneracy or decadence. It stimulated fears of invasion at a time when many felt the country would not be able to defend itself in the event of attack²⁰. Hynes, in listing the invasion stories of the turn-of-the-century, includes Erskine Childer's The Riddle of the Sands (1903), William Le Queux's The War in the Air (1908) and Saki's When William Came (1914).

Dracula forms part of the earlier generation of this genre, which Hynes does not mention. The other great invasion story of this period is, of course, H.G. Wells' The War of the Worlds, published only a few months after Dracula, in 1897²¹. Wells describes the invasion of England by a 'superior' race from Mars. The Martians' world is cooling and they must find new territories for survival, using their superior intellect (they have an anatomy which is almost all brain) and strength to defeat and 'consume' the inhabitants. The War of the Worlds articulates the fear of the end of the empire of man or the 'sense of dethronement' as Wells calls it.

The invasion of the Martians parallels Dracula's invasion in many ways, particularly in the image of the spreading circle as the primary motif of invasion. Wells describes the impact of the Martian weapon, the black terror:

From a balloon it would have seemed as if some monstrous pen had flung ink upon the chart. Steadily, incessantly each black splash grew and spread, shooting out its ramifications this way and that, now banking itself against rising ground, now pouring swiftly over a crest into a new found valley, exactly as a gout of ink would spread itself upon a blotting paper (Wells, The War of the Worlds, p.408).

Harker similarly notes the invasion points marked on Dracula's map (like Wells' chart) of England:

On looking at it, I found in certain places little rings marked and on examining these I noticed that one was near London...; the other two were Exeter and Whitby...
Dracula; Harker's journal, p.24)

and Van Helsing warns that Dracula's invasion is spreading:

The circle goes on ever widening, like as the ripples from a stone thrown in the water.
Dracula; Seward's diary, p.214)

Thus the metaphor of invasion is one of assimilation: the spreading of small circles until everything is ultimately assimilated into one major circle. The lives of both the Martians and Dracula are supported by the assimilation of the blood of their victims: the Martians pipe fresh blood straight into their veins and Dracula drinks his. Such efficient carnal appropriation confirms these invaders as superior beings, dispensing with the unnecessary paraphernalia of digestion. They are able to surround and absorb new territories and bodies efficiently and quickly, like the amoeba described here in Professor Allman's address: 'Protoplasm and the Commonality of Life' of 1874:

A stream of protoplasm instantly runs away from the body of the Amoeba towards the destined prey, envelops it in its current, and then flows back with it to the central protoplasm, where it sinks deeper and deeper into the soft yielding mass, and becomes dissolved, digested and assimilated in order that it may increase the size and restore the energy of its captor²².

The erotics of transubstantiation. Protoplasm was, of course, the key term for Darwinist materialism. In this theory, expounded by T.H. Huxley, all matter, from the lowest forms of life to man, are

made up from protoplasm. In order to increase in size and strength, one must assimilate the protoplasm of other forms of life and transubstantiate it into human protoplasm. We can see the nineteenth-century discourses of transubstantiation, invasion and amoebic ingestion interacting in an article of 1892 on the problem of immigration entitled: 'The Invasion of the Destitute Aliens'²³. Here the Earl of Dunraven warns that immigration is detrimental to the British nation causing a 'paralysing, demoralising, body-and-soul destroying effect upon our people' (p.997), but it is the metaphor of transubstantiation that is of interest in this context:

Whether immigration be good or bad for us depends upon the quality of the material arriving on our shores, upon the condition of these industries which have to absorb it, and upon the general tone of the national digestion. The material is, in my opinion, intrinsically bad. But even if it were good, it could not benefit us unless our population were in a position to assimilate it properly and convert it to their own use.
(Earl of Dunraven, 'The Invasion of the Destitute Aliens', p.986)

Huxley's exposition of physiological reductionism and protoplasm achieved some notoriety throughout the last decades of the nineteenth century as Blinderman demonstrates in his article, 'Vampirella: Darwin and Count Dracula'²⁴. Just as human protoplasm needs other forms of protoplasm in order to increase in size and strength, the empire can only grow by the assimilation and transubstantiation of new territories into its own. It must increase the size of the circle as it extends outwards, consuming such new territories.

Wells' description of the invasion of the Martians uses the same imagery as the description of amoebic ingestion quoted earlier:

each splash grew and spread, shooting out its ramifications this way and that... now pouring swiftly over a crest into a new found valley... (Wells, The War of the Worlds, p.408)

Both the action of the amoeba and the Martians are vampiric in that they must assimilate bodies or blood in order to sustain life and grow strong. Similarly Dracula and the Martians are invaders of a particular kind, threatening to transubstantiate the protoplasm of the empire into another form, another culture.

Consequently Dracula is a text which places emphasis on spaces: what is inside and threatened and what is outside and threatening. These spaces are primarily signified by circles; the aim of the alliance of men (inside) is to form perfect circles of discourse (so that there are no gaps in knowledge); to form perfect circles around their women (to 'protect' them); and finally to surround and contain Dracula himself. Dracula is always outside trying to get in: planning his invasion of England in Transylvania, beating on the window as a bat, working on the weaknesses of others to allow him entry. The alliance is always on the inside, strengthening the fortifications, anxiously sealing gaps. This part of the thesis, then, deals with such 'spaces' in the text, examining the motifs of circles and frontiers, discovering what is placed 'inside' and what is placed 'outside'. Such frontiers are not merely geographical frontiers, but frontiers as protection and restraint of female sexuality, frontiers as the censorship of fiction and frontiers as definition of the self.

Jonathan Harker, lawyer, travels alone to Dracula's castle, Transylvania. He travels into unknown foreign territory. He travels from the West to the East. He crosses the frontier dividing West from East: 'the impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East' (Dracula; Harker's journal, p.1). Here he discovers an unmapped area beyond time-tables, and such unpunctuality disturbs him:

I had to sit in the carriage for more than an hour before we began to move. It seems to me that the further East you go the more unpunctual are the trains. What ought they to be like in China?

(Dracula; Harker's journal, p.9)

Harker deals with such anxieties as every good traveller should, taking careful notes of peasant dress, manners, customs, superstitions, and carrying home recipes for his fiancée, Mina. He assimilates what he can see into a written form. As he becomes more confused, more disorientated, his natural cheerfulness begins to wane. The superstitions²⁵ begin to play upon him, particularly at the point when he enters the Borgo Pass and is picked up by the 'strange driver', leaving his companions behind him. Here he is aware of even a change of atmosphere:

It seemed as though the mountain range had separated two atmospheres and that now we had got into the thunderous one.

(Dracula; Harker's journal, p.9)

Having 'got into' this new territory, Harker now begins to feel threatened. Instead of unemotionally observing this 'foreignness', he begins to feel it might absorb him:

Soon we were hemmed in by trees, which in places arched right over the roadway till we passed as though through a tunnel, and

again frowning rocks guarded us boldly on either side.
(Dracula; Harker's journal, p.12)

For Harker it is like 'some awful nightmare'. Wolves are heard far off and they, too, 'were closing round us from every side... as though following in some moving circle' (pp.12-13). Finally, the wolves do encircle the coach and Harker experiences 'a paralysis of fear'. The horses, too, cannot move: 'the living ring of terror encompassed them on every side' (p.13). The driver reappears (we later learn that he, like all the servants on his estate, is Dracula himself):

As he swept his long arms, as though brushing aside some impalpable obstacle, the wolves fell back and back further still.

(Dracula; Harker's journal, p.13)

Dracula is able to dissolve the circle; he is no respecter of frontiers, as we shall see later. For him this 'living ring of terror' is some 'impalpable obstacle'.

Harker's terrible nightmare continues. Now he is contained within Dracula's castle. From this point his journal records the gradual breakdown of reason. His reason is assaulted from every side, at every moment of the day. His journal is the principle tool he has for protecting the frontiers of this reason, to keep insanity at bay, and to prevent himself from being absorbed by this foreignness:

Let me be prosaic as far as facts can be; it will help me to bear up, and imagination must not run riot with me. If it does I am lost.

(Dracula; Harker's journal, p.25)

Harker's fear is of losing his reason to imagination, losing himself

in this unmapped, untimetabled country and of being absorbed into it.

After the attack of the three female vampires, Harker again tries to keep a grip on his reason by resorting to legal language:

I tried to satisfy myself on the subject, but could not arrive at any unquestionable result. To be sure there were certain small evidences...but these things are no proof, for they may have been evidences that my mind was not as usual... I must watch for proof... I must know the truth.
(Dracula; Harker's journal, 40)

Such language can only break down in the absence of truth.

Once threatened with being consumed by the wolves, Harker is now threatened with being consumed by the three female vampires. Dracula promises Harker to them as soon as he has finished with him. He is locked in. There are no keys. All his energies in this last section of his journal, are used in trying to find gaps in Dracula's fortification. He escapes (we do not know how), but is finally 'lost', suffering (as we find out later) from physical and mental breakdown.

This section, then, dramatizes the breakdown of reason in the unmapped land of Transylvania, 'the horseshoe of the Carpathians... the centre of some imaginative whirlpool'. Harker, alone, with only his journal as protection, can prove nothing, can discover no 'truth' about Dracula. He is finally consumed, absorbed into this imaginative whirlpool and loses his reason, his recording voice,

himself. His journal represents and protects his reason; he falls silent as this reason is lost.

As David Seed²⁶ observes, the narrative then jolts us from the Gothic horror mode to the domestic banality of Lucy and Mina's letters. We move from the one-journal account of the first section to a fragmented narrative: a proliferation of journals, letters, telegrams, newspaper articles. In the gaps of these discourses, in the darkness, offstage, Dracula is invading England, via Whitby. Dracula is here a personification of absence. He begins where rational explanation of experience ends. He resides in the gaps of discourse. As he leaps from the wrecked boat in the form of a wolf, he disappears into the darkness, 'which seemed intensified just beyond the focus of the spotlight' (Dracula, p.79). The searchlight, like the discourse, cannot contain him. It cannot quite reach him; he is just beyond its reach, just beyond its circumference.

Although we are firmly placed in the modern, technological world of transmitted information (the telegram, shorthand, the typewriter, the phonograph, the newspaper), all these devices are impotent. They cannot pull Dracula out of the gaps. Each person's knowledge of events is, as yet, partial. Dracula is able to invade Whitby because there are such gaps in fortification. The searchlight must extend its range, the discoveries must come together and extend their range of inquiry and knowledge.

Van Helsing enters the text, combining the roles of psychic investigator, detective, psychiatrist, philosopher, and scientist. As we have seen in the preceding section and in the observations of David Seed²⁷, he counteracts the fragmentation of knowledge by accelerating the process of coming together. He insists that the opposition to evil must be a collaborative enterprise; there must be a collaboration of knowledge. The journals begin to be exchanged and the gaps are filled. Mina Harker types up, organizes and stores the information. With this sharing of knowledge, the surface of the text changes, with one account often finishing where another takes over. As the gaps close, Dracula becomes better known. Such group strength depends, of course, on the constant production of discourse. Mina and Jonathan Harker transcribe all of the individual discourses into one uniform whole: 'Mrs Harker says they are knitting together into chronological order every scrap of evidence they have... by dinnertime they will have a whole connected narrative' (Dracula, Seward's diary, p.225).

Every now and again someone fails in their duty of constant group confession. When such concealments occur a gap is opened in the knitting of collaborative discourse, through which Dracula can enter. Mina is excluded from the alliance by virtue of her 'weakness' as a woman:

Mrs Harker is better off out of it. Things are quite bad enough for us, all men of the world, and who have been in many tight places in our time, but it is no place for a woman, and if she had remained in touch with the affair, it would in time infallibly have wrecked her.
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.256)

Excluded from the alliance, Mina is kept 'in the dark' and it is in this darkness that she is seduced by Dracula, seemingly in a dream. She falls silent, deciding not to share her nocturnal experience with her husband, fearing to worry him further:

I shall put a bold face on... he shall never see it. I suppose it is one of the lessons that we poor women have to learn...
(Dracula; Mina's journal, p.257)

By the time this seduction, this concealment is discovered, it is too late; she is already contagious.

Mina moves, then, from being one of the strongest parts of the alliance, the frontier, to being one of its weakspots. Lucy earlier, had been one of the weakspots, being Dracula's first victim after his entry into England. There is, in the text, a latent accusation of complicity. Lucy seems destined to be Dracula's victim. Even before his invasion she is prone to sleepwalking. She is weak, flirtatious, she even articulates a desire to be polygamous. She does not take easily to confession: 'I cannot tell you how I loathe talking about myself', she confesses to Dr Seward who is examining her. Mina, too, falls silent at a crucial point in the battle against Dracula. In describing her experience she confesses: 'strangely enough I did not want to hinder him'(p.287). The other main human weakspot is Renfield, the pet lunatic of Seward's lunatic asylum. He is tricked by Dracula into allowing him entrance. Those, then, who are weakest at the frontier, those who are most likely to be offenders, are women and lunatics.

The concluding section of the novel is narrated collectively. The stylistic idiosyncrasies disappear. The 'scrappiness' disappears. The action speeds up correspondingly. Each account is more concise, more detailed, more accurate. The alliance now has enough material to combat Dracula, and the text ends with a parallel image to Harker's threatened absorption at the beginning of the novel. There Harker was 'encompassed... hemmed in on every side' and here Dracula is encompassed. He is trying to return to his castle, carried in his coffin by a band of gypsies. The alliance of men converge on him from all directions like the wolves on Harker earlier:

the various bodies began to converge close upon us... Closer and closer they drew... Seeing they were surrounded, the men tightened their reins and drew up.
(Dracula; Mina Harker's journal, pp.374-75)

Finally he is stopped, staked and absorbed by the alliance. He crumples into dust, seemingly destroyed but actually contained and absorbed by the opposing alliance. Dracula disappears, but a boy is born on the anniversary of his death, carrying the names of 'all our little band of men together' (and possibly also Dracula's?) - representative of the new order, born out of the absorption of the old order. Dracula is squeezed out of the gaps as they close. Once produced, brought out of the darkness, under the spotlight, he is able to be assimilated.

The movement of the text, then, is from fragmented 'scraps' to collaborative uniformity. As more discourse is produced the gaps are filled and the fortifications of the frontier made stronger. Dracula

can no longer attack and is instead absorbed by the discourse, absorbed by the circle of the discursive alliance.

We may now turn from frontiers formed by collaborative discourse to frontiers made by men to protect or restrain women. Circles are, of course, present here too. Four out of the five women in the novel are female vampires and there is only one male vampire. Women are at risk. Dracula is 'heterosexual', attacking only women (he leaves Harker alone although he has ample opportunity to quench his thirst on Harker's blood). These women, once vampires, are sexually released. They are openly sexual, assertive, voluptuous and seductive:

'Come to me, Arthur' [Lucy entreats] 'Leave the others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you'.
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.211)

To protect their women from such unrestrained sexuality, circles must constantly be placed by the men around them. Dracula will invade through any gaps. Lucy is encircled by the wreaths of garlic flowers. Putty containing Holy Wafer seals her tomb to prevent her entry or exit. Mina is surrounded by the circle of crumbled Holy Wafer to prevent her being enticed outside by the vampire sisters. Once the process of corruption begins, such women will be pushing at their constraints, insistently searching for a way out:

Twice during the night I was awakened by Lucy trying to get out. She seemed, even in her sleep, to be a little impatient at finding the door shut, and went back to bed under a sort of protest.
(Dracula; Mina Harker's journal, p.93)

If gaps are made in such male fortifications, they are primarily made by women. It is Lucy's mother who twice removes the garlic flowers from around her neck. It is the maid who steals the gold crucifix again protecting Lucy, and it is the maids who lie in drugged sleep whilst Lucy is being attacked. It is the three vampire women who try to draw Mina through her male fortifications into the sisterhood of unrestrained female sexuality with their cry: "Come, sister. Come to us. Come! Come! Come!" (Dracula; Memorandum by Van Helsing, p.367). Women cannot be entrusted with the sexual protection of their own kind. They are weak, naturally immoral, untrustworthy. Van Helsing refuses to ask the maids for a blood transfusion for Lucy, and explains: 'I fear to trust these women...'
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.148).

Purity can only be restored to Lucy, once she is 'sexualized', by phallic authority. The men gather in a circle with elaborate ritual around Lucy and drive a stake through her. Christopher Craft has observed, moreover, that the elaborate rituals of correction (what he terms the 'pacification program') are reserved for the female vampires. The rituals of correction are strangely neglected in the staking of Dracula himself²⁸. Like Dracula she is surrounded and absorbed, through death. She cannot be allowed to remain 'outside', 'sexualized', but must be reabsorbed into the system even if this process demands her 'death'. Thus if Dracula is invading England and women or England via women, then frontiers are of paramount importance, both geographical and moral frontiers.

Stoker's article 'The Censorship of Fiction'²⁹, published in The Nineteenth Century in September, 1908, makes explicit this connection between frontiers and morality. The year was a crucial one in the censorship debate, which had become a public issue in the last decades of the nineteenth century and which continued well into the twentieth century. Although there was no official censor for literature at this point, as there was for drama, censorship became a legal issue after 1857 with the passing of the Obscene Publications Act. Lord Justice Cockburn had provided the legal definition of obscenity in 1868 as that which tended to 'deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences' (emphasis mine). As a result of this Act, and other legislation, the last decades of the nineteenth century saw the Bradlaugh-Besant trial in 1877 for the publication of a book on contraception, the imprisonment of Zola's publisher, Vizetelly, in 1889, the trials of Oscar Wilde in 1895 for homosexuality, and the prosecution of Havelock Ellis' Sexual Inversion in 1898. During all such trials, the Government and the magistrates themselves were under pressure from the National Vigilance Association, formed in 1885 to provide unofficial censorship of literature.

Censorship became a public issue again at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. The National Social Purity Crusade had formed in 1901, sponsored by the N.V.A., which needed fresh support. In 1908 the national Social Purity Crusade reformed as the Forward Movement (one can see the development of progressively more military metaphors in the naming of such groups). On April 4, 1908,

an announcement appeared in the Times:

Not only in London, but in all great cities and towns, there is an inevitable demoralisation that can only be arrested and replaced by a higher tone through combined action. For this object the forward movement of the National Social Purity Crusade has been inaugurated...

Stoker's article makes similar reference to combined, 'military' action, which suggests that he was familiar with the work of this association.

Also in 1908 the Government appointed a Joint Committee to consider two issues: lotteries and Indecent Advertisements. The committee's report recommended greater police control, more authority for the magistrates themselves in the cases of indecent advertisements, and the extension of legal power to apply to advertisements that were not obscene, but which might be considered 'objectionable' and 'indecent'. The report received considerable publicity.

The greatest publicity in the censorship debate, however, in 1908, went to the debate about censorship in drama. The Lord Chamberlain had absolute power over the production of plays through his henchman, the Examiner of Plays. Certain productions could and were refused a license without explanation, and without power of appeal. Such was the case with the suppression of Edward Garnett's play The Breaking Point and with Granville-Barker's Waste, both refused licenses in 1907. As a result a petition was drawn up in the same year with seventy-two signatories, requesting a meeting with the Prime Minister. The signatories included Barker, Barrie, Conrad, Galsworthy, Gilbert, Hardy, Ford Maddox Ford, James, Masefield,

Maugham, Meredith, Pinero, Shaw, Swinburne, Synge, Wells and Yeats. In a letter to the Times in October, 1907, these signatories requested the abolition of all censorship of drama. Little was achieved but much publicity. They were granted a meeting with the Home Secretary in February, 1908, and a committee was correspondingly set up in 1909 to consider the matter. Little was changed; the Lord Chamberlain retained his authority.

Although no longer manager of the Lyceum in 1908 (Irving had died in 1905 and the Lyceum was now a music-hall), Stoker was still active in the London literary and theatrical circles. Irving's death had left him free to devote more time to novel-writing; he wrote ten novels between 1897 and 1912, the year of his death. He had been the manager of the Lyceum for twenty-six years and, now a novelist, he would, we assume, have been closely following the censorship debate. The submission of a petition, signed by so many great novelists and playwrights, would have given him the necessary impetus to commit his views on censorship to publication. That Stoker addresses his article to this particular part of the debate is clear from the article itself:

It is this gentleman to whom is applied the term 'censor' by the writers of letters to newspapers and of articles in magazines who clamour against 'oppression' and call aloud for absolute freedom of subject and treatment of stage productions. (Stoker, 'The Censorship of Fiction', p.483)

Such opposition to freedom of subject and treatment could be expected from the ex-manager of the Lyceum, which only produced 'safe' plays and was opposed to the production of the 'problem' plays inspired by the works of Ibsen, and which dealt with

'problems' such as the plays which, by their suppression, had sparked off the controversy outlined above. Licensing served to protect the financial investment of theatres such as the Lyceum, and gave its productions the seal of morality.

That Stoker should write an article denouncing the abolition of censorship is not particularly notable. What is significant, however, is the language used in this article, in which 'fiction' is seen to be interchangeable with Stoker's views on female sexuality in Dracula. Stoker argues that censorship must be enforced in an age such as his own, in which there is evolving 'a class of literature so vile that it is actually corrupting the nation'(p.483). Such writers 'have found art wholesome and made it morbid; they found it pure and left it sullied' (p.485). Such a description parallels Dracula's effects on his female victims. They become sexualized and impure (which is precisely what Stoker condemns in his article: the inclusion of sexuality in fiction). Mina, after her attack by Dracula, repeats the word 'unclean, unclean', and 'rubs her lips as if to cleanse them from pollution' (Dracula, p.288). In this article Stoker implies that such moral depravity is contagious, like venereal disease:

If the plague-spot continues to enlarge, a censorship there must be. ('The Censorship of Fiction' p.486)

In 1859 an anonymous publication appeared called 'Our Plague Spot. In Connection with Our Polity and Usages, as Regards our Women, our Soldiery and the Indian Empire'³⁰. This article was specifically

addressed to the problem of prostitution and its effects on the army and the Indian Empire - primarily the spread of sexually transmitted diseases. Stoker uses this same metaphor to describe the corruption of fiction whilst this publication uses it to describe the corruption of Empire via sexual women (prostitutes). Together they reveal a more general late nineteenth-century tendency to conflate ethics and aesthetics: fiction must be kept clean just as the Empire must be kept clean. Also both use the image of the enlarging circle of disease. The article calls prostitutes:

a pestilence to any community, of which they cannot be said to form a part, but a huge over-grown excrescence, for ever enlarging, and eating into the very core of all social comfort and happiness. ('Our Plague Spot')

Thus, if moral depravity is an illness and a plague, it must be dealt with 'medically' and even 'surgically'. Stoker perceives the work of the censor is to be with a knife: such fiction must 'come under the knife of the censor'. The censor is perceived as surgeon/mutilator and the censored as the operated on or the mutilated. Such language parallels the discovery by Mina of the two enlarging spots on Lucy's neck

I looked at her throat just now as she lay asleep and the tiny wounds seem not to have healed. They are still open, and if anything larger than before... they are like little white spots with red centres. Unless they heal within a day or two, I shall insist on the doctor seeing about them.
(Dracula; Mina Harker's journal, p.95)

The 'knife of the censor', too, parallels the staking of Lucy, now thoroughly corrupt, in order to restore her to the state of purity. This staking is performed like a surgical operation. Arthur's face

as he drives the stake into his fiancée's heart is full of 'high duty'.

As shown earlier, the text implies a complicity on behalf of the human weakspots, especially Lucy, but also Mina and Renfield. These weakspots, lacking sufficient strength or self-restraint, must be protected or they will become corrupt. Censorship, too, exists to protect the weak:

 censorship... is based on the necessity of perpetually combatting human weakness... the weakness of the great mass of people who form audiences, and of those who are content to do base things in the way of catering for those base appetites... The vice of the many of the audience is in the yielding to the pleasant sins or weaknesses of the flesh, as against the restraining laws made for the protection of higher effort. (Stoker, 'The Censorship of Fiction', p.481)

Censorship, in Stoker's terms, is to be a kind of battle against evil and a collaborative enterprise:

 If progress is to be good and is to be aimed at the organization of natural forces, the powers of evil, natural as well as arbitrary, must be combatted all along the line. It is not enough to make a stand, however great, here and there, the whole frontier must be protected. ('The Censorship of Fiction', pp.481-82)

The emphasis, then, as in Dracula, is on collaborative protection rather than an isolated stand here and there. This can be related to the movement of the narrative (from fragmentation to collaboration) and to the sealed circles that surround Mina's purity at the end of the novel. Is there then a direct connection between imperialism (the defending and extending of national boundaries) and sexism (the defending and confinement of women)? Property of all kinds must be protected in this high-capitalist world; both empires and women must

be protected by such sealed circles. As in Dracula, Stoker is clear about what is 'inside' and what is 'outside' in this article:

as the object of an external power is to prevent a thing of possible good from straying into the region of evil, the mandate should be to prevent excursion beyond the outmost point of good. ('The Censorship of Fiction', p.480)

Stoker's metaphor becomes insistent, repetitive, anxious: 'censorship must be continuous and rigid' ('continuous' like discourse and 'rigid' like the circular restraints):

There must be no beginnings of evil, no flaws in the mason-work of the dam. The force of evil, anti-ethical evil, is the more dangerous as it is a natural force.
('The Censorship of Fiction', p.481)

This natural force will be thundering at the dam of organized morality at all times, looking for an entrance, in order to follow its 'natural' course.

Stoker specifies the type of evil to be resisted as:

that arising from the sex impulses... when we have realised this we have put a finger on the actual point of danger.
('The Censorship of Fiction', p.483).

What the finger discovers is a flaw in the mason-work; in the context of Dracula the flaw is woman. Both fiction and female sexuality must be restrained. 'Indeed', Stoker exclaims, 'women are the worst offenders in this breach of moral law' ('The Censorship of Fiction', p.485). He is presumably alluding to the writers of New Woman fiction here such as Sarah Grand, Mona Caird and others who were dealing with controversial subjects such as venereal disease, non-consensual marital sex and the double standard in their fiction. Stoker, as we shall see later, has read his Lombroso and Nordau and

has had it 'scientifically proved' that women, once corrupt, are far more naturally criminal than men³¹. They have only to be slightly encouraged to step out of line, out of the circle. If female criminality or female sexuality or female immorality (all constituted as 'other' or unnatural) cannot be restrained voluntarily, it must be enforced. 'Restraint' (from Latin *restringere*: to bind fast, confine) is the key word for Stoker, a word he uses repeatedly: for 'freedom contains in its very structure the germs of restraint' ('The Censorship of Fiction', p.479).

This article, then, re-enforces, and in some sense decodes, motifs and preoccupations also present in Dracula, published ten years later. Indeed Dracula himself is called an 'author' by Van Helsing:

But there remains a greater task: to find out the author of all this our sorrow and to stamp him out.
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.217)

The motifs of frontiers and circles remain in Stoker's imperialist imagination, even after the publication of 'The Censorship of Fiction' (1908) - in the novels of 1911 and 1912 which I will look at in greater detail later.

It seems contradictory to place this article alongside some of the explicitly erotic passages in Dracula (and in later novels). The answer to this lies again with the circle: the novel acts as its own censor. It shows the 'operation' of censorship at work, simultaneously producing sexuality and appearing to restrain it. It produces desire and sexuality, offering vicarious fulfilment, whilst attempting to expel itself of such desire. In Van Helsing's words,

Dracula is 'creating a new and ever widening circle of semidemons'. This image is used geographically, too, to demonstrate Dracula's invasion marked on his map: circles around Whitby, Exeter and London, which will presumably enlarge. To combat this widening circle, Van Helsing and his men, as censors, must form a circle of restraint, made up from the continuous production of discourses, knitted together. This will enlarge and push back Dracula from the frontiers whilst simultaneously producing him. Stephen Marcus in The Other Victorians³² writes of the effect of censorship on pornography, showing how it produces even more sexuality:

For every warning against masturbation issued by the official voice of culture, another work of pornography was published; for every cautionary statement against the harmful effects of sexual excess uttered by medical men, pornography represented copulation in excelsis, endless orgies, infinite daisy chains of inexhaustibility; for every assertion about the delicacy and frigidity of respectable women made by official culture, pornography represented legions of maenads, universes of palpitating females; for every effort made by the official culture to minimize the importance of sexuality, pornography cried out - or whispered - that it was the only thing of any importance at all. (Marcus, The Other Victorians, pp.283-84)

Dracula's principle function is to invade, to break down the fragile boundaries put up by the alliance. David Punter in the Literature of Terror³³, sees Dracula as blurring the lines (taboos) which 'enable society to function without disruption'. He sees Dracula as blurring the line between man and beast, blurring the line between man and God ('by daring to partake of immortal life'); blurring the line between man and woman ('by demonstrating the existence of female passion'). 'He is a shape changer, a merger of species, the harbinger of social collapse' (Punter, p.262). Ernest Jones, in his

psychological study of the vampire motif, sees it as being connected with the desire for a Beyond: 'the mysterious land of boundless possibilities where all phantasies are realised and all secrets revealed'³⁴. In this sense Dracula represents a fantasy of 'no limits', of the violation of cultural taboos, of unlimited desire. Rosemary Jackson in Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion, states that 'fantasy tends to dissolve structures and moves towards undifferentiation'³⁵. It refuses difference, distinction and homogeneity.

Van Helsing and the alliance, in combatting Dracula, must preserve the status quo, must prevent such merging of species, such blurring of the boundaries of morality. They must maintain taboos, distinctions, and social order. They must perform their social duties, anxiously building and checking frontiers, keeping things clear and distinct. They must maintain closed circles around their so vulnerable women:

The professor and I took it in turns to watch, and we never left her for a moment unattended. Quincey Morris said nothing about his intention, but I knew that all night long he patrolled round and round the house.
(Dracula; Seward's diary, 152)

The women must be kept inside: left unattended for a single moment they may succeed in getting out of their confinement.

Rosemary Jackson in Fantasy³⁶ produces some useful material for dealing with the 'spaces' in Stoker's Dracula:

The fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made absent.(Jackson, Fantasy, p.6)

The text similarly traces the 'unsaid' and the 'unseen', the silent, the invisible and absent. The movement of the text is to uncover Dracula himself as the absence, as desire. Jackson sees fantasy as having two operations: the first is the expression of desire as the telling of desire (in this case van Helsing's injunction to tell), and the second is the expression of desire as the expulsion or squeezing out of desire (when this desire, like Dracula, is a threat to cultural order). Dracula, then, both tells of the vampire (desire) and expels the vampire (desire). Both result in the production of desire.

For Jackson, the space inhabited by 'otherness' or the 'invisible', changes in secular culture. It can no longer inhabit the alternative regions of heaven and hell, but now inhabits absent areas of the world: 'a world replaced and dislocated'. Fantasy becomes the obverse side of reality, of reason and of culture. It lies alongside the principle axis: in paraxis. Thus it 'exists in parasitical relation to the real'. Dracula can be seen to be the obverse side of Van Helsing and the alliance and has a symbiotic relation to them. In the structure of the text, neither can function without the other.

Fantasy also has an opening activity in Jackson's theories. She quotes Marcel Brion as showing that fantasy has the kind of perception 'qui ouvre sur les plus vastes espaces'³⁷. She summarizes Bessiere's work from 'Le recit fantastique: la poetique de l'incertain'³⁸, which also deals with the opening effect of fantasy:

such opening is disturbing by denying the solidity of the real. Such opening represents a 'violent opening of syntactic order, by means of a tear, or rupture, or wound'. Dracula has an opening activity: he not only opens up bodies by means of ruptures or bites. He refuses to accept the existence of any boundaries, he infiltrates:

The fantastic, as Bessiere understands it, cannot be closed off. It lies inside closed systems, infiltrating, opening spaces where unity had been assumed... Because it is a narrative structured upon contraries... fantasy tells of limits and it is particularly revealing in pointing to the edges of the real. (Jackson, Fantasy, p.23, emphasis mine)

Dracula as the unsaid and the unseen, as absence, infiltrates into the closed systems of social order. He infiltrates his way into England and into bodies. He infiltrates his way into the cosy, domestic world of Lucy and Mina. He resides in the gaps of discourse, the gaps between individual accounts, the lack of knowledge. He comes from the unmapped, untimetabled land of Transylvania, where 'every speck of dust that whirls in the wind [could be] a devouring monster in embryo' (Dracula, p.355). Dracula, the monster of undifferentiation, the fantasy of undifferentiation, resides in the spaces between things. Jackson writes:

With time, as with space, it is the intervals between things that come to take precedence in the fantastic: part of its transformative power lies in this radical shift of vision from units, objects and fixities to the intervals between them, attempting to see as things the spaces between things.
(Fantasy, p.48)

Dracula, then, in England, is inside, residing in the intervals, the gaps of reality, the spaces between things. In order to render reality fixed and solid - the closed circle - he must be made into the 'other', he must be forced outside again before he can be

absorbed into reality, or into the system. Dracula dissolves the life/death boundary, returning from the other world to prey upon the living. He occupies Jackson's 'paraxial realm' - neither dead nor alive. 'His victims are condemned to an eternal interstitial existence, in between things' (Jackson, Fantasy, p.118). Lucy, for instance, is seen to 'pass in through the interstice where scarce a knifeblade could have gone' (Dracula, p.212). (The instrument of the censor is of course a knife, here it cannot pursue Lucy into the paraxial realm.)

Jackson sees Stoker's Dracula, like other fantastic texts, as 're-enforcing a bourgeois ideology':

The shadow on the edge of bourgeois culture is variously identified as black, mad, primitive, criminal, socially deprived, crippled or (when sexually assertive) female. Difficult or impalatable social realities are distorted to emerge as melodramatic shapes - monsters, snakes, bats, vampires... femmes fatales. Through this identification, bad social elements can be destroyed in the name of exorcizing the demonic.(Jackson, Fantasy, pp.121-22)

Thus fantasy (and specifically Stoker's Dracula) has a normalizing activity, identifying such a normality as middle-class, monogamous and male-defined culture.

Jackson in summarizing the work of Bessiere and the limits of fantasy writes:

Presenting what cannot be, but is, fantasy exposes a culture's definitions of that which can be: it traces the limits of its epistemological and ontological frame.(Fantasy, p.23)

Dracula, then, in such a definition, as existing 'outside', points to the edges of the real: Dracula, as the text, 'traces the limits

of (culture's) epistemological frame'. By representing what cannot be, the absent, it also frames what can be, what is allowed to exist inside the circle.

In this Jackson and Bessiere correspond with Jameson's arguments in 'Magical Narratives: Romance as a Genre'³⁹. Here Jameson insists that the concepts of good and evil are not metaphysical categories, but are as 'little natural, as historical and humanly "constructed", as say, the totemic systems of certain primitive tribes':

It is becoming increasingly clear that the concept of evil as at one with the category of Otherness itself: evil characterizes whatever is radically different from me, whatever by virtue of precisely that difference seems to constitute a real and urgent threat to my existence.. The point, however, is not that in such figures the Other is feared because he is evil; rather he is evil because he is Other, alien, different, strange, unclean and unfamiliar.

(Jameson, 'Magical Narratives', p.140)

Evil, then, is always relative to each culture, or stage of culture. It is constructed as 'Other'. It is all that is outside, taboo, and marks the limits, the frontiers, of what is socially and culturally acceptable: that which lies within the circle.

Burton Hatlen, in his article 'The Return of the Repressed/Oppressed in Bram Stoker's Dracula'⁴⁰, sees Dracula as the 'embodiment of otherness': he is sexually 'other', culturally 'other' and socially 'other'. Hatlen argues here that Dracula is culturally 'other' in that he comes from an-other culture, representing superstitions, ancient, religious, magical superstitions, rooted in the earth. He confronts what lies within the circle: the values of technology, science and reason. Dracula is also 'socially' other. He can be seen

as the 'centurion of the empire gone native' (like Conrad's Kurtz). He is the racial outsider. Because he is everything outside the circle (and what lies within the circle is middle-class society, represented by Van Helsing and the alliance) he can be both worker and aristocrat: everything that middle-class society needs to define its own frontiers.

It is Dracula as sexually 'other' that I will be examining in the final part of this chapter. If fantasy is useful in exposing 'a culture's definitions of that which can be'; if it is useful in tracing 'the limits of (culture's) epistemological and ontological frame', then in examining Dracula's significations and effects, we may find what is sexually taboo in turn-of-the-century male dominated culture. By discovering what lies outside the circle, we also discover what lies within the circle: what is socially and sexually acceptable at the time of the publication of Dracula. This is particularly appropriate in the case of female sexuality: a subject of huge debate and controversy in 1897, and a subject of anxiety in Stoker's text.

3. THE DEVILS OF THE PIT: DRACULA AND THE DISCOURSES OF FEMALE

SEXUALITY OF THE TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY

I have shown how Stoker's text first produces (by incitement) a discourse with an erotic content, and then organizes this material,

or product, into 'spaces'. I have also suggested that such spacing into inside or outside areas can reveal the taboos and moral organization of the text's cultural moment. It thus remains to examine the product itself: the sexual product of the text.

Critics, in approaching this text, looking specifically at the sexuality of the novel, have tended to provide primarily psychoanalytic readings. Psychoanalysis can show us the unconscious sexual symbolism working in the text. It can reveal the possible workings of Stoker's mind and what infantile anxieties or adult fantasies are being played out within the text. It can show us that fear of sexuality and particularly female sexuality are present in the unconscious workings of the text, but these things are present for psychoanalysis at all times, across all cultures. What psychoanalysis fails in providing is a cultural, historical and sociological understanding of this content. It fails to locate Dracula in an historical moment: a unique historical moment in which questions of gender, sexual roles and sexuality were key problems in political and public debate. It fails to locate Dracula as the product of this moment and as an index to its time. I shall be attempting to fill this gap in the proceeding part of this work.

Stoker's eroticism often has a peculiarly comic, and often bizarre, effect. Reading several of Stoker's texts gives the impression of a surging undercurrent of sexual energies, just beneath the surface of the plot. This becomes even more evident and more bizarre in the later texts, particularly The Lair of the White Worm⁴¹. Here the

forces of good struggle with evil in the person of Lady Arabella March, a local widowed landowner, and with the sultry Mr Caswall, the local squire. To validate their theories the protagonists must test out the monsters on their own territories, which results in a series of tea-parties, which become covers for huge sexual and psychic battles. These tea-parties are given no dialogue, but instead the undercurrents of power, energy and sexuality are described:

At half-past three the next day, Edgar Caswall called at Diana's Grove. Lady Arabella met him on the roadway and walked beside him towards Mercy Farm... They found Lilla and Mimi at home and seemingly glad to see them... The proceedings were a repetition of the battle of souls of the former visit... This time the struggle for supremacy of will was longer and more determined...

(Stoker, The Lair, p.77)

Earlier Lady Arabella had already had a few words with Caswall about strategy:

'Mimi will try to make you look at her cousin. There lies defeat. Let nothing take your attention from Mimi, and you will win. If she is overcoming you, take my hand and hold it hard whilst you are looking into her eyes. If she is too strong for you, I shall interfere. I'll make a diversion and under cover of it, you must retire unbeaten, even if not victorious. Hush! they are coming.'

(The Lair, p.77)

All such social encounters between any combination of the protagonists and the evil forces follow the same pattern. Stoker has no interest in the 'small talk' which must, of course, form a cover for these spiritual battles, but shows us only the raw psychic energies. Such encounters, repeated, begin to appear as physical wrestling matches, with Mimi usually victorious by driving Caswall out through the door using only the power of her eyes. The effect of

such descriptions is comic, leaving us unsure as to the sanity or perception of the narrator. Like Dracula the text incorporates its own scepticism:

Just fancy how any stranger - say a doctor - would regard her, if she were to tell him that she had been to a tea-party with an antediluvian monster, and that they had been waited on by up-to-date menservants.
(The Lair, p.124)

Stoker clearly intends us to see the comedy of such an unlikely encounter and also to doubt the mental stability of those who are determined to see an antediluvian monster in the person of Lady Arabella March. Aside from the comedy⁴², however, Stoker does seem to want to reveal the silent energies of power and sexuality and to show that we find such energies everywhere, especially in the drawing-room. We must re-adjust our sight, for no situation is innocent. We must be on our guard at all times, especially when such predatory sexual monsters as these stalk the drawing-rooms of the aristocracy.

Dracula has a similar effect. Even Lucy does not know what is happening to her until it is too late. Dracula is cunning. He comes at night, under cover of a dream or mist, when his victims are never sure if they are hallucinating or not. Dracula, as absence, is always lurking just round the next corner, just behind that closed door. These doors, once forced open, reveal the most extraordinary scenes, but one must enter areas never before entered in order to find them:

'It is unusual to break into a lady's room!'

Quincey reminds Van Helsing anxiously. Yet Van Helsing's impulse is right, for, as Seward narrates:

We threw ourselves against it; with a crash it burst open and we almost fell headlong into the room... What I saw appalled me. I felt my hair rise like bristles on the back of my neck and my heart seemed to stand still. On the bed beside the window lay Jonathan Harker, his face flushed and breathing heavily as though in a stupor. Kneeling on the near edge of the bed... was the white-clad figure of his wife. By her side stood a tall, thin man, clad in black... his right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her down on his bosom.
(Dracula; Seward's diary, pp.281-82)

Although The Lair of the White Worm is not about vampires, these silent energies are described in vampiric and sexual terms. Caswall seeks domination over the two women, Lilla and Mimi, and to achieve this, drains their energy:

The weaker Lilla seemed, the stronger he became, just as if he were feeding on her strength.
(The Lair, p.42)

For Stoker, this is what is really going on in human transactions. Unlike James (and Stoker is very unlike James), Stoker does not attempt to show us sinister energies through dialogue, but dispenses with dialogue altogether, in these scenes from The Lair of the White Worm. He appears to be interested in the 'soul battles' or sexual battles. Sir Nathaniel, like Van Helsing, is astute enough to see the sexual element:

'It strikes me that, as we have to protect ourselves and others against this feminine nature, our strong game will be to play our masculine against her feminine.'
(The Lair, p.111)

They could almost be speaking of a chess-game here. All such encounters are described in similar strategic terms. All players must be prepared in advance. Strategies must be discussed or there

will be casualties. The loss of Lilla to Caswall is almost incidental, as are the deaths of parents in Dracula: pawns are easily dispensed with after all. Van Helsing and his men seek out Dracula's last pieces left on the board - here coffins of Transylvanian earth. Once they have ascertained how many boxes are missing by exploring the house at Carfax, Van Helsing adds:

'It has given us opportunity to cry "check" in some way in this chess game, which we play for the stake of human souls.'
(Dracula; Harker's journal, p.253)

Stoker, himself a man of prodigious energies, seems particularly sensitive to such human energies residing outside (or beneath) discourse. Most of his life was dedicated to the charismatic actor Henry Irving for whom Stoker was secretary and manager. Stoker met Irving for the first time in 1876 and 'there began the close friendship between us which only terminated in his life - if indeed friendship like any other form of love can ever terminate?' During this extraordinary encounter between actor and adoring critic, Irving recites a poem by Hood and Stoker describes his reaction to it:

But such was Irving's commanding force, so great was the magnetism of his genius, so profound was the sense of his dominance, that I sat spell-bound... the whole thing was new, recreated by a force of passion which was like a new power, incarnate passion, so close that one could meet it eye to eye within touch of one's outstretched hand... That experience I shall never - can never - forget⁴³.

At this point Stoker bursts into something approaching hysterics, and he writes in his own defence:

I was no hysterical subject. I was no green youth; no weak individual yielding to a superior emotional force. I was, as men go, a strong man... I was a very strong man... when, therefore, after his recitation I became hysterical, it was

distinctly a surprise to my friends; for myself surprise had no part in my then state of mind⁴⁴.

There is some peculiar sexual electricity going on here (interestingly read by Stoker as hysteria), although there is no reported dialogue. Stoker feels himself to be spell-bound, dominated, magnetized by this 'incarnate passion'. One can almost see Jonathan Harker paralysed, peering out through half-closed lids at the approaching female vampires, feeling them 'so close that one could meet (them) eye to eye within touch of one's outstretched hand'; they are so close in Harker's case that he can feel their breath on his neck. Stoker here, and Harker in the novel, both delight in being so dominated, in yielding, in passivity in the face of seduction.

Stoker's texts, therefore, and Stoker himself, are constantly aware of the sub-surface of reality, of unspoken vampiric forces, of domination, of sexual energies and disguised sexual beings. Lady Arabella March to those of blinkered sight is a beautiful, widowed landowner. To those of 'sexual' sight she is really a manifestation of some predatory, child-eating, antediluvian white worm, residing not in Diana's Grove, but in a slimy pit beneath the house itself. Dracula, similarly, may appear to be a rather sad, somewhat emaciated and impoverished Transylvanian aristocrat, but we know (don't we?) that he is really centuries old, lives on human blood and is, like Lady Arabella, entirely bestial, able to take the forms of bat or wolf, and able to command the support of lunatics, wolves, rats, storms and women. No-one is innocent until proven innocent,

especially Transylvanian aristocrats, especially women who glide rather than walk. If you leave yourself vulnerable for a single moment, then the hideous sexual monster, who is forever waiting, will attack and perhaps add another 'initiate' into the world of semi-demons. One must watch for signs at all times and never let oneself be deluded into thinking that this is another innocent tea-party... tea-parties are never innocent.

Paranoia perhaps, but paranoia of a particular cultural moment. The cultural and political implications of Darwinism and evolutionary theory were still being worked through at the turn of the century⁴⁵. Evolutionary theory raised so many anxious questions about sexuality, about the beast within, about the primal slime from which man was supposed to have crawled. If man had evolved from such primal slime, had grown in stature from his appalling ancestor, the ape, if he were moving forward, progressing, then could not the reverse be possible - degeneration⁴⁶? Was the terrible beast, the sexual beast, fully exorcised, or was he (or more importantly she?) still lurking beneath the facade of civilisation?

Stoker's texts are not alone in expressing this anxiety. Punter, in The Literature of Terror⁴⁷, states his belief that the whole genre of what he terms 'decadent Gothic' enacts such fears of regression and degeneration. All are concerned in some ways with 'the problem of the liberation of repressed desires' (Punter, p.255). In this genre he places 'four of the most potent of literary myths': Stevenson's Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (1886), Wells' The Island of

Doctor Moreau (1896), Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891), and Stoker's Dracula (1897). Stevenson, for instance, exploits anxieties about scientific progress and the direction of such 'progress', if undertaken without moral guidance. Hyde, the monster, is part of the social, civilised being of Jekyll and is unleashed: 'My devil had long been caged, he came out roaring'. It does take much to activate this monster, as it does not take much to activate Dorian Gray or Dracula. Often such activation is caused by misplaced scientific experiment like the sadistic experiments of Doctor Moreau. Such texts play out a particular anxiety: the issue of relations between the human and the bestial caused by the theories of evolutionary progress.

As such, then, a cursory glance at the impact of these 'new' scientific concepts on Dracula will show us that, like other texts of the period, Dracula articulates fears about degeneration. Dracula can be seen as the beast within, so precariously contained, or he can represent what we might become after cultural degeneration: the sad end of a declining civilisation. Dracula is explicitly a novel which enacts cultural anxieties about imperialism (it is after all an invasion fiction) and about Darwinism (in that it articulates fears about progress, about science, about the possibilities of degeneration). It is easy to make these assumptions about the text; these themes make themselves felt on the surface of the text. They do not hide themselves. I believe, however, that Dracula and The Lair of the White Worm engage with evolutionary theory on a much deeper and perhaps more sinister level.

Charles Blinderman⁴⁸ provides the most useful analysis to date of Dracula's interaction with evolutionary theory. Blinderman sees the crucial link to be Darwinist materialism, and shows its relation to Dracula through the work of Thomas Henry Huxley. Materialism reduces all phenomena to matter in motion. All animate forms, from man to the lowest form of life, are made up from protoplasm and this protoplasm is in a constant state of transformation. During everyday life it is being constantly used up and must be replaced by other forms of protoplasm which are then transubstantiated into human protoplasm. Hence Renfield is for Blinderman the ultimate materialist, obsessed with the acquisition and transubstantiation of protoplasm, and Dracula becomes the personification of an apocalyptic future where everyone will become predatory, amoral and soulless. Dracula is the logical outcome of such fears: an onanistic ape of prodigious sexual appetite with no soul, parasitically feeding on human protoplasm in order to maintain life. Blinderman sums up:

Dracula fantasizes on what could happen were materialism to be as successful in shaping the moral basis of the community as it has been successful in elucidating the physical basis of life. (Blinderman, 'Vampurella', p.428)

Blinderman's only dealings with the sexuality of the novel are to suggest that Dracula represents sexual regression. If Dracula represents the spectre of the ape lurking somewhere on man's ancestral tree then the most disturbing part of this ancestor would be his sexuality. Dracula represents sex without responsibility, without morality, conscience or guilt: sex for its own sake. Dracula

wants to establish his empire of sexual beings without souls, a limitless world of no responsibilities. This analysis is appropriate and works well with Stoker's text. We must, however, return to the small problem of the gender ratio of vampires in the novel: there are four female vampires to one male vampire. Why is it so easy to dismiss the problem of female sexuality in critical analysis of this kind? Why are these disturbingly sexual women so invisible? Why does Dracula receive all the attention? Because the novel is named after him? Because he initiates the chaos? The fact remains that although the threat of the novel is Dracula and Dracula is male - hairy, dominant, patriarchal - the silent threat of the novel remains the problem of bestial and predatory women and the fear that if Dracula is not stopped the world will be overrun with such women.

Evolutionary theory had, of course, its own very special theories about the relative position of women on the evolutionary ladder. The science of craniology worked with evolutionary theory, interacting with it. Vogt, the principle exponent of craniology, sought to prove Spencer's theories of Social Darwinism, developed in First Principles⁴⁹, scientifically. This 'proof' amounted to a classification of the levels of development reached by various races, and such classification depended on brain measurement, or craniology. This investigation threw up all sorts of useful material to justify the biological inferiority of certain races, and the natural inferiority of women. Craniology discovered that women's brains were smaller than men's (no adjustment was made for the

smaller physical stature of women, of course) and closer to the size of the brains of children and savages:

We may therefore say that the type of the female skull approaches in many respects that of the infant and in a still greater degree that of the lower races⁵⁰.

Later women resembled not only children and savages but even animals:

We may be sure that whenever we perceive an approach to the animal type, the female is nearer to it than the male, hence we should discover a greater simious resemblance [in studies of the 'missing link' between animals and humans] if we were to take the female as our standard⁵¹.

Darwin himself endorsed Vogt's discoveries about evolutionary development of women in The Descent of Man:

the formation of her skull is said to be intermediate between the child and the man⁵².

As such then the scientific discoveries of Darwinism and craniology only substantiated cultural prejudices which had been prevalent for centuries. Schopenhauer had written, a decade before Vogt's discoveries, that women:

are a kind of intermediate stage between the child and the full-grown man⁵³.

What is more significant than such rampant misogyny, however, is the belief that, as women were stunted in their evolutionary development, they were much closer to savages, animals and children - their brains were, after all, of the same size. Craniology in turn was similarly endorsed by other aspects of science, particularly in the study of criminology. Lombroso and Ferrero write on the innate criminality of both women and children:

What terrific criminals would children be if they had strong passions, muscular strength and sufficient intelligence; and if

moreover their evil tendencies were exasperated by a morbid psychical activity! And women are big children; their evil tendencies are more numerous, and more varied than men's but generally remain latent. When they are awakened and excited they produce results proportionately greater⁵⁴.

Such theories were more widespread than one might imagine. Stoker was certainly aware of them for he provides a long discussion of the evolutionary development of Dracula's brain in the text, mixing the language of criminology and craniology⁵⁵. Van Helsing, the scientist⁵⁶, begins this discussion, in his ludicrous broken English:

'have you ever study the philosophy of crime?... This criminal has not full man-brain. He is clever and cunning and resourceful; but he be not of man-stature as to brain. He be of child-brain in much. Now this criminal of ours is predestinate to crime also; he too have child-brain.'
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.341)

At this point Mina becomes so excited that Van Helsing allows her to complete his theories. Mina is, of course, diagnosed as being of women's heart and of man's brain by Van Helsing, which accounts for her privileged position in the discourse of the men, and perhaps accounts for the difficulty that Dracula experiences in trying to vamp her. In this section she makes reference to Lombroso and Nordau:

'The Count is a criminal and of criminal type. Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him and qua criminal he is of imperfectly formed mind... Then as he is criminal he is selfish; and his intellect is small and his action is based on selfishness, he confines himself to one purpose.'
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.342)

Nordau would classify the symptoms of Dracula and other degenerates as ego-mania marked with obsession with a fixed idea, and it is to

this that Mina refers. Dracula has not a manbrain, he has a childbrain (this reference is to the studies of brain sizes conducted by Nordau's teacher Caesar Lombroso), and as a 'child' he is much closer to the brain sizes of a woman or savage than to a white man. Mina thus assures the alliance that, being more evolutionarily developed in intellect than Dracula, they must win (the chess game). Dracula, being evolutionarily undeveloped, is a savage beneath his cultured facade, beneath the libraries, the books, the smooth talking, but perhaps under the sinister black cloak he is also a woman.

Such specific signals in Stoker's text demonstrates Stoker's familiarity with the science of craniology (not of man stature as to brain) - the field of Caesar Lombroso, substantiated by Nordau's Degeneration, translated into English in 1895. In The Lair of the White Worm, the white worm is female and like Dracula she has been alive for thousands of years, living in a hole in the ground. Here the debate is taken up again:

'If this be so, what could be a more fitting subject than primeval monsters whose strength was such as to allow a survival of thousands of years. We do not know yet if the brain can increase and develop independently of other parts of the living structure. In an age of investigation like our own, when we are returning to science as the base of wonders... we should be slow to refuse to accept facts however impossible they may seem to be... in process of time... (might not) that rudimentary intelligence have developed? There is no impossibility in this; it is only the natural process of evolution.'

(Stoker, The Lair, p.106)

The fear here is that the female worm will have a developed intellect (in this sense it is the obverse of the anxiety

articulated in Dracula), but no controlling conscience or morality 'and therefore no acceptance of responsibility'. Whilst the white worm can be taken to represent womankind in the abstract, Lady Arabella March represents womankind in particular: she is the human manifestation of the white worm. She is literally a snake and commands snakes. Her initials spell L.A.M. or Lamia. She is both evil and animal-like: Sir Nathaniel 'was fascinated by the idea of there being a mysterious link between the woman and the animal' (The Lair, p.53). Moreover, there is a strange eroticism between Arabella and the black servant, Oolanga (Oo-langour?), who makes love to her. Stoker makes the contrast of their social positions clear in order to indicate the 'true' social status, primitivism and lack of morality of the woman:

The circumstances were too grotesque, the contrast too violent for subdued mirth. The man, a debased and primitive specimen and of an ugliness which was simply devilish; the woman of high degree, beautiful, accomplished.
(The Lair, p.74)

Opposite ends of the social spectrum one would believe, but not so. When Oolanga lapses into barbaric gibberish, only Arabella is able to understand the meaning of his words 'with a woman's quick intuition' (for intuition read 'intuitive ability to understand savages'). In a penultimate and apocalyptic scene, Arabella lures Oolanga into her home and draws him into the slimy pit beneath her house:

In another instant she had seized Oolanga, and with another swift rush had drawn him, her white arms encircling him, down with her into the gaping aperture... which seemed to go down into the very bowels of the earth... that fathomless pit, whose entrance was flooded with spots of fresh blood.
(The Lair, pp.96-97)

Lady Arabella is no lady, just as Dracula is no Count. She is however, on the same level as animals and savages, just as Dracula is on the same level with the criminal child. They are both stunted in evolutionary development, being devoid of responsibility, conscience or soul: those precious 'male' attributes. At the core of this criminality, as we might expect, is a problematic sexuality. Lady Arabella's pit signifies both her sexuality and the primal slime from which mankind had dragged itself. To be lured back into this pit is to regress and to die. To become a vampire has the same significations: bestiality and regression to earlier forms of life with its accompanying sexuality. Women are again the principle offenders, for as established by Lombroso: women, by virtue of their smaller brains, are more inherently 'criminal' than men. Reversion is a smaller step for the woman, for they are only one step ahead of animals and savages on the evolutionary ladder. Even the zoo-keeper is aware of this in Dracula:

"you can't trust wolves no more than women!"
(Dracula, pp.157)

It comes as no surprise that Van Helsing refuses to trust the maids and to allow them to participate in the blood transfusions. What Lucy needs is masculine blood to prevent her degeneration, as Van Helsing insists:

'A brave man's blood is the best thing on this earth when a woman is in trouble. You're a man and no mistake.'
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.149)

Female blood would presumably only speed up the process of degeneration, as women are inherently criminal: it is, after all,

primarily women who break the male seals of protection, allowing Dracula entry.

It is no surprise, when we become aware of the 'scientific knowledge' that informs the text, that it should single out women as the weakspots in the frontier of progress and development. Given any opportunity, women will drag men back to the primal abyss, to sexuality, to irresponsible bestiality, to the collapse of civilisation. Auguste Forel writes:

The modern tendency of women to become pleasure-seekers and to take a dislike to maternity leads to degeneration of society. This is a grave social evil which rapidly changes the qualities and power of expansion of a race and which must be cured, or the race affected by it will be supplanted by others⁵⁷.

The seeking of pleasure by women is a grave social evil. It must be 'cured', like any other disease, before it affects (or infects) the entire race. The seeking of pleasure here is bound up with the rejection of maternity, so we can assume that the 'pleasure' signifies non-procreative female sexuality. The spectre of degeneration is female and she triumphs by effeminization, as Proudhon writes:

A nation, after having risen with virile energy can become effeminate and even collapse. That was what happened to the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans... while a race can become effeminate, it can also make itself more virile through its work, its philosophy and its institutions⁵⁸.

Here the imperialist metaphor for the rising of nations is a sexual one: 'to rise with virile energy'. To become effeminate signifies the 'collapse' of this 'erection' of nations. Virility can only be regained through the work, philosophy and institutions of the race; effeminization causes cultural impotency.

Van Helsing and his men (and this includes Mina in some respects with her 'man's brain') provide the work in the novel, which is opposed to sexuality. In a complex passage Seward renounces his desire for Lucy, to take up a cause - work - which will be to stamp out Dracula or desire:

Oh, Lucy, Lucy, I cannot be angry with you, nor can I be angry with my friend whose happiness is yours, but I must only wait on hopeless and work. Work! Work! If I could only have as strong a cause as my poor mad friend there, a good, unselfish cause to make me work, that would indeed be happiness.
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.71)

'Lucy' is quite explicitly replaced by 'work' ('Lucy, Lucy' - 'work, work') - the desire to channel sexual energies into the work ethic. Dijkstra⁵⁹ writes that at the turn of the century, Darwinism and the notion of progress became infused with neo-platonism, implanting in the young vanguard intellectuals an urgent sense of responsibility for bringing mankind nearer to the world of pure mind. Such men turned to celibacy and to ideal relationships with other men, excluding women and sexuality, for desire implied death to the soul. Similarly the alliance of men in Dracula excludes women and puts emphasis on work and progress through the elimination of Dracula as desire. In a sense, then, the work of the novel is the work of restoring cultural 'potency' and it is opposed to effeminacy which is threatened by Dracula and the vampire women. All desire must be transformed into work.

To conclude, then, it is perhaps too easy to see Dracula as a novel of vampiric degeneration without seeing the concealed gender of this degeneration. This is especially evident when we look at the

subsequent creation of Lady Arabella: beautiful, civilised, accomplished and yet no more than a predatory, sexual animal or savage beneath the facade, a trap for the male soul:

She tore of her clothes with feverish fingers, and in full enjoyment of her natural freedom, stretched her slim figure in animal delight. Then she lay down on the sofa to wait for her victim! Edgar Caswall's life blood would more than satisfy her for some time to come.
(Stoker, The Lair, p.145)

Another young science developing alongside evolutionary theory was that of sexology. For Foucault, sexology is another of the 'manifold mechanisms' for producing the truth about sex. It was a dubious science and one which served to preserve the status quo. As Stephen Marcus writes, sexology:

rests on a mass of unargued, unexamined and largely unconscious assumptions; its logical proceedings are loose and associative rather than rigorous and sequential, and one of its chief impulses is to confirm what is already held as belief rather than to adapt belief to new and probably disturbing knowledge⁶⁰.

