Man Up

Man Up:

A Study of Gendered Expectations of Masculinities at the Fin de Siècle

By Morna Ramday

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations have been used throughout the text:

Α	The Awakening.
AO	Adnam's Orchard.
D	Dracula.
DD	The Daughters of Danaus.
DG	'Dracula's Guest'.
HT	The Heavenly Twins.
S.C.L.A.	Shakespeare Centre Library and Archives.
S.C.L.A. SS	Shakespeare Centre Library and Archives. The Sorrows of Satan.
SS	The Sorrows of Satan.
SS T	The Sorrows of Satan. Trilby.

INTRODUCTION

Get up, stand up Stand up for your rights Get up, stand up Don't give up the fight.¹

The grooming of young men to have a feeling of entitlement by [...] parents breeds a sense of masculinity and male privilege. [...] Such an upbringing ill-prepares them for the modern world of independent, capable women. [...] When women do not cower or display their vulnerability, what follows is a sense of emasculation and grievance on the part of these men. [...] Female empowerment is totally unsettling to many men. It has shaken up their sense of entitlement and their response is [often] violent and volatile.²

This quotation could almost represent a summary of the ideas that follow here; however, this comment does not relate to the Victorian fin de siècle, but to modern India. What it does help to highlight is how relevant studies of historical literature are to modern thought and how, by studying and interpreting the information they hold, we can open discussions relating to current problematic gender issues. Michael Roper and John Tosh think that 'the historical approach offers the best opportunity for exploring the meaning of gender as power: for seeing masculine and feminine identities not as distinct and separate constructs, but as part of a political field whose relations are characterised by domination, subordination, collusion and resistance'.³ By exploring historical gender concerns in this book, I will argue that gender relations are inseparable from social structures and that changes must be co-dependent between both genders and within society as a whole. The fin de siècle, in particular, was a time of increasing selfconsciousness regarding changes to the fundamental tenets of society, especially those pertaining to marriage, sex and gender matters. Political changes in the mid-nineteenth century had led to security and opportunities that, as in modern India, had hitherto been unthinkable for women. Movements towards reform included changes in the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 which, while still maintaining a double standard for men and women regarding divorce on the ground of adultery, did further women's independence by offering 'protection of judicially separated property' alongside the 'addition of cruelty and desertion for two years to the aggravated causes for divorce for women'.⁴ In 1869, the law was amended again to allow women to 'testify in their own defence' and to allow 'their barristers to cross-examine witnesses'.⁵ Although gender equality under divorce laws was not achieved until 1922, the nineteenthcentury amendments did indicate a shift in attitude that began to recognise the woman as having an identity separate from her husband. The later changes to the Married Woman's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882 saw opposition from men and women organising campaigns reform—although still being firmly in support of marriage itself. It was not until the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869 that women began to realise that men exploited their bodies with a double-standard they found impossible to accept and they gradually became more radicalised in their approach to change.⁶ These changes in outlook came alongside new opportunities for education and employment with the opening of such institutions as Cheltenham Ladies' College and Girton College which helped to expand possible horizons and, in so doing, reduced dependency on marriage.⁷ As the *fin de siècle* approached, the new-found freedoms women were able to explore contributed to worries concerning the perceived sphere allocated to them as many women sought a move from the confines of the private sphere to a more public arena. The new radical thinkers developed a suspicion of marriage as it stood and challenged the use of this institution as a tool for the subjection of women. Some Victorian men, many of whom, in the nineteenth century, had seen the public sphere as exclusively theirs, felt both their masculinity and male privilege threatened and were confused by women's challenges and their attempted encroachment into perceived male domains. It proved difficult for patriarchal society in general, which had grown familiar with traditional spheres, to comprehend women's motivation to change the status quo.