Shiela Jeffreys, in The Spinster and Her Enemies⁶¹, goes even further, seeing the rise of sexology as a direct reaction to the works of the feminists of the period: the banding together of men of all political persuasions to quell the threat of feminism. Whatever its motives, sexology had a remarkable public impact, by bringing sex into the realm of medical science and 'this coupled with the strong social and reforming temper of the times made for a situation in which considerable public discussion of sexual matters took place'⁶². The turn of the century was a crucial period for the social 'construction' and definition of sexuality, and at the forefront of such construction was the 'science' of sexology. Just

as the science of evolutionary theory enabled the scientific justification of the capitalist market economy and imperialism via the adaptation of Social Darwinism, sexology enabled the continued growth of sexism and violence towards women by confirming the sexual difference between men and women.

There is an extraordinary sexual violence present in Stoker's texts. Such violence is usually a reaction to the fear of uncontrolled female sexuality. The slimy pit which lies beneath Lady Arabella's house is blasted open with dynamite. The description betrays the concealed sexual impulse of this blasting:

The Saltons could now look through to the room beyond where the well-hole yawned a deep narrow circular chasm. From this the agonized shrieks were rising, growing ever more terrible... Once in a sort of lull or pause, the seething contents of the hole arose after the manner of a bubbling spring and Adam now saw part of the thin form of Lady Arabella... several times some masses of enormous bulk were forced up with inconceivable violence... The ground for far around quivered and opened in long deep chasms... it brought relief - relief from the presence of the fear of all that was horrible.
(Stoker, The Lair, pp.151-52)

Such violence is, then, the destruction of an evil female sexual power and a confirmation of virility. This is again the case in the earlier text of Dracula. Here Lucy, the superficially innocent Lucy, has been horribly sexualized by Dracula so that she, too, becomes predatory and voluptuous. She is to be feared because she is tempting. She, of anyone, is most vulnerable to attack: she is prone to sleepwalking, is restless and even articulates an heretical desire to be polyandrous. In a sense she invites Dracula's attack. She is the perfect female victim. Once sexualized she must be cured,

and this is performed like an operation to restore her purity (or 'a pacification program' in Craft's words). Before the operation the men examine their patient (or victim):

Holding the candle so that he [Van Helsing] could read the coffin plates and so holding it that the sperm dropped in white patches which congealed as they touched the metal, he made assurance of Lucy's coffin.
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.197)

'Sperm', of course, refers here to the 'sperm' candle (which used ointment from the sperm whale) in use in the nineteenth century, but it has a double signification here and alerts the reader the concealed sexual impulses of the male 'operators', united in their common desire for Lucy.

Several days of investigation follow, during which the men see the now wholly sexualized Lucy about her new 'career': 'the career of this so unhappy lady is but just begun' (career: prostitution?), remarks Van Helsing, sympathetically. She is now Medusa with a look that 'could kill'. Gone is the flirtatious, two-dimensional and empty-headed girl of the earlier chapters. The girl has become the woman: voluptuous, languorous and fully sexualized. She is terrifying. After this scene Seward speaks for the alliance:

At that moment the remnant of my love passed into hate and loathing; had she then to be killed, I could have done it with savage delight.
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.211)

He does not have to wait long to satisfy this fantasy of delight. The men return the following night (significantly the night after Lucy's intended wedding) to complete the task. Van Helsing bring the stake 'some two and a half inches thick and about three feet long...

sharpened to a fine point'. (Why the need for such a precise record of proportions?) To Seward, Van Helsing's medical preparation is both 'stimulating and bracing'. Arthur, of course, as Lucy's fiancé, is the only 'proper' agent for this 'sexual' operation. The other men stand around voyeuristically, chanting a missal, emphasising the ritualistic nature of the operation:

he placed the stake over the heart... as I looked I could see its dint in the white flesh. Then he struck with all his might. The Thing in the coffin writhed; and a hideous blood-curdling screech came from the opened red lips. The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth clamped together till the lips were cut and the mouth was smeared with crimson foam. But Arthur never faltered. He looked like a figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it... Finally it lay still.
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.216)

The rhythm of the passage betrays Seward's voyeuristic and sadistic 'delight'. Moreover, the allusion to Thor is well-placed; the god of thunder of the Viking race, notorious for its mass rapes and plunderings⁶³. The text displaces the enjoyment of such violent sexuality by insisting that the 'operation' is performed by men of high honour and social standing and that it is professional: a medical operation led by the renowned Van Helsing, free from desire.

The Jewel of Seven Stars⁶⁴ has an almost identical 'operation' scene. Here a sarcophagus containing an Egyptian Queen, centuries old, is opened by a group of scientists, Egyptologists and a lawyer. Margaret, who is reputed to be a reincarnation of the Queen and identical to her, is anxious lest the unwrapped Queen should be vulnerably naked:

'you are not going to unswathe! All you men... and in the glare

of light! Just think, father, a woman! All alone! In such a way! In such a place! Oh, its cruel, cruel!"
(The Jewel of Seven Stars, p.220)

The effect of such unravelling, of course, (as Margaret is evidently all too aware) is to reveal the semi-naked body of the Queen, a body identical to Margaret's, in the presence of her father and fiancée. Somewhat contradictorily, she has asked her fiancé, Ross, to be present at this unveiling:

'You may be glad later on that you were present tonight.'
(The Jewel of Seven Stars, p.222)

Ross, the narrator, is thus able to describe the naked Queen/ the body of his fiancé :

We all stood awed at the beauty of the figure which save for the face-cloth, now lay completely nude before us!... It was not right that we should be there, gazing with irreverent eyes on such unclad beauty. It was indecent; it was almost sacrilegious! And yet the wonder of that beautiful form was something to dream of!... This woman was the image of Margaret.
(The Jewel of Seven Stars, pp.225-26)

Although there is a violation of nakedness, no actual violence is done to the dead body of the dead Queen/ Margaret, but in a confused final scene, the room is filled with thick white mist. Nobody can see and when it clears the body has disappeared. Just what did happen beneath the blanket of white mist, the reader will never know. The epilogue narrates the marriage of Ross and Margaret, but one might imagine that the sexual consummation had perhaps taken place earlier, with the exposure of Margaret's naked body and the falling of the curtain of mist.

Stoker's texts, then, contain lurid, codified fantasies about violence towards women, especially sexual women, women who 'ask for it'. Marcus and Jeffreys demonstrate how the work of the sexologists contain pornographic fantasies. Marcus suggests that turn-of-the-century sexology has much in common with turn-of-the-century pornography. Stoker's text shares the same cultural moment⁶⁵.

Another result of turn-of-the-century sexology was the 'rediscovery' of female sexuality and the corresponding sexualization of women. A splitting sets in between those women who are expected to be sexual and those who are expected to be asexual. Sexology tends to classify in terms of race and class: women from the working classes were seen to be more sexual than women from the middle classes, as were women from less 'developed' cultures. Pornography reflects such assumptions. The work of sexology, then, adapted itself to the status quo: the middle class wife must be kept asexual, pure and uncorrupted for her work as reproducer, whereas the prostitute is assumed to be sexual, insatiable and impure, to cater for the needs of the middle class male. There was consequently a huge divide between the fallen and the pure woman, primarily a class divide. Acton, the famous Victorian doctor, writes that the man 'need not fear that his wife will require the excitement... of a courtesan', for:

I should say that the majority of women (happily for them) are not very much troubled with sexual feeling of any kind... there are a few women who have sexual desires so strong that they surpass those of men... I admit, of course, the existence of sexual excitement terminating even in nymphomania, a form of insanity...⁶⁶

Nymphomania became a popular topic for sexology. It existed, of course, outside the circle of normalized acceptable behaviour, a space occupied by black women and prostitutes. Asexual women reside within the circle. To become sexual to this degree was to fall, to fall from middle-class womanhood and hence out of the circle, into that 'other' world. Sexology created the term 'nymphomania' in the last decades of the nineteenth century and it fed the concept with convenient case histories. Lucy, of course, sexualized, exhibits all the symptoms of nymphomania: from the pure woman she becomes the fallen and insatiable woman. She is lustful, voluptuous, demands that Arthur come to her and finally absorbs the 'blood' of four men. Auguste Forel writes of nymphomaniacs:

Nymphomaniacs often have polyandrous instincts and they then become more insatiable than men⁶⁷.

and Lombroso and Ferrero agree that:

Nymphomania transforms the most timid girl into a shameless bacchante⁶⁸.

Lucy's case history is a peculiar one. Before Dracula's attack she laments:

Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble? But this is heresy and I must not say it.
(Dracula; letter from Lucy to Mina, p.59)

During her transformation, the duality of her sexuality develops. Whilst awake she clutches the circle of garlic flowers to her, whilst asleep she pushes them away. At night she is forever looking for a means to escape. Seward, the doctor of the insane, well used to formulating closely observed case studies, notes this duality:

I noticed the difference in her between sleeping and waking.

Whilst asleep she looked stronger, although more haggard and her breathing was softer, [when awake] she looked her old self, although a dying one (Dracula; Seward's diary, p.153).

In a sense Lucy must die, to pass into the realm of the Undead, outside the circle. There is no longer a place for her inside the circle for she is middle-class woman and sexual/predatory woman. There is no classification for her, once sexual she can no longer exist in a society which cannot acknowledge her existence.

Once vampirized Lucy becomes that 'shameless bacchante' seen from afar through the trees of Highgate Cemetery, a grotesque parody of the classical bacchante. She is a 'nightmare' of Lucy (or a fantasy of Lucy?):

the bloodstained, voluptuous mouth - which made one shudder to see - the whole carnal and unspiritual appearance.
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.214)

She is now pure, sexual body. Her spirit, her conscience, her morality have been lost and this makes Seward shudder. Seward is constantly shuddering when he sees the transformed Lucy - one wonders whether this is a symptom of fear or of desire. Behind such fantasies of released female sexuality, released from the restrictions of middle-class morality and conscience, lie both emotions, of course: fear and desire. Behind such fantasies lies the spectre of the New Woman, demanding the recognition of autonomous female sexuality: the New Woman who will some day 'do the proposing herself' (Dracula, p.89). It is perhaps no coincidence that 1897, the year of the publication of Dracula, saw the amalgamation of the different suffrage societies into the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies⁶⁹. The New Woman was, moreover, widely believed

to be sexually and morally degenerate. Mrs Lynn Linton, for instance, terms the New Woman the 'Wild Woman' in a series of articles in The Nineteenth Century in 1891 and implies that her degeneracy is contagious:

Creatures impatient of restraint, bound by no law, insurgent to their finger-tips, and desirous of making all other women as restless and discontented as themselves... they would incite the women to revolt against the rule of seclusion⁷⁰.

Dracula splits its women, with the story of the sexual woman forming the first part of its plot and the 'revised edition' of the asexual woman told in the second part. In this sense Dracula enacts the exorcism and death of the bad New Woman in the person of Lucy - sexual, selfish, anti-maternal, predatory - and a replacement in the person of Mina, the good New Woman who retains her submission, her femininity, her maternity, whilst being granted a 'man's brain'. Such a New Woman can be assimilated into the circle for she does not abuse her place there, she does not threaten the status quo. She will not reject motherhood as the New Woman threatened to do, but will openly embrace it, becoming a mother (or sister) to all the men of the alliance, supporting, nurturing and loving them.

Peter Gay comments that 'doctors are invaluable witnesses to the fantasies of their culture'⁷¹. One might add that popular novelists are equally invaluable. Stoker was certainly no stranger to the medical profession: three of his four brothers were doctors and one was knighted for his services to the medical science. Aside from this, he demonstrates his familiarity with the works of Lombroso and

Ferrero, perhaps even his familiarity with craniology. He makes reference to Burdon-Sanderson's physiology, Ferrier's brain-knowledge and Charcot's hypnotism. There are sufficient references in the text to support the theory that Stoker was at least familiar with medical discourses about female sexuality, which was at this time receiving some public attention.

Part One examined the production of discourse in the text, showing how a discourse-exchange results in a discourse-circulation: a sealed circle of individual accounts, a sealed circle of words. Aside from this circulation of words, there are other fluid circulations in the text, of varying importance and complexity. One of the minor circulations or fluid exchanges is alcohol, for example. The alliance must continuously resort to bribery to acquire information from the working classes. Bribery is exclusive to the working classes, but within this group there are those who are bribed with money, and there are those who are bribed with beer. Harker, the principle administrator of alcohol, seems to know instinctively which form is appropriate. Those who are bribed with alcohol always indicate their preference in code, by emphasising their 'abnormal thirst':

another put in a rider that the thirst then generated was such that even the time which had elapsed had not completely allayed. it (Dracula; Harker's journal, p.227)

Jonathan Harker is similarly cryptic in his reference to bribery, when he indicates that he has shown 'some appreciation of their efforts in liquid form' (p.227). Alcohol is transformed into

discourse, it loosens the tongue and releases the information crucial to the alliance.

Jonathan Harker is the sole administrator of alcohol, whereas Seward and Van Helsing, the medical men, are the sole administrators of narcotics, primarily to women. Lucy is injected before her transfusions; Mina is given narcotics for her insomnia during Dracula's night attacks, which actually allows his attack by making Mina vulnerable and sleepy. Seward drugs Renfield when he wants to steal the pocket-book in order to read it. We never know who drugs the maids - we are led to believe it was Dracula. Certainly the administration of narcotics is almost always suspect: it enables Van Helsing to transfuse blood into Lucy and blood transfusions were very risky in 1897; it makes Mina vulnerable to Dracula's attack and it enables theft of property.

Finally, then, if Harker administers alcohol, Van Helsing and Seward narcotics, we are left with Morris and Godalming. As rich men their power is, of course, money: money for bribery, money for the purchase of steamboats, tickets, horses, carriages. Mina exclaims after the purchase of the steamboat:

It made me think of the wonderful power of money! What can it not do when properly applied and what might it not do when basely used! I felt so thankful that Lord Godalming is rich and that both he and Mr Morris, who also has plenty of money, are willing to spend it so freely.

(Dracula; Mina Harker's journal, p.356)

Money appears readily. Parents and surrogate parents die conveniently (Mrs Westenra, Mr Hawkins, Lord Godalming) leaving adequate finances to be absorbed into group funds. Without such financial support, the campaign against Dracula would not have been possible. The exchange of money most often shown is from the alliance to the working classes in return for information:

A half-crown tip put the deputy's knowledge at my disposal.
(Dracula; Harker's journal, p.263)

Again the bribery is transacted through Harker: Lord Godalming would not involve himself directly in such vulgar bribery, there are always middle-men (and middle-class men) such as lawyers to do this. Dracula, on the other hand puts his money (which presumably comes from the pile of ancient, multi-national gold seen by Harker in the early chapters and which itself has come from the concealed treasure of vanquished invaders under the Transylvanian soil which is marked by the blue flames on particular nights) into labour and into property. He pays his labourers to shift his coffins and requires no information from them.

The final, most crucial (and most complex), textual circulation is, of course, blood. As Dracula is the chief vampire, the principle threat superficially, one would imagine that all the blood routes lead to him. This is not so. The circulation of blood is as follows: Dracula attacks Lucy; her blood is lost and must be replaced; Van Helsing, Arthur, Morris and Seward transfuse their blood into Lucy, enough to make them weak and debilitated; Dracula drains Lucy again, thus acquiring the blood of these four men as well as that of Lucy;

finally the last description of blood-sucking we have in the novel is that of Mina sucking Dracula's blood, which contains Lucy's blood and that of the four men. Mina is the last to be seen receiving blood and as such she is the final receptacle of all the blood exchanges of the novel. It is significant, then, that Mina produces the only child of the novel, who bears the names of all the band of men⁷². He is the social production of the alliance. He contains the mixed blood of the alliance and the blood of Dracula also. Just as all contribute to the body of the text by producing discourse, all similarly contribute to the body of the child by producing blood.

It is not blood absorbed into the body of a woman that results in reproduction, but semen. There is, of course, a sexual undercurrent in all these blood circulations. 'In the unconscious mind', writes Ernest Jones, 'blood is commonly an equivalent for semen'⁷³. There are too many instances in the novel of the substitution of blood for semen to catalogue them all, but one or two will suffice. The most transparent instance is the episode in which Mina describes her attack by Dracula, which reads uncomfortably like a description of enforced fallatio⁷⁴:

'and with his long sharp nails [he] opened a vein in his breast. When the blood began to spurt out, he took my hands in one of his, holding them tight and with the other seized my neck and pressed my mouth to the wound so that I must either suffocate or swallow some of the - Oh my God, my God! - What have I done?' Then she began to rub her lips as if to cleanse them from pollution. (Dracula; Seward's diary, p.288)

(One wonders exactly what word Mina is avoiding using in this passage.)

A further example occurs in the description of the blood transfusions initiated by Van Helsing. Arthur is the first donor as Lucy's fiancée. A few days later more donors are needed, until after ten days Lucy has received the blood of four men. Van Helsing understands the sexual nature of these transfusions. He warns Seward not to upset Arthur's feelings:

'If our lover should turn up unexpected as before, no word to him. It would frighten him and enjealous him too'.
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.128)

After Lucy's death, in the strange King Laugh episode, Van Helsing explains why the fact that Arthur believes he has consummated his marriage to Lucy through the blood transfusions, should be so amusing:

'If so that, then what about the others? Ho! Ho! Then this so sweet maid is a polyandrist and me, with my poor wife dead to me... even I... am bigamist'.
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.176)

The implication is that this is more than a joke. Lucy is indeed a polyandrist having received the blood (semen) of the four men whom she desires.

There are instances where the money circulation and the blood (semen/sex) circulation overlap. In the case of Arthur's supposed consummation of his marriage with Lucy, we have seen how this is effected and sealed by blood, but it is also sealed with money. Arthur inherits Mrs Westenra's property through Lucy's death and the immediately preceding death of her mother. Thus although Arthur has no formal marriage ceremony, he does achieve a kind of bizarre double sexual consummation (the blood transfusion and the driving in

of the stake on what would have been his wedding night) and he gains possession of his 'wife's' inheritance. Money and blood overlap, too, in the close encounter between Dracula and his pursuers in the Piccadilly House. Harker stabs at Dracula:

As it was, the point just cut the cloth of his coat, making a wide gap, whence a bundle of bank notes and a stream of gold fell out. (Dracula; Seward's diary, p.306)

The use of a 'stream of gold' clearly demonstrates that gold here is a substitute for blood, which would normally stream from such a 'wide gap' (wound). Dracula seems to have money flowing in his veins rather than blood.

There is a similar overlap between sex and money (or desire and money) in Stoker's The Lair of the White Worm⁷⁵. Here the sexual desire of all the women of the novel is transformed into a predatory desire for money. Lilla and Mimi as a pair (cousins in this case), replay the same dichotomy evident in the portrayal of Lucy and Mina. There is more than a similarity of names: Lilla, like Lucy, is delicate, dove-like, the perfect victim, but also becomes predatory in the course of the novel, only to die soon after, vamped of all her strength by the hypnotic Edgar Caswall. Mimi is strong, resolute, religious. Like Mina she marries during the course of the novel, marrying a man very similar to Jonathan Harker.

In describing the victimization of Lilla by Caswall, Stoker is inconsistent. Caswall is literally killing the frail woman who, like a dove, must be protected from the talons of the hawk, Caswall. Suddenly, however, Stoker describes a dramatic change in her

character:

Mimi's marriage set her thinking; naturally she came to the conclusion that she, too, might have a mate. There was not for her much choice - there was little movement in the matrimonial direction at the farmhouse...[Caswall] was unmistakably an excellent parti, much better than she could have any right to expect. This weighs much with a woman, and more particularly one of her class.(Stoker, The Lair, p.132)

The authorial tone here lacks any register of surprise that Lilla should want such a man as this. It records her desire for a 'good catch' as if it were entirely natural and to be found in all women of her class. Earlier Stoker had described, in a similar tone, the same predatory attitude of the two girls towards Adam Salton:

Of course neighbours in the position of the Watfords knew all about Adam Salton, his relationship, circumstances and prospects. So it would have been strange indeed if both girls did not dream of possibilities of the future.(The Lair, p.30)

Lady Arabella March shares the same predatory desire for a rich husband as these two 'innocents', although she is treated less sympathetically. She, too, is pursuing Caswall, for Caswall is the best financial 'catch' around:

'Caswall is a rich man. Her husband was rich when she married him - or seemed to be. When he committed suicide, it was found that he had nothing left, and the estate was mortgaged up to the hilt. Her only hope is in a rich marriage.'
(The Lair, p.25)

This, of course, culminates in the sexual scene already quoted, with Arabella lying naked on her couch waiting for Caswall:

Edgar Caswall's life-blood would more than satisfy her for some time to come.(The Lair, p.145)

Edgar's 'life-blood' is, of course, his money which she will consume like blood, as she had already consumed the blood/money of her husband, leaving him mortgaged 'up to the hilt' (hilt: handle of

dagger or weapon/ 'tool' - phallus). Once drained of financial resources he is no longer useful, and he is found mysteriously shot in the head. Satisfaction, for Arabella, is the satisfaction of consuming the life and money of a husband, not satisfaction in love. Mimi and Lilla have a similar thirst, being interested only in men with 'prospects' and this, suggests Stoker, is a class phenomenon. Sex, money, class, and blood are inextricably linked.

Lucy is, of course, of a different mould to Lady Arabella and yet she shows similar characteristics. She, too, is a husband-hunter, hunting not just for herself but also for her friend, Mina:

We met some time ago a man who would just do for you, if you were not already engaged to Jonathan. He is an excellent parti, being handsome, well-off and of good birth... He is only nine-and-twenty and he has an immense lunatic asylum all under his own care.

(Dracula; letter from Lucy to Mina, p.54)

Lucy herself is being courted by Seward as she is being courted by two others: Arthur Godalming and Quincey Morris. All three propose and Lucy must choose between them. It comes as no surprise that she chooses the richest of the three and the suitor with the title. The triple proposals give her obvious satisfaction. She writes to Mina:

But for goodness sake, don't tell any of the girls or they would be getting all sorts of extravagant ideas and imagining themselves injured and slighted if in their very first day home they did not get six in the least. Some girls are so vain.

(Dracula; letter from Lucy to Mina, p.56)

Some girls, one might add, are also so greedy. Lucy wants all three suitors and laments her restriction in the same letter to Mina:

Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all the trouble? But that is heresy and I must not say it. (Dracula; letter from Lucy to Mina, p.59)

Lucy, then, like any good nymphomaniac has fantasies about polyandry. Like any good middle-class debutante she has fantasies about hordes of suitors and feels restricted in not being able to have them all. In some sense she does have them all. She absorbs the blood of, not three, but four men and Van Helsing is able to recognize her as the polyandrist that she always wanted to be.

In the long description of the blood transfusions there are constant references to manhood, strength and energy. Lucy's energy is being slowly drained. Van Helsing wants male blood to increase her strength. Van Helsing insists on the manhood of each donor for it is strong male blood that will restore Lucy's health. Van Helsing positively gloats over the manhood which he can see in Arthur:

as he took in the stalwart proportions and recognized the strong young manhood which seemed to emanate from him, his eyes gleamed. (Dracula; Seward's diary, p.121)

Each of the four men, after the transfusions, are debilitated. They must rest and restore strength. There is correspondingly a preoccupation about the amounts of blood being transfused and mysteriously disappearing:

'The whole bed would have been drenched to a scarlet with the blood which the girl must have lost to leave such a pallor as she had before the transfusion.'
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.123)

Van Helsing is careful to regulate the amounts of blood entering Lucy, making sure that each transfusion is 'appropriate' to the donor. Arthur, as Lucy's fiancé for instance, is allowed to give the most blood, which Seward, as second donor, seems to resent. He gains obvious satisfaction from the operation:

No man knows till he experiences it, what it is to feel his own

life-blood drawn away into the woman he loves.
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.128)

and resents being made to stop by Van Helsing, who watches him
'critically':

'That will do' he said. 'Already?' I remonstrated. 'You took a great deal more from Art'. To which he smiled a sad sort of smile as he replied: 'He is her lover, her fiancé.'
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.128)

Loss of energy is most often articulated in economic terms: "I cannot afford to lose blood at present" (p.141), says Seward, and Lucy's strength is said to be 'taxed' (p.158). The diagnosis of Lucy's illness is said to be: 'nervous prostration following great loss or waste of blood' (p.190). Life, too, is seen to be recorded in economic terms:

I began a new record. So it will be until the Great Recorder sums me up and closes my ledger account with a balance to profit or loss. (Dracula; Seward's diary, p.71)

God, then, is perceived as the Great Recorder or the Great Accountant, counting up points and entering them as profit or loss. Energy is similarly accountable, as is blood, for 'the blood is the life'.

To find an explanation for these rather complex connections and overlaps between money, energy and sex, we must turn again to the work of the early sexologists and here we find the application of an economic principle to sex⁷⁶. Energy is expendable, and as energy is bound up with manhood and virility, then these become expendable too. Masturbation, particularly, came under attack; it was an irresponsible waste of resources. The young male masturbator would

use up his vital supplies of semen and find himself reaching early impotence. Semen, like blood, was to be treasured and not wasted.

Peter Gay quotes Tissot:

Physicians of all ages have unanimously believed that the loss of one ounce of that humor [semen] is more weakening than of forty ounces of blood⁷⁷.

To have an orgasm was colloquialized in the nineteenth century as 'to spend'. Just as Lady Arabella's thirst for money is described in terms of life-blood which she dries up in her husband, Lucy's thirst for blood is similarly insatiable, as Morris exclaims:

'that poor pretty creature that we all love has had put into her veins [within ten days] the blood of four strong men. Man alive, her whole body wouldn't hold it!'
(Dracula; Seward's diary, p.151)

The fear is, of course, that her body would hold it and consume it, leaving the men weak and debilitated. Lucy becomes the conspicuous consumer of high capitalist culture, the vampire of high capitalist culture. She consumes blood, money and sex. She consumes vital resources. She is the bottomless pit, the preying mantis, the white worm. Such fears of female sexuality and female insatiability continue well into the twentieth century and are found articulated in the most extraordinary discourses. Here William Robinson, chief of the Department of Genito-Urinary Diseases at the Bronx Hospital, writes in Married Life and Happiness in 1922, that female desire for sexual intercourse more than once every two weeks is abnormal:

there is the opposite type of woman who is great danger to the health and even the very life of her husband. I refer to the hypersensual woman, to the wife with excessive sexuality. It is to her that the name of the vampire can be applied in the literal sense. Just as the vampire sucks the blood of its victims in their sleep whilst they are alive, so does the woman vampire suck the life and exhaust the vitality of her male

partner - or victim. And some of them - the pronounced type - are utterly without pity or consideration⁷⁸.

The application of the economic principle to sex extends to female sexuality, with the notion that women, too, have a limited supply of sexual energy (although not so easily identified as semen could be), and that when this is used irresponsibly, other functions such as motherhood would suffer. Masturbation and nymphomania would cause severe exhaustion, often fatal. Krafft-Ebbing, in Psychopathia Sexualis, reports the case-history of a girl who:

suddenly became a nymphomaniac when forsaken by her betrothed; she revelled in cynical songs and expressions and lascivious attitudes and gestures. She refused to put on her garments, had to be held down in her bed by muscular men and furiously demanded coitus. Insomnia, congestion of the facial nerves, a dry tongue and a rapid pulse. Within a few days lethal collapse⁷⁹.

This sounds very like Lucy's case history. Total physical debilitation was seen to be the key symptom of the female masturbator. Nicolas Cooke dedicated a good part of his life to rather suspect research into female masturbation, published in the 1870s as Satan in Society. He catalogues the symptoms of a female masturbator:

languor, weakness, loss of flesh, absence of colour, sad expression, panting at the least exertion and the appearance of incipient consumption⁸⁰.

Most masturbators, Cooke believed, were boarding-school girls (like Lucy and Mina) who had picked up the habit from others, for masturbation, like vampirism, is 'the contagious vice'. All forms of excessive sexuality and, in the case of women, any form of sexuality outside occasional, enforced, conjugal sex would lead to anaemia or

consumption:

The frequent exercise of the act of copulation leads directly to anaemia, malnutrition, asthria of the muscles and nerves and mental exhaustion. Immoderate persons are pale and have long, flabby, or sometimes tense features. They are melancholic and not fit for any difficult and continued corporeal or mental work⁸¹.

Lucy suffers from anaemia, of course, and gets progressively weaker, more melancholic and pale. Her insatiability, her immoderation are causing mental and physical exhaustion. Such women will, of course, like Lucy and the New Woman, reject motherhood and this rejection has a biological cause, for excessive sexuality will use up the vital energies needed for reproduction:

Sensuality has multiple and imperious needs which absorb the mental activity of a woman and by rendering her selfish, destroy the spirit of self-abnegation, inseparable from the maternal function⁸².

The turn-of-the-century male scientific establishments became obsessed with the degenerative effects of sexual stimulation in women. Such pleasure-seekers could no longer be the self-abnegating, nurturing baby-machines of earlier decades. Consequently society demanded that none but the fallen woman could find pleasure in sexual intercourse, which would use up the vital female energies crucial for the production of a strong master race. To enjoy sex became a sign of illness or of being fallen. Dracula articulates some of these obsessions. Like sexology itself, it is rather confused in its discourses. Dracula articulates both fear of and desire for active female sexuality. The sexualized female vampires are seductive, vital and fascinating, whereas Mina and the early Lucy are somewhat insipid and transparent in comparison. The same is

true of Lady Arabella, drawn with such strength and vitality. Yet these monsters must be destroyed before they can assist Dracula in creating a new empire of semi-demons: an empire of unlimited desire, peopled presumably by women such as these. Even the aging Van Helsing find himself uncertain when he is faced with the sleeping female vampires, faced instead with the textual ambivalence about the fate of these new creatures, these New Women:

Yes, I was moved - I, Van Helsing, with all my purpose and motive for hate - I was moved to a yearning for delay which seemed to paralyse my faculties and to clog my very soul (Dracula; Van Helsing's memorandum, p.370).

To return again to the motif of the circle as the frame of a culture, we can see how amongst other things, autonomous female sexuality is placed outside the circle, as something which cannot-be-but-is, which must-not-be-but-is. Female sexuality presses at the frontiers of a culture from which it has been excluded. It threatens invasion and the creation of a new order of beings, primarily (in male fantasy) predatory sexual women. It threatens to create a new empire of role-reversals, a world where some day the New Woman 'will do the proposing herself'. Stoker's text produces a confused discourse precisely because of this ambiguity towards sexualized women; like Harker who experiences the 'deliberate voluptuousness' of the vampire women as both 'thrilling and repulsive'. Such an invasion threatens cultural debilitation and sexual debilitation; it threatens cultural impotency and sexual impotency.

Part One described the radical structure of Dracula: the collage effect of its fragmentation, the insistence that the text forms 'simple history', pieced together from contemporary records, from 'within the range of knowledge of those who made them'. As demonstrated, I believe that the concealed fear of the novel is not that of the Transylvanian vampire, Dracula, but of what he might do to 'our women' and the cultural implications of such sexualization. We have seen also how the text produces a sexual discourse or product which, like the narrative structure, forms a kind of collage, a 'record', of turn-of-the-century conceptions of female sexuality made up from fragments of evolutionary theory, sexology and cultural prejudices. The sexual product is a hotch-pot of such beliefs knitted together to form one of the most prevailing and obsessive of our modern literary myths; a text which is a product of a unique historical moment which saw the birth of the definition and construction of female sexuality, and its institutionalization. The text of Dracula forms a simple history, as Stoker asserted, but not for his reasons. It forms a history because of its unique, sublimated sexual discourse; a collage or hotch-pot of cultural prejudices and fears. As fantasy, it 'traces the limits of [culture's] epistemological and ontological frame'.

CHAPTER 2

FEMALE DEGENERATION AND INVASION IN HAGGARD'S ADVENTURE FICTION.

I remember that when I sat down to the task my ideas as to its development were of the vaguest. The only clear notion I had in my head was that of an immortal woman inspired by an immortal love. All the rest shaped itself around this figure. And it came - it came faster than my poor aching hand could set it down¹.

She² was Rider Haggard's second successful novel, written 'at white hot heat' in six weeks, 'almost without rest'. Within months of its publication in 1887, the year of Victoria's Golden Jubilee celebrations, it had sold thirty thousand copies, and within ten years had made its author ten thousand pounds in royalties.

'An immortal woman inspired by an immortal love'...

Ayesha, She-who-must-be-obeyed, has lived alone in the centre of Africa for two thousand years, waiting for the reincarnation and return of her dead lover, Kallikrates, a priest of Isis whom she had killed two thousand years before. His crime?: that he had refused her gift of immortal life. His reason?: that he loved another woman, the Egyptian, Amenartus, his wife. Amenartus, having witnessed the murder of her husband, had returned to Egypt where she bore a child whom she named Tisthenes or the Avenger. The story has been passed down from father to son for two thousand years. The name has changed through time until it becomes Vincey, still the Avenger. At last Ayesha's long wait comes to an end. It is the late nineteenth century that produces the blonde superman, the reincarnation of Kallikrates, Leo Vincey, the British descendant of the murdered priest. Leo, obeying the patriarchal mandate passed down to him by his father, returns to the centre of Africa, accompanied by his

guardian, Horace Holly. The two men undergo a series of trials and near fatal adventures until they find the legendary queen ruling the Armahagger tribe in the middle of a vast, impenetrable swamp. The white queen is too beautiful for human eyes. She must be veiled from head to foot at all times for her beauty is fatal, a curse upon man. She does, however, unveil for Leo and Holly. Once recognized as Ayesha's lost lover, Leo has no hope of resistance. Ayesha disposes of his 'wife', a young native woman with a glare which proves fatal. Leo is now free to embrace the persistent queen over the dead body of Ustane. Ayesha reveals her plans: Leo must first be made immortal, he too must bathe in the Fire of Life, and then the two lovers will invade England and from there conquer the world. Ayesha takes Leo to the womb of the world, to the Place of Life, where, to reassure him of the safety of the fire she steps in first, only to be shrivelled up before their eyes. She becomes, by degrees, a hideous corpse, having the time, however, to swear that she will return, leaving Leo and Holly to make their way back to England in despair.

As promised Ayesha does return, although Haggard's eager public had to wait twenty years for the fulfilment of this promise. In 1905 Haggard published Ayesha or the Return of She³ in which the somewhat older pair, Leo and Holly, find Ayesha again. Leo, now forty, but still a perfect example of prime British manhood, discovers Ayesha ruling another lost race, this time in the Himalayan mountains. Leo, maddened with frustrated desire insists on consummating their love, before he has been made immortal, although Ayesha warns him of the

dangers.

He insists.

They embrace.

She kisses him.

He dies.

Ayesha, too, chooses death and the spirits of the two lovers are seen floating into the great flame of the volcano. Holly returns to England alone to complete the manuscript and then to die.

The story of Ayesha, then, spans twenty years and longer if one includes the other two novels in which she appears. Twenty years of desire: the frustrated, tormented desire of Leo for his elusive bride and the desire of the Haggard reader for more of this compulsive narrative. Dracula falls midway between these two novels and shares many of the common themes and preoccupations of She. Both, of course, were two of the best-selling novels of the late nineteenth century, although Dracula could not compete with the sales figures of King Solomon's Mines or She. Both are myths which concern immortal and alien figures: Dracula's history rivals that of Ayesha's. Both are foreigners and threaten the invasion of England and the world, thus articulating the invasion anxieties peculiar to this period. Both have imperialist concerns - these invaders threaten the empire in their desire to set up an 'alternative' empire: the empire of the 'other' or the 'alien'. Both were published in Jubilee years, peaks of public celebration of empire and patriotism.

Both novels dramatize imperialist concerns and nationalism but also correspondingly fears of invasion from without and degeneration from within. Ayesha both undergoes rapid degeneration and threatens degeneration in her role as 'the modern Circe', in her effect on her male victims. Dracula is degenerate and threatens degeneration in his effect on his female victims. Both threaten degeneration through the awakening of sexual desire, the sexual beast within. Both texts consequently play with the implications of female sexuality and role reversal. Both texts contain at their centre elemental and sexual forces, significantly forces which are immortal, which must be defined and enclosed by the narrative structure.

Like the critics writing on Stoker's Dracula, the critics of Haggard's She have had huge conceptual problems in seeking to define an adequate interpretation of the novel. The riddle will not be answered. Interpretations of the novel as allegory have been inadequate. They slip off the viscous surface of the novel. They are never quite enough. The traditional interpretation of She is to see it as a parable on the necessarily cyclic nature of time and of life and death⁴. Such an interpretation is fundamentally a philosophical one concerning cycles of time and the implications of immortality.

Similarly critics have competed to find a suitable title for the mysterious Ayesha. Morton Cohen calls her 'a female Prometheus...huge, cold and beautiful'⁵. W.E. Henley in 1890 called her the 'heroic Barmaid, the Waitress in Apotheosis'⁶. Etherington

calls her a 'Diana in jackboots'⁷ and perhaps most complex of all, Hinz calls her 'the post-Darwinian female Faustus'⁸.

Morton Cohen, Haggard's biographer, lists the impressive collection of people for whom She has taken on extensive imaginative significance. Jung, for instance, sees She as a classic dramatization of his concept of the 'anima' (the feminine force in man)⁹. Nandor Fodor sees it as a working out of the anxieties of pre-natal existence and the 'birth trauma': 'a beautiful allegory of the penalty attendant on our yearning to return to the womb'¹⁰. Leo Michael, as early as 1889, was prepared to see the novel as an allegory of the church¹¹. Freud includes in The Interpretation of Dreams an account of one of his own dreams in which the plot of She plays an important part and which also involves a pelvic operation leaving him paralysed from the waist down¹². Other critics such as C.S. Lewis, Graham Greene and Henry Miller have also responded to the allure of Ayesha, writing lengthy and impassioned appreciations.

Haggard was himself unsure of the interpretation of his novel. Most of his attempts to clarify the 'meaning' correspond to the traditional yet vague interpretations mentioned above, centring mainly on the problems of immortality, passion, reincarnation...They are always vague and half-hearted attempts and often contradictory.

Atwood in her article of 1965, is, like a few other critics, honest enough to admit defeat. She writes that She:

Reads like a Faerie Queene from which the supporting theological and political substructures have been removed: the

emblematic topography and the stylized figures are present but they have no specific referents¹³.

Her answer is to return to the possible sources - the earlier novels, but here too the answer is insufficient. Perhaps here lies the problem: that any attempt to read She as an allegory will end in defeat. The novel is both dense and incoherent in this sense. It is not consistent enough to survive as an allegory in any interpretation. It writes in its own negation. This is not to say that it negates itself. Nor is it to say that there is a deficiency of referents, rather that the problem of interpretation lies in the overproduction of referents, but referents of a particularly historical and cultural kind. No consistent attempt has been made, for instance to answer the problem of why this alien invader of 1887 and later of 1905, should be female. Whilst critics have specialized in the imperialism of Haggard's fiction, the Darwinism of Haggard's fiction, the attitude to race in Haggard's fiction, and so on, none have attempted to leave these disparate elements - imperialism, feminism, evolutionary theory, invasion anxieties - tangled up and interwoven as they are in the text itself.

Ridley writes of Rider Haggard and other colonial novelists that:

it was partly their lack of literary distinction and unthinking acceptance of current attitudes which permitted [them] to reflect so faithfully the currents of their age¹⁴.

To reflect the currents of an age faithfully is to reflect a web of entangled discursive threads. Such is the fabric of Haggard's She: a fabric of entangled threads which in their entanglement reveal the various ways that the discourses of imperialism, invasion fears,

fears of the New Woman and of unrestrained sexuality, evolutionary theory and its related scientific offshoots interconnect and intersect. Haggard's She, perhaps because of its lack of literary distinction, perhaps because it was written at 'white hot heat', perhaps because it was unedited, unrefined, pure, is a fascinating cultural document. Haggard's account of its conception is a good starting point: 'the only clear notion that I had in my head was that of an immortal woman inspired by an immortal love. All the rest shaped itself around this figure': Ayesha as centre of text, Ayesha as centre of 'all the rest', Ayesha as centre of a cornucopia of disparate discourses, Ayesha as centre of Africa. Haggard continues: 'And it came - it came faster than my poor aching hand could set it down': the sexual nature of the act of writing. Stoker's female vampire entreats 'Come, my husband, come'. Ayesha whispers 'Come' to her lover as she holds out her arms to him. Ayesha, 'an immortal woman inspired by an immortal love' whispers 'Come' to her creator, Haggard, in 1886, and he has no choice but to respond 'at white hot heat' and 'almost without rest'

1. THE DARK CONTINENT: EROTIC AFRICAN LANDSCAPE

Haggard writes of Africa. His career as a successful novelist began soon after his return from South Africa where he had lived between the years 1875 and 1881. He had been intimately involved in the political struggles in South Africa during these years, as secretary

to the Lieutenant-Governor of Natal. He had been on the team that accompanied Shepstone, the special commissioner of the Home Government, in the march on Pretoria in January, 1877, and the subsequent annexation of the Transvaal¹⁵.

Public attention had focussed on Africa during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Philip Curtin in The Image of Africa¹⁶ argues that it was Livingstone's report of 1857 of his missionary journey which had captured and retained the public imagination. With the political unrest caused by the first Kaffir wars, then the Zulu war and the first Boer war whereby Britain was forced to the retrocession of the Transvaal after its annexation three years earlier, public interest was focused on Southern and Eastern Africa rather than Western Africa. Popular magazines of this period, such as the London Illustrated News, catered for public demand with years of continual reporting of savage African life using visual images supplied by travelling artists.

Haggard's literary career began in the 80s when public interest in South Africa had reached a peak. By setting his major works in Africa he was able to exploit such fascination, and his fiction became part of a growing genre of colonial and imperialist fiction. Indeed Patteson credits the beginnings of this particular genre entirely to Haggard:

In the mid 80s, with the publication of King Solomon's Mines and She, a type of novel that might be called the imperialist romance first began to reach a wide audience¹⁷.

Patteson, in his analysis of this genre¹⁸, concludes that the imperialist romance can be reduced to twelve recurring plot functions and includes such features as the quest motif, the discovery of lost races, the importance of special scientific knowledge, romantic encounters with native women and the descent into caves or underground passages.

Furthermore:

A strongly androcentric, if not misogynistic, mystique permeates British writings on Africa, particularly during the nineteenth century¹⁹.

In such novels, Africa becomes the testing ground for white male adventure. Millman, in his thesis on Haggard²⁰, suggests another wider term for such colonial fiction. He terms it the 'male novel', to be defined as that which is 'written by men, for men or boys, and about the activities of men'²¹. He sees this genre as a 'conservative backlash to an overwhelming association of the Victorian novel with women, often made by people who neither liked novels nor women'²². Thus it can be seen as a reaction to the 'forces of feminism and radicalism'. Such novels describe male adventures out in a wilds where men will be men because there are no women about: thus the emphasis on male loyalty and camaraderie.

Almost all of Haggard's novels involve the quest motif: usually a band of men must journey into the centre of Africa in search of some thing or someone. They travel into unknown territory and into certain danger. Their physical and moral strengths will be tested at every point of the quest in a series of tests. In his autobiography

Haggard insisted that:

the quest for the divine...must (for the purposes of the story) be symbolized by a woman. You see, the thing must have a heart, mere adventures are not enough²³.

The secret-to-be-discovered is thus the woman - the object of the quest, the heart of the story, the centre of Africa. Although we can see that Ayesha is the respective 'heart' of She, there is a lack of central female characters in Haggard's adventure fiction such as King Solomon's Mines and Allan Quatermain - none that can be said to be at the 'heart' of the story. Yet women are at the heart of Haggard's fiction through the motif of Africa.

We have seen how the narrative structure of Dracula is intimately bound up with the treatment of female sexuality in the text. The same can be seen to be true of Haggard's She. Haggard's text has a layered quality. The editor receives the manuscript from Horace Holly. Holly in turn has received the preliminary information from Leo Vincey's father, who had received it from his father and so on. The narrative revolves around the opening of the box which contains the 'history' of Ayesha, left in trust for Leo, to be opened on his twenty-fifth birthday, when he reaches manhood. There is an increasing tension and suspense in the text as the day approaches. The box has an explosive quality:

'Now are you both ready?', I said, as people do when they are about to fire a mine. (Haggard, She, p.209)

Once opened the box reveals a series of other boxes each inside the first and finally the information they need for the quest to begin. The box tells of Ayesha who is to become the object of the quest.

Yet the box also contains a (health) warning:

He who would tamper with the vast and secret forces that animate the world may fall victim to them. (She, p.212)

Holly, Leo and Job, the ever suffering servant, decide to take the risk and to travel to the centre of Africa in search of their object the white queen, who is exploited as the secret-to-be-discovered, un-veiled, un-covered. She is also the reason for the text's existence, like Dracula. Without her there would be no discovery, no heart. The narrative, then, has a chinese-box structure. Narratives contain other narratives. This has its function. Haggard presumably used it to authenticate his 'history', just as Stoker had used the journal technique to authenticate his. But it has another more complex function in the structure of the plot: at the centre of this series of boxes within boxes is Ayesha herself. This destructive, invading, desirable being must be approached in this way, must be contained within various enforced strongholds. To reach her is to unveil her in many complex ways, but it is also to unveil oneself and to release her. The 'death' scene completes the un-veiling, the dis-covery, the un-covering. Ayesha is stripped to her essence in the centre or womb of the world, and the men un-veil the truth of her being, the horror of it.

There is a constant evocation in Haggard's fiction of the lifting of a veil and a corresponding anxiety about what will be found beneath the veil. In Jess²⁴, completed a month before Haggard began to write She, the heroine is described as 'uncanny', a 'riddle', 'Egyptian

.

Sphinx' and as an inscrutable veiled woman. The hero comes across Jess sleeping, half hidden by foliage, and as he gazes at her the authorial voice intervenes with a warning:

From here and there there is a human heart from which it is not wise to draw the veil - a heart in which many things slumber...Draw not the veil, whisper not the word of life in the silence where all things sleep, lest in that kindling breath of love and pain dim shapes arise, take form, and fright thee.(Haggard, Jess, p.45)

In Ayesha or the Return of She²⁵, Leo and Holly are warned about unveiling the mysterious Hes (Ayesha) by Oros the high priest:

'you and your companion come...of set purpose, seeking to lift the veil from mysteries which have been hid for ages...But if this veil is lifted, it may chance also that you will find what shall send your souls shivering to despair and madness. Say, are you not afraid?' (Haggard, Ayesha, p.100).

The heart of woman must be approached with care. The 'thing' behind the veil or in the box has an explosive quality. One never knows what one might be releasing. Temptation and mystery are exploited in such situations. Tension builds up. Suspense builds up. Curiosity is insufferable. It was curiosity that was responsible for the opening of Pandora's box, releasing sins and evils into a world previously peopled only by men and free from all discord. Ayesha is a Pandora figure. Her beauty is a curse. It is explosive ('beauty is like lightning...it destroys', Ayesha warns). In Ayesha, Hes is directly compared to Pandora:

Thus it would seem that Ayesha...was in truth but another blind Pandora. From her stolen casket of beauty...had leapt...a hundred torturing demons.(Haggard, Ayesha, p.157)

But the connection is implied in the earlier conception of Ayesha, in She itself, as Holly curses:

'the fatal curiosity that is ever prompting man to draw the

veil from woman, and curses on the natural impulse that begets it! It is the cause of half - ay, and more than half, of our misfortunes.' (Haggard, She, p.309)

The 'impulse', however, to draw the veil from woman, is uncontrollable. The horror must be confronted.

The first successful novel set in Africa in the late nineteenth century, after Olive Schreiner's The Story of an African Farm had been Haggard's King Solomon's Mines²⁶. It is a perfect example of the 'male novel' genre, dedicated as it is to 'all the big and little boys who read it'. It was bound in a matching volume to Treasure Island and had immediate success, selling 30,000 copies in the first twelve months and becoming Cassell's best title of 1885.

Allan Quatermain, the hero of this novel and its sequels, assures us in the first chapter that there are to be no (white) women:

I can safely say that there is not a petticoat in the whole history. (Haggard, King Solomon's Mines, p.14)

To make such a statement in the introduction clearly identifies this novel as part of Millman's genre of the 'male novel': a reaction against the woman-centred or woman-gets-her-man Victorian novel. This will be a novel of heroism set in a male world of scrupulous camaraderie and adventure. As Morton Cohen remarks (without, I suspect, intentional irony):

There was no heroine, nor should there have been one; penetrating Africa was strictly a man's job²⁷.

The penetration of Africa is to be the subject of Haggard's text, and of future novels of colonialism. Patteson writes that:

the imperialist romance is primarily a male-orientated genre. The exploration of hostile territory is often described in terms of sexual conquest...and for the imperialist romancers, the earth is the eternal feminine - the body to be conquered, penetration followed by possession. Haggard is no exception²⁸.

Thus whilst Quatermain insists there are no petticoats in the story, King Solomon's Mines does have its female body. That body is that of Africa herself, waiting to be explored.

Like Treasure Island, King Solomon's Mines has its crucial treasure map. Allan Quatermain receives the map from an associate who has received it from his ancestor, Jose Silvestre, a Portuguese political refugee. The map maker, Silvestre, has drawn the map in his own blood as he dies beside the 'nipple' of the legendary Sheba's Breasts, a pair of mountains in Africa. Such an extraordinary motif - death from starvation beside the primary source of sustenance, the breast - sensitizes the reader to the harshness and cruelty of this African landscape. It is a land that refuses to nurture and refuses sustenance to man.

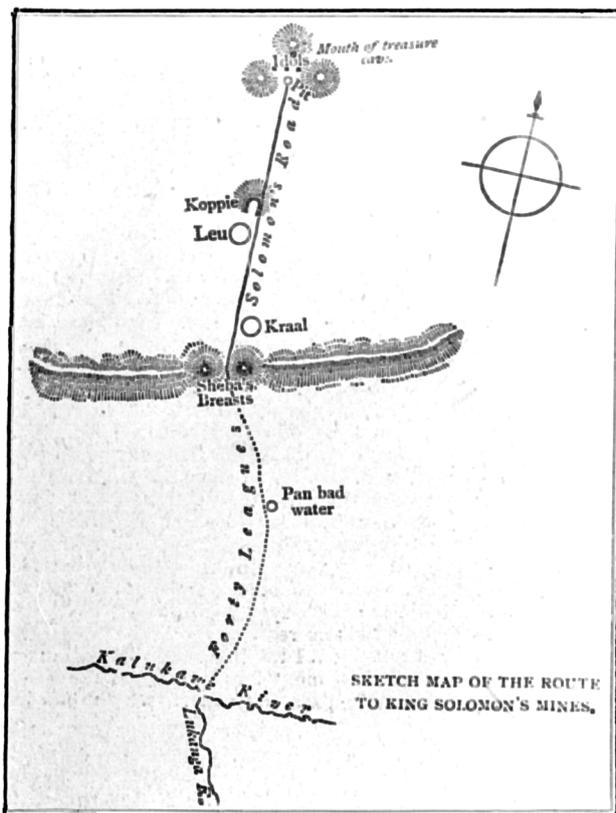


PLATE 1:
Sketch Map of the
Route to King
Solomon's Mines.

The map (see Plate 1), drawn as it is in blood, underscores the sexual nature of the quest. It forms an image of a headless female body turned upside down. The explorers must travel through Sheba's Breasts, down Solomon's Road to a triangle of mountains, called the Three Witches, where they must descend into the earth, into a pit, to find the treasure.

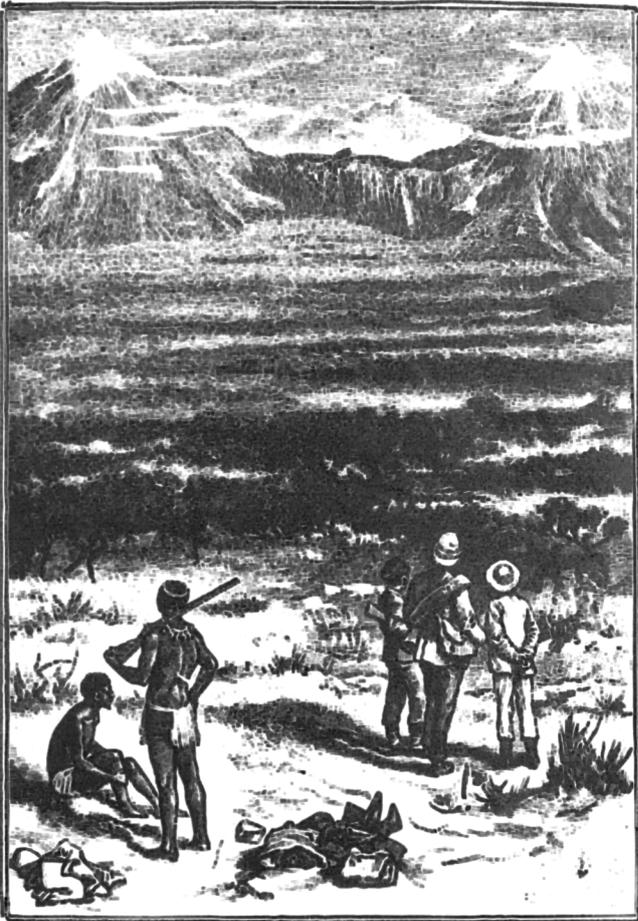


PLATE 2:
'For there were Sheba's Breasts'. Illustration from 1898 edition of King Solomon's Mines by Walter Paget.

Quatermain, Curtis, Good, and Umbopa reach a desert in their travels where 'the burning sun seemed to be sucking our blood out of us' (Haggard, King Solomon's Mines, p.52). Almost dying from thirst, the men come up over a ridge and perceive Sheba's Breasts glittering in the distance. This scene forms one of Haggard's 'aerial views', so

called by Pierce in his thesis on Haggard²⁹. These, according to Pierce, operate as part of an imperialist structure: a group of explorers look down onto the land that they are about to enter. The land stretches out before them invitingly. The men enjoy a time of 'peaceful and lofty contemplation' before they must descend to the struggle of the plain. Pierce notes that such contemplation involves temptation: the imperialist temptation of the desire to possess and conquer, echoing Satan's temptation of Christ, offering him dominion over the earth. This Olympian situation is never sustained in Haggard. The men must descend in order to confront their destiny.

Here Sheba's Breasts are seen by the explorers in the distance, inviting and promising sustenance (see Plate 2). Quatermain remarks:

I am impotent before its very memory [mammary?]....These mountains placed thus, like the pillars of a gigantic gateway, are shaped after the fashion of a woman's breasts, and at times the mists and shadows beneath them take the form of a recumbent woman, veiled mysteriously in sleep. Their bases swell gently from the plain, looking at that distance perfectly round and smooth; and upon the top of each is a vast hillock covered with snow, exactly corresponding to the nipple on the female breast...Sheba's Breasts had scarcely vanished into cloud-clad privacy when our thirst - literally a burning question - reasserted itself. (Haggard, King Solomon's Mines, pp.56-57)

Thus if the 'aerial view' is the imperialist gaze of desire, its object here is the vision of a gigantic recumbent woman, veiled in sleep and complete with breasts and snow covered nipples. The fantasy is that of a passive body, naked beneath the thin veil, and half-asleep. Africa invites; Africa is veiled but offers tantalising glimpses of herself. She beckons in her sleep, in her passivity. The body described here is clearly a white female body

(corresponding to a late nineteenth-century definition of white middle-class female sexuality), veiled and passive.: the male fantasy of submissive female sexuality. Yet 'Africa' offers sexual invitation and in her nakedness and recumbent position hints at a concealed sexuality that may prove to be 'non-white' ³⁰.

The men who dare travel further cannot say they have not been warned by the male travellers who have gone before them: later, on the breasts themselves, they find the dead Silvestre, preserved in ice:

a sad memento of the fate that so often overtakes those who would penetrate into the unknown.
(Haggard, King Solomon's Mines, p.64)

Silvestre's 'failure' does not deter them, it acts as an additional challenge to the virility of the explorers, but it also warns the reader of the perils of entering a 'foreign body'.

The heroes travel down Solomon's Road which will take them to the triangle of mountains, across Kukuanaaland - an 'earthly paradise'. After an impressive array of Haggardian adventures and trials, they force the witch, Gagool, to take them to the mountains. Only she knows the secret of the stones, the treasure to be found in the mines beneath the mountains. Centuries old, she is the initiator and the initiated, the hag-like brothel-keeper, the 'madam'. There is no entry without her. She both leads the white men to their confrontation with the body which is Africa, to their initiation into manhood, and to their death (as she believes).

Standing before these mountains Quatermain comments that their formation 'was evidently the result of a solitary upheaval' (King Solomon's Mines, p.149). Suddenly they discover 'a vast circular hole with sloping sides'...three hundred feet deep and half a mile in diameter' (Lady Arabella March's pit cannot compare in proportions with this one...). Gagool takes them to an underground cavern which is like the 'hall of the vastest cathedral' (p.151). Underground they discover the petrified bodies of past rulers, turning to stalactites. The cackling Gagool operates a hidden lever and the wall lifts up to reveal the treasure chamber. They are tricked. Gagool seals them into the chamber and is herself crushed to death. The men prepare to die in the perfect silence and darkness of their underground tomb. They are in Hell. Eventually, however, they find a labyrinth of hidden passages and, taking what little treasure they can carry, they struggle up and out through the huge pit. With Gagool's death the secret of the lever has been lost. The men can only predict that some future explorer (is this a challenge to Haggard's readers ?) will find the chamber and 'flood the world with gems'. The explorers return to England.

Greene writes of King Solomon's Mines as being an inner journey into the heart of darkness³¹, and Margaret Atwood as 'the journey into the unknown regions of the self'³². However much this journey may represent a journey into man's soul, it also declares itself to be a journey across and into a woman's body. The quest is both an imperial and a sexual one. The fantasy is that the body will be passive (as the explorers survey Sheba's Breasts), but the nightmare

is that it turns active and threatens death by trapping the heroes inside the treasure chamber.

Penetration threatens to release the dormant sexuality hidden in the female body (Africa) - this is itself a projection of the fear that for the white male explorers, confrontation with barbarism in Africa may release primitive impulses in themselves. There is anxiety about penetration itself and the violation of the body (the theft of treasure) which expresses itself in the nightmare of the violated body revenging itself by trapping the penetrators. There seems to be also anxiety about sexual disease - the fear of the penetrated foreign body bringing death to the penetrators. The solution is to get out of the foreign body before it consumes its white male prey.

Allan Quatermain³³, the sequel to King Solomon's Mines, has a similar structure and seems to express similar fears about sexually transmitted diseases and devouring female sexuality. Here the adventurers are sucked into an underground tunnel. The rushing subterranean river carries them along for miles through the mountain. They are nearly burned to death as they are carried past the Rose of Fire - a flame shaped like an open flower. Next they are attacked by giant crabs(!): 'a screaming, foaming, stinking mass of monsters' (Haggard, Allan Quatermain, p.513) try to eat them alive.

Most of the action in Allan Quatermain and King Solomon's Mines takes place in the open, allowing for a number of 'aerial views'. Pierce notes that the domain of Ayesha is underground: the burial

chambers of Kor. There are almost no 'aerial views' in She. Pierce adds:

From the time Holly announces that 'we are entering the bowels of the great mountain', he and Leo lose their sense of location in its dark, confusing recesses. Their wondering in the hot, circuitous passages of the mountain is the correlative of their search for an understanding of the veiled white queen³⁴.

Pierce only hints at the sexual content of this correlation.

To reach the burial chambers of Kor, Holly and Leo must first survive a storm as they approach Africa by boat. The 'furious tempest' creates breakers which are 'boiling up in snowy spouts of spray, smiting and gnashing together like the gleaming teeth of hell' (Haggard, She, pp.232-33). The water quietens until Holly describes it as 'heaving like some troubled woman's breast'. Later they must cross a swamp, led by Billali, the aged patriarch of the Armahagger tribe. The swamp threatens to 'swallow the wayfarer' and has 'an awful smell of rotting vegetation that hung about it, which was at times positively overpowering' (She, p.278). The only entrance to the domain of Ayesha, the burial chambers of Kor, is through an ancient drainage channel. Here they enter the 'bowels of the mountain'.

Ayesha takes them on another journey. They emerge from the 'long confinement in the caves' (She, p.377), travel through the ruined temples of Kor and into another underground opening, into:

a rut or fold of stone that grew deeper and deeper...then suddenly ended in a cave. (She, p.386)

The cave slopes 'inwards like the petal of a flower' and seems to

have been 'blown bodily in the mountain'. It is 'pitted with deep holes, in which it would have been easy to break a leg'. They enter a chasm 'jagged and torn and splintered in a far past age by some awful convulsion of Nature' (She, p.387). The chasm is bottomless. A spur juts out across the chasm, vibrating 'like a living thing'. A light penetrates the gloom:

I presume that there was a cleft or hole through which it pierced...Right through the heart of darkness that flaming sword was stabbed (She, p.388).

This is the Place of Life, the 'womb of the world'. Having experienced the horror of Ayesha's devolution, they escape, again through subterranean labyrinths, and return to the support of Billali who cannot help but point a moral:

Venture no more into lands that ye know not, lest ye come back no more (She, p.418).

This proverbial statement echoes the Silvestre-momento of King Solomon's Mines: 'a sad momento of the fate that so often overtakes those who would penetrate into the unknown' (Haggard, King Solomon's Mines, p.64).

The discourse of imperialism clearly expresses anxieties 'other' than directly imperialist ones. The discourses of entering into, penetrating, colonizing, conquering and dominating of colonized peoples draw upon sexual discourses for the expression of suppressed sexual and imperial anxieties. Imperialist fiction of this kind illustrates the complexity of the relations between sexual and imperialist discourses. There is no easy division of such discourses. The landscape of potential empire becomes the landscape

of 'pornographic' fantasies and of sexual terrors. The focus is clearly on the experience of the white male dominator or explorer, not on the experience of the colonized. The imperialist gaze (the 'aerial' view in Haggard) is also the gaze of the voyeur, the gaze that surveys territory about to be penetrated and appropriated. Stephen Marcus writes of the landscape, not of colonial fiction, but of late nineteenth-century pornography:

On the horizon swell two immense snowy white hillocks; these are capped by great, pink, and as it were prehensile peaks or tips - as if the the rosy-fingered dawn itself were playing just behind them. The landscape then undulates down to a broad, smooth, swelling plain, its soft rolling curves broken only in the center by a small volcanic crater or omphalos. Further down...is a dark wood - we are now at the middle of our journey...in its midst is a dark romantic chasm. In this chasm the wonders of nature abound. From its top there depends a large, pink stalactite, which changes shape, size and color in accord with the movement of the tides below and within. Within the chasm.. there are caverns measureless to man, grottoes, hermits' caves, underground streams - a whole internal and subterranean landscape...Thunderstorms are frequent in this region, as are tremors and quakings of the earth...The whole place is dark yet visible. This is the center of the earth and the home of man...Although I have in part composed of this catalogue of features with a humorous intention, I should add that every image in it is taken from a work of pornography, and that all of these images are commonplaces - they really are the means through which writers of pornography conceive of the world³⁵.

The passage could also be a description or summary of a Haggardian plot outlined above. Thus, the discourses of late nineteenth-century pornography, satirized here by Marcus, contain sublimated fantasies about the exploration and appropriation of passive landscape which is female body; imperialist fantasies plot the movement across and into a foreign landscape which, it is hoped, will receive the penetrator without struggle. The imperialist discourses of Haggard's adventure fiction are strikingly similar to the pornographic

discourses outlined above. Africa is the land where manhood is to be tested and proved: The Dark Continent. Interestingly, Freud had spoken of female psychology as the Dark Continent (mysterious, 'other', unmapped, to be explored) and Jung had written of Freud's 'passion for knowledge which was to lay open a dark continent to his gaze'³⁶. The search for knowledge is both an imperialist quest ('to lay open a dark continent') and a sexual quest ('passion... lay open... to his gaze'). The gaze is both the imperialist gaze, the appropriation of new territory for scientific theory, and the gaze of passion (desire) and of voyeurism ('to lay open... to his gaze'). I quote this sentence to show the interaction of sexual and imperial discourses even in so short a sentence as this, and that such metaphors are obviously not restricted to imperialist fiction of the period.

Haggard, like Stoker, had clear and ardent views about the inclusion of sexuality in fiction. He chose to publish these views in an article published in The Contemporary Review of 1887, entitled 'About Fiction'³⁷. It is an arrogant article in which he denounces every genre of fiction except romance. It made him unpopular and was attacked from all sides, but the material on the erotic content of fiction is worth noting in this context. As Stoker was to do twenty years later, Haggard attacks the 'naturalistic school of writing' as an 'accursed thing', for its portrayal of 'the carnal and the filthy' (Haggard, 'About Fiction', p.176). Zola is singled out for particular scorn and Haggard expresses his hope that this kind of writing 'will never take firm root in England' for:

Sexual passion is the most powerful lever with which to stir the mind of man, for it lies at the root of all things human; and it is impossible to over-estimate the damage that could be worked by a single English or American writer of genius, if he grasped it with a will...Once start the average mind upon this subject, and it will go down the slope of itself.
(Haggard, 'About Fiction', pp.176-77)

Degeneration of morality, it seems, is to be described in terms of landscape: 'it will go down the slope of itself'.

Unlike Stoker, however, Haggard is more moderate in his views. He calls for a 'middle path'. He denounces the fact that English fiction should be 'at the mercy of the Young Person'...it is 'a little hard that all fiction should be judged by the test as to whether or no it is suitable reading for a girl of sixteen' ('About Fiction', p.177). He calls for more freedom from censorship on the grounds that censorship encourages the circulation of lewd novels. Again, like Stoker, we find the same condemnation of sexuality in fiction, and the singling out of sexual passion as at the root of all things human. It is a natural force and must be kept in check. The 'naturalistic school' of France is the invader. It must be prevented from taking root in England:

If the seed of eroticism is sown broadcast, its fruit will be according to the soil it falls on, but fruit it must and will...the publications of the French naturalistic school are such seed as was sown by the enemy who came in the night season.
('About Fiction', p.177)

The discourse is one that we are familiar with: interconnections between invasion fears and sexuality, the same preoccupation that Stoker exposes in his article on censorship - the need to keep sexuality 'outside' and to protect what is 'inside' from corruption.

The plots of Haggard's novels studied here do not need to undergo psychoanalytical surgery. Their sexual content, though sublimated, declares itself openly when examined in this way. Imperialist discourses and sexual discourses work side by side; they are symbiotic. The fantasy is that these lands are passive and inviting. The fear is of possible incorporation (absorption into the body - corpus), just as Harker fears absorption-by-the-foreign dramatized in his journey into the foreign, into Transylvania. In Haggard's work the object to be penetrated threatens to become active and possibly also violent. It threatens to trap and consume the explorer.

Hugh Ridley, in Images of Imperial Rule³⁸, quotes a description of Africa from a French colonial novelist and presents it as an 'archetypal picture of the cruelty and harshness of Africa, repeated ad nauseam in all colonial fiction. Its most obvious feature is the insistence on intensity and violence...Africa is here the active agent' (Ridley, p.70). Ridley does not mention the sexual content of his chosen archetypal picture of Africa, but it is present. Haggard's Africa corresponds perfectly to this archetype:

This is Africa, man-eater, soul-destroyer, wrecker of men's strength, mother of fever and death, mysterious ghost which for centuries has sucked the blood of Europeans, draining them to the very marrow, or making them mad...The innumerable inlets breathing pestilence, which hide in the sickly shades of the mangroves are the ever-open eyes of Africa, like Sirens ready to engulf those hardy spirits who affront her.
(Ridley, Images of Imperial Rule, p.70)

Haggard's hardy spirits affront Africa: vampire, man-eater, soul-destroyer, mother of fever and death, Siren. Haggard's hardy spirits

confront Ayesha who is all these things and by extension the human manifestation of Africa itself, like Kurtz's savage woman:

in the hush that had fallen suddenly upon the whole sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul³⁹.

2. DO NOT BETRAY THE BROTHERHOOD

If Africa is the testing ground for white male adventure in colonial fiction of this period; if Africa can be seen as female body, and if male adventure involves a confrontation with this body; if Haggard's Africa threatens absorption and must be resisted and escaped from, then we may expect the same to be true of Haggard's representations of male-female relationships.

In She, Ayesha is exploited as secret-to-be-discovered, object of the quest and of desire. She is the eternally beautiful, the eternally irresistible. Yet she is She-who-must-be-obeyed and consequently She-who-must-be-feared. Fear of and desire for Ayesha are inseparable: the same ambiguity of response to be seen in the male reaction to the female vampires in Dracula. Two crucial scenes in She illustrate this tension.

Having entered the burial chambers of Kor, the home of the

mysterious queen, Holly is commanded to present himself to her. He enters the private apartments. The walls 'were entirely hung with rich looking curtains'...'here and there...were settees of beautiful black wood'. It is empty but evidently something stands behind the curtains in the recess, 'through which the odour of perfume seemed to float upwards'. Holly fantasizes about what he is about to confront:

some naked savage queen, a languishing Oriental beauty, or a nineteenth-century young lady drinking afternoon tea?
(She, p.295)

By implication all of these manifestations would be equally disturbing, especially to a man such as Holly who 'is supposed to be as much afraid of a woman as most people are of a mad dog' (She, p.194). Suddenly something begins to move:

The curtain agitated itself a little, then suddenly, between its folds there appeared a most beautiful white hand...with long tapering fingers, ending in the pinkest nails.
(She, p.295)

He hears a silvery voice, and sees the veiled figure of Ayesha. Although she warns him of the dangers involved, the curse of her beauty, Holly insists that she unveil:

She lifted her white and rounded arms...and slowly, very slowly, withdrew some fastening beneath her hair. Then all of a sudden the long, corpse-like wrappings fell from her to the ground, and my eyes travelled up her form, now only robed in a garb of clinging white that did but serve to show its perfect and imperial shape...On her little feet were sandals...Then came ankles more perfect than ever sculptor dreamed of. About the waist her white kirtle was fastened by a double-headed snake...above which her gracious form swelled up in lines as pure as they were lovely, till the kirtle ended on the snowy argent of her breast...I gazed above them at her face and...shrank back blinded and amazed...How am I to describe it? I cannot - simply, I cannot! (She, p.304)

Browne⁴⁰ remarks that the setting of this scene is 'like an expensive bordello' and that Holly's lengthy description of her unveiled figure (of which I quote only part) presents the various features of her body 'for the delectation of the reader'⁴¹. Thus Holly becomes the client inspecting the 'goods', but also surveying the landscape of desire and pornography. We may go so far as to compare it with an extract from the Victorian pornographic magazine, the Pearl, first published in London in 1879 and disappearing in 1880. Here the hero, in search of a harem, arrives at the capital of the Turkish empire. Ibzaidu, a Circassian beauty, is brought before him for inspection:

She was enveloped in a piece of fine Indian muslin and had a veil over her face.

I raised the veil and started back in amazement at the dazzling beauty of her face.

I then caught hold of the drapery in which she was enveloped and gently drawing it from her clasp, I threw it on one side and gazed with admiration on the most ravishingly beautiful face and figure I ever beheld. Hers was one of those oval, majestic faces, such as poets and mythologists attribute to Juno. I much admired her rich jet-black hair...contrasting singularly with the dazzling whiteness of her skin...Her breasts, luxuriously large...tipped with deliciously small nipples, of that fine pink colour which so strongly denotes virginity in the possessor.

Her waist was gracefully elegant and tapering; her belly fine, round...soft as the finest down. Her hips were very large and wide... her buttocks swelling out behind two hillocks of snowy white flesh...ankles tapering and a foot delicately small⁴².

Admittedly Haggard's description contains less overtly sexual detail, but both passages share the same delight in the opportunity to gaze at the unveiled female form which promises unlimited pleasures. The male gaze travels up or down the object: Holly travels 'up-country' and the Frenchman travels 'down-country'. This

is the imperial gaze, the gaze that delights in the passivity of its object, the gaze that maps ('two hillocks of snowy white flesh'), the gaze that travels ('my eyes travelled up her form'), and the gaze that explores ('I raised the veil'): the gaze of the connoisseur and the imperialist. It corresponds to the imperial gaze that Pierce⁴³ outlines in his analysis of Haggard's 'aerial views': the surveying of the land stretched out before the eye, veiled mysterious, tantalizing and above all, passive, waiting to be taken.

Corresponding to Haggard's portrayal of Africa (from passive to active landscape), this fantasy of Ayesha as passive object is disturbed when Ayesha turns active. Ayesha has extraordinary sexual powers. She plays with her two admirers with great pleasure, even her beloved, Leo. Over the corpse of Leo's murdered 'wife', she chooses to demonstrate these powers:

'Look now on me Kallicrates!' and with a sudden motion she shook her gauzy covering from her, and stood forth in her low kirtle and her snaky zone...rising from her wrappings, as it were, like Venus from the wave...or a beatified spirit from the tomb. She stood forth, and fixed her deep and glowing eyes upon Leo's eyes, and I saw his clenched fists unclasp, and his set and quivering features relax beneath her gaze. I saw his wonder and astonishment grow into admiration, and then into fascination, and the more he struggled the more I saw the power of her dread beauty fasten on him and take possession of his senses, drugging them, and drawing the heart out of him... Once more she stretched out her arms to him and whispered 'Come', and then in another few seconds it was over. I saw him struggle - I saw him even turn to fly; but her eyes drew him more strongly than iron bonds, and the magic of her beauty and concentrated will and passion entered into him and overpowered him - ay, even there, in the presence of the body of the woman who had loved him...but he cannot be blamed too much...the temptress who drew him into evil was more than human.
(She, pp.357-58)

Ayesha fixes her eyes on Leo, she fastens the power of her beauty on

him. She takes possession of his senses. She draws the heart out of him. She stretches out her arms to him and draws him closer. She enters into him and overpowers him.

Leo unclasps his hands, relaxes, then struggles, is fascinated, struggles again, tries to escape, but cannot be blamed.

Ayesha is active, overpowering, penetrating, and takes possession.

Leo is passive, struggles weakly, but is overpowered.

There is a role-reversal here, similar to the one we saw in Dracula, as Harker is approached and caressed by the three vampire women, who similarly drug his senses. Their object is to draw the blood out of him (rather than the heart in Leo's case). Both Harker and Leo play passive to the active powers of their seductresses.

These two passages illustrate the ambiguity in the text towards Ayesha. She is both desired and feared, even loathed. She is both virgin goddess and hag. She is associated with symbols of evil: the double-headed snake, her snake-like movements, her corpse-like appearance, the references to Circe. She twice performs ceremonies which imitate the black mass. This ambiguity is dramatized in one of Holly's dreams (the dream sequences form tableaux / emblems of what is happening in the plot), in which he dreams of:

a veiled form...always hovering, which from time to time, seemed to draw the coverings from its body, revealing now the shape of a lovely blooming woman, and now again the white bones of a grinning skeleton. (She, p.272)

Ayesha's 'death' confirms Holly's suspicions. The virgin-hag tension

is resolved. Ayesha's identity is revealed. This dream is part of a relentless series of associations between sexuality and death in the novel. Sexual embrace literally signifies death at almost every point in the novel.

The Armahagger tribe, according to ancient custom, try to 'hot-pot' Mohamed, the Arab guide who accompanies Leo and Holly. Aside from custom it is an opportunity for female revenge: one of the Armahagger women has been rejected by Job and, insulted, she plans revenge. The guests are invited to a feast at which, unknown to them, Mohamed is to be sacrificed. The revenging woman first plays with the victim, she:

began to fondle him, patting his cheeks and calling him by names of endearment, while her fierce eyes played up and down his trembling form...I saw Mohamed turn white.
(She, p.pp.264-65)

The active female gaze echoes both Holly's gaze, as his eyes travel up Ayesha's form, and Ayesha's gaze as she draws the heart out of Leo. Here Mohamed turns white as the female gaze draws the blood from him. Mohamed is held down by the woman and the heated pot is placed over his head. In the confusion Holly fires his gun at the woman and the bullet passes through her and into him, killing them both.

In the ensuing battle Ustane throws herself on top of Leo, her 'husband' (according to Armahagger law), and the natives then attempt to drive a spear through them both so that they, too, shall be wedded in death. In the tombs of Kor Holly discovers an embalmed

couple with an inscription above: 'Wedded in death'. The instances are too numerous to mention. She is full of sexuality being asserted only to be stifled in some gruesome manner.



PLATE 3:
'With a murmured cry of "Husband" Ayesha cast her arms around her lover's neck'. Illustration by Maurice Grieffenhagen from 1905 edition of Ayesha: The Return of She.

The motif of the outstretched arms of the female (signifying active female sexuality) corresponds to the same pattern. The woman promises sexual fulfilment and gives death, just as Africa promises passivity and threatens death. In the passage quoted above Ayesha holds out her arms to Leo and whispers 'Come!' in order to overpower him. Indeed she even holds out her arms to him in the final 'death' scene, as she turns into a corpse. Leo recoils in horror but one has to admire her persistency. In Ayesha Leo is finally killed by the

passion of her embrace (see illustration from Ayesha of this killing embrace: Plate 3). The motif of the outstretched arms is paralleled in Dracula: it is the main distinction that the novel makes between the innocent Lucy and the vampire Lucy. Voluptuous and sexualized, she holds out her arms to Arthur and begs him to come to her. She promises the fulfilment of desire but will make him Undead, a vampire, in the embrace: the embrace of death.

Millman writes that one of the characteristics of the 'male novel' is the fear of female sexuality and the consequent need for men to band together in order to protect themselves. Women:

become the enemy; so threatening are their attempts to compromise the essential maleness of adventuring...In a world where women exist, there is an urgent need for a kinship among men that will combat the forces of femininity...men must love one another or die at the hands of the woman⁴⁴.

Male friendships are of supreme importance in Haggard's adventure fiction, perhaps because of its intended market: King Solomon's Mines is dedicated to 'all the big and little boys who read it'. This is a world of male adventure and camaraderie. In Dracula, too, the alliance of men working together to expel Dracula is of great importance. They band together to protect their women from Dracula, but they also band together to protect themselves and the world from the advance of the vampire women. Even before they reach Africa, when Leo is only five, Holly determines to protect his relationship with Leo from women:

I would have no woman to lord it over the boy and steal his affections from me. (She, p.205)

The implicit fear, then, is both the fear of female power and domination and the fear of the theft of affection. In the absence of women, Leo becomes everything to Holly: son, friend, companion, fellow traveller.

A secondary fear in Holly's mind and in this male world is that contact with women will effeminize the man and sap his moral strength. This is precisely the effect that Ayesha has on her victims. Her power results in subjugation, degradation and demoralisation. Ayesha represents 'the disintegrative lure of the senses'⁴⁵, as Billali warns:

'Flee from [women] for they are evil and in the end will destroy thee.' (She, p.273)

Holly is horrified at the effect that Ayesha has on Billali, who crawls into her presence on his hands and knees 'after the fashion of an Irishman driving a pig to market' (She, p.294), and refuses to debase himself before her:

I was an Englishman, and why...should I creep into the presence of some savage woman as though I were a monkey...it would have been a patent acknowledgement of my inferiority. (She, p.294)

Within an hour of his meeting Ayesha, Holly has acknowledged his inferiority and is 'babbling confusedly', however. He calls her 'this modern Circe' and this is precisely her effect: she reduces men to a state of bestiality and desire, she threatens the moral sense and male camaraderie. Leo, recovering from his utter abandonment and desire for Ayesha in the scene quoted earlier, 'was not so lost as to be unaware of the depth of degradation to which he

had sunk' (She, p.358). Holly begins to realise that Ayesha's curse has made him 'rent by mad and furious jealousy' towards Leo. She has come between the two companions and Holly realises that:

The woman had confounded and almost destroyed my moral sense, as she was bound to confound all who looked upon her superhuman loveliness. (She, p.357)

Ayesha herself is marked by her lack of moral sense and this appears to be contagious. She will destroy the moral sense of all those who look upon her. She will destroy manhood and male camaraderie signified by moral sense.

In Ayesha: The Return of She⁴⁶, Leo pines away under Ayesha's influence. He cannot consummate his desire so it is 'little wonder that Leo lost appetite, grew thin and pale and could not sleep' (Ayesha, p.149). Later Holly notes that he has become, like Ayesha, more 'ethereal'. His appearance is changing:

It was no longer that of the Leo with whom I was familiar - the deep-chested, mighty-limbed, jovial, upright traveller, hunter and fighting man...These things were still present indeed, but the man was changed and I felt sure that this change came from Ayesha, since the look on his face had become exceeding like to that which often hovered on hers at rest. (Ayesha, p.184)

This sounds strangely like the vampiric transformation: Leo's manhood and masculine identity are being sapped, making him weak, pale, ethereal and effeminized.

Similarly the effect of women like Ayesha is to weaken the loyalty of men for each other. In Allan Quatermain⁴⁷ the dependable Good (Bougwan) comes under the influence of the evil Sorais. He is 'bewitched by her beauty' and is no longer able to distinguish

between good and evil:

'now had Bougwan become a woman, and no longer knew the good from the evil.'(Haggard, Allan Quatermain, p.580)

By implication, then, to become a woman is to lose a sense of morality. Good is no longer to be trusted and has become Sorais' 'tool':

no more dreadful fate can befall a man than to become the tool of an unscrupulous woman, or indeed of any woman.
(Allan Quatermain, p.584)

Umslopogaas, the Zulu warrior, tells Good a parable based on his own life history which tells of the betrayal of the male band under the influence of a woman. Such a man would become, and deserves to be, an outcast and his name cursed *from generation to generation*. Good repents, asks forgiveness, is 'cured'. He denounces Sorais, 'determined at last to act like a loyal man'.

This parable and the injunction 'do not betray the brotherhood' lie at the root of all Haggard's adventure stories: 'do not be seduced away from the brotherhood by women'. Women, by implication, will always be trying to break through male camaraderie, to disrupt the perfect circle of male loyalty.

In Ayesha Holly and Leo spend some time in a lamasery high in the Himalayan mountains. Here a group of celibate lamas have denounced the company of women in their attempts to reach Nirvana. Here a lama tells them of his encounter with Ayesha in a previous incarnation. She, it appears, had unveiled for him, too, leaving him cursed with desire:

'I have never forgotten that priestess and she has been a great

hindrance to me through many ages, delaying me upon my journey to the other side, to the shore of salvation.' (Ayesha, p.22)

As he remembers, he is seized by panic:

'Nay, I will say no more. Oh! my sin, my sin! I am slipping backward and you draw my black shame out into the light of day. Nay, I will confess it...that woman, if woman she were, lit a fire in my heart which will not burn out; Oh! and more, more.'
(Ayesha, p.22)

When Leo and Holly announce that they are about to leave the lamasery to go in search of this same woman, the lama gives them an impassioned warning:

'Brother Leo, if you win her, it will be but to lose, and then the ladder must be reclaimed...Oh! bide here and pray with me. Why dash yourselves against a rock...?' (Ayesha, p.29)

The two heroes bravely renew their commitment to the quest. The lama resignedly goes on with his warning:

'Then brethren, go keep your tryst; and when you have reaped its harvest, think upon my sayings, for I am sure that the wine you crush from the vintage of your desire will run red like blood...
Rather should you desire to live alone in holiness until at length your separate lives are merged in the God unspeakable, the eternal bliss that lies in the last nothingness.'
(Ayesha, p.30)

For hundreds of years and separate incarnations this lama has been prevented from reaching Nirvana by the image of one unveiled woman. This image alone has been sufficient to ensure that he keeps 'slipping back'. The man attempts to climb the ladder of the spirit but will be forever dragged back by the woman, by sexuality, carnality and desire. Ayesha has invaded the all-male world of the lamasery. Even here the male is not safe. If She has invaded the male circle of lamas, hidden deep in the Himalayan mountains, what hope is there for man in society?

Women, in Haggard's fiction, are consistently associated with snakes, spiders and sirens. Whilst Ayesha appears to be the object of the quest, she is also that to be resisted, the single most powerful obstacle to man's struggle to reach his spiritual goal. Women will tempt men away from moral truths, from male friendships, from self-respect. She will demoralize and degrade. She will bring man down to her own level and trap him there. Ayesha is described in Ayesha as a siren luring the men to their doom. Holly says of Ayesha that he is 'too involved in the web of her fatal fascinations to say no even if [he] had wished'. Ayesha is described as a basilisk with piercing, killing eyes, and as Circe. In Allan Quatermain the Zulu warrior warns: 'a woman will swim through blood to her desire and think nought of it' (Haggard, Allan Quatermain, p.586).

If women are exploited as the enemy in Haggard's fiction then they are not just to be resisted but fought. Millman writes that Haggard's novels are:

the medium of an extraordinary psychic violence which includes the killing off of nearly every female character by the end. These killings are part of the adventure ritual; in them Haggard's usually tepid prose acquires energies one never would have thought it had⁴⁸.

This is the sublimated revenge of the brotherhood: not just to resist but to kill or to remove. In Beatrice the heroine commits suicide. In Cleopatra the heroine commits suicide. In Marie the heroine is murdered disguised as Allan Quatermain. In Allan's Wife the heroine and her alter-ego Hendrika, the baboon-woman, die, one from shock and the other commits suicide. Ayesha 'dies' twice only to return. In King Solomon's Mines Foulata and Gagool die

simultaneously. In Allan Quatermain Sorais is killed off...The list is endless. The description of these deaths are always lengthy and voyeuristic.

The quest of She is implicitly a revenge quest:

Seek out the woman and learn the Secret of Life, and if thou mayst find a way slay her. (She, p.214)

Amenartus had named her son Tisthenes, or the avenger. In the records of lineage the name changes to 'Vindex' 'which seems to have been adopted by the family after its migration to Rome as an equivalent to the Greek name Tisthenes'. Vindex becomes De Vincey which becomes Vincey. Holly notes:

It is very curious to observe how the idea of revenge, inspired by an Egyptian before the time of Christ, is thus, as it were, embalmed in an English family name. (She, pp.219-20)

Revenge is both the raison d'etre of this patriarchal lineage and the name ascribed to it. Leo has inherited an ancestry committed to revenge. He can neither escape this ancestral mandate nor the name ascribed to him. Holly's reason for accompanying his ward is similarly an aggressive one:

'I do not believe in the quest, but I do believe in big game...I've always wanted to kill a buffalo before I die.'
(She, p.227)

The quest becomes the hunt. Ayesha is very big game... the greatest shoot of the century.

Ayesha's appalling 'death' is the climax of the novel. It is unexpected and devastating. As Millman notes Haggard's prose

acquires extraordinary energies. The death scene covers several pages. It is this scene that has gripped the imagination of commentators. Henry Miller, the twentieth-century 'male novel' novelist, writes:

The chapter in which Ayesha is consumed in the flame of life - an extraordinary piece of writing! - is burned into my being. It was at this point in the narrative that I came awake - and remembered. It was because of this gruesome harrowing event that the book remained with me all these years. That I had difficulty in summoning it from the depths of memory I attribute to the naked horror which it inspired...One is privileged, as it were, to assist at the spectacle of Nature reclaiming from her victim the secret which had been stolen from her...

The veil which wraps her round, a veil which no mortal man has penetrated - her divine virginity, in short - will be torn from her, at the crucial moment...

I was pierced through - in the Place of Love, in the place of Beauty, in the Place of Life...Just as Ayesha had dealt death to her beloved instead of life,...so had I been dealt a 'little' death, I suspect, on closing this book some forty-five years ago...

Ayesha, consumed by the devouring flame, at the very source and fount of life, took with her into limbo all that was sacred and precious to me⁴⁹.

Miller has been robbed. In such a commentary the sexual nature of the 'death' scene becomes evident. It is interesting that this interpretation should come from such a twentieth-century novelist as Miller. It is 'burned into' Miller's being. It was at this point that he came awake, and remembered. It has evidently become the object of taboo since his first reading as a boy. Her virginity is torn from her (a familiar subject of Miller's novels) in the unveiling - the veil is torn. Miller had experienced a 'little death' in this first reading, had been 'pierced through'. Miller's first reading of She has evidently been a sexual experience. He both provides a sexual reading of this scene and is the sexual reader, the sexually aroused reader.

Ayesha's death comes just before the long-awaited unification of the two lovers. Ayesha had warned that until Leo becomes immortal they cannot 'mate':

'As yet I may not mate with thee, for thou and I are different and the very brightness of my being would burn thee up and perchance destroy thee.'(She, p.372)

Yet it is Ayesha who is burned up and it is Ayesha who is destroyed. The title of the chapter 'What we saw' emphasises the voyeurism of the writing, the male gaze. Ayesha is naked:

there she stood before us as Eve might have stood before Adam, clad in nothing but her abundant locks.(She, p.401)

In a sense, then, the two men are acting as Adam's nineteenth-century avengers. The pillar of flame can be heard in the distance:

On came the crashing, rolling noise and the sound thereof was as the forest being swept flat by a mighty mountain, and then tossed up by it like so much grass...Nearer and nearer it came...and now the edge of the pillar itself appeared. Ayesha...stretched out her arms to greet it... I saw the fire lap up her form...I even saw her open her mouth and draw it down into her lungs, and a dread and wonderful sight it was... The mysterious fire played up and down her...locks, twining and twisting...it slid along her pillared throat and delicate features...

But suddenly...a kind of change came over her face: she was shrivelling up...and she shrieked - ah, she shrieked! - she rolled on the floor and shrieked!...

At last she lay still, or only feebly moving...

She was dying: we saw it and thanked God...

Overcome with the extremity of horror, we too fell on the sandy floor of that dread place, and swooned away.(She, pp.401-403)

The prose suggests cathartic release culminating in the swooning of the two voyeurs (or participants?) as if in total (post-coital) exhaustion. The pillar of fire plays with Ayesha and then moves away leaving her dying. Ayesha's shrieks (repeated three times) parallel the 'hideous blood-curdling screech' of Lucy in the staking scene of

Dracula. Similarly both bodies writhe and contort. Both bodies finally lay still - Dracula: 'Finally it lay still' and She: 'At last she lay still' - this is the laying still of the vampire woman, literally: making still by laying. Both novels record considerable relief at this point and release. It is at this point that the excited prose calms itself. Both novels involve a group of male spectators who record the scene with immaculate detail. Both scenes take place on the 'marriage night': Lucy's staking takes place on the night after the planned wedding and Ayesha's 'death' on the eve of the planned consummation of the two lovers. Miller, too, as might be expected, is sensitive to the voyeurism both of the spectators and the reader: 'one is privileged, as it were, to assist at the spectacle...'. The reader is complicit. The reader assists, just as the spectators assist or participate.

Millman summarizes:

Viewed in a slightly different light, this description suggests the mingled qualities of rape, carnage and satisfaction and those final shrieks, wherein Ayesha's immortality is at last conquered, are like the terrible shrieks of pleasure⁵⁰.

Ayesha, as monkey with claws, foaming and gnashing, swaying her head like a tortoise (these are the animal analogies used), becomes an image of the sexually aroused, yet thankfully dying female. This is the final sex/death equation in She and this climax necessitates the death of woman. Ayesha had warned that consummation of desire may result in Leo's death. She is wrong. Male fantasy reverses this threat: it is she who must die. She-who-must-be-obeyed becomes She-who-must-die under the patriarchal mandate of revenge, but she must

die in a particularly sexually sadistic manner to suit her crime as object and subject of desire.

If the patriarchal mandate is revenge, then what are the motives for such revenge? If Holly and Leo are somehow implicated in the 'death' of Ayesha (and Holly certainly seems to be as narrator, voyeur, and the voice that records the relief at her death), then what are their motives? Holly has reasons enough. In the earliest chapters of the novel he records his interactions with society women. Two women are singled out. The first is a woman whom Holly overhears saying that the sight of his ugliness had converted her to the 'monkey theory'. The second is a woman who Holly had been engaged to. On hearing that Holly had lost his inheritance she had discarded him, brutally mocking his ugliness and revealing her solely mercenary interest in him. Holly's experience of society women, then, is of women as money-hunters and savage despisers of his ugliness.

It is this experience that confirms Holly as a misogynist and which influences his decision to exclude women from the care of his ward, Leo. Leo becomes a woman substitute for Holly and there must be no woman to compete with. This is precisely what Ayesha does: she steals Leo away from Holly. She steals Holly's primary source of love, affection and companionship. She comes between the two men so that Holly is never quite sure where his jealousy lies: jealousy towards Leo for being Ayesha's lover, or jealousy towards Ayesha for being Leo's lover? Ayesha has broken male bonds, she is the wedge that has been forced between the two men. She must be removed.

Ayesha's powers have degraded and demoralized the two men, particularly Holly who does not even have the compensation of her love. Ayesha has demonstrated her absolute power over him by making him 'creep' and 'babble' in her presence: a 'patent acknowledgement of [his] inferiority'. Ayesha has overpowered him and made him inferior. She has degraded him. The text (Holly's text) takes its revenge. Earlier Holly had likened himself to a monkey in her presence. Now it is she who is the monkey, no higher than his knee.

Holly's quest is also, in some senses a spiritual one. Partly out of the necessity of his ugliness he has relinquished (or tries to) the pleasures of the flesh in the search for a higher truth. His quest is to 'loose the prisoned pinions of the soul and soar to that superior point...to cast off this earthly robe...to have done forever with these earthly thoughts and miserable desires'. Holly's quest is to expel desire and attain spiritual heights above the level of desire. Desire itself can only drag him back, as the lama is dragged back or slips back from this spiritual height. Holly's purpose, then, is to hunt down Ayesha as desire and to expel Ayesha as desire.

With Ayesha's 'death' the reversal of sexual power is complete.

Sandra Gilbert sees this novel as:

one of the century's literary turning points, a pivot on which the ideas and anxieties of the Victorians began to swivel into what has come to be called the 'modern'⁵¹.

She sees this scene ('the ceremonial sexual act that brought about Her "reduction" or "devolution"') as the forerunner of a number of

similar scenes in turn-of-the-century and modernist tales: Wilde's Salome (1894), MacDonald's Lilith (1895), Stoker's Dracula (1897), T.S. Eliot's 'The Love Song of St. Sebastian' and D.H. Lawrence's 'The Woman Who Rode Away':

In all these works, a man or a group of men must achieve or at least bear witness to a ceremonial assertion of phallic authority that will free all men from the unmaning enslavement of Her land⁵².

The voyeuristic ceremony, the imperial gaze. In Dracula the band of men collect and gather around the contorting figure of Lucy chanting a missal. In She the ceremony of betrothal is immediately followed by the ceremonial and sexually sadistic 'death'. The prose exposes its voyeuristic complicity. The prose becomes active, excited. It will not be satisfied until it can record the words of relief and release from female power: 'at last (finally) she (it) lay still'.

3. TOUCHES OF KINSHIP: DISCOURSES OF DEGENERACY IN HAGGARD'S

FICTION

The journey into Africa is, then, both a journey into Africa as female body and a revenge quest; a quest which entails both locating Ayesha as desire and expelling Ayesha as desire. Such a novel dramatizes the banding together of men to resist the moral degradation of women and dramatizes the extraordinary violence to women latent in the text/s. It dramatizes male fantasy but male

fantasy of a particularly historical kind. Haggard's novels of this period and the male fantasies inscribed within them are defined and contained by the culture in which they were produced. As Ridley states, popular colonial novelists, because of their lack of literary polish, are closer to cultural preoccupations and anxieties⁵³. It is not enough to say that these novels dramatize resistance and violence to women. One must be aware of the range of referents, referents in Haggard's texts to contemporary debates about evolutionary theory, 'missing links' and invasion anxieties amongst others.

We have already established that Dracula contains its own specialized and incorporated evolutionary discourse. To find a comparable discourse in the works of a writer such as Haggard is to be expected. The anxieties caused by the writings of the evolutionists were wide-reaching. Henkin writes that the late nineteenth century saw the 'invasion' of such theories into popular consciousness:

By 1910 evolutionary theory had invaded every branch of science, ethics, philosophy and sociology. As such it had entered so generally into the warp and woof of modern thought as to be indistinguishable as an independent factor⁵⁴.

The Origin of Species was published in 1859, three years after Haggard's birth, so that, as Sandison⁵⁵ points out, Haggard would have grown up in an intellectual climate charged with the fierce debate which the evolutionary doctrine excited. Sandison, moreover, in his study of the imperial idea in late nineteenth-century fiction, considers Haggard to be the writer most responsive to

evolutionary theory of the group of writers that he examines: Conrad, Buchan, Kipling and Haggard.

In She, perhaps more than any other Haggard novel, the presence of evolutionary discourse is most evident. This is perhaps because Haggard has created a new type of narrator, Horace Holly, the university man, the scholar. Holly sees himself as a kind of amateur anthropologist, recording and collecting data on his strange journey into previously unexplored territory. He is constantly aware of and making reference to his university colleagues, the 'fossilized' scholars back at Cambridge:

For half an hour or so I lay still, reflecting on the very remarkable experiences that we were going through, and wondering if any of my eminently respectable fossil friends at Cambridge would believe me if I were to be set down at the familiar dinner-table for the purpose of relating them. (She, p.246)

These colleagues are the eyes for which Holly is writing. They are the silent presence in the text, those who look on interested and amused, watching their friend, the scholar turned explorer: 'if my friends could see me now!'. It is to these scientific scholars that the text is to be given, the manuscript which Holly believes constitutes an extraordinary history, a 'gift':

and that is the end of this history as far as it concerns science and the outside world. (She, p.419)

The gift is to be presented at the familiar dinner-table, for the delectation of the listeners. Furthermore its publication and editing are the responsibility of another member of the university, an anthropologist, we assume. All profit is to be his. Thus the text is the property of the university, to be edited, transcribed,

commented on, profited by, the university. Showalter adds an interesting perspective to this reading:

Cambridge is presented as the last stronghold of pure, homosocial, and potentially homosexual, masculinity, during the decade in which women were pressing for admission to the Colleges and to university degrees⁵⁶.

It is for these 'consumers' that Holly includes all the anthropological data: the customs and beliefs of the Armahagger tribe, the information about the ancient race of Kor. Like Harker, he incorporates the foreignness, the strangeness, through this process of collecting and recording information. This recording process extends to even the smallest of botanical details. Holly notes, for example, the existence of certain waterlilies:

few of the flowers were perfect, owing to the prevalence of a white water maggot with a green head which fed upon them.
(She, p.245)

Such small details form part of a larger pattern: the presence of a Darwinian consciousness in the recording voice of the text, a pessimistic sense of the struggle of all things for existence in the brutal landscape of Africa. Holly is witness to, for example, a struggle to the death of a crocodile and a lion. Holly perceives them 'struggling hideously' and describes it as a 'duel to the death' (p.243). The white men themselves are subject to the attack of mosquitos which are described as 'bloodthirsty': they have been waiting for the blood of the white man for thousands of years. Significantly it is the hairy Holly who is most fitted to survive in this mosquito-infested world:

the other two were, comparatively speaking, clean-shaved which of course gave the enemy a larger extent of open country to operate on. (She, p.244)

The metaphor is one of struggle and invasion. The white men enter a Darwinian world of eat-or-be-eaten, kill-or-be-killed. They are the predators invading and killing the big game of Africa, but they are also the preyed-upon, the prey of the bloodthirsty mosquitos. Haggard's story, then, is filtered through a mind sensitized to new evolutionary science, a scholarly mind which orders and arranges it material conscious of the watchful eyes of the 'colleagues', conscious of the scientific implications of its data.

Holly is famed for his ugliness, particularly in contrast to his beautiful, youthful companion, Leo Vincey. Whilst Leo is referred to as the Lion, Holly is the ape, the baboon. The sight of him alone is said to be enough to convince anyone of the truth of the 'monkey theory'. Holly is the scholar as ape, the scholar as beast. Henkin, in Darwinism in the English Novel, writes that this aspect of evolutionary doctrine, the 'monkey theory', the suggestion that man evolved from the ape, had a particularly dramatic effect on popular consciousness⁵⁷. The Origin of Species of 1859 had carefully avoided the problem of the origin of man and consequently the attention of the scientific world had shifted to this question. Two years before The Origin Huxley had started exploring the links between man and the apes and it was in 1863 that he published these theories in Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature which began the 'missing link' hypothesis and caused huge public controversy:

These works and those of Darwin were torn from the hands of Mudie's shopmen as if they were novels.
(Henkin, Darwinism in the English Novel, p.55)

By 1871 Darwin felt secure enough to commit himself to publication

on the same subject, producing The Descent of Man. Henkin attributes the main controversy over evolutionary theory to this particular part of the debate:

The principle obstacle which the doctrine of evolution encountered in the public mind was the conception that men were descended from apes...it was degrading to man's dignity. (Henkin, p.66)

Haggard's awareness of the pessimistic implications of evolutionary theory is expounded in the introduction to Allan Quatermain⁵⁸, written in the same year as She - 1887. Here the narrator, Quatermain, the eternal pessimist and persistent recorder of the savagery of civilisation lays down his theories at great length:

Ah, this civilisation, what does it all come to? For forty years and more I lived among savages, and studied them and their ways; and now for several years I have lived here in England...and what have I found? A great gulf fixed? No, only a little one...I say that as the savage is, so is the white man, only the latter is more inventive and possesses the faculty of combination...It is a depressing conclusion, but in all essentials the savage and the child of civilisation are identical. (Haggard, Allan Quatermain, p.429)

Quatermain goes on to suggest that the child of civilisation is made up from twenty parts: 'nineteen savage and one civilised' (Allan Quatermain, p.430). It is these savage parts that we must look to if we are to understand ourselves, whilst the one civilised part is spread over the other nineteen parts like the blacking on a boot or the veneer on a table:

It is on the nineteen rough, serviceable savage portions that we fall back in emergencies, not on the polished but unsubstantial twentieth. (Allan Quatermain, p.430)

Civilisation is the veneer on the table, the blacking on the boot. It is the thin surface, the facade of humanity, which is no better, in substance, than savagery.

So much for Quatermain's characteristically pessimistic philosophy of life. That it is a 'depressing' conclusion makes the implications clear. We are no better than savages, and savages are brutal, barbaric, unevolved. Yet what is more interesting in Quatermain's introduction is the gender of his chosen representatives of the latent savagery of civilisation. Whilst he attacks the 'superfine, cultured idler scientifically eating a dinner at his club the cost of which would keep a starving family for a week' (Allan Quatermain, p.429), this is the only mention of the civilised male. The remaining portion of Quatermain's discourse is directed at the civilised female:

I dare say that the highly civilised lady reading this will smile at an old fool of a hunter's simplicity when she thinks of her black, bead-bedecked sister...and yet my dear lady, what are those pretty things round your own neck? - they have a strong family resemblance, especially when you wear that very low dress, to the savage woman's beads. Your habit of turning round and round to the sound of horns and tom-toms, your fondness for pigments and powders...the quickness with which your taste in feathered head-dress varies - all these suggest touches of kinship, and remember that in the fundamental principles of your nature you are quite identical...
(Allan Quatermain, p.429; emphasis mine)

'Touches of kinship', 'family resemblance': the nature of woman and the nature of the savage are 'quite identical'. Moreover they belong to the same family. They are kin. Whilst Haggard exposes the beast in man in his novels, the 'bloodlust' that can overcome even the most civilized of male civilisation, it is not the beast in woman that Haggard reveals but the woman as beast.

As we have established in dealing with the cultural roots of Stoker's 'sexual product' in the earlier chapter, one of the

preoccupations of late nineteenth-century science, particularly craniology and criminology, was to find evidence to support the woman-as-savage or woman-as-evolutionary-throwback hypothesis. Craniology had established, or was in the process of establishing in this period, that women by virtue of their stunted brain sizes were closer to the evolutionary state of animals, savages and children. Black women, particularly, were a curious phenomena. Perhaps even more so than black men, they were exploited as the 'missing link'. George Cuvier, for instance, a French scientist, wrote in 1878 of the 'Hottentot Venus' (who died in Paris that year):

she had a way of pouting her lips exactly like that we have observed in the orang-utan. Her movements had something abrupt and fantastical about them, reminding one of the ape. Her lips were monstrously large. Her ear was like that of many apes, being small, the tragus weak and the external border almost obliterated behind. These are animal characters. I have never seen a human head more like an ape than that of this woman⁵⁹.

On this issue, the fascination with women, particularly black women, as 'missing links', the discourses of craniology and criminology were to fuse. Criminology sought to define the criminal type not just by brain size (although this was an interesting phenomenon as criminals invariably had abnormally large brain sizes according to criminological data), but also by facial and bodily features. With such theories the criminal becomes a type, or even a separate species because he/she can be demonstrated to have facial and bodily features (termed stigmata by the criminologists) which resemble those of the ape. Thus criminology sought to demonstrate that the criminal was some kind of evolutionary throwback or 'missing link',

as Lombroso asserted:

The criminal is an evolutionary throwback in our midst⁶⁰.

In 1870 Lombroso 'discovered' what he believed to be the criminal type and described it as:

an atavistic being who reproduces in his person the ferocious instincts of primitive humanity and the inferior animals...

The 'stigmata' to be looked for are:

insensibility to pain, extremely acute sight, tatooining, excessive idleness, love of orgies, and the irresponsible craving of evil for its own sake, the desire not only to extinguish life in the victim, but to mutilate the corpse, tear its flesh and drink its blood⁶¹.

Both Ayesha and Dracula together share a large number of these stigmata, although the tatoos may be difficult to substantiate. These stigmata are also the symptoms of degeneration carefully set out by Lombroso's disciple, Nordau, in Degeneration⁶². Women as evolutionary throwbacks were thus the perfect criminals, being underdeveloped in moral sense.

Criminology and craniology were flexible discourses, available for the use of any scientist aware of their general application. Perhaps because of the looseness of their theories and discourses, criminology and craniology became platforms for the oppression of certain social groups and the justification for their existence. Gould, in The Mismeasure of Man⁶³, demonstrates that the data used by such 'scientists' was consciously or unconsciously manipulated in order to find the results they wanted to find. Gould takes issue with the preoccupation with the measurement and reification of intelligence itself; that one can measure intelligence by measuring

the size of the skull. Moreover Gould, a scientist, processes the data of these scientists again showing how the results have been tampered with or incorrectly measured. Sometimes such mismeasurement could be unconscious, for as Gould points out, 'expectation is a powerful guide to action' (The Mismeasure of Man, p.65), but it was also sometimes conscious, a few figures would be altered where results were found to be inconsistent. Gould's point is not that the science of craniology constituted a conscious fraud on the part of a small group of scientists, but that a science such as craniology, based as it was on highly dubious methods of collecting and measuring data, becomes charged with prejudices and expectations of all kinds. As Gould reminds us 'science is a socially embedded activity' (The Mismeasure of Man, p.21).

Both craniology and criminology form parts of the increasingly popular concept of biological determinism which argued that:

shared behavioural norms and the social and economic differences between human groups - primarily races, classes and sexes - arise from inherited inborn distinctions and that society, in this sense, is an accurate reflection of biology.
(Gould, The Mismeasure of Man, p.20)

Biological determinism became a useful tool for groups in power. It became a useful tool for ranking undesirable social groups, in fact anything other than or outside white male hegemony, as a fixed, separate entity, even another species. Thorslev, in his study of the representation of the 'wild man' in late nineteenth-century fiction and science, notes that the 'wild man' comes to represent everything 'lost or repressed by Victorian culture': 'he must stand as the

antithesis of culture and civilisation'⁶⁴. Racial anthropology, craniology and criminology thus sought to define culture as what it is, by means of defining what it is not. The move to identify the criminal as a type (the evolutionary throwback), to identify the savage, the child, the woman, the poor, as fixed groups because of a brain size that is other than that of the white male, displays an anxiety about 'frontiers'; it is necessary to make these groups other and outside. This is a period in which ranking becomes an insistent preoccupation of science. It is in 1870, as Foucault writes, that the homosexual is first identified as a fixed 'type', for instance, rather than the identification of the act of sodomy⁶⁵.

Such ranking becomes a form of segregation and a political means to ensure that these groups remain segregated. If these groups are fixed types, if the poor are poor because their diminished brain size makes them so, if women are 'inferior' because their brain sizes prove them to be ranked with savages and children, then such theories defend the status quo. Some of the more misogynist craniologists used these theories to argue against higher education for women, for instance. Gustave le Bon, a French craniologist and the founder of social psychology writes in 1879:

All psychologists who have studied the intelligence of women, as well as poets and novelists, recognize today that they represent the most inferior forms of adult evolution and that they are closer to children and savages than to the adult civilised man...Without doubt there exist some distinguished women, very superior to the average man, but they are as exceptional as the birth of any monstrosity...and we may neglect them entirely...The day when, misunderstanding the inferior occupations which nature has given her, women leave the home and take part in our battles, on this day a social revolution will begin⁶⁶.

Women threaten to leave the home, to leave the spaces that men have allotted to them, they refuse to remain fixed, they threaten to move outside. That Le Bon should group together psychologists with poets and novelists as those who have studied the intelligence of women, demonstrates the cultural roots of such beliefs. Is he referring to poets and novelists as fellow scientists in their observation of female intelligence? The novel becomes the collection of data, the scientific text-book. Poets and novelists rank with scientists as the perpetrators of such prejudices.

Gould, in The Mismeasure of Man, attests to the popularity of these theories:

Cranometry was not just a plaything of academicians, a subject confined to technical journals...no one examined the fragility of primary documentation.(The Mismeasure of Man, p.52)

One of the instances of the entry of these discourses into wider contexts can be found in The Nineteenth Century of 1887, the year of the publication of She, and the same journal in which Stoker published his views on censorship in 1908. The May issue of 1887 includes an article by George J. Romanes, a friend of Darwin, author of 'Darwin and after Darwin' (1892), a professor at Edinburgh and at the Royal Institution, and noted for his studies in physiology and zoology. Romanes addresses himself to the controversial issue of higher education for women and the issues that evolutionary theory brings to bear on the problem. The article is entitled 'The Mental Differences between Men and Women' and is answered in the September issue by Edith Simcox in an article entitled 'The Capacity of Women'. Romanes shows himself to be well-versed in the discourses of

craniology, making reference to the brain sizes of women and the expectation of a 'marked inferiority of intellectual power' in women. Having first established the case for the mental inferiority of women (using brain size as primary criterion), he then switches his approach arguing that these weaknesses are due to women 'not having hitherto enjoyed the same educational advantages as men'. If these sadly small brains are to enlarge they must be stimulated. If women are to become better 'helpmeets' to their husbands and better educators of their children, they must be better educated. The argument is a familiar one yet it is interesting that such a discussion should be steeped in references to craniology, natural selection and other aspects of evolutionary theory. Romanes uses these discourses to support his argument for the higher education of women, whilst other scientists, such as Gustave le Bon (cited above) would use the same discourses to argue virulently against the higher education of women. Romanes speaks, for instance, of the feminist movement in evolutionary terms:

this latest yet inevitable wave of mental evolution cannot be stayed until it has changed the whole aspect of civilisation⁶⁷.

Edith Simcox's reply, in the September issue of the same journal, makes rather a disappointing article. Although it takes up some of the evolutionary points raised by Romanes, its range of reference and attempts to prove the intellectual capacities of women from the past are rather too vague to carry any real force. Nonetheless these two articles demonstrate how far these ideas had infiltrated into intellectual journals and magazines by 1887 and into public debate.

The adaptation of these theories to the problem of women's education, their adaptability to arguments both for and against higher education, demonstrates the extraordinary flexibility of these discourses.

The fascination with the 'missing link' hypothesis for scientists who would exploit it as a category in which to tentatively place black men, women, and criminals was reflected in the literature of the period. Henkin states that:

a fertile theme in the English anthropological romances was that of the discovery of the 'missing link', not in fossil form but alive. (Henkin, Darwinism in the English Novel, p.178)

Henkin cites two crucial novels: J. Compton Rickett's The Quickening of Caliban (1893) and J. Provand Webster's The Oracle of Baal (1896). In the former a huge African is brought back to England to be educated until it is discovered that he has no soul so that his education must be abandoned. The latter concerns a pair of explorers (a professor and his companion: sounds familiar?) who travel to darkest Africa where they discover a whole tribe of 'missing links' who similarly are said to have no souls, and who revert to type having overthrown their masters.

The 'missing link' theme extends to a fascination with hypothetical species and mutations - the discovery of a reverted type living in civilisation who, like the criminal, can only revert to type. There is no helping these creatures. One such is Jessie Enderby from Colonel Enderby's Wife, written by 'Lucas Malet' (Mary St. Leger

Harrison), the daughter of Charles Kingsley. Lucas Malet calls the novel, in her Preface, 'the history of a deviation' (read : a turning away from the right way, course or line), and the deviant is to be the glittering and beautiful Jessie, the wife of the aging Colonel. Jessie displays a rather disturbing lack of moral sense, an indifference to right and wrong, a lightheartedness and a fearless nature that leads Dr. Symes to remark:

'In watching that young lady just now, I could not avoid thinking of the ancient conception of a race of beings supplying the missing link between ourselves and the dumb animals about us'⁶⁹.

Henkin makes no mention of Haggard's fiction in his study of the 'missing link' theme in English fiction. Yet Haggard's work incorporates three 'monkey women': Gagool in King Solomon's Mines(1885), Hendrika in Allan's Wife(1889), and Ayesha herself who reveals herself to be a monkey beneath the enticing flesh. Moreover Hendrika is said to be a 'missing link' and by implication this description extends to Gagool and Ayesha, through their 'touches of kinship' with this baboon-woman.

Haggard's Allan's Wife⁷⁰, published only two years after She, takes us back to the early years of the hero of King Solomon's Mines and Allan Quatermain - Quatermain himself. The story tells of his dead wife, the mother of his son - their early childhood and friendship, the years leading up to their marriage. Allan had known Stella as a child. They had been neighbours in the 'early days'. Allan had saved her life when her clothing had caught fire at a Christmas party.

Stella and her father had disappeared soon after this when Stella's father decided to denounce the hypocrisies of civilisation and emigrate.

In adulthood Allan 'accidentally' discovers his childhood sweetheart in deepest Africa where she has grown up, and where too he has lived and is now exploring. Guided by a familiar Haggardian character type, Idupa, he has trekked across Africa, saving a six-year-old Boer child, Tota, from the savagery of the Zulus and taking her with them. Dying from thirst, they collapse under a tree at the edge of the desert they have just crossed. They are found and revived by Stella, accompanied by her servant, Hendrika, the baboon-woman. Allan describes Hendrika as:

young, of white blood, very short with bowed legs and enormous shoulders. In face she was not bad-looking, but the brow receded, the chin and ears were prominent. In short she reminded me of nothing so much as a very handsome monkey. She might have been the missing link.(Haggard, Allan's Wife, p.79)

This description parallels that of the 'Hottentot Venus' (cited above), except that here the woman is white. The mystery is solved for Quatermain as Stella explains: Hendrika has been reared by baboons who live in the rocks behind Stella's father's house. Stella had rescued her, tamed her and Hendrika had become her servant and companion. Hendrika has 'long sinewy arms', is able to shin up trees, swing from limb to limb, and loves her white mistress with a passionate intensity. She both speaks and understands the baboon language.

When Allan falls in love with and proposes to Stella, Hendrika warns him off with a declaration of her love for Stella:

'do I not love her also?...I am a woman as she is, and you are a man, and they say in the kraals that men love women better than women love women. But it is a lie...She used to kiss me sometimes...but those who loved her before you came are forgotten. Be careful, Macumazahn, be careful, lest I am revenged upon you...Walk softly, Macumazahn, or you will fall into a pit...' (Allan's Wife, p.108)

Allan fears her jealousy and is intrigued by it:

the lower one gets in the scale of humanity, the more readily this passion thrives; indeed it may be said to come to its intensest perfection in brutes...Now Hendrika was in some ways not far removed from the animal, which may account for the ferocity of her jealousy of her mistress' affection.
(Allan's Wife, p.109)

Allan Quatermain is ranking Hendrika here as the lowest scale of humanity. This is the same Haggardian hero who, in the introduction to Allan Quatermain had attested to the 'touches of kinship' between the civilised woman and the savage. As 'missing link' this is Hendrika's position on the evolutionary scale: the link between man and the beasts is woman. She knows her position and warns him of her inevitable revenge. After their marriage, Hendrika, who has become an outcast, rallies together her baboon kin in their thousands and kidnaps Stella, who dies later from the shock. Haggard's tragedy and Hendrika's revenge are complete. Quatermain sees the maniacal Hendrika stab herself over Stella's grave, asking only that God torture her forever. Her body is thrown to the vultures.

Hendrika's story is that of an inevitable reversion to type. Although white, she is savage by nature, having been nursed on

baboon's milk. No amount of education, love and nurture can protect her from her savage self: this is fixed. She is the 'missing link'. She is predatory and sexual. The implications of a latent lesbian attachment are not hidden. She is a criminal by nature, a natural criminal, and her crime, a crime of passion. She must 'possess' Stella even by kidnapping her to prevent her from being possessed by the man.

Looked at from another angle she is also the savage underside of the sweet and angelic Stella, just as the vampire Lucy lurks beneath the innocent, pure Lucy: the beast within the civilised white woman. The two have grown up together, been inseparable, and it is not until the appearance of Quatermain that the savagery of Hendrika is unloosed. Stella and Hendrika must die together, they cannot be separated, for Hendrika is the 'bead-bedecked sister', the bead-bedecked 'other', she is the underside of the civilised white woman.

Hendrika is the full version of Haggard's baboon woman type, but Gagool and Ayesha display 'touches of kinship' through the series of links and shared metaphors used to describe them. Gagool is the wicked sorceress of King Solomon's Mines(1885). Like Ayesha she is immortal. She is less athletic than Hendrika: a wizened, shrivelled up version of the same fictional type. Allan Quatermain describes her (he seems to be unable to escape from these figures):

I observed the wizened, monkey-like figure creeping from the shadow of the hut. It crept on all fours, but when it reached the place where the king sat it rose upon its feet, and throwing the furry covering from its face, revealed a most extraordinary and weird countenance. Apparently it was that of a woman of great age so shrunken that in size it seemed little

larger than the face of a year old child...Set among these wrinkles was a sunken slit, that represented a mouth...There was no nose to speak of; indeed the whole visage might have been taken for that of a sun-dried corpse, had it not been for a pair of large black eyes still full of fire and intelligence, which gleamed...like jewels in a charnel-house. The head itself was perfectly bare, and yellow in hue, while the naked, wrinkled scalp moved and contracted like the head of a cobra.
(Haggard, King Solomon's Mines, p.112; emphasis mine).

This description of Gagool includes all the iconography of the Haggardian 'monkey-woman': monkey, snake, corpse, child and savage.

There are also touches of the vampire about her:

'Rivers of blood; blood everywhere. I see it, I smell it, I taste it...Blood is good, the red blood is bright; there is no smell like the smell of new-shed blood!..
(Haggard, King Solomon's Mines, p.161)

Gagool is the perpetrator of the witch-hunt, which Quatermain and his companions witness and in which she is joined by her 'daughters', the 'horrid ministers' or 'vultures'. Together they dance themselves into a frenzy and select the members of the tribe who are to be sacrificed. Gagool is said to be in a 'frenzy of excitement'. Foam flies from her 'gnashing jaws'. She has a 'horrible fascination'. Her flesh quivers, her eyes start from her head. When Quatermain describes her dancing as waltzing, the whole scene becomes a grotesque parody of the civilised Victorian ball, and reminds us of Quatermain's jibe at the civilised woman in the introduction cited earlier:

Your habit of turning round and round to the sound of horns and tom-toms.(Haggard, Allan Quatermain, p.429)

When Gagool is forced to take them to Solomon's treasure chamber later in King Solomon's Mines, she becomes yet more sinister:

'Hee! Hee! Hee!' cackled old Gagool behind us, as she flitted about like a vampire bat.
(Haggard, King Solomon's Mines, p.112; emphasis mine)

She creeps like a snake out of the treasure chamber. Foulata, the 'innocent' native woman for whom Good has an attachment, struggles with her as she tries to escape. This scene parallels the descriptions of the Darwinistic struggles between animals that the Haggardian hero is forever witness to, such as the fight between the crocodile and the lion that Leo and Holly witness in She. Here Gagool fights 'like a wild cat' and twists 'like a snake'. Foulata is stabbed. Gagool is crushed under the closing wall of the chamber. Now no more than a 'bloody ooze', the men in the darkness accidentally step in her...

Gagool, like Hendrika, can also be seen to be the underside of Foulata. They, too, die together - the virgin and the beast - they must die together. Foulata's death saves Good from an inter-racial marriage. Her death is 'fortunate'. She admits this herself in her dying words. King Solomon's Mines, then, finds its own solution to the 'woman problem': the women annihilate each other and free the men from responsibility. Gagool is the dark aggressive underside of Foulata's deceptive beauty and purity, she is the animal beneath her skin.

Gagool is a fascinating fictional creation. Graham Greene recognizes her from the nightmares of his childhood:

didn't she wait for me in dreams by the linen cupboard, near the nursery door? and she continues to wait, when the mind is sick or tired...Yes, Gagool has remained a permanent part of the imagination.

Wasn't it the incurable fascination of Gagool with her bare yellow skull, the wrinkled scalp, that led me to work all through 1942 in a stuffy office in Freetown, Sierre Leone?⁷¹.