In this work, the public sphere is defined as a discursive arena where men set themselves in relation to their society and its needs. Women's attempts to enter this sphere were seen by many as a challenge to the basic tenets of an androcentric society.⁸ Female encroachment into this sphere was seen as a destabilising threat, not only to patriarchy and masculine pride, but to social and economic order. In the 1960s, Jürgen Habermas defined the Bourgeois Public Space as a masculine creation of late eighteenth-century Germany in response to the rapid expansion of commerce and literary activity within Europe at that time.⁹ He based his ideas on Ancient Greek perceptions where 'the public sphere was

constituted in discussion' and 'the private sphere was attached to the house'.¹⁰ The basic theory saw

the public sphere as a realm of freedom and permanence. Only in the light of the public sphere did that which exists become visible to all. In the discussion among citizens issues were made topical and took shape. [...] Just as the wants of life and procurements of its necessities were hidden inside the *oikos* [house or family], so the *polis* [city] provided an open field for honourable distinction: citizens [within the *polis*] indeed interacted as equals. [...] virtues [displayed in open interaction] were the ones whose test lies in the public sphere and there alone receive recognition.¹¹

Hegemonic confinement of women to the private sphere thus operated to 'the systematic profit of some groups and to the systematic detriment of others'.¹² Within the *fin de siècle*, many more women realised that the private sphere was intrinsically inadequate as, trapped within it, they were precluded from an expansion of their environment that would allow them the creation of a discursive space from which they could 'become visible to all' in order to instigate change.

In 1990, Nancy Fraser sought to redefine and extend Habermas's theory; she pointed out that, in studying how these spheres are utilised, one comes to the 'discovery that conflicts of interests are real and the common good is chimerical'.¹³ Her ideas echo views that emerged in the *fin de siècle* where social relations were, to many, a grotesque product of the male imagination. Fraser's theories further explain emerging discursive opportunities that began to offer the New Woman a way to share ideas within a supportive environment. Fraser suggests the emergence of

subaltern counterpublics in order to signal that there are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinate social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs.¹⁴

Emerging *fin-de-siècle* subaltern counterpublics created a space within which the New Woman could instigate a reverse discourse in response to the dominant discourse of the hegemonic majority.¹⁵ In actualising these processes, late nineteenth-century women could explore options that would enable them access to expanded public arenas. As Foucault proposes in his account of modern and reverse discourses:

we must be ready to receive every moment of discourse in its sudden irruption [...]. We must show that they [discourses] do not come about of

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themselves, but are always the result of a construction the rules of which must be known and the justification of which must be scrutinised: we must define in what conditions and in view of which analysis certain of them are legitimate; and we must indicate which of them can never be accepted in any circumstances.¹⁶

New Women began to define which of these conditions could 'never be accepted'. In a letter to Havelock Ellis, Olive Schreiner's strength of feeling clarifies this:

I can't live on dependence [...], better to die of cold and hunger or thirst than to be robbed of your freedom of action, or of your feeling that you are an absolutely free and independent unit.¹⁷

Along with many of her era, Schreiner was compelled by these feelings and used her writing to create an environment for feminist ideas to be debated in a public domain. New Women championed a breadth of debate to empower access to a variety of freedoms. In the argument that follows, these theories provide a means for thinking about fields of discourse the New Woman wished to establish in their attempts to reconstruct many of the rules enforced by an androcentric society.

While improved legislation in the decades preceding the *fin de siècle* had given women a more autonomous position regarding property, education, children and divorce. Charlotte Perkins Gilman accentuated women's need 'to point out how far we have already gone in the path of improvement, and how irresistibly the social forces of today are compelling us further'.¹⁸ Although American, Perkins Gilman promoted the same desire for economic independence and autonomy that English New Woman reformers were seeking. Indeed, taking into account Perkins Gilman's nationality alongside authors such as Schreiner, a South African, and George Egerton (Mary Chavelita Dunne), an Australian of Irish descent, provides an indication that the feminist movement was not, as a phenomenon, exclusively English. Reform was being sought by women, in various countries, whose ideas circulated within a selection of international subaltern counterpublics and created effective counterdiscourses. This, in turn, encouraged the participation of significant numbers of women to explore a metamorphosis in their gender identity that would allow them access to the 'freedom of action' and of feeling that these writers and others so desperately desired. Exploring literary discourses surrounding the *fin-de-siècle* Women Question highlights the corresponding quandary of masculinities under threat by alterations to conventional gender spheres.

In order to investigate this, I examine interaction between texts by both male and female authors, mainly covering the period between 1885 and 1915, with the focal point being the final decade of the nineteenth century.