Yet Gagool is in many ways only the prototype of Ayesha. Etherington writes that Ayesha is 'Gagool tarted up to be sexually devastating'⁷², but she also represents the successful integration of the polarity of the Haggardian woman; the poles represented by the pairs: Hendrika/Stella and Gagool/Foulata. Hence the ambiguity of response. She is both the object of desire and the object of fear and loathing. She is surrounded by and associated with symbols of evil, yet she is also the object of the life-long quest. Like Gagool she is all-powerful having magical powers. She is corpse-like in her wrappings just as Gagool is corpse-like without her wrappings. Her curses are hisses. She has a snake-like grace. She is fascinating, like a snake. Like Gagool her brain has been developing for centuries:

[Ayesha] whose brain was supernaturally sharpened and who had two thousand years of experience, besides all manner of knowledge of the secrets of Nature at her command. (She, p.332)

Her gaze is able to draw the heart out of man. Moreover she is associated with the 'vampirism' of Gagool through the use of the word 'flitting'. As she leads the men into the Place of Life, just as Gagool leads the men into the Place of Death, she is described as 'a white ghost-like form flitting in front of us' (She, p.397), whilst Gagool is described as 'flitting like a vampire bat'.

Whilst Ayesha shares all the rich iconography associated with Gagool: corpse, snake, savage, vampire, monkey, child (in the 'death'-scene she is said to be no larger than a 'two-months child'), she is also, like Hendrika, the younger, sexual version of the same type. She is predatory. There is :

'no man on earth who could resist me if I put out my strength.
If the temptation be strong enough, then will the man yield,
for every man, like every rope, hath his breaking strain.'
(She, p.338)

Finally Ayesha is 'unveiled' and shown to be no more than the hag Gagool. If Gagool is the savage underside of Foulata, then Gagool, or her prototype, is under the skin of Ayesha, to be stripped away by the Pillar of Life. The unveiled Ayesha is, moreover, 'black', like Gagool:

her skin changed colour, and in place of the perfect whiteness
of its lustre, it turned dirty brown and yellow...
(She, p.402-403)

The 'black' woman is revealed beneath the perfect white skin of the white woman - Gagool beneath the skin.

This 'death'-scene can also be seen to be a dramatization of the evolutionary concept of retrogressive evolution, a savage devolution which unveils the truth and origin of woman. She shrinks. First her hair falls out and then her hands transform into claws. She shrinks again until she is 'no bigger now than...a two-months child'. She rolls on the floor and shrieks, then in her final death-throws manages to raise herself on all-fours and look around her blindly 'as a tortoise does...her whitish eyes were covered with horny

film'. Finally she 'dies' reduced to 'the hideous little monkey frame...covered with crinkled parchment that once had been the glorious She' (She, p.403). The glorious She has been reduced by degrees to a baboon, a child, a tortoise and finally again a monkey, yet Holly remarks with horror at the revelation that 'it was the same woman'.

Ayesha has passed through retrogressive evolution. She moves backwards, regressing. Such a transformation dramatizes the concept of recapitulation:

the idea that higher creatures repeat the adult stages of lower animals during their growth⁷³.

as well as retrogressive evolution. Cope defines retrogressive evolution in 1896 as that which:

may be accomplished by a retardation in the rate of growth of the taxonomic characters, so that instead of adding and accumulating them, those already possessed are gradually dropped, the adults repeating in reverse order the progressive series, and approaching more and more the primitive embryonic stages. This process I have termed 'retardation'⁷⁴.

Earlier, in an essay in his book The Origin of the Fittest first written in 1887, he describes how retardation produces retrogressive evolution:

Acceleration produces constant addition to the parts of an animal, while retardation implies continual subtraction from its characters... Retardation continued terminates in extinction⁷⁵.

Ayesha is retarded to the point of extinction. She approaches the primitive embryonic stages (no larger than a two months child), and the origin of the human species (no larger than a baboon).

This is not to suggest that Haggard was familiar with the primary sources of evolutionary theory, but that, by 1887, the more visual and imaginative implications of such theories had caught the public imagination and had entered into 'myth'. Beer writes of the popularity of the Darwinian concepts of growth and transformation:

In the light of this emphasis upon irreversible growth and succession we can understand the force of one popular form of Victorian fantasy, that which disturbs the necessary sequence of growth. So Alice in Wonderland grows small again, and then finds herself, and parts of herself varying inconveniently according to which side of the mushroom she nibbles⁷⁶.

Beer argues that the Darwinian preoccupation with transformation becomes easily incorporated into Victorian myth, fantasy and fairytale. Ayesha's transformation incorporates this discourse.

Criminology, ever expanding, incorporated 'retardation' into its own discourses. If the criminal is an evolutionary throwback, then he/she is 'retarded' in development, moving backwards to an earlier stage of development and remaining there. Ayesha is exploited as the criminal at many levels of the text. She is powerful because she lacks moral sense:

what may not be possible to a being, who, unconstrained by human law, is absolutely unshackled by a moral sense of right and wrong which...is yet based...upon the great wall of individual responsibility that marks mankind from the beasts
(She, p.340).

Ayesha lacks the dividing wall of moral sense, thus she is the beast, the 'evolutionary throwback', the criminal. Dracula has similar powers through the lack of moral sense peculiar to him. Ayesha is a murderess. She has murdered Kallicrates. We watch her

murder Ustane. She displays some of the 'stigmata' of Lombroso's criminal listed earlier: acute perception, idleness, love of orgies (she initiates the 'savage fetish dance' put on to entertain Holly and Leo), and above all intelligence (abnormal intelligence and large brain size were the peculiar features of the criminal recorded by the criminologists - the largest female skull on record by this time was that of a multiple female murderess).

Criminology, growing in the confidence of its own popularity, began to be used as a platform for the arguments of those who wanted to promote capital punishment or even genocide. Criminology was to fuse, on this issue, with the evolutionary theory of artificial selection, which connects it inevitably with eugenics. Ferri demonstrates how these discourses fuse in 1897:

It seems to me that the death penalty is prescribed by nature, and operates in every moment in the life of the universe. The universal law of evolution shows us also that vital progress of every kind is due to continual selection, by the death of the least fit in the struggle for life. Now this selection in humanity as with the lower animals may be natural or artificial. It would therefore be in agreement with natural laws that human society should make an artificial selection, by the elimination of anti-social and incongruous individuals⁷⁷.

Ayesha and Dracula are incongruous individuals and thus must be eliminated for the protection of society. She incorporates the notion of selection into its own discourse. Holly remarks after Ayesha's 'death' that he perceives 'the finger of Providence in the matter' for Ayesha:

strong and happy in her love, clothed in immortal youth and god-like beauty and the wisdom of centuries would have revolutionized society and even perchance have changed the

destiny of mankind.(She, p.405; emphasis mine)

Ayesha is sacrificed to and by Providence.

Ayesha's 'crime', then, specifically is that, like Dracula, she threatens invasion and revolution. She must be eliminated before she releases herself on the world. Thus we can see that in this text the discourses of evolutionary theory, criminology and invasion anxieties are fused, in that Ayesha as evolutionary throwback and criminal must be prevented from invasion. Etherington makes the connection between the invasion anxieties of She and of Dracula clear when he remarks:

England is to be invaded Dracula-like by an irresistible African conqueror⁷⁸.

Ayesha's plan is to take England by force and then the world, with her beloved Leo by her side. Like Satan she offers Leo:

'dominion over the sea and earth...dominion over the world...as God shalt thou be.' (She, p.396)

and Holly remarks with horror yet fascination:

The terrible She had evidently made up her mind to go to England, and it made me absolutely shudder to think what would be the result of her arrival there...It might be possible to control her for a while, but her proud ambitious spirit would be certain to break loose and avenge itself for the long centuries of its solitude...what was there to stop her? In the end she would, I had little doubt, assume absolute rule over the British dominions and probably over the whole earth, and though I had no doubt that she would speedily make ours the most glorious and prosperous empire the world has ever seen, it would be at the cost of a terrible sacrifice of life.
(She, p.376; emphasis mine)

At this stage, 'caught in the web of her fatal fascinations', Holly believes that Ayesha is being used by Providence:

as a means to change the order of the world and possibly...to change it for the better. (She, p.376)

Ayesha's sacrificial 'death' puts Holly right on this issue: Providence has no such plans. Ayesha is dangerous and criminal and must be eliminated if there is to be progress.

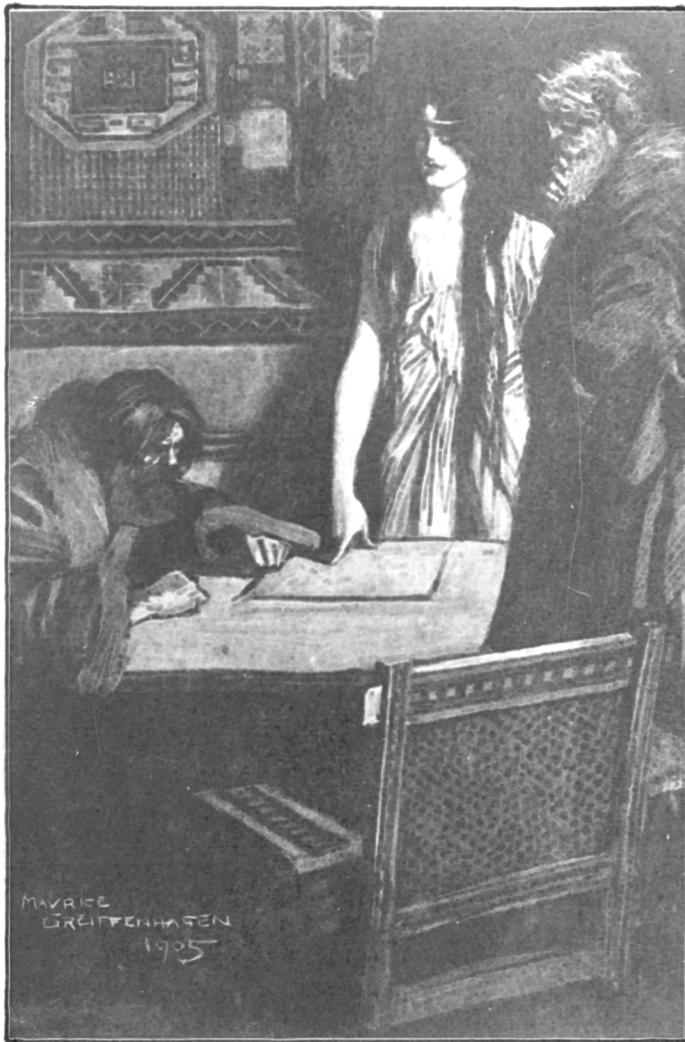


PLATE 4:
'She took a map...'
Illustration by
Maurice Grieffenhagen
from 1905 edition of
Ayesha: The Return of She.

Ayesha's invasion threat is considerably more detailed and realisable in the later novel, Ayesha: The Return of She. Cultural anxieties about invasion had increased by this date, the peak of

Hynes' category of invasion literature: 1904. Here several chapters describe the careful planning of invasion detailed by Ayesha. She is to begin in China this time:

She took a map of the Eastern Hemisphere which I had drawn, and, placing her finger upon Peking, said:

'There is the place that shall be our home...I have chosen the Chinese because thou tellest me that their numbers are unaccountable, that they are brave, subtle, and patient, and though now powerless because ill-ruled and untaught, able with their multitudes to flood the little Western nations..'

'And if the "little Western nations" will not wait to be flooded?' suggested Leo. 'If they combine with Russia, for instance - in whose territory we may be at this moment, for aught I know - and attack thee first?'

'Ah!' she said...'I have thought of it, and for my part hope that it will chance, since then thou canst not blame me if I put out my strength. Oh! then the East, that has slept so long, shall awake - shall awake, and upon battlefield after battlefield... thou shalt see my flaming standards sweep on to victory.'(Haggard, Ayesha, pp.158-159)

Ayesha's plan is, then, to take over the rule of China and from there conquer the 'little Western nations' (see Plate 4). Tibet and China were crucial territories in the first decade of the twentieth century. Persia, Afghanistan and Tibet were the countries that separated the respective empires of Russia and Britain which explains Leo's confusion as to which territory they occupy. Similarly China constituted its own threat, nicknamed the 'yellow peril' (see French cartoon of 1904: Plate 5) of which Gollwitzer writes:

The best known of all these catchphrases is 'the yellow peril'...which expressed a whole sheaf of threats at once. The workers in the 'white' countries feared the competition of the coolies and being undercut by cheap labour with a minimum standard of living. The European and North American economies were concerned about the successes of Japanese production. Finally a picture was projected of the complete political emancipation of the large 'yellow' nations, who, armed with modern weapons and because of numerical superiority, would be

able to clear the 'white man' out of the Far East and become masters of the East, perhaps even of the world⁷⁹.



PLATE 5:
French Cartoon of the 'Yellow Peril' as
seen in Europe.

Ayesha, thus, becomes the modern weapon necessary for this invasion - indeed she becomes Asia/Ayesha. She proposes to waken the nations of the East and flood the little Western nations. The possibility of these Western nations joining forces with Russia to oppose the 'yellow peril' was a very real one in 1905. Russia was at war with Japan between the years 1904-1905 and 1907 saw the Anglo-Russian Convention which 'organized' the territories in Afghanistan, Persia and Tibet. Haggard's novels, then, form an index to the extent and urgency of such invasion anxieties.

Ayesha's invasion threat in She is primarily the invasion of a seducing power. She is irresistible: there is 'no man on earth who could resist me if I put out my strength'. Ayesha proposes to put out her strength to the men of the world. Whilst it might be possible to 'control her for a while', she is 'bound to break loose'. She will stretch out her arms to the world, incorporate it and make it her own, her own empire. She is the New Woman, with outstretched arms like the vampire women, signifying her active sexuality. She will revolutionize the world, turn it upside down as the New Woman proposed to do and be a catalyst of the inevitable apocalypse. In 1889 the Westminster Review predicted that the ego of woman:

will yet roll over the world in fructifying waves, causing incalculable upheaval and destruction. The stirrings and rumblings now perceivable in the social and industrial worlds, the 'Bitter Cries' of the disinherited classes, the 'Social Wreckage' which is becoming able to make itself unpleasantly prominent, the 'Problems of Great Cities', the spread of Socialism and Nihilism, are all intimately connected with the ascent of [this] Ego⁸⁰.

Earlier, in 1871, the Saturday Review had seen the coming collapse or apocalypse to be a result of degeneration or retrogressive evolution, wholly attributable to woman:

Far from undervaluing the part played by woman in the history of our race, we think them more powerful than men to disturb the deeper foundations of order...To discourage subordination in women, to countenance their competition in masculine careers by way of their enfranchisement, is probably among the shortest methods of barbarizing our race... Slight checks may seriously affect the prospects of a race in the severe struggle of humanity, and if our better halves alter the conditions which have raised us from the conditions of orang-utans, a relapse into savagery is quite possible⁸¹.

Changes in women's place in society would represent a retrogressive

evolution - a return to savagery and barbarism. Women are invading the franchise. We must keep them out, defend the brotherhood if we are to remain a civilisation. Ayesha, too, threatens the invasion of the brotherhood. If her effect on the men of England is to parallel her effect on Holly and Leo, she will turn the men into beasts, turn them against themselves and each other, infiltrate into and destroy the closed circle of the brotherhood.

Yet Haggard's texts also register extreme ambiguity about such a New Woman. She is both 'terrible' and 'fascinating'. This parallels the ambiguity of Dracula: the ambiguity of response and temptation. Even the great defender of morality and decency, Van Helsing, is tempted by the vampire sisters:

Yes, I was moved - I, Van Helsing, with all my purpose and motive for hate - I was moved to a yearning for delay which seemed to paralyse my faculties and clog my very soul⁸².

Holly, too, the great misogynist ('noted for what my acquaintances are pleased to call misogyny') is tempted:

the very diablerie of the woman, whilst it horrified and repelled, attracted in even a greater degree. (She, p.308)

Such ambiguity constitutes the double register of fear and desire: the double fantasy of the desire to be seduced and the fear of its consequences - that of being consumed by the woman. Ayesha is immortal, a magician, has supernatural beauty, but she is also merely a woman: 'a nineteenth-century young lady drinking afternoon tea'. Ayesha is the New Woman as Old Woman and evolutionary throwback. The 'unveiling' scene, in which Ayesha is revealed as

what she really is and must be - some kind of antediluvian relic, a beast and a hag - parallels the discovery of the 'reality' of Lady Arabella March in The Lair of the White Worm. Lady Arabella, the beautiful and sophisticated yet predatory widow of Diana's Grove, is revealed to be the manifestation of some antediluvian white worm, another sinister and hideous relic from the past, waiting to consume men, heavily disguised as an attractive young woman. Ayesha is also, in some senses, a widow (relic/relict: widow): the 'black' widow.

Such monsters must be dealt with in the same way: annihilation which includes sexual sadism. Ayesha is 'blasted', just as Lady Arabella's hell-hole is blasted with dynamite. The ends, of course, justify the means, for civilisation, the brotherhood, the empire, must be protected. Ayesha is safe whilst she waits for Kallicrates' return, whilst she is passive and docile, contained in the centre of unexplored Africa, but once she has realized her desire with the reincarnation of Kallicrates, she becomes active and threatens invasion. It is at this point that she must be annihilated. The active woman is not to be allowed in, not to be allowed into a culture that has no place for her. To make a place would be to invite revolution and apocalypse.

Gilbert writes that the preoccupations with the all-powerful New Woman in the literature of this period:

were symptoms of a complex of late Victorian socio-cultural and sexual anxieties that have until recently been ignored or even overlooked by critics and historians alike⁸³.

To ignore or overlook these anxieties is to overlook the complexity

and range of the discourses, discourses which are fed by such socio-cultural anxieties, discourses which interact and intersect, discourses which surround and define the Haggardian woman. She, like Dracula is a complex historical document, invaluable in its display of the entry into popular consciousness of such problematic discourses such as craniology, criminology and evolutionary theory. In the centre of such intersections lies the New Woman, male sexual anxieties about her and the male ambiguity of response to her. To treat these discourses as separate threads, as critics have done in their search for an appropriate 'interpretation', the answer to the riddle of She and Ayesha herself, is to miss the centre and to miss the heart. In the centre of these intersections is Ayesha herself - 'all the rest shaped itself round this figure' - the centre of the text, the centre of Africa, the heart of darkness.

The text of She demonstrates that many of the same discourses that I have 'mapped out' in Dracula exist in a slightly different form and with slightly different emphasis within this text. The invasion anxieties of She are expressed with less urgency and paranoia than in the later text of Dracula. As we reach the peak of the period characterized by what Hynes calls invasion literature, in the first decade of the twentieth century, Haggard's Ayesha correspondingly attaches much greater urgency and anxiety to the problem of Ayesha as invader. We can see also that the discourses of craniology and criminology are not overtly specified or identified in She as they are in Dracula with its references to brain sizes and to Lombroso and Nordau. Nevertheless they are present in the substructure of the

text of She. That they should be present in an early popular novel such as this, and in a combination - imperialism, invasion, evolutionary theory, fear of the New Woman, criminology and craniology - which rivals that of the intersection of these discourses in Dracula, signifies the infiltration and incorporation of these discourses into literature, at a relatively early stage of their development.

Haggard is a 'popular' novelist. He was a significant contributor to the development of the genre defined by Millman as the 'male novel' with its preoccupation with male adventures in a hostile, threatening environment such as Africa. What characterizes such novels besides the rejection of the female, is the horror of the female, particularly the active female.

Henry Miller fulfils a peculiar nostalgia in reading Haggard's novels, a nostalgia that is more than discovering a novel that he has read as a boy, a nostalgia that has more to do with finding the roots of his own genre - the 'male novel' - and his own fantasies. Miller, the erotic misogynist of the twentieth century, finds his roots in Haggard. He is fascinated and repelled by Ayesha, who reminds him that:

Whenever in my life I have gazed too long upon Beauty, particularly the beauty of the female, I have always experienced the sensation of fear. Fear, and a touch of horror too. What is the origin of this horror? Why, do we not sometimes ask ourselves, why the faticidal beauty in the great heroines of love throughout the ages? Why do they seem so logically and naturally surrounded by death, bolstered by crime, nourished by evil? There is a sentence in She which is strikingly penetrative...

'As yet I may not mate with thee, for thou and I are different,

and the very brightness of my being would burn thee up and perchance destroy thee'...⁸⁴.

The answer to the problem of the horror of the female, for Miller, lies in this 'strikingly penetrative' sentence - the female threatens to destroy the male in mating. He will be burned up. Moreover She, the woman, is other, foreign, alien, foreign territory: 'for thou and I are different'. The male must dare to travel into foreign territory and must risk being consumed by this new terrain: an imperialist anxiety expressed in terms of the female body? Or anxiety about the dangers of the female body expressed in terms of imperialism? Here we encounter the intersection: neither causes the other, they are both part of the same socio-cultural formula or collage of discourses.

Haggard anticipates Conrad, whose Heart of Darkness involves a familiar Haggardian plot: the male journey into the heart of darkness, the centre of Africa. In this centre or heart is to be found the unnamed horror - Kurtz' final words 'the horror, the horror, the horror'. D.H. Lawrence writes to Rolf Gardiner in 1926 about fiction:

There needs a centre of silence, and a heart of darkness, to borrow from Rider Haggard⁸⁵.

Lawrence is not confusing his novelists here: Holly and Leo travel into the Place of Life where they encounter the 'heart of darkness'. It is here in the heart of darkness that they experience the horror of Ayesha's devolution, the horror that Miller explains lies at the heart of the woman, where:

overcome with the extremity of the horror, we, too, fell on the sandy floor of that dread place and swooned away. (She, p.403)

They survive, but their servant, Job, always terrified by women, dies from the shock, and is left, ironically, to be entombed with Ayesha.

Millman writes of Conrad:

Conrad's world, too, is an indisputable male world, and its constant evocation of the 'heart of darkness' is an immense complication of Haggard's cliché of the dark continent (Millman, 'Rider Haggard and the Male Novel', p.iii).

Conrad has much to learn from a novelist like Haggard who wrote imperturbably of dark journeys and hollow men. Conrad responded to Haggard's model and transformed it into art. (Millman, p.80)

The problem of influence is not one that concerns this study. I do not suggest that there were any 'direct' links between Haggard, Stoker and Conrad, although there may have been. That these novels share common anxieties and discourses about women is not a question of influence, but of an expression of a cultural and historical moment. Haggard's novels exploit the notion of a dark 'otherness', a heart of darkness which is invariably also woman, as 'other', as temptress, as foreign territory, as active sexual being. One may argue that woman expressed as 'other' in fiction is not unique to this period, but what is unique to this period is the particular historically-determined discourses which intersect to constitute woman as 'other' in the texts examined. Thus the Haggardian woman becomes not just a dark 'otherness', then, but even, for instance, a separate species or 'missing link. What Conrad did to Haggard's model as he 'transformed it into art', is yet to be 'explored'.

CHAPTER THREE

THE COLONIAL, SEXUAL AND LINGUISTIC ENCOUNTER: CONRAD.

1. THE MYSTERY DISCLOSED: THE EMERGENCE OF NATIVE WOMAN FROM JUNGLE
IN CONRAD'S EARLY FICTION

In Conrad's An Outcast of the Islands¹ (1896), a white trader in exile, a wandering outcast, marooned on the shore of a Malayan island, takes a canoe upriver in 'search of some solitary spot where he could hide his discouragement and his weariness' (An Outcast, p.61). He seeks 'another opening', 'another deception'. It is here in the Malayan jungle that he follows the 'capricious promise of the track' into a clear space traced with sunlight through foliage. It is here that he is to have the first glimpse of the Arab-Malay woman who is to have degenerating effects upon him:

At the end of the first turning Willems saw a flash of white and colour, a gleam of gold like a sun-ray lost in the shadow, and a vision of blackness darker than the deepest shade of the forest.(Conrad, An Outcast, p.62)

A flash of white and colour, seen through the checkered gloom of the forest, manifests itself into the form of a woman, whose gaze 'seemed to him to be something loud and stirring like a shout, silent and penetrating like an inspiration' (An Outcast, p.63). 'Sleeping sensations' awake in Willems, bringing 'new fears, new desires'. The woman is nameless, sourceless and silent. Willems awakened, scorched by a wind that seems to 'be driven by her moving figure', must make out her meaning and to do this he looks to the forest from which she has loomed:

Who was she? Where did she come from? Wonderingly he took his eyes off her face to look around at the serried trees of the forest that stood big and still and straight, as if watching

him and her breathlessly. He had been baffled, repelled, almost frightened by the intensity of that tropical life which wants the sunshine but works in gloom; which seems to be all grace of colour and form, all brilliance, all smiles, but is only the blossoming of the dead; whose mystery holds the promise of joy and beauty yet contains nothing but poison and decay...but now as he looked at that life again, his eyes seemed to pierce the fantastic veil of creepers and leaves, to look past the solid trunks, to see through the forbidding gloom - and the mystery was disclosed - enchanting, subduing, beautiful. He looked at the woman. Through the checkered light between them she appeared to him with the palpable distinctness of a dream. The very spirit of that land of mysterious forests, standing before him like an apparition behind a transparent veil - a veil woven of sunbeams and shadows. (An Outcast, p.64)

In answering the questions: 'Who was she? Where did she come from?', Willems must look to her source: the forest. She has come from the forest, but she also is the forest: 'the very spirit of that land of mysterious forests'. The forest and tangled undergrowth have produced her. She is also a product of the light, the checkered light that produces her as 'apparition'. The forest is an active agent: the trees stand 'as if watching him and her breathlessly'. The forest has fulfilled the 'capricious promise of the track' by producing this apparition, this manifestation of itself for the delectation of the white male. Moreover, the above passage, juxtaposing Aissa's mystery with that of the jungle, suggests that her mystery is also that of the 'blossoming of the dead', holding the 'promise of joy and beauty' yet containing nothing 'but poison and decay', like the carnivorous plants of the Malay Archipelago.

Aissa is the spirit of the jungle, but she is also clothed by the jungle. Looking into the 'fantastic veil of creepers and leaves', Willems is able to 'pierce the veil', to disclose the mystery and

the mystery is woman: 'He looked at the woman'. To make out her meaning he must first see her and he sees her 'behind a transparent veil', a veil 'woven of sunbeams and shadows'. This veil of 'checkered light' stands between them. The forest, clothing her in its light and in its foliage, stands between them. To understand her he must pierce the veil of the forest, and in this piercing, in this revelation, the mystery will be disclosed, both the mystery of the forest and of woman.

A colonial encounter in a forest glade: a white man perceives the apparition of a native woman. This scene is one of many such colonial and sexual encounters in Conrad's early novels. The white male colonial gaze peers into the gloomy foliage which constitutes an 'otherness', and there in the confusion of foliage, his searching eyes will make out the form of a native woman. For Willems, the flash of white and colour, the gleam of gold and the vision of blackness will become a revelation of meaning and an awakening as it forms itself into the object of desire. Unlike Paul's revelatory vision on the road to Damascus, Willems' vision, 'the gleam of gold like a sun-ray lost in shadow' will not signal a spiritual conversion, but instead the beginning of a demonic enchantment.

What characterizes such passages in Conrad's early work is the manifestation of the 'signs' of the jungle into the form of native woman. Joanna de Groot argues that this correlation of Orient and woman is a nineteenth-century phenomenon:

Since European commentators endowed the Orient they had created with qualities with which men of the period also endowed

females, they came on occasion to characterize the Orient as essentially or generally 'feminine'. The use of the phrase 'mysterious Orient', like 'mysterious female', indicated that both were seen as hard for western men to understand; references to the irrationality and emotional extremes to which 'orientals' were inclined carried the implied comparison with similar tendencies attributed to women (Groot, "'Sex" and "Race"', p.105).

It is this conflation of jungle-as-sign and woman-as-sign that will be the subject of this chapter: the mystery disclosed as feminine 'other'.

Conrad's early Malayan or savage women are almost always pictured or framed against a 'riot of foliage', in twilight or in checkered green sunlight. Conrad describes Willems looking at Aissa a few days after their initial encounter:

And he looked at her, standing above him, her head lost in the shadow of the broad and graceful leaves that touched her cheek; while the slender spikes of pale green orchids streamed down from amongst the boughs and mingled with the black hair that framed her face, as if all these plants claimed her for their own - the animated and brilliant flower of all that exuberant life which, born in gloom, struggles forever towards the sunshine (An Outcast, p.69).

Aissa's head is lost in the shadows created by the foliage in which she is placed. Moreover the foliage and flowers interpose into the plane of vision: they come between her and the eyes that see her, just as the checkered light had stood between Willems and his vision in the earlier passage, like a veil. She is not framed against the foliage, but enveloped into it, so that the outlines of her face dissolve into foliage. The leaves touch her cheek, thus breaking the outline, and the slender spikes of orchids mingle with her hair. By enveloping her, the plants claim her as their own, she is indistinguishable from the jungle growth. She both merges into the

foliage and looms out of it. Conrad does more than associate Aissa with the jungle, with flowers, with creepers, he suggests in descriptions such as these, that there are deeper perhaps more sinister correlations.

Critics have noted Conrad's methods of describing landscape. Ian Watt writes in Conrad in the Nineteenth Century³:

Conrad is not in the ordinary sense a nature writer; his memory and imagination distil and recreate the characteristic Malayan landscapes with vividness and truth, but his primary interest is both wider and more subjective. Conrad looks at the visible universe with the eye of one who believes that only by deciphering its features can the individual find clues to life's meaning or lack of it (Watt, p.44).

Willems, in the above passage, deciphers the features of the jungle and discovers the features of the native woman with the 'signs' of the jungle inscribed upon her. In Willems' case the movement from landscape to woman is manifested in the form of a female 'apparition', seemingly conjured up by the light, an apparition offered up by the landscape as temptation.

Moser similarly notes Conrad's association of jungle growths with women:

Moreover, through frequent references to flowers, as well as creepers, Conrad underlines the femininity of the destructive jungle life⁴.

Conrad's correlation of native woman with jungle is more complex than mere association - with the repeated visual image of woman enveloped in foliage, her contours dissolving in the jungle growth which in turn veils her, holds her, frames her, holds her up as

manifestation of itself as it would one of its flowers, the text offers up native woman as manifestation of landscape.

Just as the jungle will offer Aissa up as gift, as temptation for the white man, it will also tantalize him by withdrawing her back into its depths, concealing her:

While he [Willems] sat in the tremor of that contact she ran off with startling fleetness and disappeared in a peal of laughter, in the stir of grass, in the nod of young twigs growing over the path, leaving behind only a vanishing trail of motion and sound (An Outcast, p.70).

The peal of laughter echoes back at Willems, mocking him and teasing him. Aissa disappears into the peal of laughter as she disappears into the 'stir of grass' or the 'nod of young twigs'. The laughter seems to be as much part of the jungle as are these other sounds. The jungle laughs at him. These women, their contours dissolving, can disappear at will, back into the darkness or into the forest, back into the 'other world'. They will veil themselves from the male gaze:

It was as if she had drawn slowly the darkness round her, wrapping herself in its undulating folds that made her indistinct and vague (An Outcast, p.130).

Almayer's Folly⁵, Conrad's first novel, differs from An Outcast of the Islands in that it fuses the two lovers (here Malay man and half-caste woman rather than white man, Malay woman), Nina and Dain, and places them together in the jungle setting. It is their mutual lovemaking that is represented as the expression of the jungle:

All the seething life and movement of tropical nature seemed concentrated in the ardent eyes, in the tumultuously beating hearts of the two beings, drifting in the canoe, under the white canopy of mist, over the smooth surface of the river

(Conrad, Almayer's Folly, p.59).

Here again is the manifestation of tropical landscape into the figures of two of its representatives, both native, both half savage. Conrad, then, can be seen to be using a similar technique of correlation to that we have seen in An Outcast of the Islands: correlation through the dissolution of contours. As Nina and Dain hide from their pursuers in a jungle clearing, their 'forms melt in the play of light':

With a rythmical swing of their bodies they walked through the light towards the outlying shadows of the forest that seemed to guard their happiness in solemn immobility. Their forms melted in the play of light and shadow at the foot of the big trees...
(Almayer's Folly, p.140)

The difference for An Outcast of the Islands, as suggested above, is that of colour partly. In Almayer's Folly native man meets native (half-caste) woman and together they melt into the other world of the jungle. In An Outcast of the Islands white man meets native woman. She is held and enveloped by the jungle, he is not. For him the jungle, which is part of her being, will always be 'other': 'he had been baffled, repelled, almost frightened by the intensity of that tropical life' (An Outcast, p.64), and consequently she will always be 'other'.

Examining Conrad's 'jungle' novels in this way (whether the Malay novels or those of the Congo), a colour pattern does begin to emerge in such passages. Take, for example, the so-called Grove of Death passage in Heart of Darkness⁶:

Black shapes crouched, lay, sat between the trees, leaning against the trunks, clinging to the earth, half coming out, half-effaced within the dim light, in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment and despair...nothing but black shadows of

disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom...These moribund shapes were free as air - and nearly as thin. I began to distinguish the gleam of their eyes under the trees. Then glancing down I saw a face near my hand. The black bones reclined at full length with one shoulder against the trees.(Conrad, Heart of Darkness, p.20)

Like Willems, the white foreign gaze (here Marlow's) has trouble in seeing, in making out shapes in the gloom. But careful looking will reveal shapes and shadows, fragmented limbs, eyes, literally appearing to loom out of the earth, foliage, trees themselves: 'clinging to the earth, half coming out, half-effaced within the dim light'. Here Conrad's slaves form a kind of optical illusion for Marlow whose eyes range over the grove and suddenly perceive 'a face near my hand' and 'black bones' reclining against a tree. The tree becomes the bones and shadows of a black man. Similarly the light and foliage of a forest clearing becomes the hair and features of a black woman. Whilst there is an obvious difference of perspective in the two scenes (Marlow is describing a scene intended to shock and repel the reader, whereas Willems' vision is one of primitive sexual beauty) the effect is strikingly similar: black bodies under the white gaze looming out of landscape - 'half coming out, half-effaced'. Other passages in Heart of Darkness similarly fragment the black body into landscape:

But suddenly as we struggled round a bend there would be a glimpse of rush matts, of peaked grass - roofs, a burst of yells, a whirl of black limbs, a mass of hands clapping, of feet stamping, of bodies swaying, of eyes rolling, under the droop of heavy and motionless foliage...a black and incomprehensible frenzy. The prehistoric man was cursing us, praying to us, welcoming us - who could tell?
(Heart of Darkness, p.37; emphasis mine)

A glimpse of movement and savagery through the trees, these inhabitants of a prehistoric earth are indistinguishable from their

surroundings, seen in fragments to the white gaze which must look carefully in order to see them at all, for they form an organic unity with the forest itself, a conflation of 'otherness'. Like Aissa, these black bodies dissolve back into the darkness when needing concealment. The savage from the Middle Station, beaten for causing a fire, disappears back into the jungle:

Afterwards he arose and went out - and the wilderness without a sound took him into its bosom again.
(Heart of Darkness, p.26)

At times the wilderness is capable of great movement, although one of its principle characteristics is stillness. It moves through its black bodies:

the crowd, of whose presence behind the trees I had been conscious all the time, flowed out of the woods again, filled the clearing, covered the slope with a mass of naked, breathing, quivering bronze bodies.
(Heart of Darkness, p.66; emphasis mine)

The energy of the wilderness becomes intensified as Marlow travels to the centre, to the Central Station, to Kurtz and the 'unspeakable rites'. The energy is concealed behind foliage, veiled, threatening. Marlow looks again:

I saw a face amongst the leaves on the level with my own looking at me very fierce and steady, and then suddenly, as though a veil had been removed from my eyes, I made out deep in the tangled gloom, naked breasts, arms, legs, glaring eyes - the bush was swarming with human limbs in movement, glistening, of bronze colour. (Heart of Darkness, p.46; emphasis mine)

Here Marlow's revelation is very like that of Willems: the gaze surveys the veil of foliage and the veil is suddenly removed disclosing the mystery, the movement, the life force of the wilderness.

It is the savage mistress of Kurtz who is the ultimate expression of the threatening energy of the wilderness, however. Whilst the 'mass of human bodies' fills the clearing, she is the 'eddy in the mass', she is its figure-head:

the woman with helmeted head and tawny cheeks rushed out to the very brink of the stream. She put out her hands...
(Heart of Darkness, p.66)

Earlier, emerging from the forest, Marlow had described her as 'savage and superb'. Like Aissa, the wilderness offers her up as 'apparition':

from right to left along the lighted shore moved a wild a gorgeous apparition of a woman. (Heart of Darkness, p.60)

and as the image of itself, manifested into woman:

And in the hush that had fallen suddenly upon the whole sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul. (Heart of Darkness, p.60; emphasis mine).

The savage mistress, holding out her arms to the dying Kurtz as he sails down river away from him, becomes a death figure. Kurtz will not be allowed to leave the wilderness - it has embraced him as its own and will not relinquish him. The savage mistress will bring down death with her outstretched arms as easily as she will bring down the twilight:

Suddenly she opened her bared arms and threw them up rigid above her head, as though in an incontrollable desire to touch the sky, and at the same time the swift shadows darted out on the earth, swept around on the river, gathering the steamer in a shadowy embrace. (Heart of Darkness, pp.60-61)

Like Aissa, like the savage responsible for the fire, the savage mistress is enveloped by the wilderness once more and the last that

Marlow sees of her is of her eyes gleaming in the foliage, watching:

She turned away slowly, walked on following the bank and passed into the bushes to the left. Once only her eyes gleamed back at us in the dusk of the thickets before she disappeared.
(Heart of Darkness, p.61)

Another death figure from Conrad's fiction of the 90s is that of James Wait in The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'⁷. Like the savage mistress he is 'calm, cool, towering, superb' (Conrad, The Nigger, p.18). Whilst the treatment of Jimmy is ironic and complex, Conrad can be seen to be using dissolving contours to describe him as black man, although here not against foliage but darkness, from which he looms as death itself:

In the blackness of the doorway a pair of eyes glimmered white, and big and staring. Then James Wait's head protruding became visible...He seemed to hasten the retreat of the departing sun by his very presence; the setting sun dipped sharply, as though fleeing before our nigger; a black mist emanated from him; a subtle and dismal influence; a something cold and gloomy that floated out and settled on all the faces like a mourning veil.
(The Nigger, p.34; emphasis mine).

As Jimmy deteriorates he becomes more insubstantial: the dying black man dissolves back into darkness:

He was becoming immaterial like an apparition...the fleshless head resembled a disinterred black skull...He was demoralising...(The Nigger, p.139)
long, lean, dried up as though all his flesh had shrivelled up in the heat of a white furnace; he was outrageous - belonging wholly neither to death nor life.(The Nigger, p.148)

Whereas black bodies, and particularly female black bodies are pictured in Conrad's fiction enveloped in twilight, foliage and wilderness, fragmented and dissolved by the light, Jim from Lord Jim⁸ is always firmly outlined against the twilight wilderness that

is Patusan. He is substantial, white and distinct, almost in silhouette:

he, out there with his back to the light...

(Conrad, Lord Jim, p.174)

That was my last view of him - in a strong light, dominating, and yet in complete accord with his surroundings - with the life of the forests and with the life of men. (Lord Jim, p.175)

In the midst of these dark-faced men, his stalwart figure in white apparel, the gleaming clusters of his fair hair, seemed to catch all the sunshine that trickled through the cracks in the closed shutters of that dim hall...He appeared like a creature not only of another kind but of another essence.

(Lord Jim, p.229)

He was protected by his isolation, alone of his own superior kind...(Lord Jim, p.176)

James Wait, black man, 'seemed to hasten the retreat of the departing light'. Lord Jim 'seemed to catch all the sunshine that trickled through the shutters'. Moreover Marlow, observing Jim, notes how 'in the midst of these dark-faced men' Jim is marked out distinctly, his colour emphasised by the white clothes and fair hair. He seems 'like a creature not only of another kind but of another essence', not only because of his colour, the fact that he catches light rather than dispels it (like James Wait and the savage mistress), but because this light makes him distinct, clearly outlined: 'distinct...planted solidly' (Lord Jim, p.176). These clear contours, moreover, mark his isolation and dominance over this twilight world: 'He was protected by his isolation, alone of his superior kind', 'in a strong light, dominating'.

If clear contours signify isolation from the twilight worlds of Conrad's jungle settings and signify dominance and being 'alone of his superior kind', then Lord Jim in Patusan, although Marlow claims he is 'in complete accord with his surroundings', is culturally

isolated, always distinct (presumably Jim, as white man, is 'in complete accord with his surroundings' because he has retained his distinction, his superiority - that he is precisely Lord Jim in this jungle world; we might add that he is in complete 'biological'/hierarchical accord with his surroundings). He does not 'go native'. Whereas Jewel, Jim's native mistress is insubstantial and shadowy in her visual appearance:

the ghostly figure swayed like a tender tree in the wind, the pale oval of the face drooped; it was impossible to distinguish her features, the darkness of the eyes was unfathomable; two wide sleeves uprose in the dark like unfolding wings, and she stood silent, holding her head in her hands... it had grown pitch-dark where we were so that without stirring she had faded like the intangible form of a wistful and perverse spirit. (Lord Jim, p.308)

Jewel, too, is deeply 'rooted' in the jungle landscape. She joins forces with the jungle itself to hold Jim, to guard him:

He was jealously loved, but why she should be jealous, and of what, I could not tell. The land, the people, the forests were her accomplices, guarding him with vigilant accord, with an air of seclusion, of mystery, of invincible possession. (Lord Jim, p.283)

Jim, unlike Kurtz, escapes, his distinctness intact, but he must extricate himself first from Jewel's arms, from her shadowy embrace.

If clear contours signify in Jim's case, the boundaries of self (cultural isolation in the sense of not being dissolved by the wilderness), if they signify Jim's distinctness and that, whilst being threatened with the shadowy embrace of tropical nature, he can escape from it, then what do dissolving contours signify? Dissolution of contours correspondingly may prove to signify some

sense of communion with a place, being native, belonging in the sense of being 'rooted' but also of being possessed by a place. Conrad's native women are 'rooted' in that they are emanations of tropical landscape, seen enveloped in foliage, created by green light or twilight - blossoms which the forest claims as its own.

Norman Sherry's substantial work on the source figures of Conrad's fictional characters⁹ makes almost no reference to Conrad's female characters. Nina and Aissa are referred to only briefly although they are major figures. Sherry's search can often produce as many as four real-life sources for characters such as Kurtz, Willems or Almayer but he does not even attempt to find sources for Aissa or Nina. Whether this is Sherry's blindspot or whether he has failed to find sources for them, reading the two volumes of his work gives the impression of substantial male characters created by Conrad from composite sources and shadowy female characters who are only important in their effect on the men. If Sherry is correct, then Conrad's men are substantial in their composite models, whereas Conrad's native women are sourceless and fragmented. Conrad is doing something wholly different with his female characters leaving them veiled in twilight. Conrad's male figures are not dis-jointed or fragmented because they have specific referents, specific sources, whereas the only referent of the female characters is the jungle itself. Conrad's women are not 'like' certain women he knew in the Malay Archipelago. They express something wholly different: the jungle itself, or the effect of the jungle upon the white man.

The effect of the jungle on the white man, the colonial encounter with 'otherness' expressed through the native female, brings us to another, rather complex, problem, that of authorial control. A number of critics have written about Conrad's so-called 'impressionism' or impressionistic technique and argued about whether Conrad was notably influenced by impressionism or literary impressionism. This debate and its relation to the kinds of descriptions I have discussed so far in this chapter may answer certain questions about technique: how far is Conrad manipulating such passages to demonstrate the effect of the native woman upon the white man?

Conrad, in the famous and much quoted Preface to The Nigger of the 'Narcissus' claims that:

My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel - it is, above all, to make you see...The task approached in tenderness and faith is to hold up unquestioningly, without choice and without fear, the rescued fragment before all eyes in the light of a sincere mood. It is to show its vibration, its colour, its form; and through its movement, its form, and its colour, reveal the substance of its truth - disclose its inspiring secret: the stress and passion within the core of each convincing moment (p.viii).

If Conrad, then, is true to his task which he outlines in this Preface, he holds up, in the passages which I have discussed above, the moment, the fragment of the colonial encounter with native woman and shows us its vibration, its colour and its form. His task is to make the reader see 'the substance of its truth', 'the stress and passion within the core of [this] convincing moment'.

James Nagel in Stephen Crane and Literary Impressionism¹⁰, describes the impressionistic technique in fiction as follows:

The characters, especially protagonists, are in a continuous state of flux, never fully comprehending themselves or the world around them, never able to grasp a generalisation that explains life to them. They are subject to uncertainty and delusion, to diminution of stature, to ironic and satiric treatment, but they are also capable of percipient states in which they realise something new about their lives.
(Nagel, p.30)

Thus he believes Crane's novels and specifically The Red Badge of Courage offer impressions 'distorted by fear and fantasy' (Nagel, p.119). They show us 'distortions of apprehension caused by societal norms and conditioning'.

Ian Watt¹¹ suggests that Conrad's reactions to impressionism were largely unfavourable (Conrad in the Nineteenth Century, p.173) and that it was unlikely that Conrad was significantly influenced by the impressionist movement (p.179), although he admired Crane's work. Watt does suggest, however, that Conrad uses a particular technique which he terms 'delayed decoding' which is related to the techniques of literary impressionism. This technique, summarized by Watt as:

combining the forward temporal progression of the mind, as it receives messages from the outside world, with the much slower reflexive process of making out their meaning. (Watt, p.175)

presents a sense impression and withholds naming it or explaining its meaning until a later point.

Watt suggests that it is the decoded meaning that is of importance to Conrad in instances of 'delayed decoding', the intellectualisation of sense impressions, whereas Bruce Johnson¹² in

'Conrad's Impressionism and Watt's Delayed Decoding', claims that Conrad has more interest in the primary sense impressions i.e. the effect of a situation upon the protagonist. Johnson claims that Conrad was more of an impressionist in this sense than Watt would give him credit for and that:

the Impressionist, as Conrad apparently understood the term, seeks not only to render 'the effect of the tree', with all the emotional and visual peculiarities of the individual point of view, but to remind the reader continually that what he might easily and readily assume to be 'objectively' the tree is actually the result of complex cultural prejudices¹³.

This theory assumes a distance from the perception of the object, an ability to render the peculiarities of the individual point of view in order to demonstrate the effect of a tree on a particular sensibility as a result of complex cultural prejudices. Transposed on to Conrad's representation of native women, for instance, this theory would suggest that Conrad portrays these women as manifestations of the jungle, but is doing so in order to show the 'effect of native woman' and to remind the reader that what he/she might readily and easily assume to be 'objectively' the native woman is actually the result of cultural prejudices in the mind of the white viewer. Such a theory applied to Conrad's early fiction implies a control over the description of the objects pictured in such passages, the kind of control over the description of women that Meyer¹⁴ in his psychoanalytic biography of Conrad would never allow him. Johnson believes otherwise, however, and concludes that Conrad does not offer us 'confused seeing' but a 'freshness of sensory perception'¹⁵.

Returning to Nagel on literary impressionism¹⁶, Nagel claims that this technique in its purest form, which portrays 'distortions of apprehension caused by societal norms and conditioning' and impressions 'obscured by darkness and distance and distorted by fear and fantasy', can, by its 'tendency for fragmentary episodes of intense sensory experience', achieve a degree of 'psychological realism'. About Crane he writes:

Crane's psychological 'realism' is notable as an epistemological record of sensory experience, followed by internalisation, reflection, fantasy.
(Nagel, Stephen Crane and Literary Impressionism, p.169)

To take an example of the fragmentary quality of Conrad's descriptions of the colonial/ sexual encounter, I return to Willems and Aissa and An Outcast of the Islands. Willems, now an outcast from the world of men, is imprisoned by Lingard, as punishment, in a forest clearing on a river, with only Aissa and her servant woman as companions. He struggles with despair and thoughts of suicide. He has only contempt for Aissa now. Her presence reminds him of his 'fall' and she is now 'that creature', who, 'by the touch of her hand had destroyed his future'. In a moment of abandonment and despair:

He took her suddenly in his arms, and she clasped her hands round his neck with a low cry of joy and surprise...She clung to him trembling with the intensity of her happiness and love. He heard her whispering - her face hidden on his shoulder - of past sorrow, of coming joy that would last forever...She, wild with delight, whispered on rapidly, of love, of light, of peace, of long years...He looked drearily above her head down into the deeper gloom of the courtyard. And, all at once, it seemed to him that he was peering into a sombre hollow, into a deep black hole full of decay and of whitened bones; into an immense and inevitable grave full of corruption where sooner or later he must, inevitably, fall.(Conrad, An Outcast, p.273-74)

The description is fragmented, focussed clearly on Willems' sensations as he embraces this woman whom he both fears and despises. His mind is full of his exile, his despair. The preceding pages have described his thought processes, his mental images: his body consumed by 'minute throngs of insects', 'with horns, with claws, with pincers...in eager struggle for his body' (An Outcast, p.268), but it is here, in intimate contact with the black woman who has dragged him down, that the text reaches its most climactic and sharply focussed image: Willems' own grave. Aissa, whom the text persistently associates with twilight and with darkness, embraces him and he looks above her head into the 'deeper gloom of the courtyard'. He hears her whispering, feels her body clinging to him, and pictures a deep black hole into which he must fall, a grave already full of whitened bones, decaying and corrupt. Aissa, as agent of death and of the wilderness, brings in her embrace a vision of death: a corrupt hole waiting for Willems.

The movement of the passage is from primary sense impressions (Willems feels Aissa embrace him, feels her trembling, he hears her whispering and looks into the courtyard) to what might approximate to Watt's concept of 'delayed decoding': the intellectualization of sense impressions. Such intellectualization here however, involves the distortion of sense impressions, the distortions of fantasy and fear.

In the passages examined up to this point it would seem that Conrad does achieve a 'freshness of sensory perception', describing the

barrage of sense impressions in the mind of the protagonist created by the encounter with native female. Conrad's women, we could argue, are shadowy and indistinct, made up from fragments of the jungle, apparitions, because Conrad's interest is in the effect-of-native-woman on the white male. However, there is clearly much more to Conrad's elusive prose than this. In the passages which describe the dissolving contours of the native woman, the text offers the reader a dense web of signifiers (a barrage of sense impressions), so that the dissolution of the woman is as much due to the prose as to the jungle into which she disappears. The prose offers an obscuring veil between the reader and the described object: a textual jungle. Willems looks to the jungle (as we look to the prose) to make out Aissa's meaning. He looks to her source, as we must look to her source: the language from which she emerges. He is lead inexorably towards that 'deep, black hole full of decay' into which he must inevitably fall. As readers, this, too, is our fate: to follow the 'capricious promise of the track' (the text), to move through the textual jungle (language itself) towards the deep black hole into which we and Marlow and Willems must all inevitably fall (the textual void). It is not just, then, that the prose describes the process of dissolution, but that the prose is continually dissolving and reconstituting itself, offering the reader glimpses of his/her destination and of a tantalising object towards which the text moves and simultaneously dissolving that object and that centre. It is to the relation between jungle, native woman and language that I now turn: the shadowy embrace.

2. THE SHADOWY EMBRACE OF JUNGLE, WOMAN AND LANGUAGE

If native woman emerges from the jungle in Conrad's early fiction, then it is essential to examine the significations of the wilderness itself in these early works. Conrad's journeys into the 'interior' begin on the exterior, in which the 'interior' is seen in map form. In A Personal Record Conrad tells of his own early fascination with exploration and with maps:

It was in 1868, when nine years old or thereabouts, that while looking at a map of Africa of the time and putting my finger on the blank space then representing the unsolved mystery of that continent, I said to myself with absolute assurance and an amazing audacity which are no longer in my character now: 'When I grow up I shall go there'.
(Conrad, A Personal Record, p.13)

The blank space represents here 'unsolved mystery', the blank space that asks to be filled. The white child with audacity and assurance places his finger over that space with a gesture of defiance and dominance. Marlow in Heart of Darkness¹⁷ describes a similar desire:

Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa or Australia and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth and when I saw this one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look like that) I would put my finger on it and say: 'When I grow up I will go there'. (Heart of Darkness, p.11)

The land invites. It beckons just as Haggard's African landscapes tantalize and beckon the white male. The land invites but it invites, here, not the man but the boy. The boy can only 'look' but not 'go there'. Marlow continues:

But there was one yet - the biggest - the most blank, so to speak - that I had a hankering after. (Heart of Darkness, p.11)

The pleasures of big and blank spaces are observed, hankered after

by the boy, to be enjoyed by the man. The aesthetic pleasures of virgin whiteness / blankness promise fulfilment of manhood and initiation into manhood.

At closer range, whilst Marlow is still 'outside', still distanced from the African wilderness rather than enclosed within it, the land continues to beckon:

Watching a coast as it slips by a ship is like thinking about an enigma. There it is before you - smiling, frowning, inviting, grand, mean, insipid, or savage and always mute with an air of whispering - 'come and find out'.
(Heart of Darkness, p.16)

The map had fascinated the child, Marlow, specifically 'a mighty river...resembling an immense snake uncoiled':

And as I looked at the map of it in a shop-window, it fascinated me as a snake would a bird - a silly bird...The snake had charmed me. (Heart of Darkness, p.12)

The child has a 'passion' for maps and will 'lose himself' in all the glories of exploration, looking for hours at a map in shop-window, a map that promises excitement, challenge, passivity and initiation into manhood and adult adventure. The child's gaze is voyeuristic (seen through a shop-window) and the map with its whispered promises of initiation and sexuality becomes a sexual invitation: 'come and find out'.

Similarly in 'Youth'¹⁸ the young Marlow describes his first voyage, an initiation into manhood in its own way. Here he sees the East for the first time, not Africa, but similarly treated in its significations of 'otherness', sensuality and exotica. Just as Marlow had sailed along the coast of Africa and heard the whispering of its

invitation, the younger Marlow approaches the East by sea. To see it from middle-distance is to smell and feel the erotic invitation and to experience its effect on the senses. No longer a blank space, its promise is more intoxicating:

I have seen its secret places and have looked into its very soul; but now I see it always from a small boat, a high outline of mountains...

A red light burns far off upon the gloom of the land, and the night is soft and warm...suddenly a puff of wind, a puff faint and tepid and laden with strange odours of blossoms, of aromatic wood comes out of the still night - the first sigh of the East upon my face. That I can never forget. It was impalpable and enslaving, like a charm, like a whispered promise of mysterious delight...The mysterious East faced me, perfumed like a flower, silent like death, dark like a grave. (Conrad, 'Youth', p.41, emphasis mine)

The East for the youth bears a 'whispered promise of mysterious delight', but simultaneously it bears also the threat of death and the grave, like Willems' vision of death in Aissa's embrace. Willems had followed the 'capricious promise of the track' and been led to Aissa who had whispered promises of delight and brought simultaneously a vision of death and, of course, his literal death at her own hands.

On entering these mysterious landscapes the explorer moves from an exterior conception of white blankness to a profusion of sense impressions. The jungle landscape, seen from within rather than long-distance (the map) or middle-distance (the views from the sea) becomes a confusion of seeing, a sensory experience: a Darwinian model of struggle, profusion and decay. Watt¹⁹ writes of the scene in which Dain and Nina in Almayer's Folly meet against the

'backdrop' of fecund nature:

The lush tropical aubade, with the jungle showering the happy lovers with nuptial petals is soon disclosed as an ephemeral moment in a larger and grimmer process; nature's cycle begins in death and decay, and though some spectacular flowers may manage to thrust themselves up into the sunshine, they soon fade, die, and sink back into the corruption where they began. (Watt, Conrad in the Nineteenth Century, p.45)

Conrad's earliest novels, in descriptions of fecund tropical nature, share a similar vision of nature as decay, struggle and profusion with the work of A.R. Wallace, The Malay Archipelago²⁰, a favourite book of Conrad's and written in 1869. Wallace's work describes the struggle for life in the Malay jungle and particularly the simultaneous process of decay and life feeding off decay. Compare, for instance, two passages describing beetles breaking down matter.

First Wallace:

In the tropics a large proportion of the insects of all orders, and especially of the large and favourite group of beetles, are more or less dependent on vegetation and particularly on timber, bark and leaves in various stages of decay. In the untouched virgin forest, the insects which frequent such situations are scattered over an immense extent of country, at spots where trees have fallen through decay and old age or have succumbed to the fury of the tempest...(Wallace, p.28)

Conrad adds man to this decaying landscape, makes him the subject of the beetles' bite, replaces the fallen tree with the fallen Willems imaging his own death:

He would be stretched upon the warm moisture of the ground, feeling nothing, knowing nothing; he would lie stiff, rotting slowly; while over him under him, through him - unopposed, busy, hurried - the endless and minute throngs of insects, little shining monsters of repulsive shapes, with horns, with claws, with pincers, would swarm in streams, in rushes, in eager struggle for his body; would swarm countless, persistent, ferocious, greedy - till there would remain nothing but the white gleam of bleaching bones in the long grass... (An Outcast, p.268)

White man, inside tropical landscape in Conrad's early fiction, confronts an alien environment characterized by fecundity and decay, in which he, too, must struggle to survive or be eaten alive, just as Haggard's heroes had struggled to survive the attacks of mosquitoes. Fecundity and decay are symbiotic, sexual desire, too, is subject to decay. Whilst Conrad's landscapes are fecund and swarming places, the adjectives used to describe them form a pattern of 'signs' or keynotes.

The first of these keynotes, sounded repeatedly to form a dense linguistic pattern, is the jungle as passive landscape waiting patiently for the invasion to pass away:

And outside, the silent wilderness surrounding this cleared speck on the earth struck me as something great and invincible, like evil or truth, waiting patiently for the passing away of this fantastic invasion.
(Heart of Darkness, p.26)

A few pages later Conrad repeats almost the same sentence with the emphasis altered, so that the 'patience' becomes 'ominous patience':

The high stillness confronted these two figures with its ominous patience, waiting for the passing away of a fantastic invasion.(Heart of Darkness, p.35)

The landscape has become more active in the second sentence: the stillness now 'confronts' the invaders and the patience is 'ominous' so that now the stillness and the waiting have become active, marking Marlow's increasing fear of being consumed by the wilderness as he moves towards the interior. The waiting of the wilderness is repeatedly expressed by the word 'brooding':

And the stillness of life did not in the least resemble a peace. It was the stillness of an implacable force brooding

over an inscrutable intention. It looked at you with a vengeful aspect (Heart of Darkness, p.36; emphasis mine).

Thus what Marlow initially perceives as stillness and passivity, becomes increasingly oppressive and cloying in the sense that its fecundity and heaviness become an 'implacable force'. As was seen in Haggard's fiction, landscape at a distance offers passivity but at close range becomes an active and oppressive entity. The word 'brooding' is used more and more often as Marlow approaches the interior, to describe the wilderness, the brooding force. It signifies perfectly the active stillness and the waiting of the jungle. Brooding suggests both the action of incubating or hatching (hence: 'brooding over an inscrutable intention'), moody mental contemplation (hence: 'ominous patience'), and also that which hovers closely around or overhangs as a bird over her brood. Thus the 'implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention' becomes a passive force, a maternal force, that waits as it incubates, oppressive, heavy, hovering over the invaders with a vengeful aspect. The wilderness, brooding, hangs over and threatens to envelop, waiting for its vengeance.

The wilderness has enveloped Kurtz:

The wilderness had patted him on the head, and behold, it was like a ball - an ivory ball - it had caressed him and - lo! - he had withered; it had taken him, loved him, embraced him, got into his veins, consumed his flesh and sealed his soul to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation (Heart of Darkness, p.49; emphasis mine).

It is the final embrace of the cannibalistic jungle that has sealed Kurtz's fate, just as it is Aissa's embrace that seals Willems; both

are the agents of death and decay; both consume flesh: the wilderness as devourer.

Willems, too, feels the encroachment of the wilderness, imprisoned as he is on his river post. It surrounds him and moves in for the attack, which, like the effect of the wilderness on Kurtz, is described in terms of the sexual caress:

He saw the horrible form [of death] among the big trees, in the network of creepers, in the fantastic outlines of leaves, of the great indented leaves that seemed to be so many enormous hands with broad palms, with stiff fingers outspread to lay hold of him; hands gently stirring, or hands arrested in a frightful immobility, with a stillness attentive and watching for the opportunity to take him, to enlase him, to strangle him, to hold him till he died; hands that would hold him dead, that would never let go, that would cling to his body for ever till it perished - disappeared in their frantic and tenacious grasp.(Conrad, An Outcast, p.268)

The brooding over an intention, the incubation of an intention suggests, thus, that the intention is vengeance: 'watching for the opportunity to take him'. The wilderness waits for vengeance and moves in for the kill through the caress:

But the wilderness had found him [Kurtz] out early and had taken on him a terrible vengeance for the fantastic invasion. (Heart of Darkness, p.57)

Conrad, in his late essay 'Geography and Some Explorers'²¹ writes:

Regions unknown! My imagination could depict to itself there worthy, adventurous and devoted men, nibbling at the edges, attacking from north and south and east and west, conquering a bit of truth here and a bit of truth there, and sometimes swallowed up by the mystery their hearts were so persistently set on unveiling.
(Conrad, 'Geography and Some Explorers', pp.19-20; emphasis mine)

This is precisely Kurtz's fate: the imperialist consumed, the consumer consumed. The adventurers attack and conquer and this is seen in terms of consumption: 'nibbling at the edges', until the mystery of the land swallows them: the unveiled consumes the unveiler.

The devouring of the jungle is thus described in early Conrad as the devouring of the female, either the devouring sexual caress of the female (Kurtz is embraced and withers, Willems is enlaced by hands gently stirring that would never let him go until he perished) or the brooding devouring of the jungle, equally signifying femaleness.

Devouring females are characteristic of Conrad's work as Meyer's biography of Conrad persistently demonstrates. Furthermore 'Conrad's women are dentally superb', writes Visiak in The Mirror of Conrad²². Certainly the text does place emphasis on the gleam of female teeth, but Conrad lays more stress on the devouring caress/embrace of the female - the embrace that both clings and envelops. Jewel is described as hovering over Jim in Lord Jim:

Her tenderness hovered over him like a flutter of wings...Her vigilant affection had an intensity that made it almost perceptible to the senses; it seemed actually to exist in the ambient matter of space, to envelop him like a peculiar fragrance, to dwell in the sunshine like a tremulous, subdued and impassioned note,(Conrad, Lord Jim, p.283)

Jewel's tenderness, then, can be correlated to the brooding of the jungle: 'it hovered over him like a flutter of wings' and threatens

to envelop him. Moreover her affection is 'vigilant'; Jim is her conquest, to be guarded.

The clinging, caressing, cloying quality of the jungle, the jungle that moves in on its victims is at its most intense in the passage cited above in which Willems perceives the foliage as caressing hands. This quality is reflected in Conrad's native women who cling to their men persistently and must often be physically pulled away. Jewel clings to Jim as he leaves:

She flung herself upon his breast and clasped him around the neck.
'Ah! but I shall hold thee thus!' she cried. 'Thou art mine'.
(Lord Jim, p.413)

Jim needs the assistance of two men to separate her arms from around his neck.

In such descriptions - the embrace of the female - the text makes associations with jungle creepers embracing the big trees of the forest. Aissa embraces Willems, for instance:

Slowly she raised her arms, put them over his shoulders, and clasping her hands at the back of his neck, swung off the full length of her arms. Her head fell back, the eyelids dropped slightly, and her thick hair hung straight down: a mass of ebony touched by the red gleams of the fire. He stood unyielding under the strain, as solid and motionless as one of the big trees of the surrounding forests.
(Conrad, An Outcast, p.120)

Willems will not be able to take the 'strain' for long. Aissa will cling to him tenaciously until he topples over like a forest tree, to decay and be consumed by creepers:

He struggled with the sense of certain defeat - lost his footing - fell back into the darkness...he gave up...because death is better than strife. (An Outcast, p.72)

In Almayer's Folly, Dain waits for Nina in a forest clearing and the image of the creepers threatening the growth of the big trees recurs:

On three sides of the clearing, appearing very far away in the deceptive light, the big trees of the forest, lashed together with manifold bonds by a mass of tangled creepers, looked down at the glowing young life at their feet with the sombre resignation of giants that had lost faith in their strength. And in the midst of them the merciless creepers clung to the big trunks in cable-like coils, leaped from tree to tree, hung in thorny festoons from the lower boughs, and, sending slender tendrils on high to seek out the smallest branches carried death to their victims in an exalting riot of silent destruction
(Conrad, Almayer's Folly, p.134; emphasis mine).

Thus, if women are manifestations of the jungle, even jungle growths themselves, they will act as the wilderness does, silent, brooding, clinging tenaciously to their men, felling them as the creepers fell the big trees. Such women act as the agents of the jungle, agents of decay, agents of destruction - they are, above all, agents of a Darwinistic conception of tropical nature, incubating and destroying in the same moment.

A second repeated characteristic of the Conradian jungle or wilderness is the jungle as watcher. It connects to the above - the jungle as devourer - in that the landscape is described as waiting and watching for a chance to trap and consume its prey - the invaders, the white man. The jungle gaze is found both in An Outcast of the Islands and in Heart of Darkness. When Willems meets Aissa for the first time in the jungle clearing 'the serried trees of the forest seemed to be watching him and her breathlessly' (An Outcast,

p.64). They continue to watch, to witness his decline, as he approaches his death imprisoned on the river:

Above and below, the forests on his side of the river *came down* to the water in a serried multitude of tall, immense trees towering in a great spread of twisted boughs above the thick undergrowth; great, solid trees, looking sombre, severe and malevolently stolid, like a great crowd of pitiless enemies pressing round silently to witness his slow agony.
(Conrad, An Outcast, p.266; emphasis mine)

Marlow, too, will experience the returned gaze of the forest as something malevolent and oppressive:

I felt often its mysterious stillness watching me at my monkey tricks.(Conrad, Heart of Darkness, p.36)
The woods were unmoved like a mask - heavy like the closed door of a prison - they looked with their air of hidden knowledge, of patient expectation, of unapproachable silence.
(Heart of Darkness, p.56)

The gaze of the jungle is steady, expressionless and unapproachable. It looks down upon the invader, forever watching and confronting.

For Marlow the effect of the jungle gaze is to make him question for the first time the balance of power: does the jungle have the power to destroy the white man?:

I wondered whether the stillness on the face of the immensity looking at us two were meant as an appeal or as a menace. What were we two who had strayed in there? Could we handle that dumb thing, or would it handle us? I felt how big, how confoundedly big was that thing that couldn't talk and perhaps was deaf as well.(Heart of Darkness, p.29; emphasis mine)

The returned gaze of the forest challenges the invader, makes him the object of the gaze, but whilst the jungle itself looks on still and implacable, it will also look at the white man through the eyes of its human representatives, the natives:

the jungle of both banks [was] quite impenetrable - and yet eyes were in it, eyes that had seen us.
(Heart of Darkness, p.44; emphasis mine)

Marlow and his companions cannot visibly penetrate the jungle on either side, they cannot see through it, but, and this is Marlow's horror, the jungle is watching them. The natives are veiled in foliage, concealed from the white gaze, but with only their eyes visible the native gaze becomes distilled. Malek Alloula, in his study of the eroticism of the Algerian colonial postcard, The Colonial Harem²³, writes of the significations of the veiled woman for the male gaze. The veiled woman becomes an attack on the colonial gaze for:

Colonialism is, among other things, the perfect expression of the violence of the gaze, and not only in the metaphorical sense of the term. Colonialism imposes upon the colonized society the everpresence and omnipotence of a gaze to which everything must be transparent.(Alloula, p.131 n.)

When the colonial gaze confronts the veiled woman it confronts an object that refuses to be transparent. Moreover, veiled entirely but for her eyes, the veiled figure becomes nothing but gaze, the gaze that is focussed on the male:

It must be believed that the feminine gaze that filters through a veil is a gaze of a particular kind: concentrated by the tiny orifice for the eye, this womanly gaze is a little like the eye of a camera, like the photographic lens that takes aim at everything.(Alloula, p.14)

Willems sees Aissa veiled and this fills him with rage:

The upper part of her body was wrapped up in the thick folds of a head covering which was pulled down over her brow, and one end of it thrown across from shoulder to shoulder hid the lower part of her face. Only her eyes were visible - sombre and gleaming like a starry night.
Willems, looking at this strange, muffled figure, felt exasperated, amazed and helpless...It made him furious...He told her not to do it and she did not obey.

(Conrad, An Outcast, p.110)

Later:

he turned furiously upon her, and tearing off her face-veil, trampled on it as though it had been a mortal enemy.
(An Outcast, p.119)

Willems' fury is that of the white man, the colonial gaze that demands transparency and is confronted with a denial signified by the veil which represents an injunction of 'no trespassing' on private space. The veil becomes the demarcation of private and public space. Willems must remove the demarcation, for the veil is literally a 'mortal enemy' to the colonial gaze.

This also parallels the game that the text plays with the reader, offering the promise of a centre to the text (the heart of darkness) but continuously and simultaneously postponing the arrival at this textual centre, denying its very existence. Positing meaning and ceaselessly evaporating it, the refusal to fix meaning constitutes a denial to the reader of the transparency of language. Our experience in reading Conrad's prose is precisely that of Willems' experience with the veiled Aissa. He looks to the jungle to pierce its fantastic veil, to disclose its mystery, to disclose Aissa's mystery. We look to the language which in turn both refuses to disclose its secret (and denies that there is any secret at all) and offers a secret (the promise of textual centres, resolutions). The confrontation with the veil of the Conradian textual jungle is a disempowering experience for the reader.

Thrust into the presence of the veiled woman, the photographer feels photographed, having become an object-to-be-seen, he

loses his initiative: he is dispossessed of his own gaze.
(Alloula, The Colonial Harem, p.14)

Similarly Willems under Aissa's steady gaze, appeals hysterically to Lingard, reiterating his claim to whiteness over and over again:

'Always watching, watching... for something. Look at her eyes. Ain't they big? Don't they stare? You wouldn't think she could shut them like human beings do. I don't believe she ever does. I go to sleep, if I can, under their stare, and when I wake up I see them fixed on me and moving no more than the eyes of a corpse... The eyes of a savage: of a damned mongrel, half-Arab, half-Malay. They hurt me! I am white! I swear to you I can't stand this! Take me away. I am white! All white!'
(An Outcast, p.222)

Willems is transformed from subject to object under Aissa's gaze, thus he must remind himself and Lingard of his whiteness, that he must be colonial subject, not the object of the gaze of a mongrel woman²⁴ just as the returned gaze of the wilderness makes Marlow wonder:

Could we handle that dumb thing or would it handle us?
(Conrad, Heart of Darkness, p.29)

The wilderness, the native woman and the Conradian text deny the transparency demanded by the colonial gaze by returning the gaze that transforms the colonial subject into object and dispossesses him of his own gaze and of his sense of mastery.

'Could we handle that dumb thing or would it handle us?': Which returns us to Conrad's prose (the way that this prose dissolves and reconstitutes itself through what Leavis has termed Conrad's 'adjectival insistence'²⁵). Here this question about the power relations between man and jungle is also an implicit question of the power relations between man and native woman (could we handle her or

would she handle us?) and also, I would suggest, a question about the power of language (do we master language or does it master us?). I believe that Conrad's questions about the nature of the wilderness/ native woman and its/ her effect on the white man are deeply bound up with ontological uncertainties about the nature of language.

For Conrad, we must remember, English was a foreign language - not his first language, as he wrote to Marguerite Poradowska (in French):

l'Anglais m'est toujours une langue étrangère qui demande un effort formidable pour être mané²⁶.

I would like to propose from this that in describing the foreign 'otherness' of the wilderness and of native woman, Conrad is also engaged in an expression of language itself as a foreign 'other', difficult to handle, needing to be wrestled with, yet impossible to resist: that the colonial/ sexual encounter is also simultaneously the linguistic encounter. As Martin Ray²⁷ has pointed out:

Conrad never devoted an entire essay or article to the problems which he encountered with language and his views have to be gleaned from the hints and asides which are scattered throughout his letters, essays and especially, his novels.
(Martin Ray, 'The Gift of Tongues', p.94)

Furthermore the dissolving contours of the native woman which I have drawn attention to in this chapter, would also seem to be, from Ford Madox Ford's outline of Conrad's attitude to language, perceived by Conrad as a characteristic of the English language:

Conrad's indictment of the English language was this, that no English word is a word: that all English words are instruments for exciting blurred emotions. 'Oaken' in French means 'made of

oak wood' - nothing more. 'Oaken' in English connotes innumerable moral attributes... The consequence is, that no English word has clean edges: a reader is always, for a fraction of a second, uncertain as to which meaning of the word the writer may intend. Thus all English prose is blurred. Conrad desired to write a prose of extreme limpidity...²⁸

Likewise, no Conradian native woman has 'clean edges'. The last sentence draws attention to the central paradox of Conrad's choice of language for his fiction: Conrad chose to write in a 'blurred' language yet he desired to write 'a prose of extreme limpidity'. Martin Ray in 'A Gift of Tongues' claims that Conrad had a paradoxical attitude to the notion of 'le mot juste': he is attracted to the pursuit of 'le mot juste' (in its implicit proposition that language has a necessary and not a provisional relationship to the world), yet as a polyglot he also knew that language was only a provisional representation of the world:

The relativity of languages which the polyglot perceives undermines a belief in le mot juste, the uniquely correct expression, with the result that 'no mot can be juste' (the phrase is Hugh Kenner's).

(Martin Ray, 'A Gift of Tongues', p.102)

Martin Ray concludes that Conrad's multilingual background and his decision to write in English resulted in an acute detachment, even isolation from his medium, a fundamental suspicion of the language he employs and a desire to transcend 'le mot juste':

Conrad's characteristic attempt to transcend merely precise language (which may be seen as the true purpose behind the style which Leavis defines adversely as 'adjectival insistence') leads him to welcome the mists and shadows which surround every English word...

(Martin Ray, 'The Gift of Tongues', p.94; emphasis mine)

It is precisely this double awareness of the blurring of language and the notion of 'le mot juste' (the tantalisingly elusive correct expression) that we can see mirrored in Conrad's description of the

effect of the jungle/ native woman on the white man; the pursuit of the object of desire is coupled with an awareness that the object can never be 'fixed' and moreover with a fear that contact with that object will result in a transformation of power whereby the subject (he who desires to master) becomes object (the mastered). In 1895 Conrad advised Edward Noble to;

search the darkest corners of your heart, the most remote recesses of your brain, - you must search them for the image, for the glamour, for the right expression²⁹.

It is in 1896 (the year of the publication of An Outcast of the Islands), only a year after Conrad offered this piece of advice to Edward Noble, that Conrad writes of Willems' colonial encounter with a native woman which is strikingly similar to his advocacy of the pursuit of 'le mot juste' in the 'darkest corners' of the heart:

At the end of the first turning Willems saw a flash of white and colour, a gleam of gold like a sun-ray lost in shadow, and a vision of blackness darker than the deepest shade of the forest. (An Outcast, p.62)

The mystery disclosed is also the perpetual mystery and fear of language, experienced as 'foreign other' like the native woman.

Finally, the movement towards the interior, experienced by the Conradian male as a process of increasing claustrophobia and fear (no longer able to keep the wilderness at arms length, no longer able to resist the suffocating embrace of this foreign 'other') can also be seen to parallel Conrad's encounter with language. Conrad has described the movement of explorers into 'regions unknown' in 'Geography and Some Explorers':

worthy, adventurous and devoted men, nibbling at the edges,

attacking from north and south and east and west, conquering a bit of truth here and a bit of truth there, and sometimes swallowed up by the mystery their hearts were so persistently set on unveiling³⁰.

Earlier I used this passage to describe Kurtz's fate - the imperialist consumed - but here it seems also to describe Conrad's encounter with language: the pursuit of linguistic 'truth' ('le mot juste'), the attempt to unveil language itself is accompanied by the fear that close contact with language will result in that language 'swallowing' the writer. From this analysis I concur with Joanna de Groot's proposition³¹ that:

The images of Otherness and subordination... need to be understood as ways for men to explore and deal with their own identity and place in the world as sexual beings, as artists, and intellectuals, as imperial rulers, and as wielders of knowledge, skill and power.
(Groot, "'Sex' and 'Race'", p.100; emphasis mine)

The search for identity for Conrad is also a search for linguistic identity, the search for mastery over this foreign language and conversely, we might add, accompanied by a fear of (and desire for?) that foreign language mastering or swallowing him. I repeat, the colonial/ sexual encounter, seen as a way of exploring personal identity, is also for Conrad a means to explore linguistic identity and a means to express his response to a 'foreign' language, experienced as 'other'. In 1911 Conrad wrote to Joseph de Smet:

I wrestle painfully with that language, which I feel I do not possess but which possesses me, - alas!³²

3. 'A VAGUE SUGGESTION OF FEROCITY': CONRAD'S NATIVE WOMAN

Aissa, as we have seen is produced by the tropical landscape as temptation for the white man. But she is also used, presumably unknowingly) as a temptation to Willems, an enticement away from the white outpost, to ensure his complicity in a native plot. Before Willems encounters Aissa, Conrad describes the plotting of Babalatchi and Lakamba who want to expel Lingard from the area. Babalatchi explains his plan:

'I know the white men, Tuan...In many lands have I seen them; always the slaves of their desires, always ready to give up their strength and their reason into the hands of some woman...Let one man destroy another'.
(Conrad, An Outcast, p.57)

Aissa, then, is intended, even before her first encounter with Willems, to be the instrument that will come between him and Lingard, the instrument that will sap the 'strength' and the 'reason' of the white man. The plot works, although Aissa is probably unaware at first of her part in the plot. When Babalatchi threatens Willems with taking Aissa away from him, Willems realises what has happened to him:

Willems measured dismally the depth of his degradation. He - a white man, the admired of white men, was held by those miserable savages whose tool he was about to become. He felt for them all the hate of his race, of his morality, of his intelligence. He looked upon himself with dismay and pity. She had him. (An Outcast, p.109)

Willems becomes the tool of the native woman and of her race but there is more going on in the passage. Conrad describes Willems' perspective. Willems has cheated his employer and been exiled from the white community in disgrace. He had treated his wife and her

relatives with contempt and cruelty. For Willems to claim, in dismay and pity, that he had been the 'admired of white men' is for him to display his self-delusion and his egoism. The text does not treat Willems sympathetically but it is faithful to his perspective, here his belief that he, the admired of white men, has been brought to this, to become the tool of a native woman.

Nevertheless, Aissa's function, inscribed in the plots of her race, is to come between the two white men and to sap Willems' strength. This is outside the ironic treatment of Willems' delusions. She does both of these things and more. In this she is entirely, albeit unknowingly (we suppose), loyal to the requirements of her race. However, even before Willems has realized that he has been the victim of a conspiracy, he is aware, as is the text, of his inevitable degradation. Soon after their initial encounter, Willems, having lost his wits, finds himself drinking the muddy water from the river out of the palm of his hand:

He drank again, and shuddered with a depraved sense of pleasure at the after-taste of slime in the water. (An Outcast, p.66).

After their second meeting he begins to feel his strength being drained away:

he, so strong, so superior even in his errors, realized at last that his very individuality was snatched from within himself by the hand of a woman. (An Outcast, p.70)

The persistent irony used to describe Willems' delusions of his importance reminds the reader that Willems is already corrupt before he meets Aissa, that he is not 'so strong' nor 'so superior', that Aissa only speeds up a process already begun.

When Aissa finally lays down beside him after days of torment,
Willems:

sat up suddenly with the movement and look of a man awakened suddenly by the crash of his own falling house. All his blood, all his sensation, all his life seemed to rush into that hand leaving him without strength, in a cold shiver, in the sudden clamminess and collapse as of a deadly gun-shot wound.
(An Outcast, p.70)

Aissa's effect is to lay her hand upon Willems and draw out his blood, sensation and life which rushes into her 'hand', leaving him collapsed and clammy, in a cold shiver. The sexual implications are self-evident: the sexual debilitation of the male. The hands recall the passage cited above in which Willems, much later in the novel, imagines himself held by the foliage which looks like hands which will caress and hold him until he dies. He is like the man who is awakened by the crash of his falling house: Aissa's hands, like creepers, have laid themselves upon him and will sap his strength (signified by the image of his falling house).

It is surely significant that the description of Willems under the hands of Aissa parallels Conrad's description in certain letters of the effects of prolonged writing upon him, his grappling with language. Compare for instance another passage from the letter cited earlier in which Conrad had advised Edward Noble to pursue the 'right expression' into the darkest corners of his heart:

at the end of your day's work you should feel exhausted, emptied of every sensation and every thought, with a blank mind and an aching heart with the notion that there is nothing, - nothing left in you. To me it seems that it is the only way to achieve true distinction³³.

to the description of Willems' debilitation:

All his blood, all his sensation, all his life, seemed to rush

into that hand leaving him without strength, in a cold shiver, in... sudden clamminess and collapse.(cited above).

Conrad, we know suffered from neurasthenia, a nervous energy which he believed to be a positive creative energy. He wrote to Wells in 1903:

for me, writing - the only possible writing is just simply the conversion of nervous forces into phrases... When the nervous force is exhausted the phrases don't come³⁴.

Once again the encounter with native woman corresponds to the linguistic encounter: both expressed in terms of sexual debilitation (exhaustion, 'nothing left in you', sudden clamminess and collapse). It would seem from this that the linguistic encounter is fundamentally a sexual encounter (a sexual struggle) but as we have seen the reverse is also true: the sexual encounter with a foreign woman is also a linguistic encounter with a foreign and threatening language: a conflation of 'others'.

Under Aissa's seductive power, Willems begins to feel his gradual slide into destruction:

Now and then he would grasp the edge of the table and set his teeth hard in a sudden wave of acute despair, like one who, falling down a smooth and rapid declivity that ends in a precipice, digs his fingernails into the yielding surface and feels himself slipping helplessly to inevitable destruction.
(An Outcast, p.71)

Compare the outbursts of the lama in Haggard's Ayesha: The Return of She:

'Oh! my sin, my sin! I am slipping backward, and you draw my black shame out into the light of day. Nay, I will confess it, that you may know how vile a thing I am...That woman, if woman she were, lit a fire in my heart which will not burn out; oh! and more, more³⁵.

Willems' 'fall' is steady but fast and is accompanied by feelings of

disbelief and amazement. The native woman has hold of him and will drag him down:

He seemed to be surrendering to a wild creature the unstained purity of his life, of his race, of his civilisation. He had a notion of being lost amongst shapeless things that were dangerous and ghastly. He struggled with the sense of certain defeat - lost his footing - fell back into the darkness.
(An Outcast, pp.72-73)

The treatment of Willems is quite different from Haggard's treatment of the lama. The lama is portrayed as a spiritual man who has unfortunately been cursed by desire (Ayesha). Conrad treats Willems in the above passage with scorn and stresses that this is Willems' perspective by the use of 'He seemed..' and 'He had a notion'. 'Unstained purity' is the most savage attack on Willems in the novel - for him to still believe in his purity is to show that he believes the 'stain' comes from outside (Aissa), whereas the stain seems to be in Willems' own self-delusions, it is already inside. He believes that Aissa will drag him back to the primeval darkness from which she has come, back to sensuality and boundary loss. The creepers of the female will infiltrate into the foundations of the white man's house (his sense of self), will undermine his manhood and bring about his fall.

The first part of An Outcast of the Islands leaves Willems slipping towards the precipice:

With a faint cry and an upward throw of his arms he gave up as a tired swimmer gives up: because the swamped craft is gone from under his feet; because the night is dark and the shore is far - because death is better than strife. (An Outcast, p.73)

Willems slips into water, into darkness and into a death-in-life state. His 'craft' has slipped from beneath him, echoing the

metaphor of the falling house. His defences are down. There is only one direction for him: the jungle and Aissa.

Part two returns us to Almayer sitting on his verandah. Five weeks have passed since Willems has disappeared into and been absorbed by the jungle. Almayer dozes and is awakened by Willems' voice. To Almayer Willems looks like a 'ghost':

a masquerading spectre of the once so very confidential clerk of the richest merchant in the islands. His jacket was soiled and torn; below the waist he was clothed in a worn-out and faded sarong. He flung off his hat, uncovering his long, tangled hair that stuck in wisps on his perspiring forehead and straggled over his eyes, which glittered deep down in the sockets like the last sparks amongst the black embers of a burnt out fire. An unclean beard grew out of the caverns of his sun-burnt cheeks. The hand he put out towards Almayer was very unsteady. The once firm mouth had the tell-tale droop of mental suffering and physical exhaustion. He was barefooted.
(An Outcast, p.79)

Willems, after five weeks with Aissa in the jungle, has been reduced to a spectre, a ghost. He is burnt out, unsteady, dishevelled, exhausted, resembling also Conrad's description of the burnt-out writer. He has 'gone native', has become like an animal. Moreover he has been biting himself:

'Look!' and he bared an arm covered with fresh scars. 'I have been biting myself to forget the pain, the fire that hurts me there!'(An Outcast, p.81)

Aissa's effect, like Ayesha's, is to reduce civilised manhood to bestiality. Aissa is another Circe figure, working with and through the jungle to achieve her ends. She is also a vampire figure, as the jungle is 'vampiric', waiting to entrap and consume its white prey, to caress its prey and draw the life out of it. The vampirism of the

jungle and of native woman is correlated through the metaphor of the clinging vine: Willems feels Aissa's caress and feels his life and blood being drained out of him; Willems images the effect of the jungle as both leaves-as-outstretched-hands clinging to him until he dies and as beetles waiting to devour his body.

Similarly Marlow in Heart of Darkness sees Kurtz crawling through the jungle towards the 'monotonous beating of a big drum' and the 'weird incantation' of the savage dance, spell-bound:

the heavy, mute spell of the wilderness - that seemed to draw him to its pitiless breast by the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts, by the memory of gratified and monstrous passions. (Conrad, Heart of Darkness, p.65)

He crawls also towards the savage mistress, the spirit of the jungle. The jungle and the jungle woman have particular victims, in this case Willems and Kurtz, men who are corruptible, and perhaps vulnerable to the influence of the jungle, for they have the jungle within them. Once it has infiltrated, the gradual dissolution begins, the breaking down of morality, manhood and restraint, the reversion to bestiality through the agency of this dark otherness: the correlation of native woman/ jungle.

We saw also in Chapter One how the 'femme fatale' and the female vampire in particular signified a certain fascination with role reversal: Harker paralysed, 'seduced' by the three vampire women both horrified and delighted; Ayesha's 'psychic ravishment' of Leo through her gaze which holds him and overpowers him. Similarly Conrad's early texts display a fascination with role reversal and

such passages are full of rich ambiguities of response. In Almayer's Folly, Dain, under Nina's gaze, feels 'penetrated', his soul 'whipped out of his body', overpowered, yet Conrad terms this 'the look of a woman's surrender'. Willems lies passive in the jungle, 'like death itself', visited by Aissa who approaches nearer every day 'with the slight exaltation of intoxicating triumph lurking in [her smile's] dawning tenderness' (An Outcast, p.69). Willems believes that he is taming her ('the gradual taming of that woman', p.69), with words of love, but it is his strength that rushes into her hand when she finally touches him. Willems registers both the desire-to-be-seduced and the fear of boundary loss and incorporation-into-the-other ('his very individuality was snatched away from within himself by the hand of a woman', p.70): the double register of fear and desire to be found in certain passages in Dracula and She.

However, Conrad appears to subvert such romantic stereotypes by making his protagonist contemptible and egocentric. Conrad demonstrates how Willems perceives the situation: he is the unstained representative of the white race to be corrupted and stained by contact with a savage woman, herself both political pawn and a projection of Willems' fear of and fascination for the jungle. There appears to be an undertow, a cynicism that refuses to collude with the stereotype of unstained-manhhood-meets-corrupting-womanhood, and this cynicism is expressed by the ironic treatment of Willems and by focussing, in part at least, on the effect of the jungle upon him.

Whilst the text may question Willems' conception of himself as unstained manhood descending to the level of savagery through the agency of the native woman, in other respects it uses devices that we have examined in Haggard. One such is the doubling of native beauty with withered hag (Foulata/Gagool, Stella/Hendrika, and the two sides of Ayesha) which presents the hag as the savage underside or alter-ego of the seemingly innocent beauty, and represents a tacit warning to the white male lover.

Both Nina and Aissa, the two most important native women in Conrad's early fiction, are similarly coupled with aging crones: Nina with her witch-like mother and Aissa with the servant woman who is Willems only other companion in his river 'prison'. This woman is described as 'a shrivelled, an unmoved, a passive companion of their disaster' (An Outcast, p.266) and as 'A thin, wizened, little old woman' with 'faded expressionless eyes'. She is most often seen bending over the fire, blowing on the embers or stirring food in a pot. She comes more and more to represent death itself to Willems, the death-in-life state of his existence and the death that awaits him. But she is also associated with the beauty Aissa, who is also the 'devil' Aissa. In one instance Willems hears a low moan in a storm:

He peered round in the half-light under the roof and saw the old woman crouching close to the wall in a shapeless heap, and while he looked he felt a touch of two arms on his shoulders. Aissa!... He turned, and she clasped him round the neck instantly...He stiffened himself in repulsion, in horror...while she clung to him.(An Outcast, p.233)

The sight of the wizened woman is transformed into the embrace of

Aissa which stiffens Willems in repulsion and horror, experiencing the fusion of the two women.

Similarly the gaze of the two women is fused:

From afar, the bleared eyes of the old serving woman, the sombre gaze of Aissa followed the gaunt and tottering figure [Willems]. (An Outcast, p.266)

As Willems' death approaches, the old woman takes on mythical proportions for him:

The old woman appeared to him through this as if in a fog, squatting on her heels, impassive and weird. (An Outcast, p.280)

Thus whilst the old woman accompanies the two 'lovers', witnesses their disaster and is merely Aissa's servant woman, there are deeper, sinister correlations between them. At one point Lingard watches the old woman hobble off into the shadows and immediately Aissa appears. Their gaze is fused in the passage cited above: 'the bleared eyes of the old serving woman, the sombre gaze of Aissa'; there is no 'and' to mark the division of the two gazes. Willems sees the old woman and feels Aissa's embrace. Moreover the epilogue records more directly their correlation: Almayer describes Aissa's fate after she has killed Willems. She is now, some years later, 'that doubled-up crone'. Not only is the fate of the native woman to age quickly and to lose beauty, but by implication (the correlation of the serving woman and Aissa), Aissa is already the hag, the dark underside of beauty.

The pattern continues. The epilogue of An Outcast of the Islands records how Aissa's fate is to become the child Nina's serving woman. Nina is to tame her, just as Hendrika had been tamed by Stella. Although the earlier Almayer's Folly does not mention Aissa as Nina's nursemaid (as murderess), she is nonetheless part of Nina's childhood, a connection between the two novels. Nina's other 'double' or crone-like companion is, of course, her mother described in very similar terms to the crone-like Aissa. She, too, had been a beauty, but is now a doubled-up, betel-chewing, witch-like figure:

her betel-chewing mother, squatting in a dark hut, disorderly, half-naked and sulky. (Conrad, Almayer's Folly, p.27)

She encourages her daughter's affair with Dain believing him to be a great Rajah, and persuaded by Dain's 'open-handed generosity', she manages to collect together a considerable amount of money in return for her daughter. Nina catches a glimpse of her counting this money hoarded in a treasure chest:

her mother extracted handfuls of shining guilders and Mexican dollars, letting them stream slowly back again through her claw-like fingers.
(Almayer's Folly, p.56-57; emphasis mine)

The old serving woman and Nina's mother share the iconography of the Haggardian monkey woman. They squat, are doubled-up, they are disorderly, half-naked and impassive. Nina's mother has claw-like fingers, like Gagool, and like Gagool she squats in a dark hut. By giving Nina and Aissa such companions, the text suggests that there are affinities: in Aissa's case this is both what she is beneath her beauty (agent of death) and what she will become; in Nina's case the savage qualities of her mother make up half of her inheritance as half-caste.

Yet, in Nina's case in Almayer's Folly, whilst Conrad may use the crone-beauty fusion in a way which appears to mirror Haggard's use of it in his fiction, the text does something far more sophisticated and apparently contradictory with biological determinism. Nina is half-caste daughter of white man and savage Malay woman. Her inheritance and her racial mixture is to be seen in her facial structure:

She was tall for a half-caste, with the correct profile of her father, modified and strengthened by the squareness of the lower part of her face inherited from her maternal ancestors - the Sulu pirates. Her firm mouth, with the lips slightly parted and disclosing a gleam of white teeth, put a vague suggestion of ferocity into the impatient expression of her features. And yet her dark and patient eyes had all the tender softness of expression common to Malay women, but with a gleam of superior intelligence. (Almayer's Folly, p.17; emphasis mine)

There are many racial assumptions going on in this passage. From her father Nina has a 'correct profile' and a 'superior intelligence'. From her mother she has a 'vague suggestion of ferocity' and a softness of expression common to Malay women'. The text surveys her face, dividing her features between white and Malay and would appear to be informed by the anthropological studies of Wallace³⁶ (who categorizes the races of the Malay Archipelago according to facial features and social customs), and perhaps also the studies of Lombroso and Ferrero³⁷: the stigmata of the native and of the criminal type. Yet by suggesting that the 'correct profile' of her father is 'strengthened' by her maternal inheritance from the Sulu pirates, the text perhaps begins to subvert these racial assumptions.

Nina's story is that of a half-caste woman trapped between two cultures and codes of behaviour. Her father's ambition is to take her to Europe and to make a white woman of her:

Nobody would think of her mixed blood in the presence of her great beauty and of his immense wealth (Almayer's Folly, p.7), whilst her mother wishes to see her remain true to her Malay inheritance and marry a Rajah at great financial gain for herself. Nina has grown up in a 'white nest', under the care of a Mrs Vinck who, jealous of the attention given to Nina by the local young men and not to her daughters, had sent Nina away, back to the jungle and to her parents. This experience, the rejection of white civilisation and its hypocrisies, has shaped a crucial decision for Nina:

It seemed to Nina that there was no change and no difference. Whether they traded in brick godowns or on the muddy river bank...whether they made love under the shadows of the great trees or in the shadow of the cathedral on the Singapore promenade...Nina saw only the same manifestations of love and hate and of sordid greed chasing the uncertain dollar in all its multifarious and vanishing shapes. To her resolute nature, however, after all these years, the savage and uncompromising sincerity of purpose shown by her Malay kinsmen seemed at least preferable to the sleek hypocrisy, to the polite disguises, to the virtuous pretences of such white people as she had had the misfortune to come in contact with. After all it was her life; it was going to be her life, and so thinking she fell more and more under the influence of her mother...she became gradually more indifferent, more contemptuous of the white side of her descent represented by a feeble and traditionless father. (Almayer's Folly, p.38)

Whilst the text plays with the notion of biological determinism in the emphasis placed on Nina's inheritance fixed in her facial features, by also placing emphasis on Nina's rejection of her whiteness implies that Nina makes a choice about values. She does not revert to savagery in a Haggardian sense (Hendrika and Ayesha), but chooses her Malay inheritance because it offers a way of life

which is more sincere and less corrupt. Such a passage radically subverts the assumptions of biological determinism: Nina's fate is not fixed, she has a choice. Moreover by making her decision that of choosing sincerity rather than corruption (whiteness), the text subverts the notion that for Nina to become more Malay is for her to revert or to regress. Thirdly the text complicates her 'choice' still further by making her decision influenced by her love for a Malay prince; thus sexual selection effects biological determinism. Mrs Almayer, convent educated, is a more familiar type. Her regression into savagery is not sympathetically treated. She is a crude version of the black female victim of reversion - no education can protect her from her savage self.

Allan Hunter, in his study of Conrad's use of Darwinism and related sciences suggests that:

it is quite obvious that...Conrad is using their findings, but he is also in most cases extending and rewriting their rather theoretical works³⁸.

In Almayer's Folly Conrad certainly extends the concept of biological determinism and rewrites it through Nina's choice, in putting more emphasis on physical and social environment than on inherited racial characteristics. But he also colludes with such theories through the rather crudely-drawn Mrs Almayer, who is in many ways no more sophisticated a type than Gagool.

Nina's position (trapped between two cultures and codes of behaviour) and her choice of one of these cultures and rejection of another culture is correlated in Conrad's decision about the

language he would use to write in, a decision made shortly before writing this, his first novel. Conrad always claimed that he did not hesitate in choosing English as his artistic medium:

it was I who was adopted by the genius of the language, which... made me its own so completely that its very idioms I truly believe had a direct action on my temperament and fashioned my still plastic character³⁹.

Later in this Author's Note to A Personal Record he reaffirms that English 'was for me neither a matter of choice nor adoption' (p.v) and that it should be regarded properly as 'a matter of discovery and not of inheritance' (p.vi). Yet recent critical work has shown that Conrad did hesitate between English and French as his chosen language. A contemporary of Conrad's, Paul Langlois, Conrad's charterer in Mauritius recollects that:

Joseph Conrad's English and French were both equally pure and fluent, but he preferred the latter language, which he handled with elegance. Our conversations were always in French⁴⁰.

Conrad, then, asserts that the adoption of the English language 'fashioned my still plastic character', just as Nina's choice to spend more time with her mother begins to fashion her character. Lastly, we can see in Conrad's claim that writing in English was 'a matter of discovery and not of inheritance' (cited above), Conrad's questioning of biological determinism which is also implicit in the portrayal of Nina's 'choice'.

Mrs Almayer 'sells' her daughter for money. It is Dain's 'open-handed generosity' that buys her protection. Nina sees her mother crouching avidly over her treasure chest, the gold streaming through her claw-like fingers. Like Lady Arabella March, money is her life-

blood; sex and money are associated in this otherwise sympathetically treated portrayal of native love, through the voracious mother figure. It is Nina's mother who gives Nina the following advice:

'remember men's strength and their weakness. Tremble before his anger, so that he may see your fear in the light of day; but in your heart you may laugh, for after sunset he is your slave'.
(Almayer's Folly, p.121)

Twilight and darkness become the domain of women. Mrs Almayer has sensed, too, that Dain's desire for Nina is his weakspot and she has exploited this for financial gain. Whilst the sex/money correlation is associated with Mrs. Almayer, it is also described, less explicitly, as part of Nina's desire for Dain. Note, for example, the erotic description of Nina's first gaze upon Dain, dressed like a rich man:

her gaze rested curiously on the chief of that imposing cortege. He stood, almost facing her...The crude light of the lamp shone on the gold embroidery of his black silk jacket, broke in a thousand sparkling rays on the jewelled hilt of his kriss protruding from under the many folds of the red sarong gathered in a sash round his waist, and played on the precious stones of the many rings on his dark fingers. He straightened himself up quickly after the low bow, putting his hand with a graceful ease on the hilt of his heavy sword ornamented with brilliantly dyed fringes of horsehair...
(Almayer's Folly, p.47)

The eroticism of the passage is displaced on to the richness of Dain's appearance. Nina's gaze recognizes his distinction: 'the gorgeous and bold being so unlike in appearance to the rare specimens of traders she had seen before on the same verandah' (Almayer's Folly, p.47). This is the female gaze that surveys a potential husband and that sees the visible richness of the male specimen. Other 'specimens' have been subject to the same gaze 'on

the verandah', other potential husbands, but none so richly erotic as this.

The passage keeps returning, as presumably Nina's gaze does, to the sword or kriss which is ornamented and which protrudes: 'in a thousand sparkling rays'. The visible richness of Dain's appearance is never seen again in the text's descriptions of him - the visible richness terminates in Mrs Almayer's treasure chest (just as the blood circulation in Dracula terminates with Mina) and it is Nina's eyes that range over the money contained there. She does not comment or show surprise at the amount of money that her mother has managed to extract from her lover:

Nina, standing silently by her, looked down on the little canvas bags ranged in the bottom of the chest, wherefrom her mother extracted handfuls of shining guilders and Mexican dollars, letting them stream slowly back again through her claw-like fingers. (Almayer's Folly, pp.56-57)

Whilst Almayer's dream is of immense wealth to enable him to take Nina to Europe where money will hide her colour, his dream will never be realised. The visible money/wealth in the novel is in the hands of a savage woman extracted in return for her half-caste daughter from a Malay prince. Almayer's treasure is his daughter, exchanged for a full treasure chest. Nina chooses her Malay inheritance and it is her mother who obtains what she is worth. The treasure money remains in the hands of a woman, a Malay woman with mercenary instincts, obtained through a man's weakness, his desire.

Similarly the movement of ivory in Heart of Darkness is out of Africa to Europe, Brussels. Kurtz, we are told, had travelled to

Africa to improve his status and increase his wealth, in order to be accepted by the family of his Intended. In 'An Outpost of Progress' (1898)⁴¹, Kayerts, marooned like Kurtz in Central Africa, describes his motivation for being there:

He had thrown up his post in the Administration of Telegraphs, though he had been for seventeen years perfectly happy there, to earn a dowry for his girl.
(Conrad, 'An Outpost of Progress', p.87)

Like Kurtz, he is destroyed by Africa. Marlow returns to Brussels and visits Kurtz's Intended. It is here in this 'whited sepulchre' of a city that Marlow discovers the destination of the stream of ivory from Africa and the only place that ivory is seen in the city is in the drawing room of the Intended, the keys of her grand piano:

A grand piano stood massively in the corner, with dark gleams on the flat surfaces like a sombre and polished sarcophagus.
(Conrad, Heart of Darkness, p.72)

Bruce Stark in his article 'Kurtz's Intended: the Heart of Heart of Darkness'⁴² points out that 'the Intended's drawing room... is filled with mute icons of the whites' rapacious exploitation' and suggests that the Intended's house is 'the symbolic center of the Inner Circle of the Infernal System' (Stark, p.543). If Kurtz had travelled like Kayerts to Africa for the sake of a woman and for the sake of money to enable him, in Kurtz's case, to possess this woman, then inevitably the Intended will be the point to which Marlow must return as (indirect) cause of Kurtz's destruction.

Bruce Stark demonstrates, through minutely close analysis of the closing pages of Heart of Darkness, how the Intended is associated with demonic energies. Emphasis, he demonstrates, is placed on the

eyes of the Intended, dark eyes which look at Marlow with 'intensity'. Moreover her eyes are said to 'glitter'. Stark points out that 'glitter' appears some thirteen times in the text: 'and in all cases but one it refers to a powerful and threatening "charm"' (Stark, p.546). It refers to Kurtz's bronze followers, the bizarre charms around the savage woman's neck, to a person's threatening eyes and to the river which takes Marlow to the Inner Station. It is also associated with the devouring gaze: the cannibal turns his 'glittering eyes', for instance, upon the Russian. Stark concludes:

The basic semantic features underlying these particular instances may be formulated as follows: the glitter of snake-like creatures charms bird-like victims into mortal acts. (Stark, p.547)

The Intended wants only one thing from Marlow: to know that Kurtz's last word was her name. Marlow, charmed by this snake-like creature can only give her what she demands.

Moreover just as the source of the ivory in the white woman's drawing room is the darkness of the African wilderness, the source of the white woman herself is the savage mistress, correlated in the final pages through the motif of the outstretched arms. This motif signifies embrace, entreaty, promised passivity, but conceals in Conrad, as it does in the novels of Stoker and Haggard examined, a female rapaciousness, a devouring quality; an embrace which, like Conrad's jungle will embrace and caress the object and hold it until it dies and is consumed back into darkness. It began with Lucy's invitation: 'Come my husband, come! My arms are hungry for you!' and was traced through to Ayesha's fatal embrace of Leo bringing his

immediate death. Conrad's use of the outstretched arms of the female here correlates white woman with black woman. It completes a pattern of imagery associated also with the jungle itself as devourer of the male subject, with leafy hands outstretched, waiting to trap and consume its prey. It is this gesture that fuses white woman and black woman, a gesture which is powerful enough to bring back the phantom of Kurtz:

She put out her arms as if after a retreating figure, stretching them black and with clasped pale hands across the fading and narrow sheen of the window. Never see him! I saw him clearly enough then. I shall see this eloquent phantom as long as I live and I shall see her too, a tragic and familiar Shade, resembling in this gesture another one, tragic also, and bedecked with powerless charms, stretching bare brown arms over the glitter of the infernal stream, the stream of darkness. (Heart of Darkness, p.75; emphasis mine)

Allan Quatermain too, had correlated, rather more crudely, the white woman with the black woman:

the highly civilised lady reading this will smile at an old fool of a hunter's simplicity when she thinks of her black bead-bedecked sister...remember that in the fundamental principles of your nature you are quite identical⁴³.

I would like to return briefly here to Joanna de Groot's analysis of 'sex' and 'race' in the nineteenth century. She extends her argument that women were presented as the means for imagining or finding out about the Orient to the proposition that:

While the Orient came to be explored and characterised through images of gender and sexuality, it is equally important that the 'Oriental' became an image through which gender and sexuality could be defined within European culture⁴⁴.

It is this shift to the Oriental or African as a means to define Western notions of gender and sexuality (the superimposition of

black woman on white woman - 'a dash of orientalism on white') that will be my focus in the final part of this chapter.



PLATE 6:
Undated sketch by Conrad.

I end this section with a drawing (see Plate 6), unfortunately undated, by Conrad, printed in Meyer's psychoanalytic biography of Conrad. The movement of the drawing is from left to right - the woman moves toward the man with arms outstretched, cigarette in hand. The man moves away, as Meyer comments: 'his knees pressed firmly together like a well-behaved girl'⁴⁵. The woman is white, her

arms appear to be about to envelop the retreating male, her gaze is fixed upon him, her head in profile. At her feet is a tiger skin, laid out from left to right, reflecting the movement of the woman, its head in profile like hers, but ferocious with mouth open, teeth exposed. The woman is clearly white and dressed in Western clothes. The cigarette identifies her as the 'New Woman'-type of 'femme fatale' (a supremely Western phenomenon), yet the tiger skin and the Eastern-looking table with decanter standing upon it, give a touch of Orientalism to the scene. That the tiger should add visual meaning to the scene, should reflect the movement and profile of the woman placed above it (and indicate her sexual voraciousness, her man-eating qualities), underlines Joanna de Groot's contention (cited above) that Orientalism became a means through which gender and sexuality could be defined in European culture.

4. FROM NATIVE WOMAN TO WHITE WOMAN: WINNIE VERLOC

Conrad once confessed that a 'dash of orientalism on white' was far more likely to excite him than the 'genuine Eastern'⁴⁶. This final part of the chapter will examine some of the vestiges of the native woman to be found in Conrad's representations of white women, in particular Winnie Verloc of The Secret Agent⁴⁷ (1907). Kenneth Inniss in his article 'Conrad's Native Girl: Some Social Questions', works from an examination of Conrad's native women to contend that in the later fictions (and he concentrates only on the two works

Victory and 'A Smile of Fortune'):

Conrad even presents us with two examples of symbolic transformation by which the dangerous tropical associations of his natives are assigned to white heroines - both, naturally, children of misfortune, dangers to the heroes who get involved with them⁴⁸.

I do not propose to cover the novels that Inniss has examined, but to look briefly instead at Winnie Verloc, a complex conception in a dense novel, but one who, I believe, shares some of the iconography of Conrad's early native woman. This is partly due I will argue to her class, her inherited characteristics and her function as murderess/ agent of death. Meyer, interestingly, links Aissa and Winnie together also, for reasons of class and sensuality:

The sensuous women in Conrad's fiction, are not the monolithic Rita and her like, but those creatures who spring from a much lower station in the hierarchy of social organisation, women like Aissa, Winnie Verloc and the simple hired girl Amy Foster⁴⁹.

The correlation between Winnie and Aissa is more complex than the assignation of class-defined sensuality however, and is inscribed in the shared iconography.

Like Nina in Almayer's Folly Conrad is careful to include substantial information as to her family history. She is the daughter of an alcoholic and sister of a 'degenerate type', Stevie, who is retarded and possibly epileptic. By doing so Conrad sets up both Stevie and Winnie as 'specimens', scientific specimens, and plays with the assumptions of the naturalistic novel, such as Zola's Nana, in which Nana (a prostitute) is given a substantial family history (she too, is the daughter of alcoholic parentage). Moreover

Winnie is half-French which suggests that Conrad is perhaps alluding to this notorious naturalistic novel. The Secret Agent is full of references to Lombroso and Nordau and their studies of degenerate types (the novel is about anarchists and Nordau has much to say about the anarchist as degenerate type), and criminological speculations become focussed on Winnie after she has murdered her husband, through Ossipon's 'scientific gaze'.

Critics have disagreed about Conrad's debt to Lombroso in The Secret Agent. Studies of the novel's debt to Lombroso include Robert G. Jacob's article which argues that, whilst Conrad includes one refutation of Lombroso through Karl Yundt, this speech is too sentimental to constitute a serious refutation and that, on the whole Conrad follows Lombroso carefully⁵⁰. John Saveson's article argues that Conrad was more likely to have obtained his knowledge of Lombrosan theories of anarchism through a series of articles in Blackwood's magazine, between 1899-1907, but that The Secret Agent:

conveys a widely accepted view of its subject, albeit with fresh ironies and unexpected intricacies and nuances of motive and character relationship⁵¹.

Martin Ray believes that Conrad's source of Lombrosan criminological theory would have come to him indirectly through Nordau's extension of the theories. He concludes that Conrad was more interested in the implications of Nordau's insistence that the artist was a degenerate type⁵². None of these articles give much attention to Winnie-as-specimen or as a degenerate type, yet they do demonstrate Conrad's extensive knowledge of criminology, whether it was directly from Lombroso or indirectly from Nordau or Blackwood's magazine.

I do not propose to take up the debate on sources. That criminological discourses are present in the text is evident from the text itself. My concern is to examine the treatment of the discourses and, more specifically, their relation to Winnie Verloc around whom the story is constructed as Conrad informs us in the Author's Note:

At last the story of Winnie Verloc stood out complete from the days of her childhood to the end, unproportioned as yet, with everything still on the first plan, as it were; but ready now to be dealt with. (Conrad, The Secret Agent, p.41)

Conrad begins with Winnie's story, 'from the days of her childhood to the end', and shapes the rest of the novel around this central plan.

Allan Hunter, in his book Joseph Conrad and the Ethics of Darwinism⁵³ attests to Conrad's eclecticism on the subject of criminology:

knowledge of such divergent sources argues, in Conrad, not merely an eclectic mind, but rather that he has a coherent knowledge of the major areas of contention of his day, and moreover is prepared to question all the arguments. (Hunter, p.216)

Hunter's thesis, in this study, is that Conrad used current scientific discourses but would rewrite or extend such theories or even use his fiction to reject them utterly. Hunter contends that Conrad's The Secret Agent is particularly critical of criminological theory:

The novel's ironic mode is applied to contemporary criminology as well as to the characters. It is, if one prefers, the novel in which Conrad rejects scientific and ethical speculation as inadequate to his needs. (Hunter, p.216)

Part of the novel's ironic treatment of criminology is the use of the anarchist Ossipon as the mouthpiece of Lombrosan theory, as the disciple of Lombroso. Leaving aside Ossipon's position as anarchist (and therefore a degenerate according to Lombroso and Nordau), he is described physically as resembling the degenerate type. Moreover the episode in which Ossipon finds himself confronted by the desperate Mrs Verloc and gradually realises that she is a murderess is treated with savage, ironic scorn:

He was scientific, and he gazed scientifically at that woman, the sister of a degenerate, a degenerate herself - of a murdering type. He gazed at her, and invoked Lombroso, as an Italian peasant recommends himself to his favourite saint. He gazed scientifically. He gazed at her cheeks, at her nose, at her eyes, at her ears...Bad!...Fatal!...he gazed also at her teeth...Not a doubt remained...a murdering type...he had in him the scientific spirit, which moved him to testify on the platform of a railway station in nervous, jerky phrases...He spoke scientifically in his secret fear...
(The Secret Agent, p.259)

Science here provides a language for a 'secret fear', 'a voice to his abiding dread' (p.260), a fear that is already present in the man who, like an Italian peasant, recommends himself to his favourite saint, Lombroso. The 'scientific gaze' is repeated insistently so that it becomes absurd, heavily ironic. Conrad is here focussing on the effect-of-woman, here a murderess, upon the man who confronts her and what he describes is the fear and dread which become transposed into scientific discourse. Ossipon's fear is presumably that Winnie will kill him too, a fear that is profound, secret, abiding, but which is displaced into another (scientific) language that enables Ossipon to categorize her safely and regain control.

But the prose is not simply describing the effect of a murderess upon the man who confronts her, it is also itself simulating that effect. It builds up clichés, disrupts syntax, overloads the passage through repetition to the point of rupture. It does not merely describe the distorted impression of Winnie (Ossipon's degenerate gaze upon the degenerate Winnie) but also obscures both Winnie and Ossipon in a dense web of words, a kind of simulated linguistic degeneracy. The nervous jerky phrases are those of the prose as well as of Ossipon. 'Degenerates', writes Nordau, 'utter monosyllabic cries, instead of constructing grammatically and syntactically articulated sentences'⁵⁴. The phrases such as 'scientific gaze', 'degenerate', 'murdering type' do not only describe the phrases in Ossipon's mind, but testify to linguistic degeneracy: the negation of language by overproduction and excess.

Martin Ray's study of Conrad and Nordau⁵⁵, which I have mentioned earlier, contends that Conrad's interest in Nordau was particularly in Nordau's contention that the artist was a degenerate type (in effect this was Nordau's most important 'contribution' to the study of degeneracy). Nordau makes this point in the dedication to the work:

Degenerates are not always criminals, prostitutes, anarchists and pronounced lunatics; they are often authors and artists. These, however, manifest the same mental characteristics, and for the most part the same somatic features, as the members of the above-mentioned anthropological family, who satisfy their unhealthy impulses with the knife of the assassin of the bomb of the dynamiter, instead of with pen and pencil.
(Nordau, Degeneration, p.vii)

Ray points out that the publication of Degeneration in English in

1895 coincided with the beginning of Conrad's literary career, and moreover, that Conrad suffered from many so-called 'degenerate' characteristics: neurasthenia, irritability, extreme nervous exhaustion, and hypochondria. Ray concludes that:

For the novice writer, as Conrad was in 1895 when Degeneration appeared, Nordau's book might have served as an analysis of what it was to be modern, and henceforth Conrad adopts Nordau's framework as a means of accounting for his own creative temperament.

(Ray, 'Conrad, Nordau and Other Degenerates', p.137)

That Conrad used Lombroso and Nordau in The Secret Agent is not in dispute, but what is less clear is Conrad's response to such theories. Martin Ray speaks of a kind of 'reflexive irony':

the oblique references to degeneration undermine such authorial assertion by allowing Conrad to hint that he is no better than Yundt and Ossipon, all being simply different versions of degenerates.

(Ray, 'Conrad, Nordau and Other Degenerates', p.139)

This 'reflexive irony' can perhaps be taken further. Many critics have noted the interdependability of all persons and institutions in Conrad's The Secret Agent. The textual allusions to Nordau's Degeneration are perhaps the means whereby Conrad himself is implicated into this interdependency: a degenerate type writes of degenerate types. Winnie's place in this scheme of degeneracy is as criminal and as prostitute: doubly degenerate. In Nordau's theory the author, the prostitute, the anarchist, the criminal are all members of the same anthropological family: The Secret Agent writes this family.

A second instance in which Conrad seems to play with criminological discourses and their application to Winnie, in particular, as

degenerate and as murderess, is in the crucial murder scene itself. Winnie is released from her 'contract' (her marriage to Verloc in return for financial support for Stevie) through her brother's death. Mr Verloc has no conception of a transaction, believing himself to be loved for his own sake, but Winnie now closes the transaction:

This woman, capable of a bargain the mere suspicion of which would have been infinitely shocking to Mr Verloc's idea of love, remained irresolute, as if scrupulously aware of something wanting on her part for the formal closing of the transaction. (The Secret Agent, p.232)

Closing the contract, through the death of her brother and the planned murder of her husband, leaves Winnie a 'free woman':

She had become a free woman with the perfection of freedom which left her nothing to desire and absolutely nothing to do, since Stevie's urgent claim on her devotion no longer existed. (The Secret Agent, p.235)

Winnie 'commits' the one 'free' act of the novel. She responds to impulse and to emotion, of which ironically Ossipon had said earlier in the novel:

'What matters is the emotional state of the masses. Without emotion there is no action'. (The Secret Agent, p.80)

Given the ironic treatment of scientific discourses in the passage cited earlier (Ossipon's scientific gaze), irony is surely present in the authorial comment as Winnie commits this anarchic act:

Into that plunging blow, delivered over the side of the couch, Mrs Verloc had put all the inheritance of her immemorial and obscure descent, the simple ferocity of the age of caverns and the unbalanced nervous fury of the age of bar-rooms. (The Secret Agent, p.234)

Winnie's act is neither unbalanced nor furious, although it is impulsive. Her actions are slow and deliberate.

Conrad infuses Winnie's story with the discourses of criminology and biological determinism. He offers her up as specimen of 'the simple ferocity of the age of caverns' transposed to 'the nervous fury of the age of barrooms' (an allusion to both Winnie's alcoholic parentage and to her nervous condition - hysteria? - 'nervous fury') both to Ossipon and the reader familiar with such discourses. Yet he is also subverting such discourses through his ironic treatment of such naive categorization. In this I tend to agree with Allan Hunter's conclusion that:

Conrad has presented what appears to be a genre-piece, but he has reassessed the formula, whilst at the same time rewriting the major criminologist of his time...The Secret Agent is concerned to describe a social problem, to describe the interactions of free-will and social conditions - it resists Lombrosan categorization⁵⁶.

I would argue that Conrad 'resists Lombrosan categorization' more in Winnie's case than any other character in the novel in giving her the one 'free action' of the novel and by giving her the title 'free woman'. This term is used insistently in the text from the moment that Winnie realises that her contract with Verloc is annulled to the point where she attaches herself to Ossipon:

Mrs Verloc was no longer a free woman.(p.255)

The phrase draws attention to itself (like other phrases of this kind in this section of the novel such as 'scientific gaze', 'degenerate type') through its repetition and whilst Conrad seems to be using it to demonstrate the impossibility of Winnie remaining free for very long (she must save herself and needs male assistance to do so), its initial significations are more complex. The phrase

primarily carries the resonances of 'New Woman' (there was a feminist journal published in 1915 entitled 'The Free Woman') signifying emancipation from economic and sexual dependency upon men, and rejection of motherhood and femininity. It is important to note, then, that Winnie becomes 'free', not by murdering her husband (although this is part of it), but by her realisation that she is freed from her contract (needing to be dependent on Verloc in order to support Stevie). Winnie is released from her ties of duty, from responsibilities, but this is not enough to make her act anarchic, it must be coupled with passion (in this case maternal) and it is therefore Winnie, rather than the passionless anarchists, who can act. Yet Conrad's point, illustrated through Winnie's subsequent actions, is that she cannot stay outside the web of society for long. She is compelled to return to it in her efforts to save herself and for economic reasons.

Free will is irreconcilable with the precepts of biological determinism, just as Nina's choice of her inheritance in Almayer's Folly subverts the precepts of biological determinism. Both Winnie and Nina are offered as specimens, invoking the assumptions of the naturalist novel, but they act outside such assumptions whilst the text surrounds them with the discourses of biological determinism. In some sense Winnie murdering Verloc is responding to her degenerate inheritance in Lombrosan terms, but she is also acting freely, released from all surface impediments to action, released from her contract.

Ossipon, looking at Winnie, perceives her degeneracy in his scientific gaze, and sees her as 'Bad!...Fatal!'. Winnie's 'stigmata' show him this: her cheeks, nose, ears, eyes and teeth. Her actions will be fatal both to herself and those around her. She is the fatal woman, 'la femme fatale', recognized by Ossipon through the criminological 'signs'. Thus whilst Conrad begins to question both biological determinism and criminology in his treatment of Winnie, there are certain 'signs' about her, hidden in the text, outside Ossipon's perception of her, which exploit her as 'femme fatale'. Winnie displays some of the iconography of the earlier Conradian native woman in her visual appearance after the murder, and whilst some of this is shown to be Ossipon's perspective, it is a perspective simulated across this entire section of the novel forming a pattern which corresponds closely to the earlier type.

There are two passages which describe the tenacious female embrace which are strikingly similar. The first is from An Outcast of the Islands. Aissa embraces the resisting Lingard, trying to prevent him from taking Willems away:

He made an effort to move, and became aware of a close embrace round both his legs, just above the ankles. Instinctively, he kicked out with his foot, broke through the bond and felt at once the clasp transferred to the other leg; the clasp warm, desperate and soft, of human arms. He looked down bewildered. He saw the body of the woman stretched at length, flattened on the ground like a dark blue rag. She trailed face downwards, clinging to his leg in a tenacious hug. He saw the top of her head, the long black hair streaming over his foot, all over the beaten earth, around his boot. He couldn't see his foot for it. (Conrad, An Outcast, p.214)

And Winnie clinging to Ossipon's legs:

He felt her now clinging round his legs, and his terror reached its culminating point, became a sort of intoxication,

entertained delusions, acquired the characteristics of delirium tremens. He positively saw snakes now. He saw the woman twined around him like a snake, not to be shaken off. She was not deadly. She was death itself - the companion of life.
(The Secret Agent, p.255)

Admittedly, both passages describe the sensations of a male embraced and trapped, focussing on the effect-of-woman and the associations made in the mind of the male being embraced. In fact the second and later passage is even more clear about the response being a subjective one: 'his terror...entertained delusions' (delusion - lunacy - degeneracy), but the images are similar. Aissa's hair covers Lingard's foot, as quicksand would: 'the long black hair streaming over his foot, all over the beaten earth, around his boot'. He cannot move, he is enveloped by her arms and hair. Aissa becomes earthlike and an agent of death, threatening to absorb him into the earth. She is 'flattened on the ground', indistinguishable from it, and threatens to take Lingard with her. Winnie clings to Ossipon like a 'snake', 'not to be shaken off' - she is death itself.

Whilst these two passages can be said to be descriptions of the effect-of-woman, the text itself colludes in a very subtle manner with Ossipon's 'delusion' that Winnie is an agent of death, by using a method of dissolving contours to describe her, similar to that used to describe the native woman in Conrad's early novels. Winnie is a white woman with dark hair and dark eyes. Before the murder she is frequently described in bed, awaiting Verloc:

The light thrown down by the shade fell dazzlingly on the white pillow sunk by the weight of her head reposing with closed eyes

and dark hair done up for the night.
(The Secret Agent, p.84)

And later immediately before the murder:

Her big eyes stared open, inert and dark against the snowy whiteness of the linen. (The Secret Agent, p.172)

Winnie is clearly outlined in such passages, her dark hair and eyes contrasting with the dazzling whiteness of the linen.

After the murder she dresses in black, veiling her face in black and for the first time she is described outside, against the blackness of a London night. It is before the murder, as a consequence of dressing herself in black, that her contours begin to dissolve:

A tinge of wildness in her aspect was derived from the black veil hanging like a rag against her cheek, and from the fixity of her black gaze where the light of the room was absorbed and lost without the trace of a single gleam.
(The Secret Agent, p.232; emphasis mine)

Winnie's eyes absorb the light as she closes her transaction with Verloc, just as James Wait's appearance hastens the departure of light. There is a 'tinge of wildness' about Winnie, just as there is a 'vague suggestion of ferocity' about Nina.

It becomes increasingly clear that the turning point in the novel's treatment of Winnie is before the murder. This is the point at which the text places Winnie against blackness rather than against contrasting whiteness. It is at the same point that the text labels her a 'free woman' that it also dresses her in black and begins to associate her with darkness. It is between these two points (dependency on Verloc to dependency on Ossipon) that Winnie as free woman commits her one free act, which at the same time points to her

atavism ('all the inheritance of her immemorial and obscure descent'). The ticking of the drops of blood are 'the first sign of a destroying flood', a flood released by Winnie and signified by Winnie, the free woman as old woman (atavistic throwback), and murderess (atavistic throwback) and black woman (atavistic throwback). Lombroso and Ferrero in The Female Offender write that:

Atavism helps to explain the rarity of the criminal type in woman. The very precocity of prostitutes - the precocity which increases their apparent beauty - is primarily attributable to atavism⁵⁷.

The text continues to mystify Winnie (literally to dissolve her into mist) as these atavistic connections become clearer, dissolving her contours, not into foliage, but into the absorbing blackness of night:

her face, veiled in black net, in the light of a gas-lamp veiled in a gauze of mist.
Near him, her black form merged in the night, like a figure half chiselled out of a block of black stone.
(The Secret Agent, pp.246-47; emphasis mine)

It is surely of great significance that, given the connection between the 'foreignness' of woman and the 'foreignness' of language for Conrad which I have been outlining in this chapter, that Conrad wrote to Garnett in 1908:

I had to work like a coal miner in his pit quarrying all my English sentences out of a black night⁵⁸.

and that Winnie is described as a 'black form merged in the night, like a figure half chiselled out of a block of black stone' (cited above). Both women and language share a disconcerting atavistic quality; they must be chiselled or quarried out of primaeval darkness.

The text insists on Winnie's blackness just as it insists on her being a 'free woman'. The Secret Agent sets up a series of repeated formulations of phrases to contain its characters. In Winnie's case these change emphasis, moving from 'Winnie believed "things don't stand much looking into"', to Winnie as 'freewoman' and Winnie's blackness. Whilst the label of free woman is limited to the period in which she is free from her dependency on men, the label of blackness begins with the plan to murder Verloc and continues to the end of the novel, with Winnie's suicide. The steward had seen:

'A lady in a black dress and a black veil, wandering at midnight alongside on the quay'. (The Secret Agent, pp.266-67; emphasis mine)

Until she disappears altogether:

when they came back for her in less than five minutes the lady in black was no longer in the hooded seat. She was nowhere. She was gone (The Secret Agent, p.267; emphasis mine)

leaving only her wedding ring glittering on the seat, the only non-dissolvable part of herself. Like James Wait, she dissolves into blackness and ultimately into the sea. They are both degenerate agents of death and dissolve into the dark 'otherworld': literally 'nowhere'.

In the above passage Winnie is described as 'half chiselled out of a block of black stone' just as the slaves in Heart of Darkness had been described as 'half effaced, half coming out' of the earth. Ossipon begins furthermore to call her 'this savage woman'. This darkness begins to constitute her signification of death itself:

Mrs Verloc came out, with her veil down, and all black - black as commonplace death itself, crowned with a few cheap and pale flowers. (The Secret Agent, p.258; emphasis mine)

Even when she lifts the veil, the face is stony and remains black, black as the burnt out holes which would have been left by the Greenwich explosion:

She had uncovered a face like adamant. And out of this face the eyes looked on, big, dry, enlarged, lightless, burnt out like two black holes in the white shining globes.
(The Secret Agent, p.259; emphasis mine)

It appears from the above analysis that the text simulates a Lombrosan reading of Winnie as atavistic throwback, outside Ossipon's direct perception of her (Ossipon as Lombroso's mouthpiece). It simulates this reading by persistent descriptions of Winnie as black, emerging out of the darkness and finally dissolving into it. As agent of death, Winnie like the native woman (Aissa is also a murderess), must be associated in the Conradian pattern of iconography with blackness, not just with the blackness of night, mystery and death, but with the blackness of body. It constitutes her 'otherness'.

Sander L. Gilman's study of the iconography of the black female in late nineteenth century art, medicine and literature⁵⁹ is useful here. He shows how, in the closing decade of the nineteenth century:

the relationship between the sexuality of the black woman and that of the sexualized white woman enters a new dimension when contemporary scientific discourse concerning the nature of black female sexuality is examined.
(Gilman, 'Black Bodies, White Bodies', p.212)

Moreover the association of the white prostitute with the black woman, both signifying unbridled sexuality, and endorsed by Lombroso's studies which argued that the prostitute was atavistic,

reaches its peak at the turn-of-the-century:

The primitive is the black and the qualities of blackness or at least of the black female are those of the prostitute. The perception of the prostitute in the late nineteenth century thus merged with the perception of the black. Both categories are those of outsiders, but what does this amalgamation imply in terms of the perception of both groups?
(Gilman, 'Black Bodies, White Bodies', p.229)

The answer, adds Gilman, is that primitiveness implied unbridled sexuality and that this:

loss of control was marked by a regression into this dark past - a degeneracy into the primitive expression of emotions in the form of madness or unrestrained sexuality.
(Gilman, 'Black Bodies, White Bodies', p.229)

He cites Zola's Nana⁶⁰ as an example of the 'degenerate' blackness that lies beneath the sexualized white woman and particularly the prostitute. Nana ends with the decomposing prostitute, decomposing into darkness and earthy mould, riddled with pox and disease which has lain dormant beneath her beguiling beauty:

It was a charnel-house scene, a mass of tissue-fluids and blood, a shovelful of putrid flesh thrown there on the cushion. The pustules had invaded the entire face with the pocks touching each other; and dissolving and subsiding with the greyish look of mud, there seemed to be already an earthy mouldiness on the shapeless muscosity, in which the features were no longer discernible...Venus was decomposing It seems as though the virus she had absorbed from the gutters and from the tacitly permitted carrion of humanity, that baneful ferment with which she had poisoned a people, had now risen to her face and putrefied it.

(from Zola's Nana, cited in Gilman, 'Black Bodies, White Bodies', p.235; emphasis mine)

Nana, like Aissa, like Ayesha, like Winnie, like the female vampires, begins to dissolve so that her features are no longer discernible. Moreover, she dissolves with the greyish look of mud (primaeval mud?), just as Aissa's hair covering Lingard's foot appears like quicksand. Nana's putrefication becomes for Zola a

signifier of the putrefication of a nation, diseased through its sexual excesses. This is the devolution of woman, a glimpse into the savage and diseased underside usually concealed beneath her beauty, but here unveiled as a warning, just as Ayesha had been unveiled. Beneath the veil lies Frau Welt, the diseased woman, the agent of death.

Whilst Winnie is not directly described as a prostitute, the text makes sure that we know (even if Verloc does not know) that she is 'capable of a bargain', a transaction with Verloc in which she exchanges sex for financial security for Stevie. She offers to relieve Verloc of a headache 'and suggested the usual remedies' in a manner that suggests a passionless transaction. Ossipon seeing her in the street, as if intoxicated, presumably takes her for a prostitute. Moreover she is associated with illicit sexuality by being dependent on the money earned from a pornography shop.

Finally Lynda Nead's study of the nineteenth-century representations of the prostitute⁶¹ shows how there is a fixed mythology of death by drowning of the prostitute in these visual representations. Winnie's death, then, by drowning, coupled with her sense of a contract with Verloc and her association with illicit sexuality provide the signifiers of her status as prostitute.

Moreover, the textual associations (associations made, in part, through the discourses of degeneracy) of anarchy, prostitution, pornography, France (Verloc keeps disappearing to France for more

supplies of pornography and Winnie has French blood) and French fiction (in that the pornography comes from France) provide a conflation of threats to the Victorian imagination. Lynda Nead writes of a similar conflation of anxieties around the figure of the prostitute:

Socialism and communism were regarded as malignancies which could spread like a disease from the Continent into England, and it was this network of fears which fed into and defined attitudes towards prostitution.
(Nead, Myths of Sexuality, p.113)

The communist and prostitute were perceived as twin figures of apocalypse or plague, just as Winnie and Verloc, anarchist and prostitute, represent the subversive system residing in the London underworld and threatening social chaos.

The concluding chapters of The Secret Agent betray an ambiguity about Winnie's active/passive roles. It maintains this duality throughout. Winnie is both active (as murderess, as prostitute confronting Ossipon) and passive victim (dependent upon Ossipon, deceived by Ossipon and finally committing suicide). Lynda Nead again shows that this passive/active ambiguity about the nature of the prostitute was a phenomenon of the nineteenth century. She demonstrates that there were two dominant images of the prostitute in this period. The first was the prostitute seen as a figure of contagion, disease and death: a sign of social disorder and ruin to be feared and controlled (Nead, p.106) - the perception of the prostitute as active and threatening, standing as a symbol of the dangerous forces which threatened anarchy and social disintegration. The second dominant image displaced these connotations of power and

defined the prostitute as a passive victim of a cruel and relentless society: the passive outcast (Nead, p.106). Finally Nead suggests that the:

definitions of the prostitute as victim and as agent of chaos were not discrete constructions but were constantly competing and working across each other.(Nead, p.127)

We can see this process at work in Conrad's representation of Winnie, but here these two constructions compete to negate all active/passive constructs. The text overproduces such constructs until it can announce that Winnie 'was nowhere'.

In a sense, then, Lombroso, Nordau and the discourses of degeneracy, although 'rewritten' by Conrad and perhaps even refuted by Conrad, are present in the sub-text of The Secret Agent, the sub-text that exploits Winnie as black woman, as savage, as prostitute, as fallen woman, as murderess and as degenerate. But what is most interesting in this text, given its preoccupation with the interdependency of all people, anarchist, criminal or police, is that whilst Winnie signifies atavism through her descriptions of dissolving into blackness, she is also at this very point termed a free woman. She has freed herself from all restraints and the text celebrates the pure energy of her one action, the murder of her husband: 'into that plunging blow...'. .

It is clear from this chapter that whilst Conrad's 'femme fatale' is a much more sophisticated version than that found in Stoker or Haggard, much of the same iconography is present: the voracious devouring woman, actively sexual, snakelike, signifying death with

her embrace. Critics have rarely been uniform in assessing Conrad's use of stereotypes. Kenneth Inniss, for instance, in his study of Conrad's native woman, concludes that:

In arranging public dreams for us he worked, comfortably it seems, within the cultural stereotypes, the set of Anglo-Saxon attitudes he had made his own⁶².

Such stereotypes, Inniss writes are complicated in the nineteenth century:

In this Anglo-American tradition, a xenophobia complicated by puritanism and by late nineteenth century notions of lesser breeds, the native girl has the ambivalent appeal of her otherness (Inniss, 'Conrad's Native Girl', p.44).

Conrad's use of stereotypes seems to be much more complex than such a formulation suggests, however, although to see him as working outside his cultural moment, as Ian Watt would have it⁶³, is perhaps assigning him too much distance from stereotypes:

In any case the greatest authors are rarely representative of the ideology of their period, they tend rather to expose its internal contradictions or the very partial nature of its capacity for dealing with the facts of experience (Watt, Conrad in the Nineteenth Century, p.147).

I would agree with Watt up to a point for certainly Conrad seems to be exposing the internal contradictions of the 'ideology' of criminology in The Secret Agent in his ironic treatment of its discourses, but we must remember that by 1907 criminology was becoming largely discredited, so that Conrad's irony may have been symptomatic. Certainly in the very use of these discourses and their application to women Conrad cannot be said to be working outside his cultural moment.

It is perhaps closer to Conrad's method to propose that the text of The Secret Agent in particular mobilizes the stereotypes of prostitute, degenerate type, murderess, and the discourses of degeneration (in Lombrosan criminology and in Nordau), pushing them to their utmost point, overloading the text with signifiers of this kind; that it pushes language and ideology of this kind to its point of rupture, and attesting in this rupturing of language to the degeneracy and dissolution of language itself. It is also appropriate to employ Irigaray's analysis of mimicry to describe the methods of The Secret Agent:

mimicry, that is, the playful reproducing of a discourse - undermines the privileged position of the first or original discourse and initiates a displacement through repetition which allows for the emergence of the repressed⁶⁴.

Conrad mimics the Lombrosan discourse in his representation of Winnie Verloc as atavistic throwback, but this discourse (translated via Nordau) also offers a reading of him as degenerate author (especially as a writer experiencing problems with language: the degenerate characteristic of the inability to construct grammatically correct sentences) so that the textual contract with Lombrosan theory (via Nordau) is finally broken, as Winnie's contract with Verloc is broken, pushed to its point of rupture.

To return to the correlation of Winnie with black woman which has been the subject of this section, we remember that Marlow, looking at the Intended, suddenly sees superimposed upon her the image of the savage mistress with arms outstretched towards Kurtz, herself the very spirit of the jungle. Winnie Verloc shares touches of

kinship with her black atavistic sister, the Conradian native woman, just as Conrad as artist shares touches of kinship with both, as degenerate:

(Artists) manifest the same mental characteristics as the above-mentioned anthropological family⁶⁵.

However, it is Conrad's identification with the victims of the degenerate female (the 'femme fatale') that is perhaps of more importance here, an identification expressed in Conrad's description of his struggle with language. In a letter to H.G. Wells (to whom, incidentally, The Secret Agent is dedicated), which describes the beginning of his work on The Secret Agent, Conrad wrote:

It is all very monstrous, - my news is. I stick here fighting with disease and creeping imbecility... The damned stuff comes out only by a kind of mental convulsion lasting two, three or more days - up to a fortnight - which leaves me perfectly limp and not very happy, exhausted emotionally to all appearance, but secretly irritable to the point of savagery⁶⁶.

(Sexual) contact with language leaves the writer 'limp', 'exhausted', 'unhappy', but most important of all, savage. It coincides with Aissa's effect upon Willems in An Outcast of the Islands at the point when Willems emerges from the jungle/ Aissa's embrace:

The once firm mouth had the tell-tale droop of mental suffering and physical exhaustion.
(Conrad, An Outcast, p.79; emphasis mine)

Conrad struggles with disease and creeping imbecility; Aissa creeps upon Willems with triumph lurking in her smile. Conrad experiences language as a foreign 'other' which must be wrestled with in a kind of sexual struggle which reduces him to exhaustion and to 'savagery'. For Conrad, in these descriptions of the process of writing, language itself is Circe, the 'femme fatale' who threatens

to reverse roles and to master him:

I wrestle painfully with that language, which I feel I do not possess but which possesses me - alas!⁶⁷.

If language is experienced as a feminine 'other' for Conrad then the struggle with language involves just this sense of threatened mastery and a crisis of male identity, just as the 'otherness' of the unexplored jungle threatens imperial identity: this land must be mastered or it will master us. Failure to master language in this (sexual) struggle will result in the dissolution of the subject, the possession of the subject by language: the transformation of subject (master) to object (the mastered). Failure to master language and to be instead mastered by language will result in an atavistic and dissolving prose (a textual jungle). Nordau's vision of fin-de-siecle degeneration in Europe is strikingly similar to both the setting of the Conradian texts studied in this chapter, and to the effects of the Conradian prose:

Over the earth the shadows creep with deepening gloom, wrapping all objects in a mysterious dimness, in which all certainty is destroyed and any guess seems plausible. Forms lose their outlines and are dissolved in floating mist⁶⁸.

This description of perceptual uncertainty and the dissolution of form (the merging of forms in twilight) is mirrored in Conrad's description of the struggle with writing (perhaps even deliberately couched in the discourses of degeneration) in a letter to Garnett in 1899 - the fin-de-siecle moment:

All is illusion - the words written, the mind at which they are aimed, the truth they are intended to express, the hands that will hold the paper. Every image floats vaguely in a sea of doubt - and the doubt itself is lost in an unexplored universe of incertitudes⁶⁹.

The loss of self and of certitude in an unexplored universe is

precisely the Conradian dilemma: the Conradian hero threatened with the encroaching 'otherness' of both the jungle and the native woman. It is the native woman and Winnie Verloc (as atavistic and degenerate types) who are characterised by the dissolution of contours (looming out of and disappearing back into the jungle/darkness). It is these women who are simultaneously agents of that twilight world, able, like Kurtz's mistress, to bring down twilight and chaos onto the white male with her 'shadowy embrace'. This is directly paralleled by Conrad's experience of language itself as Circe and as 'femme fatale': language as voracious and atavistic 'other' threatening the dissolution of the writing subject in its shadowy embrace. The struggle with language can not be put to one side. The writer must respond, like Marlow, to the (sexual) invitation to 'Come and find out', the whispered promise of delight: the enigma of language as sexual 'other'. The triple fusion of 'others' is expressed in the colonial, sexual and linguistic encounter.

CHAPTER FOUR

'SOMETHING MORE TO BE SAID': HARDY'S TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES.

1. THE CENSORSHIP OF TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES

Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles¹ has a rich textual history. It is a text that foregoes closure. From its conception in the last months of 1888 to its final 'definitive' form of 1912, it is a text that undergoes an infinite number of modifications, revisions, removal and restoration of material, many of these demanded by the strictures of serial publication. In this way the evolution of the text can be seen to have a Darwinist model: in order to 'survive' (into publication) it must undergo modifications and adaptations to be morally acceptable to the market and morally 'fit' for the eyes of the 'Young Person'.

Laird's The Shaping of Tess of the d'Urbervilles² provides a thorough and detailed account of the developments of the text. His use of the word 'shaping' implies that the text is a body to be shaped or modelled like a sculpture. That body, given that the title of the novel is also that of its heroine, is both text and Tess - the shaping of a body fit to survive.

Hardy had begun writing Tess late in 1888. Tillotsons had asked for a novel earlier that year and in September 1889 Hardy submitted the first sixteen chapters to them for publication with its early title 'Too Late Beloved'. Tillotsons, it seems, allowed the manuscript to reach proof stage before they decided that they could not take the risk of publishing it. They requested a substantial re-writing which Hardy refused. The contract was cancelled. In November 1889 Hardy

submitted the manuscript to Murray's Magazine and to Macmillan's Magazine. Both editors refused the novel. Edward Arnold objected to the 'frequent and detailed reference to immoral situations' which should not receive publicity and Mowbray Morris objected to Tess's overt yet unconscious sexuality and to the 'succulence' (eroticism) of the novel³.

It was at this point - November 1889 - that Hardy realised that the novel in its present form would not survive into serial publication, that the monopoly of the serial magazine (of which he was to write in 'Candour in English Fiction' in January 1890) was to prevent its survival. It was at this point that Hardy made a 'cynical' decision to adapt his novel and it is to the account of this in Hardy's Life that I now turn.

Hardy's Early life and Later Life, now re-edited into The Life and Works of Thomas Hardy⁴ by Michael Millgate, claims its author to be Florence Emily Hardy, Hardy's second wife. Research now demonstrates that what claims to be biography is substantially autobiography: papers compiled by Florence under Hardy's supervision including material from notebooks, diaries and miscellaneous writings⁵. Most of the Life is therefore written in the third person.

Chapter XVII of Hardy's Life records in detail the decision to re-shape Tess for serial publication rather than to publish in volume form. He would cut out certain episodes and publish them elsewhere until they could be restored. The Chapter title which Hardy almost

certainly named reads: 'More London Friends and a Novel's Dismemberment'. The metaphor of dismemberment continues into the chapter:

Hardy had never the slightest respect for his own writing, particularly in prose, and he carried out this unceremonious concession to conventionality without compunction and with cynical amusement, knowing that the novel was moral enough and to spare. But the work was sheer drudgery... However the treatment was a complete success and the mutilated novel was accepted...(Life, p.232)

Thus for Hardy the enforced process of revision constitutes a dismemberment and a mutilation, carried out without respect and with 'cynical amusement'. Elsewhere Hardy had used metaphors to describe

the effects and processes of censorship in different terms. In the Preface to Jude the Obscure he writes:

The history of the novel (whose birth in its present shape has been much retarded by the necessities of periodical publication) is briefly as follows⁶...

Thus the censored novel is described as a retarded birth: the demands of periodical publication force the author to father a deformed child. Furthermore the chapter which describes the revisions of Jude in the Life is entitled: 'Another Novel Finished, Mutilated and Restored' - thus the retarded birth is also a mutilated birth and the mutilator, Hardy himself.

In 'Candour in English Fiction' (Jan 1890), written during the 'mutilation' process of Tess, Hardy writes of the requirements of a 'regulation finish' ('they married and were happy ever after'):

As a consequence, the magazine in particular and the circulating library in general do not foster the growth of the novel which reflects and reveals life. They directly tend to

exterminate it by monopolising all literary space⁷.

Hardy claims that the relationship between magazine/circulating library and the novel which reflects and reveals life should be a nurturing, parental relationship. Instead, he claims, this relationship has been substituted with extermination, a kind of infanticide: censorship as extermination of a species or race (in this case a literary genre). This Darwinian metaphor is also Malthusian: the extermination is to be performed by monopolising all literary space - a kind of literary suffocation or crushing by overcrowding.

Hardy, therefore, to prevent the extermination of Tess, threatened by the rejections of the magazine editors, must mutilate his own text, dismember it, to allow its survival. Moreover whilst the chapter in the Life records the cynical dismemberment of the novel, it is also a chapter which is crammed with corpses, executions, severed heads, and dismembered female bodies. The structure of the Life, as I have mentioned earlier, is disjointed itself, a collection of anecdotes, newspaper jottings, philosophical commentary, put into chronological order. It is not important that the dates of many of the entries describing corpses marginally pre-date the revisions of Tess; it is important that Hardy has selected these passages much later to form the material of a chapter entitled 'dismemberment' and which forms an invaluable part of the 'history' of the novel. The first page of the chapter contains an entry dated Sept 9 1888: an account of a man, Dick Facey, who would rivet on the fetters of criminals before they were taken away for imprisonment or

execution. The second, of the same date, is an account of two men, Voss and Pouncey, whose job was to take the casts of the heads of executed prisoners:

Voss oiled the faces and took them in halves, afterwards making casts from the masks. There was a groove where the rope went, and Voss saw a little blood in the case of Stone, where the skin had been broken...(Life, p.223)

The third account, and the most important in the context of Tess, dated Sept 10, is a direct quotation from the Times, an account of the events preceding one of the Whitechapel Murders which Hardy reads as an example of how:

Destitution sometimes reaches the point of grandeur in its pathetic grimness e.g. as shown in the statement of the lodging-house keeper in the Whitechapel murder:-

'He had seen her in the lodging-house as late as half-past one o'clock or two that morning. He knew her as an unfortunate, and that she generally frequented Stratford for a living. He asked her for her lodging-money, when she said, "I have not got it. I am weak and ill and have been in the infirmary". He told her that she knew the rules, whereupon she went out to get some money' (Times report)

O richest City in the world! 'She knew the rules'.
(Life, p.223)

The story behind this, related in macabre detail in the report from which Hardy's quotation is taken, is that this woman, Eliza Sivvy, had been turned out of the lodging-house and then found disembowelled, murdered by 'Jack the Ripper' in the early hours of the morning.

The fourth account is of Hardy's visit to the White Horse Inn, Maiden Newton, where the landlady tells Hardy:

that the attic was closed up for many years and that on opening it they found a suit of clothes, supposed to be those of a man who was murdered.(Life, p.223)

After the account of the dismemberment of Tess, quoted earlier, (put in Mrs Hardy's words, so, therefore, written in the third person) the chapter ends with more corpses. The first is a description of the funeral custom in Stinsford until 1820 of having a corpse in the church on Sunday throughout the Sunday service followed by the funeral service in the afternoon. Next the Life records the death and funeral of Browning and finally the chapter ends in the process of Hardy naming the dead fieldwomen of his childhood: the 'bevy now underground'. Whilst there are only nine names recorded Hardy adds 'and others' which keeps the numbers unclosed.

Thus the corpses of the chapter begin with severed heads (from which casts are being made: a kind of record or history) and ends with a 'bevy' of dead fieldwomen similarly recorded in the act of naming and transcribing into Hardy's text. The cryptic reference to the Whitechapel murder and Hardy's comment on the extract from the Times: 'O richest City in the world! She knew the rules' seems to be central to this chapter entitled 'a Novel's Dismemberment'. Hardy is fascinated by the lodging-house keeper rather than the macabre details of the mutilation, the lodging-house keeper who evicts Eliza Sivvy despite her illness, to expose her to the dangers of a London night. 'The rules' (she must pay for her keep) prevent her from finding shelter and force her outside (presumably to prostitution as she is described as 'an unfortunate') where she is later to be exterminated and mutilated. The full account of the Whitechapel murder forms the subtext of the account of the mutilation and dismemberment of the text (Tess).

In the Preface to the First Edition of 1891 in which Hardy was able to restore the passages which had been published separately from the Graphic serialisation, Hardy writes:

My thanks are tendered to the editors and proprietors of these periodicals for enabling me now to piece the trunk and limbs of the novel together,⁸ and print it complete, as originally written two years ago⁸.

Hardy claims to be piecing the mutilated body of the novel back together again which continues the dismemberment metaphor, but of course, as Laird demonstrates, the First Edition is substantially different from the original manuscript: it bears the scars of its dismemberment in many permanent changes from the original text.

One of the most significant permanent revisions, a revision which took place after November 1889 (and therefore coming under the process of dismemberment which Hardy describes in the Life) is the addition of most of the blood-red imagery and with it much of the hunted animal/sacrificial victim imagery that surrounds Tess (the White Hart legend, the rat hunt, the trapped animals and birds). Tess's noble blood is considerably emphasised at this stage alongside the expansion of the d'Urberville motif⁹.

It is also at this stage - the revisions following November 1889 - that the authorial intrusions begin to emerge, both the protectiveness towards Tess and the anger of the philosophical commentary, as Laird concludes:

it should be noted that the increased bitterness of the philosophic comments from L3 [layer 3 of the manuscript, the point at which Hardy begins to revise for serial publication] onwards indicates that they represent an angry, and understandable reaction by Hardy to the prevailing ethos of his

time, as made clear to him through the hostile comments of editors such as Edward Arnold, Mowbray Morris, Arthur Locker, and later, of reviewers such as Andrew Lang.
(Laird, The Shaping of 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles', p.191)

Tony Tanner, in his excellent article¹⁰, suggests that the novel is saturated with blood and the colour red:

This colour is red, the colour of blood, which is associated with Tess from the first to the last. It dogs her, disturbs her, destroys her. She is full of it, she spills it, she loses it. (Tanner, 'Colour and Movement', p.220)

Moreover the red is most often emphasised by its contrast with white background. Tess is splashed with blood from the dying horse. Tess spills the blood of Alec. In both cases there is a vast amount of blood lost through a tiny hole. The text is saturated with blood: it is a blood-letting text, a violent text and this signifies, amongst other things, the history of the development of the novel, a history marked by dismemberment, disfiguration and mutilation.

Mary Jacobus' article 'Tess: The Making of a Pure Woman'¹¹ argues that the revisions after November 1889 tell us about late Victorian attitudes to sexual morality in general, and female sexuality in particular and that the revisions constitute a 'permissible portrait of a woman'. Hardy, she argues, was forced to strip Tess of her 'sexual autonomy and that capacity for being and doing', he was forced to reduce her to victim, to rob her of her tragic status. There is clearly more to the textual revisions than a cleaning up of Tess/Tess for serial publication. Clearly Hardy did not create a permissible portrait of a woman judging by the controversy caused by Tess's character. I believe that the revisions of the text and the

addition of the sub-title in the First Edition of 1891, write in a deliberate and pointed attack not only on the double-standards of Victorian morality, not only on the problem of depopulation, or the Victorian concept of the fallen woman, but also an attack on censorship, in that the novel is 'about' the censoring of Tess and her ultimate extermination. Censorship and its effects are present in the sub-text of the novel.

Censorship, as I have demonstrated in earlier chapters, was a crucial feature of the 1890s. Moreover the imprisonment of Zola's publisher in England, Vizetelly, had taken place in 1888, a few months before Hardy began to write Tess. It was during the revisions of Tess that he was asked to contribute to a symposium on censorship published in the New Review as 'Candour in English Fiction' which I have quoted from earlier. Both the novel Tess and the woman Tess undergo the same threatened extermination. Hardy is able to save the text only by mutilation, Tess is able to survive a little longer by an equivalent mutilation - the prostitution of her body to Alec. 'Candour in English Fiction' is a restrained piece from an author who had suffered so much from the monopoly of literary space by the periodicals. Much of Hardy's anger, missing from 'Candour', I believe, is deflected into the novel, Tess, which he was revising at the same time.

Laird concludes that the bowdlerization of Tess seems to result not just from editorial pressure but from Hardy's 'growing determination after November 1889 to defend Tess as a pure and modest woman'

(Laird, p.191). In this sense Hardy's defence constitutes a double defence: a defence of Tess (the fallen woman) as pure and modest from those who would censor/censure her and a defence of Tess (the 'fallen' genre of novel which reflects and reveals life) from those who would censor/censure it.

Much of Hardy's confrontation with moral censure is to be found in the sub-title - 'a pure woman faithfully presented' - appended to the novel in the First Edition of 1891. To stamp the word 'pure' on the title-page of his controversial novel was to anticipate the moral censure of the critics who would brand it 'impure', an expression of his belief that the novel was 'moral enough and to spare'. The account of the revisions describes Hardy's 'cynical amusement' in the 'unceremonious concession to conventionality' (Life, p.223) and there is a kind of cynical amusement which must have led him to append the sub-title and then claim to be surprised at the controversy it caused. It was just this controversy, I am convinced, that Hardy expected: a focusing of attention on the moral judgement of both Tess and text.

Hardy explained the appended sub-title in the 1912 Preface to Tess:

I may add that it was appended at the last moment, after reading the final proofs, as being the estimate left in a candid mind of the heroine's character - an estimate that nobody would be likely to dispute. It was disputed more than anything else in the book. (Tess, p.40)

Thus the sub-title is an appended estimate or moral judgement from the author. The tone is mischievous: both surprised and innocent. Yet in a letter to his publishers in response to a review in the

Saturday Review (16 Jan 1892) Hardy wrote:

You will be surprised to hear they alter my preface and omit the second title which is absolutely necessary to show its meaning¹².

In the public Preface Hardy declares his surprise at the debate caused by the sub-title and in the private letter declares his surprise at the neglect of the sub-title by a reviewer which he insists is 'absolutely necessary' to show its meaning. That Hardy expects a dispute is clear from the letter, a dispute that will focus on the morality of Tess and the morality of text, an incitement to discourse on sexual morality, an incitement spearheaded by the word 'pure'. Hardy claims that the sub-title constitutes an 'estimate'. The etymological root of the verb 'censor' (which the text undergoes) and the verb 'censure' (a judicial sentencing/judgement which Tess undergoes) is the Latin verb 'censere': to estimate, rate, assess, be of opinion of. Hardy starts the discursive ball rolling by appending his 'estimate': 'pure', an incitement to discourse taken up by both his reviewers and literary critics, a sexual discourse/debate about Tess and text.

Finally there is one signal in this blood-letting text - a piece of blood-stained paper which draws together and underlines my contention that this novel conflates the oppression of woman and the censorship of fiction. It comes at the point where the destitute Tess makes a trip to Angel's parents to ask for support. Her trip is in vain: there is no answer when she arrives at the door. While she rests after her fifteen miles walk:

A piece of blood-stained paper, caught up from some meat-buyer's dust-heap, beat up and down the road without the gate;

too flimsy to rest, too heavy to fly away; and a few straws kept it company. (Tess, p.374)

Tony Tanner in 'Colour and Movement in Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles' has pointed out that the paper is also Tess beaten about, too flimsy too rest, too heavy to fly away. Yet, that blood-stained paper from a meat-buyer's dust-heap, seems also to be a symbol of that blood-stained and mutilated novel, a page from the the absent novel which has been so insistently and persistently censored and dismembered (hence the blood), perhaps even a page from the two episodes that had been removed for serial publication. We must remember that whilst Hardy removed these two passages from the Graphic edition in Nov 1889, it was at this same point that he added the detail of the blood-stained paper. And the meat-buyer? Perhaps we have here a bitter and half-concealed jibe at the editors and proprietors of the periodicals who he was later to thank for allowing him to 'piece the trunk and the limbs of the novel together' and an attack on the 'meat-buying' circulating library barons such as Mudie?

2. THE DEFENCE OF TESS/TEXT

'A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented'...

The first part of Hardy's sub-title has received much critical attention, although the second part has been largely neglected. I

would like to propose that the 'faithful presentation' (the novel) constitutes a defence, informed by legal discourses, of the pure woman charged with murder. The text tells her story slowly and painstakingly taking the reader from the months immediately preceding her seduction to her execution. In his Preface of 1892 Hardy explains that:

there was something more to be said in fiction than had been said about the shaded side of a well-known catastrophe. (Tess, p.37)

The well-known catastrophe signifies both the seduction and its effects (Tess's murder and her execution). The narratorial position, as defence counsel, is not to tell her story to save her life, because Tess's story is the story of a woman who has been hung. The words in the above passage clarify the narratorial position: 'there was something more to be said in fiction than had been said'... 'Fiction' is to take up her case, is to provide the defence-that-should-have-been, the shaded side of a well-known catastrophe. The 'something more to be said' is also an articulation about censorship, just as the reader senses in reading 'Candour in English Fiction': there was something more to be said in fiction.

Hardy's letters and the (auto)biography establish a particular interest in murder, particularly female murderesses, in executions and in the workings of the legal system. I have already described the peculiar fascination with corpses, murders and executions articulated in the chapter of the Life which describes the 'mutilation' of Tess. The Life also records an execution which the 16-year-old Hardy witnessed from the top of a hill (just as Angel,

Liza-Lu and the reader witness Tess's execution - or rather its absence except via the 'sign' of the black flag - from the top of a hill). This, he tells us, was his second and last execution. The first had been that of a woman two or three years earlier (Life, pp.32-33).

There are too many references to murder in the Life to list here. It is Hardy's response that is important, a particular fascination with details: a roll of bloody clothes found in a room where Hardy is sitting (Life, p.271), a landlady tells him that the lodging house in which he is staying has been the site of a murder (Life, p.223). The physical proximity of murder seems to attract his attention. In 1888, whilst he was writing 'A Tragedy of Two Ambitions', he wrote to Gosse:

My dear Gosse,
As for my own labours, I am at present up to the elbows in a cold, blooded murder which I hope to get finished in a day or two¹³.

Hardy describes himself as being 'up to the elbows' in murder. He is of course describing the fictional murder of 'A Tragedy of Two Ambitions' but the phrasing suggests quite deliberately that Hardy is the murderer and that the writing of murder somehow implicates the author, renders him culpable.

Lastly the most striking accounts of murder in Hardy's non-fictional writing are those that are deliberately understated. These occur in Hardy's letters to his first wife, Emma Hardy, collected into volume form by Carl Weber and entitled 'Dearest Emmie'¹⁴. There are two

references to murder in these letters, both instances of murder committed by women. The first (Weber, p.7), dated Dec 3, 1890 is written from the Saville Club, London:

My dearest Em,
The journey [up from Dorchester] was without incident. There was a fog when I arrived: which since my coming to the club has thickened to blackness. London is London still - that's the impression first received in the streets. Men are reading the papers everywhere. The woman Peachey or Wheeler has been found guilty. I have just had some tea and toast.

Ever affectionately,

Tom

A murder is being read about in the midst of a thick black London fog. It is no doubt being discussed in the Saville Club itself, the meeting place of writers and literary figures. The reference is to one of the most publicised murders of the decade. Mrs Peachey had murdered her lover's wife and child, cutting up the woman's body and dumping it on waste land. It is, for Hardy, a combination of the murder and the fog which makes London: 'London still'. Secondly, the reference is casual and banal: the letter ends with 'I have just had some tea and toast', as if to deny Hardy's interest in the murder. Hardy's letters to his wife are the most domestic of letters. They contain little reflection. The second reference to female crime in these letters (Weber, p.80) is similarly hidden amongst domestic detail. Here Hardy writes from Max Gate in 1908 and the letter ends:

The servants are very quiet, and attentive about the cats. A woman in Dorchester has murdered her baby.

Yours,

T.

Lastly, the Life records that during the revisions of Tess, in June 1890, Hardy was visiting the police-courts:

At the police-courts, where at this time he occasionally spent

half a hour, being still compelled to get novel-padding, he noticed that the 'public' appeared to be mostly represented by grimy gentlemen who had had previous experience of the courts from a position in the dock; that there were people sitting around an ante-room of the courts as if waiting for a doctor; that the character of the witness usually deteriorated under cross-examination; and that the magistrates' spectacles as a rule endeavoured to flash out a strictly just manner combined with as much generosity as justice would allow. (Life, p.238) ..

One can speculate from this passage that the novel-padding was for Tess: 'being still compelled to get novel-padding'. However none of this material finds its way into the revised novel in any form. There is no trial. There are no police-courts. I would suggest that this research finds its way into the narrative defence. Secondly the note as to the hypocrisy of the legal system (the fact that the public who 'consume' the trial are those who have been in the docks themselves) finds its way into the novel as double-standard (that Angel judges Tess as fallen woman for a 'crime' which he has himself committed).

The material outlined above, although sketchy (as the Life is itself), reveals the triple fascination with murdered women, murdering women and the legal system. It is above all interested in domestic crime and particularly domestic female crime and the way that it is defended. In 1892 Hardy's Life records:

At an interesting legal dinner at Sir Francis Jeune's. They were all men of law but myself - mostly judges. Their stories, so old and boring to one another, were all new to me, and I was delighted. Hawkins told me his experiences in the Tichbourne case, and that it was by a mere chance that he was not on the other side. (Life, p.265)

Lodge, in his article 'Tess, Nature and the Voices of Hardy'¹⁵ identifies two voices in Hardy's fiction: the voice in touch with the agrarian community and the 'voice that speaks to the "quality"', the distanced voice which places the characters in their cosmic, historical and social settings (Lodge, p.168). This second voice, Lodge continues, contains several accents:

sceptical philosopher, local historian, topographer, antiquarian, mediating between his 'folk' - the agricultural community of Wessex - and his readers - the metropolitan 'quality'. (Lodge, p.169)

I would add to this list of accents the accent which I believe to be the most important to Tess: the accent of the counsel for the defence. It is this second voice, the voice that speaks to the 'quality', that speaks Tess's defence. If the accents listed by Lodge are those of the interpreter and the mediator, then similarly Hardy's defence 'faithfully presents', interprets, mediates Tess's story. Hardy both tells and explains Tess's behaviour as defence counsel to the ultimate jury who are asked to judge her: the metropolitan 'quality' of his public.

If we return to Hardy's Preface of 1892:

there was something more to be said in fiction than had been said about the shaded side of a well-known catastrophe...

it can be seen that, given Hardy's interest in domestic crime and the legal system, the voice that speaks to the 'quality', articulates the 'something more to be said': the absent trial of Tess. The judgement of Tess is spread across the entire novel, articulated by those fictional characters who judge her and name her, and the narrative voice. Evidence for the presence of Tess's

'trial' in the narrative defence is also indicated in the use of retrospective testimony from secondary characters. A doctor, otherwise irrelevant to the plot, who had seen Angel and Tess on the night of Tess's confession, recalls the incident 'a long while after' (Tess, p.303): the words of a witness for the defence?

Mrs Brooks, the eavesdropping landlady, we speculate is a witness for the prosecution, a witness to murder, taking the jury through her detailed testimony with great delight.

In examining 'the shaded side of the well-known', the novel exposes the unknown, the hidden, the unarticulated: the offensive truth. It becomes simultaneously an attack on this 'quality' and a defence of Tess. The great exposé of the late nineteenth century had been W.T. Stead's series of articles published in the Pall Mall Gazette in 1885 and entitled 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon', which led to his prosecution under the Criminal Law Amendment Bill¹⁶. Stead had been drawn into investigating the white slave trade in London by Josephine Butler. Young girls were being abducted in London, often under cover of an offer of employment as a domestic servant, and then shipped to the continent (Brussels in particular) where they became virtual prisoners in brothels. In order to substantiate his expose, Stead set up a simulation, working through an ex-prostitute to purchase a young girl from her mother and then 'export' her. This simulated abduction was published in one of the articles which led to mass demonstrations in London and to the Criminal Law Amendment Bill finally being passed by the Commons. Ironically, it was Stead who was one of the first to be charged under the new Act, charged

with the illegal abduction of the subject of his simulation: Eliza Armstrong.

Stead had exposed not just the white slave trade but the underside of London society. He had taken the lid off, exposing police corruption and the attempts not only to ignore the trade but to cover it up by those in power. Stead's articles constituted a attack on those complicit in the trade through all levels of society including leading members of the morals police in Belgium and France. Retribution was swift and efficient. Eliza's mother who had in effect 'sold' her daughter to Stead, was found and encouraged to bring a case against Stead, supported by the best legal counsel in London. Stead's articles (later published in translation in France, Germany and Portugal), his mirror held up to London, constituted a moral censuring of London society. In return it was to expose him to moral censure and to imprisonment.

There are many interesting correlations between Stead's articles and Hardy's Tess. The first of these is that Hardy and his text select a rather unwilling Tess as the subject of the text's exposé of seduction and its effects (also literally echoing the title of Stead's articles in its movement from 'Maiden' to 'Maiden No More'). Tess is selected from anonymity (a fieldwoman pure and simple) to be an example, like Eliza, of what has happened to thousands more like her. She becomes a particular case because the text has selected her to be so: Tess as test-case.

Secondly Laird's study reveals that in the earliest manuscript version of Tess it is the villain (at this stage 'Hawnferne' and no relation of Tess's family) who sees Tess (then called Love, Sis or Sue) at the country dance and subsequently visits her mother to offer her 'employment' at the Slopes. This, coupled with Joan's awareness that her daughter is likely to be seduced, and the exchange of money/favours makes this version much closer to the Stead simulated abduction: the purchase of a virgin under cover of an offer of 'employment'. Some of these implications survive into the later versions although Joan's awareness of what such 'employment' will entail is toned down somewhat. This sheds a different light on Hardy's Preface of 1892: 'the shaded side of a well-known catastrophe'. It was Stead who had made this catastrophe 'well-known' and Hardy is to add the 'something more to be said in fiction'.

After the Stead articles had been published there had been a mass public demonstration in Hyde Park on the 22 August 1885 to pressurise the Commons to pass the Criminal Law Amendment Bill. One speaker was reported as saying:

The truth must be spoken no matter what interests or class are affected. The chief cause of criminal vice is to be found in our economic system...The same system that cleared the countryside of its labourers filled the brothels with girls...and the cause is the possession of the land by a few good-for-nothing aristocrats¹⁷.

Hardy's Preface of 1891 echoes the tone and interpretation of this speaker:

I would ask the genteel reader, who cannot endure to have said nowadays what everyone thinks and feels, to remember the well-worn sentence of St. Jerome's: If an offence come out of the

truth, better it is that the offence come than that the truth be concealed. (Tess, p.35)

The offensive truth must be spoken/articulated. Secondly the material in Tess which persistently connects Tess's tragedy with the depopulation of the agrarian community and the possession of the land by a few good-for-nothing aristocrats (Alec d'Urberville's model farm at the Slopes) sets Tess's tragedy firmly in the same socio-economic framework articulated by the Hyde Park speaker as the cause of the exploitation of virginity. Hardy's Tess becomes an exposé with similar potential to shake the foundations of corrupt society as Stead's articles and contains a similar socio-economic framework. Stead himself had argued, at the same demonstration, that the wages of working-class girls should be raised, revealing his awareness of the socio-economic causes of exploitation.

Tess's move from agrarian community to city parallels her exploitation. She moves to Sandbourne, a town which is in some ways an expression of Hardy's reaction to London as the Life reveals. Whilst he was revising Tess, in the first week of 1889, he records:

On arriving in London I notice more and more that it (viz. London proper - the central parts) is becoming a vast hotel or caravan, having no connection with Middlesex - whose streets were not very long ago mostly of private residences, consisting entirely of lodging-houses, and having a slatternly look about them. (Life, p.225)

The invasion of the 'slatternly' lodging-house/brothel. Sandbourne is the town of bourgeois leisure, the town of the lodging-house and the returning Angel wonders what Tess's 'employment' is here. She is, of course, a courtesan, a high-class prostitute. Sandbourne is described as:

This fashionable watering place... on the very verge of that tawny piece of antiquity [Egdon Heath] such a glittering novelty as this pleasure city had chosen to spring up... Yet the exotic had grown here, suddenly as a prophet's gourd; and had drawn hither Tess. (Tess, p.463)

The lodging-house, with its intrusive and eves-dropping 'landlady', has something of the brothel about it with Tess appearing from her room in a cashmere dressing-gown with a frill of down around her neck and dishevelled: 'the evident result of haste' (Tess, p.465).

Lastly there is an interesting interview between Edmund Blunden and Thomas Hardy recorded in Lavalley's Twentieth Century Interpretations of 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' as 'Hardy Talks about Tess'¹⁸. Blunden writes:

When it was forecast that the broad result of the book would be a greater freedom for open and serious discussion of some deep problems of human life, Hardy went slow (He had of course no desire to set himself up as a protagonist in the manner of W.T. Stead).

'That would be a very ambitious hope on my part. Remember I am only a learner in the art of novel-writing. Still I do feel very strongly that the position of man and woman in nature may be taken up and treated frankly.' (Blunden, p.102)

We will never know whether the sentence in parenthesis was a paraphrase of a connection made by Hardy himself, but it is not important. What is important is that a connection is being made between Hardy and Stead as those who are pushing back the frontiers of what can be said about the relations between man and woman; an exposé which tests the boundaries of permissible discourse, a confrontation with moral censorship.

Whilst the above quotation reveals a Hardy who is reticent about setting himself up as a protagonist (like Stead), his novel, Tess,

in its volume form of 1891 took London by storm. His novel, like Stead's articles, brought down the furies of moral and critical censure upon his head. Tess and the judgement of Tess became the 'talk' of London as is evident from an anecdote recorded in the Life:

The Duchess of Abecorn tells me that the novel has saved her all the future trouble in the assortment of her friends. They have been almost fighting over her dinner-table over Tess's character. What she now says to them is 'Do you support her or not?'. If they say 'No indeed. She deserved hanging: a little harlot!', she puts them into one group. If they say 'Poor wronged innocent!' and pity her, she puts them in the other group where she is herself. (Life, p.258)

One can sense Hardy's delight in this anecdote. His sub-title, an incitement to discourse, was beginning to take its effect at the dinner-tables of the aristocracy. The judgement of Tess's character - her estimate - becomes a way of sorting one group from another, a method of judging society for this hostess.

There is a group of modern writers on Hardy who respond to the same incitement to judge Tess, to naturalize her and to put her on trial. In fact it is difficult not to defend or blame Tess, the temptation to naturalize her is a strong one. Critics such as Daleski, Davis and Thekkeveetil set themselves up as a kind of literary jury not to debate the merits of Hardy's text, but to judge the naturalized Tess. Even a generally well-balanced critic such as Daleski, for instance, adopts a censorious tone in his discussion of the seduction:

There is, after all, a point at which one allows oneself to fall asleep¹⁹.

'She asked for it'. I do not so much object to the preoccupation

with Tess's moral culpability (Hardy, as I have argued, encouraged this) as the tone of such criticism which often assumes a male audience who know about the wiles of women.

In 'The Profitable Reading of Fiction' (March 1888) Hardy defines a successful authorial intrusion as:

the force of an appeal to the emotional reason rather than to logical reason; for by their emotions men are acted upon, and act upon others (cited Orel, Hardy's Personal Writings, p.115).

That Tess is successful in this sense is evident from the above critical readings. Hardy's Tess and Hardy's Tess are very difficult to resist responding to emotionally. Stead, too, knew the advantages of an appeal to emotional reason.

After the publication of Tess, the Life records that Hardy was inundated with letters from women with a past such as Tess's, or from husbands such as Angel Clare requesting advice. They asked for his 'counsel under the burden of their concealment' (Life, p.257). Others even asked to meet him so that they could tell their story, unburden themselves. Hardy is being asked for his counsel. He is being asked both to defend these cases as he had defended Tess, and to give judgement: to exonerate or condemn. It is interesting both that such letter writers should respond to the voice of the defence council present in the novel and that Hardy himself should turn to his friend Sir Francis Jeune for advice: a judge (Life, p.257).

Having established that the narrative voice of Tess constitutes a defence of Tess announced by the words of the sub-title: 'faithfully

presented', I would like to suggest an alternative reading of the revisions of the novel enforced by the demands of serial publication. Given that Hardy went about the task of revising his novel (mutilating it, dismembering it) with 'cynical amusement' and given that he was frequenting the police-courts at this time, I believe that the revisions can be read as a cynical preparation of the case for the defence. In the sense that the presentation of the 'pure woman' is a legal defence, Hardy responds to and draws upon criminological discourses and the discourses of criminal justice to be articulated by the narrative voice. We must also remember that Foucault²⁰ includes criminal justice as one of the multiple (and multiplying) power centres which were producing sexual discourses in the late nineteenth century, alongside medicine, science, pedagogy, economy. These sites radiated definitions of acceptable and unacceptable forms of sexuality; they created a further impulse to speak about sexuality.

Lodge has drawn attention to the two voices in Hardy's novel, and I have suggested that it is the second, distanced voice that speaks to the 'quality' which speaks Tess's defence. It is, therefore, this voice which engages in criminological discourses and readings of Tess:

It was the third day of the estrangement. Some might risk the odd paradox that with more animalism he could have been the nobler man. We do not say it. (Tess, p.315)

But might some say, where was Tess's guardian angel? Where was the providence of her simple faith? (Tess, p.119)

It was a thousand pities, indeed; it was impossible for even an enemy to feel otherwise on looking at Tess as she sat there... (Tess, p.140)

the stopt-diason note which her voice acquired when her heart was in her speech, and which will never be forgotten by those

who knew her (Tess, p.145)

There is more here than Victorian sentimentalism or rhetorical flourish. This voice is a voice that draws back from the telling of Tess's story at emotive points and which both offers and invites a reading of Tess or her situation. It is a voice which appeals to the assembled jury (the reader), the jury assembled and invited to talk about Tess. It is the voice of the defence present at the trial, the trial absent from the novel, but dispersed throughout the novel by means of the narrative voice.

However this would be to assume that the narrative voice is consistent throughout. There is nothing so simple in this text. The novel is inconsistent especially in its philosophical intrusions, as almost every commentator on the novel has pointed out. There is a second voice, a voice that persistently stresses Tess's heredity, that insists that she is victim of biological determinism. In a sense this voice still 'defends' Tess in that it argues that she is not responsible for her violent tendencies - they are an unfortunate hereditary trait. This voice complements Angel's reading of Tess: 'a belated seedling of an effete aristocracy'. It is the voice that explains Tess in terms of degeneracy, as when it notes that she is:

an almost standard woman, but for the slight incautiousness of character inherited from her race (Tess, p.141)

or when she submits to Angel's conditions on leaving her:

Pride, too, entered into her submission - which perhaps was a symptom of that reckless acquiescence in chance too apparent in the whole d'Urberville family... (Tess, p.324)

Critics such as John Lucas have been uneasy with such authorial

persistence:

Hardy seems to have taken quite seriously the 'blood taint' of the d'Urbervilles...I suppose he hopes by means of it to exonerate Tess, but it has the opposite effect, since it makes her less of a free moral agent and more of a hunted animal...²¹

And more of a degenerate carrying an 'obscure strain of the d'Urberville blood' which leads to the 'aberration' of murder. 'A degenerate of murdering type' echoes back Ossipon from the pages of Conrad's The Secret Agent. Conrad's text, of course, was written twenty years after Tess and after the publication of Nordau's Degeneration, but there is much in Tess which anticipates the criminological discourses of Conrad's text and of Nordau's. Much of Ossipon's reading of Winnie is present in the voice that reads Tess as the fatal woman, the degenerate with debased parentage, the degenerate of murdering type. Winnie's blood line carried French blood; likewise Tess's, as Parson Tringham tells John Durbeyfield:

Your ancestor was one of the twelve knights who assisted the Lord of Estramavilla in Normandy in his conquest of Glamorganshire...Sir Pagan d'Urberville, that renowned knight who came from Normandy with William the Conqueror...
(Tess, p.43-44)

Thus the debased blood line (the bad blood) traces its descent from a French invading 'Pagan'. It is this past that constitutes Tess's degeneracy, her degeneration from French pagan blood. On one level this surely signifies the French nineteenth century invasion: that of the French naturalist novel which British censorship was so insistent on preventing as exemplified in the trial of 1888 of Zola's publisher in England, Vizetelly - the same year as the conception of Tess. I have already drawn attention to the singling out of French naturalism as source of corruption (national moral

degeneracy) in the articles of Stoker and Haggard about censorship. These articles describe naturalism as an invader which must be kept 'out' at all costs to insure that English fiction (and the English 'Young Person') be kept 'clean', as Haggard put it in 'About Fiction'²²:

the publications of the French naturalistic school are such seed as was sown by the enemy who came in the night season. (p.177)

Zola's publisher, Vizetelly, is, in this cultural anxiety about the propriety of art and national identity, read as a traitor, introducing corruption into England.

Thus the blood which Tess is so full of and which Tess spills so much of is French. If Tess has a French blood line then we may ask if Tess (the novel) has a French blood line. If Tess contains its own debate about the censorship of fiction then the spilling of French blood in the processes of censorship (the prosecution of Vizetelly) is entirely appropriate. Tess is related to the French naturalist novel not via a shared genre (naturalism), but through the shared experience of enforced censorship.

It needs to be stressed that the emphasis on Tess's heredity finds its way into the novel during the dismemberment stage - after the rejections of November 1889. It is at this stage that Hardy adds the opening chapter which contains substantially more material on John Durbeyfield's degeneracy and tendency towards drink and importantly Parson Tringham's revelation. Thus, if my contention is correct - that the cynical revision of Tess constitutes a preparation for the

defence - then Hardy's revised material engages directly with criminological discourse. Angel's perception of Tess as the 'belated seedling of an effete aristocracy' is added at this stage, as are the persistent authorial reminders that the explanation for Tess's tendency towards violence is to be found in the aberrant strain of d'Urberville blood that she carries.

This substantial thematic addition to the novel at the revision stage cannot satisfactorily be accounted for in Jacobus's terms as the purification of Tess, for it has the opposite effect. It can be explained partly, I believe, if we return to the contention that Hardy's text constitutes a double defence: a defence of Tess and a defence of Tess (text). If Tess is degenerate and her censoring takes this into account, then Tess (the novel) is degenerate (the degenerate novel) and censorship takes this into account. Hardy is manipulating his material with 'cynical amusement', and the preparation of the case for the defence involves engaging in criminological discourses of degeneracy with a sophistication and subtlety which outflanks Nordau.

Secondly the heredity theme appears to have been initiated by Hardy's own sense of the decline of his own family. In September 1888 he visited From and Blackmoor about which the Life records:

The decline of the Hardys much in evidence hereabout... So we go down, down, down. (Life, p.224)

Thus Tess's degeneracy, her tendency to go down, down, down, to 'fall' like the fallen fortunes of the d'Urbervilles, parallels

Hardy's 'fall' and degeneracy ('so we go down, down, down'). In this Hardy is very close to Conrad's 'mimicry' of Nordau: the fascination with the degeneration of the artist projected onto the fictional degeneration of the woman in The Secret Agent. In this Hardy anticipates Nordau's Degeneration which links the artist, the prostitute and the criminal as degenerate types. (Tess is, of course, both prostitute and criminal and 'pure woman'.)

To summarise: Hardy, in the dismemberment process, amends various levels of the text, censors others and adds yet others. These changes occur at two levels. Firstly they constitute a preparation of the case for the defence of Tess. Hardy must use a formula for the defence acceptable in terms of late nineteenth-century notions of responsibility, of determinism and of criminological notions of heredity. Secondly, they constitute the preparation of the case for publication which involves the audience/reviewer/reader as jury of the moral worth or degeneracy of the text (Tess). Both involve, by this engagement in criminological discourses, an incitement to discourse about the nature of degeneracy and personal responsibility.

Thus Hardy is both formulating a case for Tess and a story for publication which anticipates the 'We' of moral censure:

Some may say...we do not say it. (Tess, p.315)

Someone will say it. It will be said particularly by reviewers who similarly use the plural and formal 'we', such as Henry James on Bathsheba:

we cannot say that we either understand or like her²³.

The voice of critical censure and the voice that formulates and speaks for moral/public opinion. Hardy's Tess both anticipates and writes in this voice into the trial of Tess which is also the trial of Tess. Hardy presents the shaded side of a well-known catastrophe. This catastrophe is explicitly the seduction of Tess and its effects, but in that the novel claims to articulate the 'something more to be said in fiction than has been said' about a well-known catastrophe it is also implicitly the conflated catastrophes of Vizetelly's trial, Stead's trial and most importantly about Hardy's absent 'trial': the trial of Tess and text.

3. THE INSCRIPTION OF TESS

Hardy's Tess both tells Tess's story and reads Tess's story. It speaks for her and about her. It is both an exposé of the socio-economic pressures that transform women and of the transformative powers of the masculine reading of women. It also offers a 'reading' of Tess through the distanced narrative voice that draws back to analyse the subject of its discourse. As John Lucas describes the novel:

a great novel about a girl who tries to discover, and live into a secure identity, a sense of self that shan't be fixed for her, shan't deny her her own sense of identity. And of course the whole relentless pressure of the novel is towards showing how again and again she has to struggle free of various 'fixed' images of purity and womanhood, how she desperately tries not

to be 'owned', 'possessed', how the men in the novel - Alec, Dairyman Crick, Angel, Farmer Groby - do in different ways 'own' her, and how finally they defeat her struggles... (Lucas, The Literature of Change, p.179)

The 'fixing', naming and inscription of Tess is not confined to the male fictional characters named by Lucas, it is also part of the representation process. After all it is the text that names her 'Tess' and it is the sub-title that reads her as 'pure'.

Hardy's revisions for serial publication can be seen as a collection of material for an exposé as well as the preparation of material for the defence. In this the text must select her as the subject for a simulation of how such socio-economic and sexual exploitation works in society. Tess is the site on which these discourses are grounded, the selected site, just as Eliza Armstrong had been the site for Stead's discourses on London/European corruption. She becomes the page on which such discourses are written. Tess and Tess become discursively overdetermined not only because the text has been the subject of re-writing but also because Hardy has so much to say, to inscribe upon the blank page. Tess/Tess is discursively overdetermined as the site for such discourses (the 'something more to be said')²⁴.

The use of the heredity theme, the criminological reading of Tess, is similarly overdetermined²⁵. Hardy's adds the opening chapter in the revision stage. It is a chapter which centres and initiates the heredity theme by focusing on the 'degenerate' John Durbeyfield and

the revelation of his noble blood line: he represents Tess's degenerate parentage, the debased blood line. It is a comic scene, playfully manipulated:

there was a bias in his gait which inclined him somewhat to the left of a straight line. (Tess, p.43)

Hardy is describing the drunken posture of the haggler, but he is also alluding to his deviant inclinations ('somewhat to the left of a straight line'). This is reinforced by Parson Tringham's reading of Durbeyfield's face:

'Yes, that's the d'Urberville nose and chin - a little debased'. (Tess, p.44)

John's degeneracy and its ironies are heavily underlined. The drunken haggler, laid out on a grassy bank, bawling out that he is descended from aristocracy is a comical caricature of the degenerate:

And as he made this announcement, Durbeyfield, declining from his sitting position, luxuriously stretched himself out upon the bank among the daisies. (Tess, p.46; emphasis mine)

A fine touch: in the process of the announcement Durbeyfield declines until he is stretched out among the daisies, echoing the Parson's words:

'You are extinct...What the mendacious family chronicles call extinct in the male line - that is, gone down - gone under...in your vaults, with your effigies under Purbeck-marble canopies.' (Tess, p.45)

Similarly when the heredity theme is used to read Tess it is overused, used to explain almost anything: both her passivity and her tendency to violence. Her blood explains her incautiousness:

an almost standard woman, but for the slight incautiousness of character inherited from her race. (Tess, p.141)

or her want of firmness:

'I cannot help associating your decline as a family with this other fact - of your want of firmness'. (Tess, p.302)

When we read her the text insists that we always take her heredity into account. It explains her moments of reverie, her impulsiveness, her malleability, but also her violence. Thus she is the subject of biological determination and the subject of biological overdetermination.

Tess's blood, similarly, and there is so much of her blood in the novel ('she is full of it': Tony Tanner), is overdetermined. It is Norman blood, but like John Durbeyfield's, debased. A Group of Noble Dames²⁶ was published in 1891 and shows a similar preoccupation with the blood of the female aristocracy whose stories are being related. This theme is often comically treated, as, for instance, the description of the blood of Barbara of the House of Grebe which:

was compounded of the best juices of ancient baronial distillation, containing tinctures of Maundeville, and Mohun, and Syward, and Peverell, and Culliford, and Talbot, and Plantagenet, and York, and Lancaster, and God knows what besides, which it was a thousand pities to throw away.
(Hardy, A Group of Noble Dames, p.61)

Barbara's blood is evidently a good vintage wine ('best juices', 'distillation', 'tinctures') which must not be wasted. It is offered to the consumer: the potential husband, just as John Durbeyfield offers Alec d'Urberville Tess as a 'comely sample of his own blood'. Market/marriage value is signified by the blood as vintage. But Barbara's blood is also an overdetermined blood. The metaphor of vintage wine is inappropriate for the distinctive flavour of each of the named 'juices' (wines) would be lost through such a compound,

yet blood as wine is significant in its evocation of Christian sacrifice: the crucifixion remembered in the ceremony of the sacrament. It is also a blood which carrying so many samples and so many names is uncontainable within a single body. This story, interestingly, is related by the Surgeon.

The context of this group of stories, the framing device, has an important bearing on the context of Tess. These stories - there are ten - are told by men and relate female history: the personal histories of ten aristocratic women. They are told by the men of the Wessex Field and Antiquarian Club (Hardy himself was a member of this club) on a night when there was 'a paucity of more scientific papers' (A Group of Noble Dames, p.50). They were:

made to do duty for the regulation papers on deformed butterflies, fossil ox-horns, prehistoric dung-mixens, and such like, that usually occupied the more serious attention of the members. (Hardy, A Group of Noble Dames, p.48)

They constitute 'curious chapter(s) from the domestic histories of the country' (A Group of Noble Dames, p.50). Domestic history is to become the subject of scientific attention, but moreover a female domestic history. At the end of each story the other members interpret or frame the story. They give it a social context or meaning by discussing the behaviour of each woman, for example:

a sad instance of how an honest human affection will become shame-faced and mean under the frost of class-division and social prejudices. (Hardy, A Group of Noble Dames, p.111)

Much of the humour of this work has gone unnoticed by critics who tend to regard it as a lesser work, or as a work completed quickly for a fast financial return. But written, as it was, alongside the

revisions of Tess for serial publication, it shares many of the preoccupations of that novel (the stories are full of illegitimate children, for instance) and some of its ambiguities and scepticism about the masculine 'reading' of women. Hardy is drawing attention to the absurdity of a woman's personal history being used as an scientific exemplum, as a subject for male 'scientific' discourse: the page on which masculine discourses are inscribed. Tess's story is similarly told by a narrative voice which both describes and inscribes her, a voice which both tells and (over)reads her. It uses her (as the subject for an exposé), defines her ('pure'), names her (Tess Durbeyfield), renames her (Tess d'Urberville) and inscribes her with its discourses. Above all the text seems to be aware of the act of writing itself as a 'fixing' and appropriative activity.

Hélène Cixous speaks of:

the pervasive masculine urge to judge, diagnose, digest, name... not so much in the sense of the loving precision of poetic naming as in that of the repressive censorship of philosophical nomination/ conceptualisation²⁷.

This is precisely the point: censorship as the urge to judge, diagnose, digest, name. Hardy's Tess enacts just this process. Tess is judged (a criminal), is diagnosed (as degenerate), is digested (as consumer product of desire and of the text) and is named (not only as Tess but also as Demeter, Artemis, Eve, witch of Babylon). Cixous adds that even the question 'what is it?' is a sign of the masculine impulse to imprison reality in rigid hierarchical structures:

As soon as the question 'What is it?' is posed, from the moment a question is put, as soon as a reply is sought, we are already caught up in masculine interrogation. I say 'masculine

interrogation' as we say so-and-so was interrogated by the police (Cixous, 'Castration', p.45).

Tess is caught up from first to last in masculine interrogation, an interrogation which, I have suggested, continues in the censorious tendencies of the critics of the novel: the urge to naturalize Tess and to interrogate her 'innocence'. More importantly, perhaps, I have, earlier in this chapter, drawn attention to a passage in the Life which describes Hardy's search for 'novel-padding' whilst revising Tess:

At the police-courts, where at this time he occasionally spent half an hour, being still compelled to get novel-padding, he noticed that the 'public' appeared to be mostly represented by grimy gentlemen who had had previous experience of the dock; that there were people sitting around an ante-room as if waiting for a doctor; that the character of the witness usually deteriorated under cross-examination; and that the magistrates' spectacles as a rule endeavoured to flash out a strictly just manner combined with as much generosity as justice would allow. (Life, p.238)

Cixous has spoken of the masculine urge to judge, diagnose, digest, and name as 'repressive censorship'. Here Hardy makes a similar link between judgement (the trial), diagnosis (the people sitting in an ante-room 'as if waiting for a doctor') and digestion (the grimy 'public'). Lastly Hardy comments that character diminishes (falls) under cross-examination (interrogation) just as Tess's 'fall' is as much due to her persistent masculine interrogation (by the fictional characters and by the text) and diagnosis (as degenerate) as it is due to the seduction itself.

The Life also contains an entry which exposes Hardy's scepticism about Darwinism and its related discourses (as applied to women). It records a conversation which took place at the Conservative Club in

London (Hardy was a member of a great many clubs), between Hardy and Sir James Crichton Browne in August 1893:

A woman's brain, according to him, is as large in proportion to her body as a man's. The most passionate women are not those selected in civilised society to breed from, as in a state of nature, but the colder; the former going on the streets (I am sceptical about this). The doctrines of Darwin require readjusting largely... (Life, p.275)

Hardy is sceptical about such ranking: 'hot' women are not selected, they become prostitutes, whereas 'cold' women are selected by civilised society to breed from. Tess crosses all such boundaries: she is a passionate woman who is persistently selected (for marriage and is 'bred from' even though the baby dies). But she is also 'cold' in her relations with Alec. She is both pure woman and prostitute. She resists the categories of such masculine ranking, by overdetermination.

Tess both contains and negates stereotypes. She is vast. She shifts in and out of familiar stereotypical situations, motifs and imagery, as she shifts in and out of landscape. Ellen Moers' article 'Tess as a Cultural Stereotype'²⁸ takes up Irving Howe's phrase 'cultural stereotype' and asks: 'Of what?'. Which cultural stereotype? For Moers she is the all-purpose heroine: milkmaid, emancipated woman, good-girl/governess type of heroine, doomed descendant of an ancient race, earth goddess, doomed bride of balladry, prostitute, unwed mother, murderess, princess in disguise... Most importantly she contains both poles of the virgin-whore split: she is both passive (victim, hunted animal, virgin) and active (prostitute, murderess). Ellen Moers concludes:

Another way to put it is that Tess is a fantasy of almost

pornographic dimensions, manipulated with clearly sadistic affection. (Moers, p.100)

Yet there is more subtlety than this in the representation of Tess, I believe. As the sub-title asserts, Tess is pure woman in the sense that she is compounded of all possible contradictory and 'fixed' readings of woman.

In almost every erotic passage of the novel Tess's dual (active/passive) sexuality and personality is stressed. The famous garden scene is a good starting point. In this description she signifies 'fallen' woman in that she is on the outskirts of the Edenic garden, aligned with 'fallen' nature. She signifies the 'femme fatale' and the New Woman (who will someday do the proposing herself) in that she stalks the object of her desire, and advances towards him. She is predator in that she stalks Angel like a 'cat'. She is associated with anarchic sexuality in that she occupies a part of the garden which is rank, wild, uncultivated. She occupies the twilight - the scene is set at dusk - when things are indistinct: the nebulous twilight world in which she is figured throughout the novel. Yet she is also a bird:

Tess, like a fascinated bird, could not leave the spot.
(Tess, p.178)

She is not stained by the sticky blights, she stains herself:

rubbing off upon her naked arms sticky blights which, though snow-white upon the apple-tree trunks, made madder stains on her skin; thus she drew quite near Angel Clare, still unobserved of him. (Tess, p.179)

'Madder' is, of course, the name of a red pigment. Thus the transformation of colour from snow-white to red signals the

transformation from passive to active sexuality, as does the word 'madder' itself: Tess is 'mad' with desire. Furthermore as it is Tess who stains herself with natural pigments, her stalking of Angel becomes a primitive ritual: she is the painted hunter stalking her prey, or the cat. Since Angel does not see her in this description, this reading of Tess is that of the authorial gaze, a gaze which can maintain plural (and contradictory) readings.

Later in the revelation scene in which Tess confesses her past to Angel (although Tess's confession is 'absent' from the text, it is present as the whole of the text up to this point), Angel begins to see her as a different woman. His reading of her cannot maintain contradictions. She is either 'pure'/virginal, or corrupt/debased. It is a wedding-night confession, a necessary prelude to their consummation. It is on the wedding-night that Tess 'falls' from grace for Angel. Part of Angel's re-vision (revelation) of Tess in this scene is expanded at the re-writing stage to include Angel's association of her with the portraits of the d'Urberville female ancestors, both before and after the confession. The d'Urberville portraits, added at this stage (after Nov 1889), are part of the new expanded heredity theme. They become a point of reference for Angel's re-reading of Tess and are themselves representations (visual readings):

these paintings represent women of middle age, of a date some hundred years ago, whose lineaments once seen can never be forgotten. The long pointed features, narrow eye and smirk of the one, so suggestive of merciless treachery; the bill-hook nose, large teeth, and bold eye of the other, suggesting arrogance to the point of ferocity, haunt the beholder afterwards in his dreams. (Tess, p.283-84)

This is the first entrance into the text of the female side of the d'Urberville ancestry. They are unnamed and, therefore, representative of the essence of d'Urberville womanhood - a female blood line to which Tess belongs, as Angel discovers:

The unpleasantness of the matter was that, in addition to their effect upon Tess, her fine features were unquestionably traceable in those exaggerated forms. (Tess, p.284)

Traceable: readable. Tess's features can be traced (read) in the d'Urberville face. 'Trace' also suggests 'trait' (inherited characteristic) and the exaggerated emphasis of character in these representations is on ferocity and treachery, on the teeth and gaze (the bold eye/the narrow eye). Whilst Angel perceives the similarity of feature at this point, it is not until after the confession that he perceives the similarity of trait. Ironically, it is Angel himself who transforms her (by dressing her and adorning her with jewels as Alec will do later), who brings about the transformation which, with the confession, enables him to re-read her as a different woman. About to re-enter her room (for reconciliation?) he is checked by the portrait:

Sinister design lurked in the woman's features, a concentrated purpose of revenge on the other sex - so it seemed to him then. The Caroline bodice of the portrait was low - precisely as Tess's had been when he tucked it in to show the necklace; and again he experienced the distressing sensation of a resemblance between them. (Tess, p.305)

'Design' (sinister design) seems to be double-edged, signifying design in the sense of physiognomy and design in the sense of revenge: the two meanings are fused - it is the physiognomic design which results in the desire for revenge. 'So it seemed to him then': Angel's reading of both Tess and portrait is distorted by the

vampire woman) takes place on what would have been her wedding-night.

Tess's face is made bare (unveiled) and her truth revealed. Hardy's novel of 1892 The Pursuit of the Well Beloved²⁹ (published in 1892 with this title and in serial form, then re-written and entitled The Well-Beloved for publication in volume form in 1897) contains a similar unveiling/revelation scene. The lost wife, Marcia, returns to the protagonist, after forty years. Pierston is now over sixty and has been pursuing ideal beauty since adolescence. Pierston has fallen ill having lost the last object of desire, the twenty-year-old Avice, to a younger man. Marcia has been nursing him through his illness, although unseen by him. Pierston asks Marcia to unveil (in this case both to 'unmask' herself of her make-up and to lift her veil), which she does:

An unexpected shock was the result. The face which had been stamped upon his mind-sight by the voice, the face of Marcia forty years ago, vanished utterly. In its place was a wrinkled crone, with a pointed chin, her figure bowed, her hair as white as snow... The Juno of that day was the Witch of Endor of this. (Hardy, The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved, p.233)

She is a skeleton-figure and the contrast with her former self:

brought into his brain a sudden sense of the grotesqueness of things. His wife was not Avice, but that parchment-covered skull moving about his room. An irresistible fit of laughter, so violent as to be an agony, seized upon him... (The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved, p.233)

Marcia's unveiling is an Ayesha-like revelation to Pierston. Having believed himself to be about to be married to one woman, the youthful beauty Avice, he finds that he has been duped by Nature: the hag-like Marcia is his true wife. The influence of Haggard's She

(published in 1888, four years before this version of The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved) is evident. Marcia is a wrinkled crone, the Witch of Endor, a parchment-covered skull. Compare Ayesha's devolution:

her skin changed colour, and in place of the perfect whiteness of its lustre, it turned dirty brown and yellow, like an old piece of crinkled yellow parchment, that once had been the glorious She³⁰.

In Jude the Obscure, Jude, too, is 'duped' on his wedding-night: Arabella removes her false hair in a grotesque 'unrobing':

A little chill overspread him at the first unrobing. A long tail of hair which Arabella usually wore twisted up in an enormous knob at the back of her head was deliberately unfastened, stroked out, and hung upon the looking-glass which he had bought her³¹.

Jude experiences 'a little chill', a 'sudden distaste' and a 'feeling of sickness'. Arabella's artificiality is associated in Jude's mind with her work in the town as a barmaid. Arabella herself admits that many women in the town besides herself wear false hair and Jude reflects:

others, also had an instinct towards artificiality in their very blood. (Hardy, Jude, p.45)

Showalter interprets this passage and other revelation scenes:

When, on their wedding night, Arabella casually removes her false hair, Jude realises how thoroughly he has been undone by the domestic gin that is also a vagina dentata, a hairy springe. Like Nana, Ayesha or Lucy, she too is terribly changed, reverting to the beast³².

Apart from the misreading of the false hair as having a vaginal model (it seems to have rather a phallic model: 'tail' of hair), Showalter interprets these revelation scenes as transformations. Given that in the case of Ayesha, Lucy, Marcia, Tess and Arabella, these scenes take place on the wedding-night (or what would have

been wedding-nights or betrothal ceremonies) they are described as unveilings rather than transformations. It is not that these women revert to the beast, but that the beast which has been hidden is unveiled (or undressed) on the wedding-night, leaving the 'bridegroom' sickened and with a sense of having been duped.

Angel too, has been tricked:

She looked absolutely pure. Nature, in her fantastic trickery, had set such a seal of maidenhood upon Tess's countenance that he gazed at her with a stupified air. (Tess, p.307)

Tess, of course, does not physically age in the unveiling process, except that Angel can suddenly see the age of the blood taint, the D'Urberville blood and the d'Urberville decrepitude. She takes on for Angel the trace and trait of the d'Urberville female face (which supplies the 'code' whereby Angel can 'read' her), signifying malice, ferocity, revenge: the hag-like underside of the d'Urberville inheritance.

Most of the shrinking/withering usually present in such revelation scenes is significantly displaced onto Angel, whilst Tess remains physically unchanged except in Angel's reading of her. It is Angel who withers:

he was becoming ill with thinking; eaten out with thinking; withered by thinking; scourged out of his former pulsating flexuous domesticity. (Tess, p.313)

The withering process continues. After his journey to Brazil, a journey made necessary by the effects of Tess's revelation, we discover he has been ill:

You could see the skeleton behind the man, and almost the ghost

behind the skeleton. (Tess, p.454)

When he finds Tess:

He had held out his arms, but they had fallen again to his side; for she had not come forward, remaining still in the opening of the doorway. Mere yellow skeleton that he was now he felt the contrast between them, and thought his appearance distasteful to her. (Tess, pp.465-66)

Tess has been the unwilling cause of Angel's transformation, although it is his reading of her confession that withers him, that reduces him to a 'mere yellow skeleton', and the process begins on the wedding-night. Similarly she is able to bring about the moral debilitation of Alec, indirectly, by bringing about his deconversion. Tess comes across Alec preaching in a barn. She fixes her gaze upon him and he recognizes her:

The effect upon her old lover was electric, far stronger than the effect of his presence upon her. His fire, the tumultuous ring of his eloquence, seemed to go out of him. His lip struggled and trembled under the words that lay upon it; but deliver them it could not as long as she faced him... This paralysis lasted, however, but a short time; for Tess's energy returned with the atrophy of his, and she walked away as fast as she was able past the barn and onward. (Tess, p.384)

Tess's energies 'returned with the atrophy of his'. A woman who is persistently silenced by men's words is, here, able to silence and paralyse Alec, just as, through her confession, she is able to paralyse and silence Angel. In the above passage it is Tess's gaze, the reciprocated gaze, that draws the energy and fire from her former seducer, the gaze of revenge and retribution.

Tess is, moreover, persistently associated with twilight and darkness (as are other 'femmes fatales' in this study, notably the

female vampires in Dracula, Conrad's native women and Winnie Verloc from The Secret Agent). She is rarely described in full light. She is almost always seen in twilight (dawn or dusk): indistinct and nebulous. Yet we first see Tess in bright daylight in a white dress, a red ribbon in her hair amongst the other country women at the local Cerealia. It is an female self-exhibition, a celebration of fertility:

Their first exhibition of themselves was in a processional march of two and two around the parish. (Tess, p.51)

She soon learns that such self-exhibition is dangerous. Although she is eclipsed in the Cerealia there is no such eclipse at the Slopes. It is after her fall that she learns self-concealment rather than self-exhibition.

Thus begins the textual association of Tess with twilight: either early morning (the utopian scenes at Talbothays with Angel) or dusk. As outsider, fallen woman, this is her domain. She is not assigned to this domain, she chooses it. It is part of her method of concealment, her desire to escape the public gaze especially during her pregnancy. Her self-concealment is so successful in the following passage that our gaze does not even perceive her pregnancy:

The only exercise that Tess took at this time was after dark; and it was then, when out in the woods, that she seemed least solitary. She knew how to hit to a hair's-breadth that moment of evening when the light and darkness are so evenly balanced that the constraint of day and the suspense of night neutralize each other, leaving absolute mental liberty... She had no fear of shadows; her sole idea seemed to be to shun mankind...

On these lonely hills and dales her quiescent glide was of a piece with the element she moved in. Her flexuous and stealthy

figure became an integral part of the scene. (Tess, p.134)

Twilight: the moment between night and day. It gives her absolute mental freedom from the 'constraints' of day and the 'suspense' of night. Her freedom is constituted by the neutralizing of the moment; it is almost as if this nebulous light neutralizes her, by enabling her partial escape from the gaze. She can hit this moment to a 'hair's-breadth'. She is both a 'free' woman (twilight gives her 'mental liberty') and a fallen woman in this twilight world (Winnie Verloc's period of being a 'free woman' and simultaneously a fallen woman, was similarly framed by her association with darkness and with outside spaces). It connects also to Tess's out-of-body states, her moments of revery. The twilight hides her body from the gaze which is forever on her, just as her reveries lift her out of her body.

In the descriptions of the early mornings at Talbothays, the text gives us another clue as to the significations of twilight in the novel:

In the twilight of the morning light seems active, darkness passive; in the twilight of evening it is the darkness which is active and crescent, and the light which is the drowsy reverse. (Tess, p.186)

It is dusk when Tess stalks Angel in the garden, similarly a neutralizing moment when the narrative voice is able to maintain her manifold pluralities:

There was no distinction between near and the far, and an auditor felt close to everything on the horizon. (Tess, p.178)

If the twilight moment signifies the moment of absolute mental liberty from constraints for Tess, here she is the sexually free

(New) Woman stalking the object of her desire. If, moreover, the moment of dusk signifies the dominance of the crescent and active darkness, then Tess's active sexuality is also crescent (growing, becoming 'madder') and aligned with the night ('madder' - lunacy, this connects her with the moon, a crescent moon here) as well as with anarchic nature. It is a moment when the predatory underside of her nature is crescent.

The animal imagery associated with Tess similarly carries this tension between active/passive. She is, of course, primarily aligned with images of trapped, hunted and caged animals, but there are other analogies in the text which subvert these. In the garden scene, I have shown that whilst both bird and cat analogies are drawn, it is her cat-like, predatory qualities that are most prominent, reinforced by the imagery of the pigment-stained hunter. There is another strange passage in which Tess and Angel take the milk to the station. The train passes and 'sees' Tess staring back at it with a 'suspended attitude of a friendly leopard at pause' (Tess, p.251). Angel, in another passage, returns from a visit to his parents, to find the just-awakened Tess stretching herself:

She was yawning, and he saw the red interior of her mouth as if it had been a snake's. (Tess, p.231)

I list the above imagery, motifs and episodes not to prove that the text presents Tess as revengeful, threatening, predatory 'femme fatale' with an active sexuality and violent tendencies (indeed the narrative voice often denies this reading of her:

It was no mature woman with a long dark vista of intrigue

behind her who was tormented thus; but a girl of simple life, not yet one-and-twenty, who had been caught during her days of immaturity like a bird in a springe (Tess, p.261)).

Nor am I attempting to make a distinction between the textual reading of Tess and the ways that Alec/Angel read her (these are often interchangeable). I would suggest, however, that there is a textual ambiguity about reading her, that resists allotting Tess to any fixed stereotypical space and that this resistance works, paradoxically, by over-reading her, by over-playing the stereotype. Victim/sexual aggressor images are often spliced together, as, for instance, in the garden scene, so that they work against each other and draw attention to the process of fixing meaning through language. Sometimes this splicing process works through the juxtaposition of opposing visual images: the scene in which Tess is perceived/read by both Alec and narrative voice as the unveiled 'femme fatale' who is able to drain Alec's energy, is prefaced by the stark, brutal image of Tess bent double in the fields of Flintcomb Ash, mid-winter.

This returns us to the central question: can we justify taking the narrative disjunctions as a deliberate strategy? John Goode's recent work on Tess³³ insists that we must do just this and cease from looking for or creating textual coherence. He perceives that the novel, Tess has a:

polemical design in which discontinuities are seen as properties of the ideological discourses the text articulates. (Goode, The Offensive Truth, p.111)

I would like to suggest that part of the narrative discontinuities present in Tess are framed and informed by a correspondence between Hardy and Havelock Ellis which began in 1883 with Ellis's review of Hardy's novels³⁴. Ellis praises Hardy's representations of women. He uses Hardy's representations of women to demonstrate what he believes to be true about women. He congratulates Hardy on having 'got it right':

those instinct led women...there is something elemental, something demonic about them [yet] they have an instinctive purity...We see at once they have no souls... untamed children of Nature... involuntary and unreasoned obedience (to principles of conduct)... primitive moral conception... irresistibly fascinating...
(Ellis, 'Thomas Hardy's Women', pp.105-7)

There are so many disjunctions in this collection of readings of Hardy's fictional women. They are both pure and demonic. They have no souls, no reason, yet they are 'not all bad'. Furthermore he congratulates Hardy for adopting a new reading of women (which, of course, Ellis believes is his own): a negation of the received reading of women as moral forces. Hardy's women, he notes with delight are wonderfully and realistically immoral:

Mr Hardy's way of regarding women is peculiar and difficult to define, not because it is not a perfectly defensible way, but because it is in a great degree new. It is, as we have already noted, far removed from a method, adopted by many distinguished novelists, in which women are considered as moral forces, centripetal tendencies providentially adapted to balance the centrifugal tendencies of men; being, indeed, the polar opposite of this view. (Ellis, 'Thomas Hardy's Women', p.126)

Ellis's reading is pre-Tess. Hardy wrote to Ellis after the publication of this article in the Westminster Review. In this letter³⁵ he thanks Ellis for his 'generous treatment of the subject'

and calls the article 'a remarkable paper'. It can be argued that Tess itself forms part of this correspondence between Ellis and Hardy. The novel shares many of the conceptual disjunctions of Ellis's article by over-signifying Tess and by inciting a debate about her morality.

Ellis takes up the subject of Hardy's women again in an article about Jude the Obscure written in 1896³⁶. Hardy's Tess is also present in this article. Ellis tells us that it was on the publication of this novel that he stopped reading Hardy (he objected to the public attention attracted by the novel). He also objects, with so many other nineteenth-century commentators on the novel, to the sub-title and the word 'pure' attached to Tess. Yet it is a word that Ellis himself was only too ready to attach to Hardy's fictional representations of women in his earlier article: 'they have an instinctive purity', but in Ellis's terms they can also be demonic. Tess is a pure woman, a pure woman in Ellis's reading (she is compounded of all Ellis's contradictory readings of Hardy's fictional women and his reading of women in general), yet Ellis himself misses the connection, although he acknowledges that Tess is 'a remarkable novel', just as Hardy had called Ellis's article 'a remarkable paper'. They both belong to the same discourse on female nature and female sexuality, a discourse to be endlessly 'remarked' upon, feeding and sustaining the discourse. Ellis had used Hardy's fictional women as the site on which to ground his own discourse on female nature. Hardy had used Tess as the site for his discourses.

If we return to Ellen Moers' contention that Tess is 'a fantasy of almost pornographic dimensions', part of this fantasy, we can contend, is the fantasy of woman expressed by Ellis: that woman is primitive, elemental, untamed, and immoral (yet also pure). Tess's pornographic dimensions are a product to be consumed. Tess is an object for the consumer, the reader.

Mowbray Morris, in his 1892 review of the novel³⁷ (which he had earlier refused to publish as editor of Macmillan's Magazine), objected to Tess's sensuality:

Poor Tess's sensual qualifications for the part of heroine are paraded over and over again with a persistence like that of a horse-dealer egging on some wavering customer to a deal, or a slave-dealer appraising his wares to some full-blooded pasha. We shall not illustrate our meaning; there are more than enough chapters in the three volumes to make it only too clear. (Morris, 'Culture and Anarchy' in Cox, p.214)

Tess is here the reluctant bearer of a brim-ful sexuality which is not just being paraded but being sold to a consumer. The authorial presence which 'parades' her is that of the horse-dealer or slave-dealer. The reader is the customer, voyeuristically surveying Tess's 'sensual qualifications'. Tess is both horse and slave. She is to be selected, desired by the reader. The most overt illustration of the parading of Tess is the voyeuristic passage in which Tess works in the fields and we watch her whilst the authorial voice points out her charms:

This morning the eye returns involuntarily to the girl in the pink cotton jacket, she being the most flexuous and finely-drawn figure of them all. But her bonnet is pulled so far over her brow that none of her face is disclosed while she binds, though her complexion may be guessed from a stray twine or two of dark brown hair which extends below the curtain of her

bonnet. Perhaps one reason why she seduces casual attention is that she never courts it, though the other women often gaze around them...

She brings the ends of the sheaf together, and kneels on the sheaf whilst she ties it, beating back her skirts now and then when lifted by the breeze. A bit of her naked arm is visible...
(Tess, p.138)

The reader is invited to select Tess from amongst the other field women and to appropriate her. John Goode has pointed out that we must note that this passage 'is established in terms of the clear gaze of masculine appropriation'³⁸, a definite invitation to possess the image through the voyeuristic gaze which Tess unsuccessfully tries to resist. Just as Tess holds the corn in an embrace 'like that of a lover', so the gaze holds and fixes her. She is the object for consumption, selected for our delectation: 'selection is a condition of the economic structure' (Goode, The Offensive Truth, p.128).

Stead, as I have shown, was similarly aware of the economic causes of the selection and exploitation of young women. He had selected Eliza Armstrong as the subject for his exposé to demonstrate that young women were being selected for the sexual consumption of the middle class male. Thus the method of his exposé was a simulation of the very evil he was denouncing. Similarly we can read this passage from Tess as a simulation of the processes that Hardy is denouncing, by enacting a simulation of the voyeuristic selection of Tess for exploitation (she is exploited both as sexual object and as fieldwoman tied to the threshing machine). Tess is similarly selected by Farmer Groby later in the novel to 'feed' the threshing machine:

For some probably economic reason it was usually a woman who was chosen for this particular duty, and Groby gave as his motive for selecting Tess that she was one of those who best combined strength with quickness in untying and both with staying power, which may have been true. (Tess, p.406)

Both sexual and economic exploitation reduce her to a passive object denied subjectivity. Hardy, I believe, adds another level of exploitation: textual exploitation. Mowbray Morris's observations are particularly apposite in these two passages: Tess is both horse and slave (she signifies only by virtue of her energy for labour and her sexual attractiveness). Hardy's narrative voice here colludes with the selection, appropriation and exploitation of Tess as part of the textual method of exposing how such processes work, so that textual exploitation (the selection of Tess as subject of a novel for consumption) is shown to be part of the same process as sexual and economic exploitation.

Penny Boumelha argues in Thomas Hardy and Women that the later Hardy heroines resist the appropriation of the narrative voice through Hardy's experiments with genre, influenced by the New Fiction³⁹. Tess remains 'unknowable' and 'unrepresentable'. It is, she argues, the crucial gaps in the narrative which indicate the way in which:

Tess's sexuality eludes the circumscribing narrative voice, and point up the disturbing discontinuities of tone and point of view which undermine the stability of Tess as a focal character. (Boumelha, p.127)

It is these gaps 'that enable a critical dismembering of Tess' (Boumelha, p.127), so that she can be all things to all critics. She can be critically appropriated as representing threatened rural

society (Kettle), a displaced aristocrat (Lawrence), or even the moment of transition from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft (Lucille Herbert). Boumelha concludes that as all these interpretations work from the detail of the text, the diversity of interpretation indicates how complex and contradictory Tess is:

Tess, like Grace Melbury before her, acts as the site for the exploration of a number of ideologies of nature that find their focus in her sexuality (Boumelha, p.129).

It is this narrative strategy that, I believe, enables Tess to escape appropriation by the narrative voice. As the resistant (selected) site on which these myriad discourses are inscribed, Tess is over-determined, over-inscribed. She is the site for a proliferation of signs which allow her escape from signification and endlessly postpone her signification, much as the sign-painter inscribes a 'meta-language' on a resistant landscape

The old gray wall began to advertise a similar fiery lettering to the first, with a strange and unwonted mien, as if distressed at duties it had never before been called upon to perform (Tess, p.129).

This painting of signs on a reluctant site constitutes 'a hideous defacement'. It is also a judgement and censuring of Tess:

But the words entered Tess with accusatory horror. It was as if the man knew her recent history (Tess, p.128).

The novel invites us to read Tess and to read/judge Tess: an incitement to discourse initiated by the sub-title which stamps the estimate 'pure' upon the title page. It is a novel which incorporates many diverse and contradictory readings and judgements of her articulated by the men who refuse to allow her to be only Tess. 'Call me Tess', she asks, refusing to be read by Angel,

refusing to be called:

Artemis, Demeter and other fanciful names which she did not like because she did not understand them. (Tess, p.187)

Tess does not share the access to literary allusions and figuration that Angel possesses. She refuses to play the naming/ inscribing game. When Alec reads their situation as a replay of the Edenic fall, Tess replies:

'I never said you were Satan, or thought it. I don't think of you in that way at all'. (Tess, p.432)

If we acknowledge that in this naming game (played by all who 'talk about' her), Tess is, amongst other names, also 'femme fatale', then we must acknowledge that she is a socially-constructed 'femme fatale': the woman who seduces casual attention (unwillingly) and who murders to escape the victimization of this persistent male gaze. She is forced into this act by the men who read her and by the society which allows her exploitation both economically and sexually. Hence the dual signification - she can never be solely 'femme fatale' for being a 'femme fatale' for Hardy involves being a victim of male appropriation. Hardy's innovation is his rendering of the multiple processes of the exploitation of women, for the voice which offers her defence, the protective voice, is also the voice which points out her 'sensual qualifications' and which selects her as the site for its own discourses, which reads her, which selects and offers her as consumer product.

Adrian Poole's article⁴⁰ argues that:

Hardy is peculiarly sensitive to.. the efforts of men's words to circumscribe and describe, confine and define women's bodies.

(Poole, 'Men's Words and Hardy's Women', p.329)

Hardy's women, he continues, are 'purposively blurred and blurring'.

They refuse:

to be accommodated by these men's words as they cross and re-cross that middle distance between the vague and the coarse. The threat they pose is their ability to suggest that this middle-distance-frontier is a no-man's land which exists in men's minds and men's words.

(Poole, 'Men's Words and Hardy's Women', pp.333-334).

'Call me Tess'. Tess is read and named (and re-named) infinitely both by the men who desire her and the discursive '*meta-language*' that 'defends' her. Tess is simultaneously, in these readings, pure woman and prostitute, innocent and guilty, virgin and whore, victim and murderess, and she thus occupies the grey area - the no-man's land - between such readings: the twilight. She occupies the twilight spaces in between the names, signs and discourses of textual/sexual appropriation. At the same time the discourse for which she is the site can never be closed. Hardy made certain of this by ensuring that it would be the 'talk' of London and the 'talk' of Europe and secondly by a double process of offering an over-reading or multiple reading of her and a reluctance to read her at all. The gaps in the text, which Penny Boumelha rightly identifies as influenced by the experiments of the New Fiction (which I will return to later), invite the reader to fill them, to join the discursive explosion: an incitement to discourse. The text ensures that we will continue to 'talk about' Tess...

Tess's blood line, her ancestry and noble blood, are in some ways a distraction from the main concerns of the novel: the way that Tess is determined by the act of reading her, the way that she is selected because of her face (her desirability), rather than because of her blood. This dualism between face and blood (as means of selection) is articulated in the opening chapters and in particular in a dialogue (appropriately) between her mother and father:

Mother: 'Well, as one of the genuine stock, she ought to make her way with 'en, if she plays her trump card aright. And if her don't marry her afore he will after. For that he's all afire wi' love for her any eye can see.'

Father: 'What's her trump card? Her d'Urberville blood you mean?'

Mother: 'No, stupid; her face - as 'twas mine.' (Tess, p.93)

The blood and face discourses comingle here: Tess has a trump card⁴³ to play (a trump card is always invisible until produced towards the end of the game). Her father mistakenly believes it to be her blood - the marketing of it will be the 'saving' of Tess and the 'saving' of the family. It is the family fortune. Joan corrects him: the family fortune is not the noble blood but Tess's desirability (her face). Now that Prince is dead the family must send Tess to market, to sell herself. Tess's face is her market value. She has no other property. John comically plays with the idea of selling Alec the title (for which he is prepared to come down from one thousand pounds to twenty pounds). Alec, of course, has already appropriated the title with no exchange of money. The real object on sale is Tess, herself. John offers her as 'a comely sample of his own blood' (Alec's own blood), but just as Alec's family have already appropriated the title, Alec will appropriate Tess. It is Tess's

comeliness that will single her out from the other female workers at the Slopes rather than her blood. Alec has no interest in the d'Urberville blood as he already has the title.

Throughout the novel and more particularly in the second half, Tess attempts to deface herself, to remove the signs of her desirability, the signs which single her out from the crowd. She attempts to make herself anonymous, to de-select herself, to disappear from the text and from the gaze of the reader. A similar situation occurs in one of the stories told in A Group of Noble Dames⁴⁴. Here a young woman has been married against her will to a man she does not love. She plans to run off with her young lover. Immediately before her husband's arrival to claim her, she deliberately contracts small-pox so that he will not desire her. (Ironically the effect is to drive away her lover rather than her husband.) Her defacement in this story is an attempt by the young woman to escape masculine desire and appropriation. If he does not desire her she will be free to marry the man of her choice.

The novel opens with the self-exhibition of the Cerealia, yet Tess soon learns that such self-exhibition will only attract 'aggressive admiration', she learns to deface herself, to erase the signs that will cause her selection. These attempts must become more brutal as the novel progresses. It is not enough to hide her head in a bonnet for such evasion only increases the persistence of the male gaze. The first attempt is one I have already examined in another context: the scene in which the reader is encouraged to select the elusive

Tess from amongst the other fieldwomen:

her bonnet is pulled so far over her brow that none of her face is disclosed while she binds, though her complexion may be guessed from a stray twine or two of dark brown hair which extends below the curtain of her bonnet. Perhaps one reason why she seduces casual attention is that she never courts it, though the other women often gaze around them. (Tess, p.138)

The passage continues to describe how the gaze can perceive a 'bit of her naked arm' and eventually Tess's face itself, as she stands to rearrange her bonnet. Tess's precautions are evidently not rigorous enough, for despite her attempts to hide from her watchers, we can penetrate her defences and select her from the crowd as the 'most flexuous and finely-drawn figure of them all': the elusive object of desire, the object of an oppressive desire.

Later after she has defaced Angel's illusion of her, unveiled herself through confession on the wedding night, she learns on journey to Flintcomb Ash that her face draws attention:

To this end Tess resolved to run no further risks from her appearance. As soon as she got out of the village she entered a thicket and took from her basket one of the oldest field gowns, which she had never put on even at the dairy... She also, by a felicitous thought, took a handkerchief from her bundle and tied it round her face under the bonnet, covering her chin and half her cheeks as if she were suffering from toothache. Then with her little scissors, by the aid of a pocket looking glass, she mercilessly nipped her eyebrows off, and thus insured against aggressive admiration she went on her uneven way. (Tess, p.354)

Tess has, since the earlier scene in which she hides behind the curtain of her bonnet, added, as extra insurance, a handkerchief covering almost her entire face. If her face is her trump card it can be either enhanced to increase her chances of selection (see the earlier scene in which Joan enhances her beauty as Tess sets out to

the Slopes) or defaced to insure her against 'aggressive admiration'. However even here such precautions against attention are useless for the authorial eye can penetrate inside the defences:

Inside this interior, over which the eye might have roved as over a thing scarcely percipient, almost inorganic, there was a record of a pulsing life which had learnt too well, for its years, of the dust and ashes of things, of the cruelty of lust, and the fragility of love. (Tess, p.355)

Later Tess makes a fatal mistake. After her journey to Angel's parents to ask for support she returns angry and humiliated.

She did, indeed, take sufficient interest in herself to throw up her veil on this return journey, as if to let the world see that she could at least exhibit a face such as Mercy Chant could not show. (Tess, p.378)

Humiliated, she displays her trump card, a return to the self-exhibition of the opening Cerealia. She makes the mistake of leaving the veil down when she enters the barn in which Alec d'Urberville is preaching, so that he recognizes her. She forgets that she, being unveiled, is left uninsured against aggressive attention, but this passage makes it clear that, as far as Alec is concerned the veil is also there to protect him from her gaze. He overtakes her as she leaves the barn. Angry she turns her unveiled gaze upon him:

'Don't look at me like that!' he said abruptly. Tess, who had been quite unconscious of her action and mein, instantly withdrew the large dark gaze of her eyes,...

'No, no, Don't beg my pardon. But since you wear a veil to hide your good looks, why don't you keep it down?' She pulled down the veil saying hastily, 'It was mostly to keep off the wind'.

'It might seem harsh of me to dictate like this', he went on, 'but it is better that I should not look too often on you. It might be dangerous'. (Tess, p.388)

There are echoes of She here, a novel written only one year before the conception of Tess. Ayesha, too, must be constantly veiled to

hide her dangerous beauty, for her beauty is a curse upon man ('Beauty is like lightening, it destroys'). It is the man who is protected by the veil, protected from desire and protected from the dangerous gaze. The masculine need to be protected from the sexual wiles and desirability of the female (the construction of male desire as an uncontrollable impulse which must not be stimulated, and if it is stimulated, the male is not to be blamed for being aroused) is reflected in the words of the famous Victorian doctor, William Acton, here writing about the prostitute:

Prostitutes have the power of soliciting and tempting. Gunpowder remains harmless till the spark falls upon it; the match until struck, retains the hidden fire, so lust remains dormant till called into being by an exciting cause⁴⁵.

This construction of male sexuality is not questioned by Haggard, whereas Hardy's text treats Alec's need to be 'protected' from Tess with contempt.

Ayesha's gaze draws the manhood out of Leo, it is the penetrating gaze which fixes and overpowers its victim. Tess's gaze in this part of the novel has similar powers: it draws Alec's energies and eloquence from him. His words are censorious (he is preaching, saving souls) and Tess consumes them, she paralyses his voice. At the same time with her defacement Tess has acquired a voice. It is after she allows the veil to cover her again that Alec notes that she has acquired a fluency with the atrophy of his:

'I must go away and get strength... How is it that you speak so fluently now?' (Tess, p.389)

In defacing herself or covering her face Tess denies herself as object of desire, she destroys or veils the signs which allow her

appropriation. Her attempt is literally to desexualize herself and to disfigure herself (or to designify herself as object). This process gives her increased subjectivity in that she acquires a speaking voice. As she becomes systematically more defaced (by her own hand and by the text as it increasingly plays down her appearance towards the end of the novel) she becomes more articulate: she challenges Alec's conversion, she writes angry letters to Angel, she becomes increasingly more articulate and bitter about her oppression.

Tess's final defacement is of course to relinquish her body entirely after she returns to Alec. Angel recognizes this:

his original Tess had spiritually ceased to recognize the body before him as hers - allowing it to drift, like a corpse upon the current, in a direction disassociated from its living will. (Tess, p.467)

Her body, her means of barter, has been finally bought. (In one version Tess tells Angel 'He has bought me'.) It is now Alec who dresses her. Her living will is unpurchasable, it has moved in another direction, it has been severed from her appropriated body. Tess's various attempts to deface herself have failed. Her final recourse is to relinquish her body entirely, to cut it off. Alec possesses only a corpse.

I have mentioned earlier in the context of Winnie Verloc's death, that there is a fixed mythology of death by drowning in nineteenth-century visual representations of the prostitute⁴⁶. Hardy alludes to this mythology by describing Tess as 'like a corpse upon the

current'. Hardy seems to 're-use' this mythology, however, by suggesting, as this passage does, that the 'death' of the prostitute comes much earlier than her 'suicide'; that her death is enacted in the severing of self from body in the act of selling the body. Moreover this passage enacts Tess's penultimate dis-memberment: she is no longer a 'member' of respectable society as prostitute. Her final dismemberment is figured in her execution: she is dis-membered entirely from society.

In a novel which, as I have demonstrated, is grounded in mutilation, dismemberment and censorship, Tess's self-disfigurement and defacement can be seen as attempts at self-censorship. Her defacement is an attempt to avoid aggressive attention. Hardy, like Tess, must mutilate the body of his text (Tess) in order to avoid aggressive attention. For Tess this process must end in dis-bodiment, defacement is insufficient protection against masculine appropriation. She must be finally compromised, she must sell her body (to support her family) and prostitute herself. Similarly Hardy's decision to mutilate his novel rather than to publish in volume form only was based, he claims, on economic factors:

there were reasons why he could not afford to do this...
(Life, p.232)

Hardy's anger at the enforced 'prostitution' of the writer to the monopoly of serial publication and the subsequent need to destroy the body of his text (Tess) for economic reasons found its most eloquent expression in the text itself which both tells of and enacts the appropriation of Tess (text).

Yet Tess's face is also inscribed with the lineaments of the d'Urberville blood line as Angel had uncomfortably perceived in contemplating the portraits of the female d'Urberville ancestors. It serves as the surface for yet another set of signs traced upon it. In the fields such signs will go unnoticed. She is part of the landscape: 'a fieldwoman pure and simple'. With the addition of fine clothes and jewellery, Tess's history - her heredity - is brought out. (Tess is endlessly being dressed in the novel, by her mother, by Angel, by Alec. She is dressed up so that her beauty and with it, of course, her d'Urberville lineaments are enhanced.) Tess's attempts to deface herself are also attempts to efface her heredity, to deny that she is only one in a long row of others like her. It is above all to deny her determinism, a fate written for her and on her (her face), a fate which the voice of determinism insists cannot be erased for it is, like the portraits, built into the masonry. To deface herself is to deface her history - both her personal history (fallen woman) and her family history (the tendency to tragic events):

she dismissed the past - trod upon it and put it out, as one treads upon a coal that is smouldering and dangerous.
(Tess, p.257)

But the authorial pointers which remind us that Tess's propensity to violence is a d'Urberville trait, deny the possibility of escape from history. Tess's past and future are inscribed upon her face, but they are also inscribed/ figured in the text. It is the text which determines her and from which she cannot escape. Her face is the page on which her history has been inscribed, it is her text, much like the arctic birds (in the turnip-hacking scene at Flintcomb

Ash) who have witnessed scenes of cataclysmal horror. The birds, like Tess, are silent, but what they have experienced is to be read in their faces which:

retained the expression of feature that such scenes had engendered. (Tess, p.363)

But her personal history cannot be separated from her family history (her heredity): her fall is already written in the d'Urberville history. She cannot help but repeat patterns: she falls as the d'Urbervilles have fallen.

Her face is also the sign of the germ-plasm, the carrier of the hereditary 'trait' passed down from generation to generation (the phrase is from Wiessman's 'Essays on Heredity' which Hardy read whilst re-writing Tess):

I am the family face,
Flesh perishes, I live on
Projecting trace and trait
Through time and times anon. (Hardy, 'Heredity')

Tess's attempts to deface herself as object of the gaze and of desire and her attempts to step outside heredity/history/determinism constitute her desire to de-select herself as the subject/ site of the textual discourses. 'I cannot bear my fate as writ' laments Tess in the poem which we can consider to be another part of the dismembered text. This line, Tess's 'words', brings together many of the complexities of my argument. Tess's lament is about being written about, being incorporated in any form. It is also about being determined (I cannot bear my fate/face as writ). Writ is past tense. Her history and her future are already written, she has no escape from both biological and textual determinism. Thus to deface herself

is to censor herself but it is also to de-fate herself, to deny the tragic pattern of her ancestry, to de-trace herself and to de-trait herself.

We have established that Tess's self-defacement signifies her attempt to escape from economic determinism (the market value of her body for sex or for labour) and hereditary determinism. Yet the text places this defacement in another socio-economic framework. This is the process by which the text parallels Tess's defacement with the defacement of the land. Just as Tess's fall repeats the fall and extinction of the d'Urbervilles, so does it repeat the fall and defacement of the land. The theme of rural decay in its full form, like the heredity material, only entered the novel after November 1889⁴⁷.

In other writings Hardy describes this process as a process of defacement. In the Preface to Far From the Madding Crowd he writes:

The change at the root of this has been the recent supplanting of the class of stationary cottagers, who carried on the local traditions and humours, by a population of more or less migratory labourers, which has led to a break of continuity in local history, more fatal than any other thing to the preservation of legend, folk-lore, close inter-personal relations, and eccentric individualities. For these the indispensable conditions of existence are attachment to the soil of one particular spot by generation after generation⁴⁸.

Depopulation breaks continuity and the preservation of local history and tradition. It amounts to a defacing of the features of rural life by removing such features.

In 'The Dorsetshire Labourer' (1883) Hardy writes of the labouring class:

they are also losing their particularities as a class; hence the humorous simplicity which formerly characterised the men and the unsophisticated modesty of the women are rapidly disappearing under the constant attrition of lives mildly approximating to those of workers in a manufacturing town⁴⁹.

Again the metaphor is of defacement (losing their particularities/ characteristics). The defacement is caused by constant attrition, a wearing away or wearing down which is paralleled by Tess's gradual inability to resist Alec's pressure, by her weariness from manual work in the fields of Flintcomb Ash. But is also a feature of the d'Urberville tombs:

their carvings being defaced and broken; their brasses torn from the matrices, the rivet-holes remaining like marten-holes in a sand cliff. (Tess, p.448)

The passage from 'The Dorsetshire Labourer' also tells Tess's story and that of her family. This socio-economic perspective finds its way into Tess both as the framework for her tragedy (part of the cause) and as a parallel to it. When Tess finds herself in the Valley of the Great Dairies, for instance, the socio-economic discourse of the 'fall' of the land is put in Darwinist terms - the geological transformation of the land:

Thus they all worked on, encompassed by the vast flat mead which extended to either slope of the valley - a level landscape compounded of other landscapes long forgotten, and, no doubt, differing in character very greatly from the landscape they composed now. (p.163)

The river had stolen from the higher tracts and brought in particles to the vale all this horizontal land; and now, exhausted, aged, and attenuated, lay serpentine along through the midst of its former spoils. (Tess, p.159)

The river has caused the land to fall, by attrition, from its higher tracts so that it is now horizontal, yet it is still compounded of

old landscapes long forgotten, differing in character from its past state but still made up of the same material. This clearly parallels Tess's history. Her family have fallen, have reformed into a different 'landscape' but the family trait and trace are still present. Tess's personal history too has rendered her 'fallen' (also brought down by the attrition of the snake-like Alec), so that she differs in character from the 'innocent' Tess of the opening chapters, yet is still materially the same. She can never be 'fixed' for she, like the land, is in a continual state of flux and transformation. Thus the land/ Tess/ d'Urberville motifs are fused: all are being worn away and transformed by the processes of time and natural/ sexual selection.

The alignment of Tess's defacement with the defacement of the land reaches its most stark and explicit expression in the passage which describes Tess working the fields at Flintcomb Ash:

Each leaf of the vegetable having been consumed, the whole field was in colour a desolate drab; it was a complexion without features, *as if a face, from chin to brow, should be only an expanse of skin.* The sky wore, in another colour, the same likeness; a white vacuity of countenance with the features gone. So these upper and nether visages confronted each other all day long, the white face looking down at the brown face, without anything standing between them but the two girls crawling over the surface of the former like flies.
(Tess, p.360)

Tess, too, has been forced to remove her features, to become a white/ drab vacuity of countenance as close to anonymity as is possible. The field has been over consumed; this has stripped it of its vitality and colour. Likewise Tess has been over consumed, worn away by over work, over consumption, so that she is left featureless

drab and undistinguished. Tess is consumed by the appropriation of Alec/ Angel, but also by the reader, so that the act of writing (appropriating Tess's story for consumption) and the appropriation of land for consumption both result in the 'fall' of Tess and land to undistinguished vacuity. Both are used up. This of course adds another perspective to her self-defacement: it is both done to her and by her.

If rural depopulation is both framework and parallel to the tragedy of Tess, she also enacts the movement from field to town (depopulation) which is signalled by her change in name from Durbeyfield to d'Urberville. The text first presents Tess in a rural ceremony celebrating fertility and closes with her urban prostitution and urban execution. This is the framework and movement of her decline. She is forced into the town as a result of the eviction of her family, which is described as a kind of moral censorship, in its turn connected with Tess's 'fall':

Ever since the occurrence of the event which had cast such a shadow over Tess's life, the Durbeyfield family (whose descent was not credited) had been tacitly looked on as one which would have to go when their lease ended, if only in the interests of morality. It was, indeed, quite true that the household had not been shining examples either of temperance, soberness or chastity. The father, and even the mother, had got drunk at times, the younger children seldom had gone to church, and the eldest daughter had made queer unions. By some means the village had to be kept pure. (Tess, p.436)

Thus the family are expelled - dis-membered as members of a community, in the interests of morality and purity. It is a Darwinian dismembering, an expulsion of the unfit and the impure. It is also a moral censorship.

'The Dorsetshire Labourer' contains a similar description of eviction as censorship:

A reason frequently advanced for dismissing these families from the villages... is that it is done in the interests of morality... But a natural tendency to evil, which develops to unlawful action excited by contact with others like-minded, would often have remained latent *amid the simple isolated* experiences of a village life. The cause of morality cannot be served by compelling a population hitherto evenly distributed over the country to concentrate in a few towns, with the inevitable result of overcrowding and want of regular employment.

(Orel, Thomas Hardy: Personal Writings, p.189)

Hardy prefigures Foucault and Marcus here in his (socio-economic) analysis of moral censorship (eviction) resulting in the production of greater crime and immorality. After all, dis-membership of this kind can only result in the redistribution and production of the censored object. Similarly Tess undergoes a dismemberment which cannot eliminate the sexual discourse within it but drives it elsewhere, so that in itself it becomes an incitement to discourse on the nature of female sexuality and culpability taken up outside the text. Tess is alternately selected and expelled. She is kept on the move until she is driven into the town and appropriated as prostitute.

Tess's attempts to desexualize and to de-textualize herself amount to a denial of herself as surface on which such discourses are inscribed, as Silverman puts it:

Tess resorts to the much more extreme measure of cutting off her eyebrows - ie to disfiguration. She thus attempts not only to obscure the outlines of her form, and thereby melt into her surroundings, but to efface the erotic pattern that has been traced upon her body by a series of 'interested' viewers, so that she no longer serves as a supporting surface for figuration⁵⁰.

To return to Tess's voice and its relation to her attempts at defacement: Tess disappears from the text (into a textual void) in agreeing to become Alec's mistress. We lose her. We return to her with the returning Angel to reclaim her back into the text, but disembodied, dis-figured, she cannot return. The body that we see cashmere-wrapped and embroidered is not hers, but she does possess a voice, a voice which has not been bought by Alec. Her voice is hard, her eyes shining unnaturally. She tells Angel to keep away. Angel is silenced ('he could not get on'). Tess returns upstairs. Her following words (her avenging articulation) are fragmented, heard only by the eves dropping landlady:

All that she could at first distinguish of them was one syllable, continually repeated in a low note of moaning, as if it came from a soul bound to some Ixonian wheel -

O - O - O!

Then a silence, then a heavy sigh, and again -

O - O - O!

...It was from her lips that came the murmur of unspeakable despair... a tone which was a soliloquy rather than an exclamation, and a dirge rather than a soliloquy. (Tess, p.469)

Tess's voice wails its admonishing incantation/ dirge. The words are abruptly fragmented and repetitive. The fragment of reported speech carries the rhythm of music or poetry:

'And he is dying - he looks as if he is dying!... And my sin will kill him and not kill me!... O, you have torn all my life to pieces,... made me what I prayed you in pity not to make me again!... My own husband will never, never - O God - I can't bear this! - I cannot!' (Tess, pp.469-70)

Tess's voice resists the formal structuring of words and sentences. The words become instead a dirge and a tone. The words are fragmented, the tone is fluid. Tess's articulation exists between the words, in the unsaid between one word and the next, outside figuration. Her despair is 'unspeakable': that is it cannot be

appropriated by the text. Mrs Brooks, the voyeuristic agent of the text, cannot 'catch' the words. The fluid tone falls silent only to be picked up again by the sound of dripping, flowing blood. Earlier Mrs Brooks had noticed that:

The back room was now in silence; but from the drawing room there came sounds... one syllable... a low note of moaning...
O - O - O! ... (Tess, p.468)

Then comes silence until:

She listened. The dead silence within was broken only by a regular beat.
Drip, drip, drip. (Tess, p.471)

The triple 'O' (of Tess's incantation) is converted into the triple 'drip' of Alec's blood. The 'O' and the 'drip' break the 'dead silence'. The 'O' (instead of 'Oh') is also a signal of Tess's final encirclement: the circle; and a sign signalling 'nothing': there is nothing left for her now that Angel is gone (no-one to pin her hopes on). It signals the zero of her being: this is what she is worth now, literally nothing (she has been bought). The 'O', signalling her worth, is transformed, in the shedding of Alec's blood, to the sign of the Ace of Hearts: the Ace means the 'one' of cards or dice. It is also the Ace of Hearts: Tess has triumphed over Alec's heart (his desire for her) by stabbing him. She has moved in this act from the zero point (the 'O') to the point of the single unit (the 'one' of the Ace): in the act of murder she has become 'one' again. Her movement from 'O' signalling passive female sexuality to the 'one' or 1 (the 'active' phallus) is also paralleled in the act of murder (the transformation of utterance into murder). Tess 'penetrates' Alec with a knife and sheds his blood: a sexual role reversal whereby Alec is 'deflowered'. It is his blood on the sheets

and on the ceiling. As Ace of Hearts, Tess's trump-card (the murder of Alec) also signals the recovery of her lost virginity (her blood that was absent in the description of the rape/seduction). She has become sexually 'one' again in this recovery. His penetration of her is translated into her penetration of him. She fixes him as he had fixed her. In the act of seduction Alec had traced a coarse pattern upon Tess. Here, figuratively, she traces the Ace of Hearts upon him: her trump-card. Her act purifies her in recovering, through revenge, her lost virginity. It is a ceremonial act accompanied by the dirge of her incantation, just as the band of men had gathered around Lucy (the amoral woman) in Dracula, chanting a 'missal'. We can see from the above analysis how this short passage enacts a multiple and complex transformation of Tess from passive to active which works on many levels: the silence is broken.

Tess's textual silence (and her sexual passivity) is destroyed at the point where she penetrates and kills Alec. Earlier she had silenced him with her gaze, she had paralysed him. Here she silences him by murdering him with her voice (her dirge is translated into the act of murder), the voice of revenge and retribution. Her fluid incantation is translated into the flowing of Alec's blood (it seeps through bed-clothes, bed and ceiling: 'a lot of blood has run down upon the floor') as there is so much for a woman who has been persistently silenced to articulate. Her words, translated into Alec's blood, are boundless. The flowing of Alec's blood is translated, however, back into social discourse and this begins the process of social retribution (the hunt for Tess which is to end in

her execution):

In a quarter of an hour the news that a gentleman... had been stabbed in his bed, spread through every street and villa of the popular watering-place. (Tess, p.472)

Alec is 'pale, fixed, dead'. Tess has 'fixed' Alec. She is no longer passive object, but the subject of an action, a fixing action, which although unseen and undescribed, initiates an avenging flood, a flood of blood and a flood of discourse as the news spreads throughout the town.

Winnie Verloc, in Conrad's text of twenty years later, was to hear the triple 'tic, tic, tic' of the dripping blood of her murdered husband. It is a sound which she at first takes to be the sound of the clock. As the rhythm speeds up and changes into a continuous sound of trickling it is: 'as if the trickle had been the first sign of a destroying flood'⁵¹. The murder releases her from her sexual contract with Verloc just as Tess's murder of Alec releases her from her contract with her seducer.

I have already stressed Tess's determination (historical, textual, economic, and biological) and her impossible attempts to resist such determination. Throughout the novel Tess is hounded and hunted by the aggressive attention of men, by words, labels, by the text, by the authorial voice and by the authorial gaze. Her inevitable appropriation can only be postponed by refusing to tell her story (her reluctance to confess to Angel), by disfiguring and defacing herself (the signs for which she will be selected as the appropriated object of aggressive attention), but the threat of

appropriation will always be present. Appropriation in the novel is signalled by an encircling motif (as we have already seen in the 'O' of Tess's incantation which signals her awareness of her circumscription). Her sense of her past sorrows can only be kept at bay for instance:

Her affection for him [Angel] was now the breath and life of Tess's being; it enveloped her as a protosphere, irradiated her into a forgetfulness of her past sorrows, keeping back the gloomy spectres that would persist in their attempts to touch her - doubt, fear, moodiness, care, shame. She knew that they were waiting like wolves just outside the circumscribing light, but she had long spells of power to keep them in hungry subjection... She walked in brightness, but she knew that in the background those shapes of darkness were always spread. They might be receding, or they might be approaching, one or the other, a little every day. (Tess, p.260)

At this point it is self-censure that threatens Tess: shame encircling her like wolves waiting for their prey. Tess has internalized the moral censure of the social readings of her personal history.

Her moral censorship becomes a material reality in the moment of her final encirclement at Stonehenge. The setting is appropriate: a temple of public sacrifice. In an article in the Times of October 1908 (a significant year in terms of the debate about censorship, the year in which Stoker had joined the debate in the publication of his article on censorship), Hardy writes about the history of Maumbury Ring, which had been the site for the execution of a young woman in 1706. The woman, like Tess, had murdered her husband, although the evidence against her was slight. She had been compelled to marry against her will by her parents. Hardy writes:

The present writer has examined more than once a report of her trial and can find no distinct evidence that the thoughtless,

pleasure-loving creature committed the crime while it contains much to suggest that she did not...

She conducted her own defence with the greatest ability, and was complimented thereupon by Judge Price, who tried her, but did not extend his compliment to a merciful summing-up. Maybe that he, like Pontius Pilate, was influenced by the desire of the townsfolk to wreak vengeance on somebody right or wrong⁵².

The stress in this passage on the young woman's execution as public sacrifice in the manner of the crucifixion, is important for the context of Tess's execution. This young woman's execution satisfies a public need, a public need for moral censorship. Hardy does not chose Maumbury Ring as the site for Tess's encirclement and capture, but a site with yet clearer sacrificial resonances: Stonehenge, another circle of prehistoric stones. About the Maumbury Ring execution Hardy wrote:

Was man ever 'slaughtered by his fellow man' during the Roman or barbarian use of this place of games or of sacrifice in circumstances of greater atrocity?
(Orel, Thomas Hardy: Personal Writings, p.230)

In an interview with Edmund Blunden Hardy is recorded as saying:

having decided that she must die, I went purposely to Stonehenge to study the spot. It was a glooming, lowering day, and the skies almost seemed to touch the pillars of that great heathen temple⁵³.

Hardy, as high priest, goes to inspect the site of the sacrifice. Angel tells Tess that it is 'older than the centuries; older than the d'Urbervilles', thus it is pre-historical, pre-figuration. Tess feels 'at home':

'One of my mother's people was a shepherd hereabouts, now I think of it. And you used to say at Talbothays that I was a heathen. So now I am at home'.(Tess, p.484)

Tess reads herself here, drawing on an earlier reading of her by Angel as 'heathen', and reads herself as as timeless as the stones

themselves: a pre-historic heathen linked to the place through her maternal heredity. The historical long view that Hardy gives to this episode repeats Tess's historical figuration. She finds her 'home' amongst all the other heathen outsiders of history who have been sacrificed, censored.

Tess must be removed (censored) as murderess, as sexually illicit object of desire (and as text). She falls asleep upon her pagan altar at night. Whilst it is dark she is protected, invisible to the public gaze, yet visible to us or rather audible to us (again the last chapters of the novel play down her physical appearance and stress her voice - a voice that in this case echoes out of darkness). Angel has warned her:

'This spot is visible for miles by day, although it does not seem so now'. (Tess, p.484)

Significantly it is at dawn with the rise of the sun and with the return of Tess's visibility that Tess's final re-selection takes place. The point of view is of crucial importance here. We remain with Tess and Angel inside the stone circle. We watch from this perspective because this is where the authorial presence watches and waits:

Presently the night wind died out, and the quivering little pools in the cup-like hollows lay still. (Tess, p.486)

This line recalls the falling still of Tess's consciousness some time earlier:

her breathing became more regular, her clasp of his hand relaxed, and she fell asleep (Tess, p.486)

and prefigures her final 'laying still': the execution. As the night

wind dies out and the sun rises in the East:

something seemed to move on the verge of the dip eastwards - a mere dot. It was the head of a man approaching them from the hollow beyond the Sun-stone... The figure came straight towards the circle of pillars in which they were... Turning, he saw over the prostrate columns another figure; then before he was aware, another was at hand on the right, under a trilithon, and another on the left. The dawn shone full on the front of the man westward, and Clare could discern that he was tall, and walked as if trained. They all closed in with evident purpose...

When they saw where she lay, which they had not done till then, they showed no objection, and stood watching her as still as the pillars around. (Tess, p.486)

Tess wakes and with terrible pathos speaks her last (textual) words:

'It is as it should be... Angel, I am almost glad - yes, glad. This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough; and now I shall not live for you to despise me!'... 'I am ready', she said quietly. (Tess, p.487)

Lucy Westenra, the sexualized woman, the 'murderess' (vampire) had similarly been ceremoniously surrounded by the band of men whose duty it had been to stake the illicit sexuality within her, to censor her and to reduce her to pure, dead womanhood. More importantly, Dracula - the great symbol of illicit, anarchic sexuality, had been surrounded and staked by the same band of encircling vampire hunters. Our position, as observers, in Dracula is with the vampire hunters. We have travelled with them, hunted with them. Our perspective in the final encirclement of Dracula is, of course, outside the circle watching it converge upon the illicit hunted and censored object (both Lucy and Dracula).

In Hardy's Tess the perspective has been reversed. We have moved inside the circle of illicit sexuality and illicit morality (we can

also add illicit textuality) and we perceive the wolves of moral censure closing in on us with evident purpose. Hardy is with Tess to the end until the black flag is raised. 'Justice' was done. But the narrative does not close here, with the encirclement and execution of Tess, it opens up into new landscapes:

landscape beyond landscape, till the horizon was lost in the radiance of the sun hanging above it. (Tess, p.489)

with the union of Angel and Tess's sister Liza-Lu. 'Landscape beyond landscape, till the horizon was lost': this could almost be a description of Hardy's representation of Tess, piling layer upon layer of discourse about her until her horizons and boundaries are finally 'lost'. Tess's disintegration is both literal (she is executed) and textual (Tess is lost in the process of discursive overdetermination).

Tess's defacement and disintegration must finally be seen as part of Hardy's textual fragmentation of her character. Rosemary Jackson, in her study of the genre of fantasy, shows that the disintegration of bodies and of character is one of the strategies of the fantastic mode:

The many partial, dual, multiple and dismembered selves scattered throughout literary fantasies violate the most cherished of all human unities: the unity of 'character'. It is the power of the fantastic to interrogate the category of character - that definition of the self as a coherent, indivisible and continuous whole which has dominated Western thought for centuries⁴.

I am not arguing here that Hardy's Tess should be placed in the genre of the literary fantasy, but I am suggesting that in Hardy's novel we can perceive a similar interrogation of character (the

interrogation of Tess) and an interrogation of the construct of 'character' itself, to that outlined by Jackson. Jackson argues that this tendency to disrupt 'character' in fantastic art draws attention to the process of representation. It enacts a refusal of structured character:

Fantastic character deformation suggests a radical refusal of the structures, the 'syntax' of cultural order... They break the boundaries separating self from other, leaving structures dissolved or ruptured, through a radical open endedness of being. The fantastic makes an assault upon the 'sign' of unified character and this has far-reaching consequences in terms of interrogating the process of character construction. (Jackson, Fantasy, pp.86-87)

Hardy interrogates the process of character construction and character dissolution. He describes the process whereby a young woman is forced to deface herself, to become anonymous to insure herself against 'aggressive admiration', and finally to sever self from body in prostituting herself. Tess dissolves under her own self-defacement and under the persistent masculine readings of her: her discursive overdetermination. Tess is prohibited a unified sense of self, she is a fragmented and dismembered self, except, perhaps in the act of murder where, I have shown, she becomes 'one' again. Hardy's text does not just subvert 'character' as a stable construct, but reveals the social, sexual and economic processes and discursive practices themselves which construct and dissolve human individuals.

The questioning of unified character construction implicit in Tess, needs itself to be seen in terms of Hardy's experimentation with form explored by Boumelha in her fine book, Thomas Hardy and Women:

Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form⁵⁵. Boumelha argues that the 'liberation of experiment' of the New Fiction, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, resulted in a profusion of alternative fictional forms: short stories, fantasies, dream stories, essay fiction and impressionistic sketches: a displacement of the 'leisurely and particularised realist narrative' (Boumelha, p.66). The New Fiction, she argues, was characterised by an increasing disruption of the circumscribing narrative voice - other kinds of voice emerge which throw into question the distance between author and character. The poise of the distanced, objective narrator is unsettled. Boumelha concludes that whilst Hardy had experimented with genre and narrative voice from the beginning of his writing career, the practices of many of the lesser-known New Fiction writers 'contextualised' and gave a significant 'contemporaneity' to his experiments. The narrative disjunctions of Tess, she argues:

mark Hardy's increasing interrogation of his own modes of narration...

The disjunctions in narrative voice, the contradictions of logic, the abrupt shifts of point of view... disintegrate the stability of character as a cohering force, they threaten the dominance of the dispassionate and omniscient narrator and so push to its limit the androgynous narrative mode that seeks to represent and explain the woman from within and without.

(Boumelha, p.132)

Hardy had noted in his research at the police-courts how the character of the witness diminishes under cross-examination⁵⁶. His novel enacts this interrogation of Tess as witness, as the site of a proliferation of contradictory and shifting discourses. Tess diminishes (falls) under this interrogation and dissolves into a space where her horizon is lost in overdetermination. In this

reconstruction of the absent 'trial' of Tess (absent from the novel but present in the narrative interrogation and presentation of her case), the text breaks the dominance of the dispassionate and omniscient narrator through the mimicry of phallogentric discourses which are pushed to their limits and finally ruptured. Tess draws attention to the process of representation, the construction of character, and to the process of reading itself. The text mimics the contradictory discourses of the plural reader of Tess (judge, lover, seducer) and by so doing undermines such readings and displaces them. It disrupts the symbolic function of naming and labelling and by so doing draws attention to the ideological assumptions present in all readings, labels and representations, their contradictions and fissures. In breaking down the censorious circumscribing discourses of his text, Hardy enacts a breaking down of the censorious circumscription of his censored novel: his own experience of moral censure and censorship. The writing and re-writing of Tess; is, in part, a primary expression of that experience: 'I have had enough' states Tess as she approaches her execution. This was Hardy's penultimate novel. After Jude the Obscure he was to abandon fiction entirely.

Finally I would argue that the 'emergence of the repressed' in this novel has its finest expression in Tess's incantation: her disrupted and fragmented dirge is translated into blood. It is a dirge that speaks her 'unspeakable despair'. It is the 'something more to be said' which cannot be said (it is 'unspeakable' and the only auditor, Mrs Brooks, cannot 'catch the words') but can be acted.

Tess's words, translated into blood, kill Alec as her seducer, her 'owner', her reader and her circumscriber (and finally herself when she is executed as murderess). The blood is translated into public discourse as the news 'spreads' throughout the town: it flows into public discourse and out of the novel. Similarly the novel does not close with Tess's execution but opens up into another absent novel: the story of Liza-Lu opens up into new textual landscapes. The discourse about Tess, the public discourse, and the attempts to fix her, name her, exonerate her, judge her, interrogate her, too, will continue beyond the horizon of the text into landscape beyond landscape of literary reviews, debates at the dinner-tables of the aristocracy and into the critical readings of Tess of the twentieth century: the writing of 'the something more to be said'...

AFTERWORD

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES.

It may seem to be contravening established academic conventions to place 'theoretical perspectives' in an Afterword, and I stress that this is an Afterword and not a conclusion. Whilst the thesis began with methodological decisions it could not have begun with theoretical perspectives, nor will close with them. Theoretical insights have, to a certain extent, occurred across the thesis, in individual chapters, but it is here that I will be drawing back from the detailed analysis of these chapters to draw together some of the patterns perceived across these texts. I will engage with theorists of many kinds, those who similarly explore the concept of 'otherness'. But I repeat this is not a summary; its effect, I hope, will be to broaden and pluralise the material of individual chapters and to open up new questions, rather than to close this work.

To begin with: some observations on the relations between 'sex' and 'class' and those of 'sex' and 'race'. One of the outcomes of this investigation of the discourses mobilized by the representation of the 'femme fatale' figure was that class-related discourses did not occur as readily as race-related discourses. In this I concur with Joanna de Groot's excellent observation and explanation of this phenomenon in "'Sex" and "Race": The Construction of Language and Image in the Nineteenth Century'¹:

Whereas the theories and practices related to 'class' distinctions and relationships were founded on the new 'sciences' of political economy and social investigation, theories and practices related to 'race' and 'sex' drew on biological, anthropological and medical scholarship, often grounding themselves in part on observable and 'inescapable' physical aspects of difference. The inequalities inherent in male-female relationships and western hegemony in the world in the nineteenth century involved elements of personal intimacy and cultural encounter very different from the experiences and

perceptions which constructed the history of 'class' in that period.(de Groot, "'Sex" and "Race"', pp. 92-93)

In other words the ideological grounding of 'sex' and 'race' shared the same scientific scholarship as base, and a different grounding from that of 'class'. The common grounding of 'sex' and 'race' in such discourses is that of difference: scientific scholarship grounded on 'observable and inescapable physical aspects of difference'. This was due in part to elements of 'personal intimacy and cultural encounter': the problems of 'otherness': racial, cultural and sexual.

As I have stated in the Introduction, this thesis is concerned with both the multiplicity of writing and the multiple discourses mobilized in the nineteenth century to speak about sex. In pursuing the femme-fatale-as-sign it was discovered that her cultural signification articulated in these texts was multiple, as might be expected in that as sign she is part of a sign-system which articulates multiple sexual discourses and which encodes 'otherness'. In effect, the major common feature of the significations of the 'femme fatale' in this study is that of positionality: a sign signifying a multiplicity singularized by its position of 'otherness': outside, invading, abnormal, subnormal and so on. The femme-fatale-as-sign is, as it were, a many tentacled sign, as Pound has put it in a fragment from the Cantos about 'woman':

the female
Is an element, the female
Is a chaos
An octopus
A biological process
and we seek to fulfil...

She is submarine, she is an octopus, she is
A biological process
(Canto 29)²

Furthermore, it is interesting that in the texts studied the arms of the predatory female are a recurring preoccupation from Lucy's 'Come... my arms are hungry for you' to Ayesha's killing embrace of Leo, to the outstretched arms of the black mistress of Kurtz bringing down the twilight (chaos) on to the imperial explorers of the Congo. If, then, she is a sign of multiple 'otherness' (chaos, darkness, twilight, other worlds, even death) then her tentacles desire, in the male imagination, to draw the male into that 'other' world.

In studying the metaphors and discourses mobilised by the 'femme fatale' figure in the 1890s, I was struck by the similarity of metaphors identified by Susan Sontag as those which are mobilized in the discourses around A.I.D.S.³. Shared metaphors used to express anxieties about the 'femme fatale' or New Woman in the 1890s and those used to describe A.I.D.S. in the 1980s are those of invasion, corruption of culture and species from within; attack on the boundaries of the body and of the self via 'penetration' (which in the case of the predatory female necessitates the passivity of the male; an attack on the male self conceived as aggressive, not passive); national invasion by a foreign disease (the A.I.D.S. virus is invariably understood as a foreign disease, the predatory women of this study are often those who are either 'exotic' (black) or who have foreign origins or blood: Tess and Winnie have French blood). Sontag's study attests to the 'seductiveness of metaphorical

thinking' (AIDS and its Metaphors, p.5) and she makes the point that it is lack of understanding and primitive fears that provide 'a large-scale occasion for the metaphorizing of illness' (p.16). Finally Sontag proposes that the lack of knowledge and understanding of this new disease result in it becoming metaphorically an alien and invading 'other' (always coming from elsewhere: foreign):

there is a link between imagining disease and imagining foreignness. It lies perhaps in the very concept of wrong, which is archaically identical with the non-us, the alien. A polluting person is always wrong... The reverse is also true: a person judged to be wrong is regarded as, at least potentially, a source of pollution.

(AIDS and its Metaphors, p.48)

This may explain, in part, the association of the 'femme fatale' figure with disease and contagion: vampirism, the invasion (pollution) of Ayesha, the debilitating effects of the Conradian native woman and Alec d'Urberville's insistence that Tess should remain veiled, as if she were a source of contagion.

The metaphorical space which the 'femme fatale' occupies in these texts, then, is a space 'outside' normality, order, light, outside masculine order, logic, reason, culture. In the theorizing of 'otherness', I begin with Derrida's analysis of binary oppositions and of phallogentrism summarized here by Ann Rosalind Jones⁴:

Derrida argues that the discourse of western metaphysics has been based on the construction of a fantasized sovereign subject, an idealised version of 'man'. From the beginning of philosophy, men have set themselves up as the central reference point of an epistemology built on a set of hierarchical oppositions in which 'man' (white, Graeco-Roman, ruling class) always occupies the privileged position: self/other, subject/object, presence/absence, law/chaos, man/woman. (Jones, 'Inscribing Femininity: French Theories of the Feminine', p.81)

Binary oppositions, in Western thought, as opposed to Oriental thought, for instance, are internalised as hierarchical oppositions: the element of each pair needing the dominance or subordination of the other for its meaning. Deconstruction thereby 'aims to expose and dismantle an epistemology built on a set of hierarchical oppositions in which "man"... always occupies the privileged position'⁵. Sara Perren, in her thesis on Balzac⁶ calls for:

a new approach to the study of literature which seeks to find the plurality inherent in it - a plurality which is there to be found once we cease to see things in terms of binary, hierarchical oppositions.

It is by undermining such oppositions and, paradoxically, by drawing attention to them, that the system of hierarchical oppositions can be dismantled.

Feminist criticism has responded to the masculine reading of the 'otherness' of woman in a number of ways, both before and after the Derridean naming of this process as phallogentrism. Simone de Beauvoir's monumental and influential work, The Second Sex⁷, addresses this notion of 'otherness' in the representation of woman. This work in many ways initiated the feminist analysis of female 'otherness' to be found in the works of other French feminist theorists. For Beauvoir, woman:

is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute - she is the Other.
(Beauvoir, The Second Sex, p.16)

Beauvoir relates this definition and differentiation process to a primordial expression of a duality to be found in most primitive

societies:

The category of the Other is as primordial as consciousness itself. In the most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies, one finds the expression of a duality - that of the Self and the Other. This duality was not originally attached to the division of the sexes; it was not dependent on any empirical facts.

(The Second Sex, p.16)

We can see how easily Beauvoir's analysis corresponds to the Derridean binary opposition, although her specific focus is different from that of Derrida, taking her basis as the mythologizing of woman in Western literature and thought. It is where she proposes the existence of other 'others' in masculine thought, that she comes closest to the Derridean position of phallogentrism:

She has not represented for him, however, the only incarnation of the Other, and she has not always kept the same importance throughout the course of history. There have been moments when she has been eclipsed by other idols...

(The Second Sex, pp. 173-74)

Beauvoir adds to this proposition, however, that:

If woman is not the only Other, it remains none the less true that she is always defined as the Other. And her ambiguity is just that of the concept of the Other; it is that of the human situation in so far as it is defined in its relation with the Other... And here lies the reason why woman incarnates no stable concept.

(The Second Sex, p.175)

(This last sentence echoes the earlier formulation of the many tentacled woman-as-sign: the incarnation of no stable concept)

Whilst I concur with Beauvoir's analysis here and its emphasis on positionality, I cannot entirely agree with her proposition of the possibility of there being other 'others' than that of woman. Or rather I would put the case slightly differently with the assistance

of the Derridean concept of phallogentrism: that woman, and in this case the predatory woman as 'femme fatale', becomes a sign of multiple signification, an expression for a copious and multiple 'otherness'.

Toril Moi's Sexual/Textual Politics⁸ provides a crucial expression of this position, a summary of the works of Irigaray, Cixous and Kristeva:

If, as Cixous and Irigaray have shown, femininity is defined as lack, negativity, absence of meaning, irrationality, chaos, darkness - in short, as non-Being - Kristeva's emphasis on marginality allows us to view this repression of the feminine in terms of positionality rather than of essences. What is perceived as marginal at any given time depends on the position one occupies. A brief example will illustrate this shift from essence to position: if patriarchy sees women as occupying a marginal position within the symbolic order, then it can construe them as the limit or borderline of that order. From a phallogentric point of view, women will then come to represent the necessary frontier between man and chaos; but because of their very marginality they will also seem to recede into and merge with the chaos of the outside. Women seen as the limit of the symbolic order will in other words share in the disconcerting qualities of all frontiers.
(Moi, Sexual/Textual Politics, pp. 166-67)

Furthermore Moi adds that woman's position on the frontier is a double position depending on the type of woman. The idealised woman (the woman seen as representative of a higher and purer nature, as Virgin or Mother of God) is conceived as an inherent part of the inside of the frontier (protecting and shielding the symbolic order from chaos). The second type, the woman vilified as Lilith or the Whore of Babylon, is to be found on the outside edge of the frontier, part of the chaotic wilderness outside, representing that darkness and chaos.

We have seen this division starkly illustrated by the Lucy/Mina dichotomy in Dracula. Firstly, Lucy struggles with the wreaths of garlic flowers, pushing them from her or breaking the circle in her nocturnal and vampiric state and clasping them to her in her 'pure' state. As 'vampire', she persistently searches for a way out of the protective circles the men place around her. More strikingly, perhaps, Mina, venerated as 'one of God's women', and functioning as protectress of the band of men, remains just inside the circle of the Holy Wafer with the sexualised vampire sisters just outside the circle begging her to join them. It is the second woman, the woman conceived of as outside the circle, or beyond the frontier, that has been the subject of this thesis, thereby partaking of the qualities of all that is beyond the frontier ('other') in the male imagination.

More importantly, it is the proposition, outlined above by Moi, that 'women' share in the disconcerting qualities of all frontiers that I would like to emphasise here, and the observation that 'What is perceived as marginal at any given time depends on the position one occupies'. This formulation of the nature and positionality of 'otherness' extends Beauvoir's reading of woman as 'other', but as not the only 'other'. It implies that 'woman' is in some senses the only 'other', or rather the 'other' around whom the qualities of all 'others' collect in the male imagination. Hence the multiple signification. It is not only the qualities of darkness and chaos that collect around the figure of the 'femme fatale' but a whole cluster of 'others'.

In Moi's formulation the femme-fatale-as-sign (the woman just beyond the frontier, merging with chaos) signifies all that lies beyond the frontier or sign '/': the signifying frontier marking the distinction of the two elements of the binary opposition: the sign that marks the end of order and the beginning of 'otherness'. For many reasons, frontiers, margins and boundaries were important and expressive metaphors of the 90s, as the analysis of these texts and of non-literary discourses of the period has shown. We have seen how the late nineteenth century saw a growth in classification of all kinds, a preoccupation with ranking ethnic groups (in the sciences of anthropology and craniology), with classifying the criminal as a particular and physically recognizable type (in the sciences of craniology and criminology) and with classifying sexuality and implanting a multiplicity of sexual types including the homosexual, the nymphomaniac, the masturbator (the growth of the medical analysis of sexuality). We can see these strategies as a means of dealing with anxieties (not individual but cultural) about merging and the breaking down of boundaries. Biological determinism itself is a way of fixing 'others', believed to be themselves safely fixed by inherited and biological features. To dissolve the distinctions made by racial classification would result in the merging of species. To dissolve the classification of the criminal as a distinct physical type (recognizably 'other') would be to admit the possibility of criminality in everyone. To dissolve the distinctions of gender roles would be to admit women into previously 'safe' male areas: the club, higher education, certain male-dominated areas of work, and more importantly, into the franchise. Merging or

dissolution of such boundaries would, moreover, bring on the spectre of degeneration of all kinds and herald the end of Empire. Nordau, as we have seen, perceives the loss of form or outline (the lack of clear distinctions) to be a symptom of degeneracy: the twilight world out of which we see the 'femme fatale' persistently loom.

We could also be said to be observing here the anxieties of a marginal decade: a turn-of-the-century, the end of a century. These writings and discourses are articulated in the transition between one century and the next, a decade in which fears of the end of Empire were also being expressed. But we must beware of interpreting in terms of 'number magic', as Susan Sontag warns in her analysis⁹ of the rise of apocalyptic thinking around the subject of A.I.D.S. in the 1980s:

in the countdown to a millenium a rise in apocalyptic thinking may be inevitable. Still the amplitude of the fantasies of doom that A.I.D.S. has inspired can't be explained by the calendar alone or even by the very real danger the illness represents.
(AIDS and its Metaphors, p.87)

Sontag is much more inclined to link this phenomenon with a cultural desire for a 'clean sweep' (a tabula rasa) and the need to master the fear of what is felt to be uncontrollable (Sontag, p.87).

Of course the articulation of anxieties about merging, about the dissolution of gender distinctions and national boundaries cannot wholly be attributed to these very real ideological and political causes which I have outlined in this thesis, but are equally bound up with the definition of self and others: the importance of boundaries of the body, defining a unified self. As Joanna de Groot

has observed in her study of 'sex' and 'race' in the nineteenth century¹⁰:

first in examining concepts of 'sex' and 'race' we are dealing with the terrain of male power; second such power should be understood not just as a practical function but also as a process of defining the self and others.
("Sex" and "Race", pp.99-100)

In this she concurs with Foucault in perceiving the strategies and discourses of the concept of 'otherness' not as a deliberate, centralized strategy emanating from an ideological power base, but that these discourses come from and are produced everywhere, in all interactions:

The images of Otherness and subordination need to be understood as ways for men to explore and deal with their own identity and place in the world as sexual beings, as artists, as intellectuals, as imperial rulers, and as wielders of knowledge, skill and power. ("Sex" and "Race", p.100)

Similarly, Jameson's formulation of the definitions of good and evil indicate the same anxieties about the threatened unity of self:

the concept of good and evil is a positional one that coincides with categories of Otherness. Evil thus, as Nietzsche has taught us, continues to characterize what is radically different from me, whatever by virtue of precisely that difference seems to constitute a real and urgent threat to my own existence. So from the earliest times, the stranger from another tribe, the 'barbarian' who speaks an incomprehensible language and follows outlandish customs, but also the woman, whose biological difference stimulates fantasies of castration and devoration, or in our own time, the avenger of accumulated resentments from some oppressed class or race, or else that alien being, Jew or Communist, behind whose apparently human features a malignant and preternatural intelligence is thought to lurk: these are the some of the archetypal figures of the Other, about whom the essential point is not that he is feared because he is evil; rather he is evil because he is Other, alien, different, strange, unclean and unfamiliar.¹¹

It is this process - the response to the sexual woman as evil and threatening because she is Other, because her sexual otherness 'stimulates fantasies of castration and devoration' - that we can see at work in certain of the texts and discourses studied. It is in the translation of this fear into ideological systems, systems corroborated by seemingly empirical sciences, into a construction of 'ethics', that we see the rationalising of primitive fears. Jameson argues that moving from Derrida to Nietzsche:

is to glimpse the rather different interpretation of the binary opposition, according to which its positive and negative terms are ultimately assimilated by the mind as a distinction between good and evil. Not metaphysics but ethics is the informing ideology of the binary opposition... and it is ethics itself which is the ideological vehicle and the legitimation of concrete structures of power and domination.
(Political Unconscious, p.114)

Not metaphysics but ethics: the reading of the predatory woman as evil because she is 'other'. The establishment of 'woman' as the 'other' of the binary opposition informed by the ideology of ethics is a feature of the Victorian novel as Stephen Heath¹² has shown:

what is generally constant in the Victorian novel is a fascination with the image, the figure of 'the woman' - depicted, defined, displayed, diagnosed in a kind of ceaseless concern (the concern for identity, for who I, male, am, if she, female, is elsewhere to my difference, 'the man'/'the woman', the one from the other, like Eve and Adam, the difference secured); and this simultaneously with her emergence as a medical problem for society and with her increasing reality as disturbance, engaged even in struggle against her position as 'the woman' and hence against his as 'the man'.
(The Sexual Fix, p.90)

If we accept that the (sexually) assertive woman (the New Woman and the 'femme fatale') stimulated masculine fears of besiegement (of the self, of the nation, of the franchise, of male dominated spheres

of employment) articulated in a range of discourses of the 1890s, then it is interesting to observe that by the beginning of the twentieth century the women of the Suffrage Movement were using the visual images of besiegement to advance their cause¹³. These images appeared on the Suffrage campaign posters. The first of these (Plate 7) shows 'Mrs Bull' hammering at the door of 'Franchise Villa'. Her husband demands 'How long are you going on making that noise outside?', to which she replies 'Till you let me in John!'.



PLATE 7:
'Franchise Villa',
anon, Suffrage Atelier



PLATE 8:
'Justice At the Door'.
Designed by
Lowndes. Published
by NUWSS, 1912.

The second poster (Plate 8) shows an allegorical female figure of Justice at the door of the House of Commons asking 'I, surely am not excluded'. Both are powerful visual motifs of besiegement of the franchise, yet both deny the sexuality of the besiegers: in the first poster she is the archetypal Mrs John Bull (wife and mother - backbone of the nation) and the second shows her as idealised and asexual Justice. If we were to replace these asexual figures with sexually assertive 'femme fatale'/ New Woman types the readings of these pictures would be entirely different, signifying a sexual threat to the sexually besieged male.

That the demand for Women's Suffrage was experienced by men as a deep-rooted fear of what else 'woman' might want if she were granted this invasion; that it was experienced as a sexual besiegement and terror can be seen in some of the anti-Suffrage posters of this period. If we read these posters as a visual reply to the Suffrage posters (the woman banging on the door demanding to be let in, to invade the franchise) then these demonstrate a response to these demands as a horror of the invading woman. The first of these (Plate 9, Figure 1) shows a militant suffragette ('masculine', strident, assertive) shouting from her platform 'We don't know what we want but we'll 'ave it!'. Firstly the caption indicates her class origin reinforced by her clothing. Secondly the woman has unnaturally large hands reinforcing her threatening, voracious and all-consuming demands. The second (Plate 9, Figure 2) caricatures the same anti-suffrage attack: that women do not know what they want. The demand for 'Votes' is placed alongside demands

for 'Down with Man!' and 'Husbands For Old Maids' forming a visual narrative, showing again that, for the anti-suffragists, the demands of the Suffragists were perceived as not just political demands but sexual demands.

PLATE 9: Anti-Suffrage Posters and Postcards.



Figure 1: 'Votes for Women'.



**Figure 2:
'Hear Some Plain Things'.**



**Figure 3:
'We Want the Vote'.**

The women in this second illustration are caricatures of the plain 'old maid' type; the sexual besiegement is to come from this type. Furthermore the second of these anti-suffrage posters is informed by criminal anthropology: the speaker in particular has the prominent jaw, teeth, elongated arms, and posture of the degenerate and atavistic female as described and documented by Lombroso and Ferrero in The Female Offender¹⁴.



PLATE 10: 'French and Russian Female Offenders'
From Lombroso and Ferrero, The
Female Offender (1895).

It is with the last of these posters (Plate 9, Figure 3), the most powerful and horrifying of the visual images of the Suffragist used by the anti-Suffragists, that the discourses of degeneracy are most apparent. Here the demand for the vote is articulated by a vicious caricature of the Suffragette (the New Woman) as degenerate hag. She is represented in full face just as are the photographs of criminals and prostitutes in The Female Offender (see Plate 10). She bears many of the stigmata of the degenerate type as described in The Female Offender and other criminological works: negroid features (the flat nose, the full lips) reinforced by cross-eyes, a small forehead (and therefore a small cranium). But the overall focus is on the huge mouth and the three enlarged and pointed teeth (the vampiric 'vagina dentata'). It is this mouth that expresses the sense of horror at the potential sexual invasion and even penetration of the individual male and the degeneration of the species threatened, for some, by the invasion of the franchise.

It is clear from these posters that women's enfranchisement was experienced, at some level, as a sexual threat as well as a political threat, perhaps exacerbated by the sexually assertive women of the New Women fiction, and by the sexual discourses articulated by medicine and science: the classification of the 'degenerate' female (the atavistic female criminal and prostitute) and the pathological female (the nymphomaniac, the hysteric). If we return to Jameson's formulation we can see in these illustrations that the historically-specific 'other' of this period, in this case the suffragette as invader of the franchise, is experienced as evil

and degenerate, that bearing criminological and physiological stigmata we can read her as racial outsider (the negroid features), criminal (the eyes are set wide apart, the forehead is small and she bears atavistic features) and the lunatic (the grin and the expression of vacancy). She has the small cranium characteristic also of the craniological classification of 'lower' ethnic groups. The hair and hat which is fur-like also establishes her as the Darwinistic ancestor, the ape. Here, in the teeth and mouth of the woman are echoed Jameson's words about female 'otherness'¹⁵:

the woman, whose biological difference stimulates fantasies of castration and devoration.
(Political Unconscious, p.115)

We can glimpse also in the discourses on prostitution of the late nineteenth century a similar anxiety about the sexual otherness of woman. The late nineteenth century, as Lynda Nead has shown¹⁶, is characterised by a preoccupation with quantifying the numbers of prostitutes (especially those in London), with regulating prostitutes (rather than stamping them out) via the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869. These Acts attempted to control the spread of sexually transmitted diseases by enforced examination and/or compulsory hospitalisation of prostitutes. Nead concludes:

The fear of prostitution and deviant sexual behaviour was organized in relation to much wider anxieties concerning political and economic crisis. Prostitution was moral and seditious; it was seen as a subversive system which could destroy the very roots of bourgeois society.
(Myths of Sexuality, p.110)

The fallen woman would fall out of this secure family-centred

normality and into the subterranean depths of London: the world of the prostitute, a figure of contagion, disease and death. 'The prostitute' writes Lynda Nead, 'stood as the symbol of the dangerous forces which could bring about anarchy and social disintegration' (p.106). Her association with contagion is figured in some of the visual representations of the prostitute by the symbol of the rat. Carrying contagion, infecting a city, the rat lives under urban streets in the sewers and darkness. It undermines society and can come up through any 'manhole' or drain. Infestation of this kind can, like the prostitute, never be regulated, although the Contagious Diseases Acts attempted to respond to this infectious invasion by regulating and quantifying prostitution. Thus whilst the suffragette could be invading the franchise from outside (literally invading from her marginalised position) the prostitute was perceived as invading and undermining society from beneath, carrying contagious disease.

The threat of the prostitute (residing in the London underworld, destroying the roots of bourgeois society, invading via infection) could be conflated in the cultural imagination with other malignancies of all kinds as Lynda Nead observes:

Socialism and communism were regarded as malignancies which could spread like a disease from the continent into England, and it was this network of fears which fed into and defined attitudes towards prostitution.
(Myths of Sexuality, p.113)

I would like to propose at this point that whilst woman-as-other is a fixed concept inscribed in western binary oppositions (either metaphysics - Derrida, or ethics - Jameson and Nietzsche) the

construction of the sign of woman located in specific discourses is a historically shifting construct. To clarify this proposition, in other words re-writing Beauvoir's analysis, is to propose that the constitution of the femme-fatale-as-sign depends upon what else (besides woman) is considered to be culturally invasive or culturally and politically 'other' at any historical point. She is a sign which signals a plurality of 'others' or to put it slightly differently, she partakes of the qualities of a plurality of historical 'others'.

To return to Moi¹⁷:

Women seen as the limit of the symbolic order will in other words share in the disconcerting qualities of all frontiers. (Sexual/Textual Politics, p.167)

It is to the historical specificity of the conception of 'woman' implied by Moi's proposition, that this thesis is addressed: that an investigation of the discourses mobilised by the femme-fatale-as-sign can be a means to investigate the frontiers of self and of cultural order and normality in a specific historical moment. In this period the plurality of 'others' is to some extent due to what Foucault describes as an increase in power centres producing and inciting discourses: the discursive practices of the period. For Darwinism the 'other' is the spectre of degeneration signalled by the ape. For criminology the 'other' is the criminal, the evolutionary throwback in our midst (the 'beast' visibly present in society). For defensive/nationalist discourses the 'other' is out there waiting to invade and for disease discourses the 'other' is the diseased prostitute or the foreign plague (diseases are

necessarily understood to be foreign - Sontag). The plural other is felt to be besieging: the self besieged by the non-self. It is the conflation of 'otherness' that is characteristic here; the conflation of 'otherness' in the literary imagination and in individual texts: the conflation of the sexual and colonial and linguistic encounter in Conrad, for instance, and Ayesha as African New Woman (though white), evolutionarily superior (though African!), threatening sexual, political and female invasion. As Nead would put it slightly differently:

The representation of woman can never be contained within an investigation of gender; to examine gender is to embark on an historical analysis of power which included the formation of class and nation. (Myths of Sexuality, p.8)

To accept this proposition is to challenge Foucault¹⁸ on the possibility of speaking about 'sexual discourses' at all, in that in this analysis the discourses of female sexuality are always attached to something else - they are formed from a plurality of 'others'. I do not challenge Foucault on the notion of there being multiple discourses on sexuality (corresponding to the multiple mechanisms from which they are produced and incited), but only on the point that such discourses cannot be separated and must not be separated from the cluster of 'other' discourses in which they are embedded: the evidence that female sexuality as 'other' is attached to simultaneous 'others' through metaphors of anxiety. This thesis proposes simply that, for example, where sexual and imperial discourses occur in a text such as She they cannot be deciphered as

separate discourses but the conflation of discourses can be disentangled.

What can also be seen alongside this phenomenon is a complex strategical situation (Foucault's phrase); an attempt to respond to the plural 'otherness' of the femme-fatale-as-sign by bringing her inside the realm of the known. If the function of a frontier in an imperialist moment (such as the 90s) is both to be defended from invasion and to be extended outwards (to incorporate new territories and to extend the empire) then we can read the various (medical, scientific) attempts to define a woman acting outside established norms for female behaviour as an attempt to incorporate the threat into the 'empire' of knowledge. The naming of this 'other' is an attempt to triumph over her 'otherness'. To name the 'other' as 'femme fatale', prostitute, suffragette, New Woman, degenerate, Wild Woman, Free Woman, is both to deny her difference and to regulate it.

Stephen Heath's The Sexual Fix¹⁹ proposes the possibility of the disruption of phallogentrism (the inscription of male positions):

there are... very definitely, uses of language, discourses, inscribing male positions (spoken or written in and from the representations of the man in the particular - phallogentric - system of 'sexuality' we have been describing here); as also there are uses of language attempting to break the dominance of the inscription of those male positions... (The Sexual Fix, pp.120-21)

It is clear from my reading of Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles that Hardy's use of language is, to some extent, an attempt to break the dominance of the inscription of the male position -

phallogentrism. For Hardy, we can speculate that the desire to break this dominance and to draw attention to phallogentric systems was perhaps a result of his being subject to censorship, to the social regulation of his work, of his being subject to silencing and repression.

Rosemary Jackson²⁰ pays attention to the preoccupation of fantasy literature with metamorphosis and entropy, the longing for dissolution of boundaries of all kinds. If we accept that the boundary of self/other is associated with the definition of the self through the definition of the non-self, then the desire for entropy can be understood, on one level, as a desire for Nirvana or a death wish. On the level of language the desire for dissolution of boundaries can be understood as a process involved in pushing back the boundaries or dissolving the boundaries of what can be said: Hardy's formulation of the 'something more to be said in fiction than can be said...' As Jackson says of Sade:

The impossible quest for a 'language' for desire consists, in Sade's work, of pushing ordinary discourse to its limits, to the point of rupture.
(Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion, p.75)

This is central to my understanding of the way that Hardy and Conrad work with language and with signification. These texts search for another language, transgress the rules of the phallogentric stereotypes. They mimic the discourses of phallogentric systems (Hardy with biological determinism and with the discourses of criminal justice and Conrad with Lombrosan theory and with the discourses of degeneracy). The texts of Conrad and Hardy (Hardy

perhaps more so) push the limits of the significations of the 'femme fatale' to its utmost point, to its point of rupture. For Conrad this entropic process is linked with his adoption of the English language and with Darwinism: the fecundity of language, the plurality of meaning, the overproduction of signification. For Hardy it is linked more specifically with cultural and political limits - the effects of censorship - the limits of what can be said. Hardy, thus, pushes back the limits of what can be said through the overproduction of phallogentric discourses, through the mimicry of such discourses. These writers do not break with the stereotype of the 'femme fatale' nor with the phallogentric discourses mobilised to describe her. They push these to their limit, eroding via overproduction.

The 'difference', then, for the novels of Hardy and Conrad studied could perhaps be described in terms of a textual self-reflectiveness, an awareness of language itself as a limiting process. Secondly, this difference could be described as an awareness that the representation of the invading 'other' expresses not merely sexual anxiety but the impossibility of a fixed self figured through the invasion of an absolute and plural 'other' (all that is not sealed self). The implicit questioning of unified self and the impossibility of 'character' representation of any kind (seen in Hardy and Conrad as a discursive overdetermination of 'character' pushed to the point of rupture) can be seen to prefigure modernism - the fragmentation of self, of character representation (the disruption of a realistic signifying practice which represents

the ego as an indivisible unit) and of language and discourse, the impossibility of fixed knowledge, the relativity of ethics and of ideology.

Susan Sontag's work on A.I.D.S.²¹, addressing the notion of the seductiveness of metaphorical thinking, concludes:

But the metaphors cannot be distanced, just by abstaining from them. They have to be exposed, criticized, belaboured, used up. (AIDS and its Metaphors, p.94)

This can also be said of the seductiveness of phallogentric thinking and the seductiveness of thinking in terms of binary oppositions. The exposure and using up of such thinking can be seen to be at work in Hardy's text: the explication of the processes (socio-economic, ideological, sexual, metaphorical and linguistic) whereby phallogentricism is set in place in society. It is also the aim of this thesis to draw attention to (and to belabour, criticize, use up) the setting in place of phallogentricism in discourse and in western culture.

Stephen Heath's The Sexual Fix²² concludes:

'Masculine' and 'feminine' - and 'male' and 'female' too, in as much as they appear in the same way - are concepts we need to learn to refuse.(p.142)

But Nelly Furman's essay on the politics of language²³ warns that this refusal of 'gender' concepts, given that phallogentricism is embedded in language, metaphor, writing and thinking, is near-impossible:

Although it may be impossible, in the end, to escape the hegemony of patriarchal structures - none the less, by

unveiling the prejudices at work in our cultural artefacts, we impugn the universality of man-made models provided to us, and allow for the possibility of sidestepping and subverting their power.
(Furman, 'The Politics of Language', p.76)

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Stephen Heath, The Sexual Fix (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982).
- 2 Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony, trans. Angus Davidson, (The World Publishing Company, Meridean Books, 1956).
- 3 Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Peregrine Books, rpt. 1984).
- 4 Stephen Heath, The Sexual Fix, op.cit.
- 5 Lynda Nead, Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).
- 6 Stephen Heath, The Sexual Fix, op.cit.
- 7 Jeffrey Weeks, Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800 (London: Longman, 1981).
- 8 Lucy Bland, 'The New Woman, the Married Woman and the Feminist: Sexual Politics of the 1890s' from Equal or Different ed. Jane Rendall (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), pp.141-164.
- 9 Joanna de Groot, '"Sex" and "Race": The Construction of Language and Image in the Nineteenth Century' from Sexuality and Subordination ed. Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1989), pp. 89-130.
- 10 Quoted in Jenny Bourne Taylor, In the Secret Theatre of Home: Wilkie Collins, Sensation Narrative and Nineteenth-Century Psychology (London: Routledge, 1988), p.67.
- 11 ~~W. Green~~slade, 'The Concept of Degeneration, 1880-1910' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Warwick, 1982)
- 12 Max Nordau, Degeneration (first English translation, London: Heinemann, 1895).
- 13 Penny Boumelha, Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982, rpt. 1984).
- 14 Lynda Nead, Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).
- 15 Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author' from Image Music Text, trans. Stephen Heath (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1977).
- 16 Joseph Claybourne Nunnally, 'The Victorian "Femme Fatale": Mirror of the Decadent Temperament' (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Texas Tech. 1968).

- 17 Nelly Furman, 'The Politics of Language: Beyond the Gender Principle' from Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism eds. Gayle Green and Coppelia Kahn, New Accents Series, (London and New York: Methuen, 1985).
- 18 From Gayle Green and Coppelia Kahn, 'Feminist Scholarship and the Social Construction of Woman' in Making a Difference, eds. Green and Kahn, op.cit.
- 19 For a similar definition of ideology see Catherine Belsey, Critical Practice New Accents Series (London and New York: Methuen, 1980).
- 20 Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' from Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, trans. Ben Brewster (London, 1970).
- 21 Penny Boumelha, Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982, rpt. 1984).
- 22 Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (eds.), Sexuality and Subordination (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1989).
- 23 Lynda Nead, Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).

CHAPTER ONE: THE SEXUAL DISCOURSES OF BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA

- 1 Bram Stoker, Dracula, (first published 1897, reprinted in The World's Classics Series, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.1. All further references will be to this edition and will be included in the main body of the text. I have indicated in the text from which account each reference comes, except where this is already evident from the commentary.
- 2 I am indebted to David Seed's 'The Narrative Method of Dracula', Nineteenth Century Fiction, 40 (1985-86), 61-75, for the observation that the text moves from fragmentation to uniformity.
- 3 Rosemary Jackson, Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion, New Accents Series (London: Methuen, 1981).
- 4 Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, 3 vols (Middlesex: Peregrine Books, 1984). All reference in this thesis to The History of Sexuality will be to volume 1.
- 5 Foucault, op.cit., p.97.
6. I have acknowledged some of the limitations of Foucault's analysis in the Introduction. Foucault's work suffers from being largely ahistorical and I hope to redress this balance in

the more detailed historical analysis of the final part of this chapter in particular.

- 7 Sheridan Le Fanu, Carmilla, reprinted in Novels of Mystery From The Victorian Age, introd. by Maurice Richardson (London: Pilot Press, 1945).
- 8 Ernest Jones, On the Nightmare (London: Hogarth Press, 1949), p.98.
- 9 James B. Twitchell, The Living Dead: A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1949), p.12.
- 10 Bram Stoker, The Jewel of Seven Stars, (first published 1912, reprinted in The Ullerscoft Large Print Series, London: Jarrold's Publishers, n.d.). All further references will be to this edition.
- 11 Bram Stoker, The Lair of the White Worm (first published 1911, reprinted in Target Books, London: W.H. Allen and Co., 1986). All further references will be to this edition and will be abbreviated to The Lair.
- 12 Cited in Stephen Marcus, The Other Victorians (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), p.161.
- 13 Marcus, *ibid.*, p.163.
- 14 Marcus, *ibid.*, p.165.
- 15 Phillis A. Roth, 'Suddenly Sexual Women in Bram Stoker's Dracula', Literature and Psychology, 27 (1977), 113-21.
- 16 Carol A. Senf, 'Dracula: the Unseen Face in the Mirror', Journal of Narrative Technique, 9 (1979), 160-70.
- 17 Christopher Craft, '"Kiss Me With Those Red Lips": Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's Dracula', Representations, 8 (1984), 107-33.
- 18 G.F.C. Wall, '"Different From Writing": Dracula in 1897', Literature and History, vol.10, no.1 (Spring 1984), p.15.
- 19 Samuel Hynes, The Edwardian Turn of Mind (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p.34.
- 20 It is interesting to observe that one hundred years after this cultural phenomenon, as we approach the end of not only a century, but a millenium, Western society is experiencing a similar cultural anxiety about sealed circles, gaps in sealed circles, and the 'invasion' of harmful ultra-violet rays through the 'hole' (and 'there may be many more which we do not know about') in the 'ozone layer'. It is tempting to speculate

that such apocalyptic anxieties are associated with the closing of centuries. Now, as we approach the end of a millenium, that fear of 'something out there, invading' and threatening mass annihilation (in this case through skin cancer or changes to the Earth's climate threatening the flooding of whole nations) is an anxiety of a global kind rather than a national kind (the anxiety has increased its dimensions). The protective skin forming a circle around the Earth has been punctured: a weakspot on the frontier. Similarly conservationist campaigns urge collaboration of the populace and the collaboration of nations in combatting this invasion.

- 21 H.G. Wells, The War of the Worlds, 1897; rpt. in Seven Science Fiction Novels (New York: Dover, n.d.).
- 22 'Protoplasm and the Commonality of Life', an address given by Professor G.J. Allman to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, cited in Charles Blinderman's article: 'Vampurella: Darwin and Count Dracula', Massachusetts Review, 21 (1980), 411-28.
- 23 The Earl of Dunraven, 'The Invasion of the Destitute Aliens', The Nineteenth Century, 31 (June 1892), 985-1000.
- 24 Blinderman, op.cit., p.415-20.
- 25 One of the main sources for Stoker's description of Transylvanian superstitions seems to have been an article published in the 1885 edition of The Nineteenth Century: Mme Emily de Laszowska, 'Transylvanian Superstitions', The Nineteenth Century, 18 (July 1885), 130-150. This article contains detailed information about the St George's Day superstition and about the blue flames believed to signal buried treasure.
- 26 David Seed, 'The Narrative Method of Dracula', Nineteenth Century Fiction, 40 (1985-86), 61-75.
- 27 Seed, op.cit.
- 28 Christopher Craft, "'Kiss Me With Those Red Lips": Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's Dracula', Representations, 18 (1984), pp.123-24.
- 29 Bram Stoker, 'The Censorship of Fiction', The Nineteenth Century, 64 (Sept 1908), 477-87. Page references will be given in the text.
- 30 Quoted in Lynda Nead, Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p.122.
- 31 For a more detailed examination of the works of Lombroso and Nordau and their relation to Dracula see Part Three of this chapter.

- 32 Stephen Marcus, The Other Victorians (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966).
- 33 David Punter, The Literature of Terror (London: Longman, 1980), p.259.
- 34 Ernest Jones, On the Nightmare (London: Hogarth Press, 1949), p.105.
- 35 Rosemary Jackson, Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion, New Accents Series (London: Methuen, 1981).
- 36 Jackson, *ibid.*
- 37 *cit.* Jackson, *op.cit.* p.22.
- 38 *cit.* Jackson, *op.cit.*, p.20.
- 39 Frederic Jameson, 'Magical Narratives: Romance as a Genre', New Literary History, 7 (1975), 135-63, repeated in slightly different form in Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act (London: Methuen, 1981), p.115.
- 40 Burton Hatlen, 'The Return of the Repressed/Oppressed in Bram Stoker's Dracula', Minnesota Review, No.15, 80-97.
- 41 Bram Stoker, The Lair of the White Worm (1911; rpt.ed. Target Books, London: W.H. Allen and Co., 1986).
- 42 The 'comedy' of The Lair is difficult to define. Whilst it is not satire, Stoker does not seem to be entirely serious in his portrayal of Adam Salton and Sir Nathaniel. Perhaps he is playing with the reader: that by writing in a kind of scepticism about the mental stability of the protagonists who see evil everywhere, he is anticipating the disbelief of the reader, before he is able to 'prove' the existence of such evil.
- 43 Cited in Daniel Farson, The Man Who Wrote 'Dracula': A Biography of Bram Stoker (London: Michael Joseph, 1975), p.28.
- 44 *loc.cit.*
- 45 Whilst I am using some of the discourses of Darwinism and related sciences in this chapter, a larger analysis of the impact of evolutionary theory on late-nineteenth century culture and literature has not been possible. My interest, in this thesis, is in the related discourses of evolutionary theory, of craniology, and of Darwinist materialism and in tracking the similarities of these discourses to some of the motifs in Stoker's texts. My interest, furthermore, is not so much in the more 'scientific' discoveries of evolutionary theory, but in the aspects of the new science which were easily incorporated into the cultural imagination and which, when

adopted by certain writers on the nature of 'woman', justified forms of violence and misogyny.

- 46 See the Introduction to this thesis and Jenny Bourne Taylor, In the Secret Theatre of Home: Wilkie Collins, Sensation Narrative and Nineteenth-Century Psychology (London: Routledge, 1988) for an analysis of the shaping of a discourse of degeneration in the late nineteenth-century. Also W. Greenslade, 'The Concept of Degeneration, 1880-1910', Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Warwick.
- 47 David Punter, The Literature of Terror (London: Longman, 1980), pp.234-264.
- 48 Charles Blinderman, 'Vampurella: Darwin and Count Dracula', Massachusetts Review, 21 (1980), 411-28.
- 49 Herbert Spencer, First Principles (1862; 6th ed. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1901).
- 50 Carl Vogt, Lectures on Man: His Place in Creation and in the History of the Earth, ed. James Hunt (London: Longman and Green, 1864), p.8.
- 51 Vogt, op.cit., p.180.
- 52 Charles Darwin, The Descent of Man (1871; 2nd ed. London, 1874), p.635.
- 53 Arthur Schopenhauer, 'Of Women' in The Will to Live: Selected Writings ed. Richard Taylor (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1967).
- 54 Caesar Lombroso and William Ferrero, The Female Offender, introd. by W. Douglas Morrison (New York: Appleton, 1899), p.151.
- 55 Leonard Wolf in his Annotated Dracula (New York: Mayflower Books, 1979), demonstrates that the following passage is quoted almost verbatim from Lombroso's The Criminal Man (Wolf, p.300).
- 56 Van Helsing does at times reject science as being too limited to admit the existence of vampirism: 'it is the fault of our science that it wants to explain all: and if it explain not, then it says there is nothing to explain'. Van Helsing is a particular type of scientist, one who might perhaps have been a member of the Society for Psychical Research, set up in London in 1882 and in America in 1885. This society established working committees to investigate psychical phenomena such as thought-transference, hypnotism and apparitions. Amongst its honorary members were Lewis Carroll, J.A. Symonds and Gladstone who called its work 'The most important work which is being done in the world'. Nevertheless Van Helsing is evidently a 'modern' and 'unconventional' scientist and a medical man

- specializing in the treatment of unknown diseases. Sexology, criminology, craniology were similarly 'new' sciences and there are many similarities between Van Helsing and the 'new' scientists, particularly in their interest in the female body (hysteria, female sexuality, sensitivity to the paranormal). It is also interesting to note Showalter's reading of Van Helsing: she interprets the novel as articulating fears about syphilis and Van Helsing as a medical 'quack' specialising in the treatment of this unnameable disease. See Elaine Showalter, 'Syphilis, Sexuality and the Fiction of the Fin-de-Siècle' in Sex, Politics and Science in the Nineteenth-Century Novel, Selected Papers of the English Institute (1983-84), ed. Ruth Bernard Yeazell (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 88-115.
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CHAPTER TWO: FEMALE DEGENERATION AND INVASION IN HAGGARD'S
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CHAPTER THREE: THE COLONIAL, SEXUAL AND LINGUISTIC ENCOUNTER:
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CHAPTER FOUR: 'SOMETHING MORE TO BE SAID': HARDY'S 'TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES'

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- 4 Thomas Hardy, The Life and Works of Thomas Hardy ed. Michael Millgate (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1984). I shall be working from this edition as the most recent and comprehensive edition of the text. All further references will be given in the body of the text and will be abbreviated to the Life.
- 5 See the introduction to Millgate's edition for more information about the most recent research on Hardy's Life and the curious mixture of biography and autobiography within it. In addition I would like to point out here that Florence Emily Hardy had also been secretary to Bram Stoker's father (!). I am grateful to David Howard for this piece of intriguing information.
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- 16 For this material on W.T. Stead I am indebted to M. Pearson's study Age of Consent: Victorian Prostitution and its Enemies (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1972) which outlines the events leading up to the Stead trial.
- 17 This speech is quoted in Pearson, *ibid.*, p.166.

- 18 Edmund Blunden, 'Hardy Talks About Tess' in Twentieth Century Interpretations of 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles', ed. A.J. Lavalley, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1969), pp.102-103.
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- 20 See Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, vol.1, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Peregrine Books, rpt.ed. 1984).
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- 22 H. Rider Haggard, 'About Fiction', The Contemporary Review, 2 (February 1887), pp.172-180.
- 23 From Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage, ed. R.G. Cox (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970), p.130.
- 24 I am grateful to Kaja Silverman's fine article 'History, Figuration and Female Subjectivity in Tess of the d'Urbervilles', Novel, vol.18, no.1 (Fall, 1984), for this insight.
- 25 The Life tells us that in the latter part of 1890 Hardy read Weissman's 'Essays on Heredity' and the influence of this on Hardy's Tess has been discussed in the articles of Peter Morton and J.R. Ebbatson: Peter Morton, 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Neo-Darwinian Reading', Southern Review, 7 (1974), 38-50; J.R. Ebbatson, 'The Darwinian View of Tess: A Reply', Southern Review, 8 (1975), 247-53.
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- 27 Helene Cixous, 'Castration or Decapitation?', trans. Annette Kuhn, Signs, 7 (1981), no.1, p.45. Cited in Toril Moi, Sexual/Textual Politics, New Accents Series (London and New York: Methuen, 1985; reprinted Routledge, 1988), p.111.
- 28 Ellen Moers, 'Tess as Cultural Stereotype' from Twentieth Century Interpretations of 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles', ed. A.J. Lavalley, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1969), pp.98-100.
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- 31 Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure (1896; reprinted London: Macmillan, 1986), p.45.
- 32 Elaine Showalter, 'Syphilis, Sexuality and the Fiction of the Fin-de-Siecle' in Sex, Politics and Science in the Nineteenth-Century Novel, Selected Papers of the English Institute (1983-84), ed. Ruth Bernard Yeazell (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p.107.
- 33 John Goode, Thomas Hardy: The Offensive Truth, Rereading Literature Series, ed. Terry Eagleton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988)
34. Havelock Ellis, 'Thomas Hardy's Novels' (Westminster Review, April 1883) reprinted in Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage ed. R.G. Cox (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970), 103-132.
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- 36 Havelock Ellis, 'Concerning Jude the Obscure' (Savoy Magazine, Oct 1896) reprinted in Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage, op.cit., p.330-315.
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- 38 John Goode, Thomas Hardy: The Offensive Truth, Rereading Literature Series, ed. Terry Eagleton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p.128.
- 39 Penny Boumelha, Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982).
- 40 Adrian Poole, 'Men's Words and Hardy's Women', Essays in Criticism, vol.31, no.4 (Oct 1981), 328-345.
- 41 Thomas Hardy, 'Tess's Lament' from Poems of the Past and the Present (first published London and New York: Harper Brothers, 1901) reprinted in The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy, ed. Samuel Hynes, vol.1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp.216-17.
- 42 Thomas Hardy, 'Heredity' in Moments of Vision (London: Macmillan, 1917), reprinted in The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy, vol.2, ed. Samuel Hynes (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

- 43 In the context of Tess's 'trump-card' I should like to point out that all four card suits are present in the novel: the novel opens with the 'club walking'; Tess fights with the two sisters nicknamed 'The Queen of Spades' and the 'Queen of Diamonds' (one of these sisters is called Car Darch - Car D). It is this fight which indirectly causes Tess's seduction. The novel ends with Alec's blood figured as a gigantic Ace of Hearts on the ceiling of the Sandbourne lodging house. These symbols in the text are drawn together in the final authorial comment 'Justice was done... The President of the Immortals had ended his sport with Tess' (Tess, p.489). These textual signals indicate that Tess is playing a risky game with 'Justice' in which she initially triumphs (the emergence of her 'trump card': the murder of Alec) but is finally 'beaten', not by Alec, but by Justice itself.
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- 51 Joseph Conrad, The Secret Agent (1907; reprinted The Penguin English Library, 1985), p.236.
- 52 From Thomas Hardy: Personal Writings, ed. H. Orel, op.cit., p.229.
- 53 Edmund Blunden 'Hardy Talks About Tess', reprinted in Twentieth Century Interpretations of 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles', ed. A.J. Lavalley, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1969), p.102.
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- 56 See The Life and Works of Thomas Hardy, ed. Michael Millgate (London and Basingstoke, Macmillan Press, 1984), p.238.

AFTERWORD: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

- 1 Joanna de Groot, "'Sex" and "Race": The Construction of Language and Image in the Nineteenth Century' from Sexuality and Subordination, eds. Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1989), 89-130.
- 2 Ezra Pound, Canto 29 from The Cantos (London: Faber, 1975, revised ed. 1981), pp.144-145.
- 3 Susan Sontag, AIDS and Its Metaphors (Harmondsworth etc: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1989).
- 4 Ann Rosalind Jones, 'Inscribing Femininity: French Theories of the Feminine' in Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism, eds. Gayle Green and Coppelia Kahn, New Accents Series (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), 80-112.
- 5 Gayle Green and Coppelia Kahn, 'Feminist Scholarship and the Social Construction of Woman', in Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism, op.cit., p.26.
- 6 Sara Perren, Honoré Balzac: Sexual Identity Into Text (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of York, 1989).
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- 11 Fredric Jameson, Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), p.111.
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 - 20 Rosemary Jackson, Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion, New Accents Series (London and New York: Methuen, 1981), p.72.
 - 21 Susan Sontag, AIDS and Its Metaphors (Harmondsworth etc: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1989).
 - 22 Stephen Heath, op.cit.
 - 23 Nelly Furman, 'The Politics of Language: Beyond the Gender Principle?', in Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism, eds. Gayle Green and Coppelia Kahn, New Accents Series (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), 59-79.

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