Much modern criticism on gender focuses on either women's struggles or those pertaining to masculinity.¹⁹ Elaine Showalter's study of changing approaches to sexuality in Sexual Anarchy (1991), and of the differing approaches to the recognition and treatment of hysteria in Hystories (1997), reveals not only the *fin de siècle* as an age deeply conflicted in its thinking about gender roles and identity, but also the continuation of these conflicts into modern times.²⁰ Angelique Richardson's anthology, Women Who Did: Stories by Men and Women, 1890-1914 (2002), draws on a diversity of writings and images in a way that suggests how widespread anxieties about gender roles and identity had become.²¹ By including work from both sexes, it begins to emerge that it was not only New Women who were showing concern with possible changes to the status quo. The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle by Sally Ledger (1997), provides an insight into the struggles of the New Woman and what contemporary nineteenth-century writers considered challenging or contentious texts. However, when it came to male-authored texts, Dracula in particular, feminist interpretations such as those by Showalter and Ledger emphasise the inadequacies of the male characters and pay insufficient attention to Stoker's own critique of conventional masculinities-or to his recognition of the changing conceptions of masculine behaviour. I thus felt there was an opportunity to explore the view of these changes from a male perspective in order to detect whether these male-authored texts provided parallel discourses with New Woman thought.

Moving on to critics writing on masculinity, *A Man's Place* by John Tosh (1999) afforded an insight into late-Victorian patriarchal practices and expectations.²² Lucy Bland's study of sexual politics in the *fin de siècle*, *Banishing the Beast* (2002), led me to consider Victorian positions on education and suppression pertaining to sex and sexual morality within the gender divide that would be pertinent to my field of study.²³ Michael Kimmel's explorations in *The Gendered Society* engaged me with the idea of the 'fluid assemblage' of gender constructions.²⁴ In a lecture at the London School of Economics in January 2012, Professor Kimmel gave his opinion that women's studies do not include men.²⁵ This continued the link I sought to create between New Woman ideals of masculinity and the fact that, for men, their public and private gender performances could

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neither be compartmentalised nor easily negotiated. There is, among male critics, a conviction that men, both historically and at present, are influenced and shaped by society's expectations of manly behaviour. Leo Braudy's work, *From Chivalry to Terrorism* (2003), led me to a realisation that men through the ages have followed codes which guide them towards defining their masculinity.²⁶ It seemed to me that, if women demanded change, men may seek to negotiate these codes and explore where changes could occur without threatening their belief in themselves as men. Following on from this, by investigating male and female views alongside each other, I sought correlations in the issues addressed by authors of both sexes as they negotiated gender transitions in the *fin de siècle*.

The Newtonian law that 'for each and every action there is an equal and opposite reaction' can be seen in the male response to female demands—what Roper and Tosh refer to as 'a relational approach to gender'.²⁷ As women authors criticised traditional male behaviour while accentuating its detrimental effects on their lives, so male authors took on the task of contemplating traditional masculinities to distinguish which aspects should be changed while exploring those they considered worth saving. I found that there were levels of positive action and reaction between male and female-authored texts of the time. The authors selected include those of differing nationalities, to illustrate that gender imbalance was an international concern within English-speaking nations. Thus, texts by Schreiner. Perkins Gilman and Kate Chopin are analysed alongside those of like-minded English authors including: Sarah Grand, Mona Caird, Ella Hepworth Dixon, Marie Corelli and Ouida. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Bram Stoker were at pains to create heroes who would epitomise a quality and bearing of masculinity that would show unambiguous manliness. As a result of this, the Sherlock Holmes stories and Dracula form the basis of the male viewpoint, which also encompasses works by Henry James, Rudvard Kipling, George Gissing and Grant Allen, among others, together with a selection of critics such as Hugh Stutfield and Eliza Lynn Linton who added their opinions to the discursive field which addressed issues pertaining to both genders.

Even now, masculine and feminine identities are so inextricably interwoven that the search for change in one must, of necessity, impact on the other. Thus, if women's roles change, especially when they seek more power in a domain that is traditionally male, some men may see this as challenging their masculinities, notably of those aspects involving their traditional power bases established within a patriarchal framework. The

problem that India currently faces with the perceived emasculation of much of its male population, relates to Michael Kimmel's ideas of constructed manhood:

I view masculinity as a constantly changing collection of meanings that we construct through our relationships with ourselves, with each other, and with our world. Manhood is neither static nor timeless; it is historical. Manhood does not bubble up to consciousness from our biological makeup; it is created in culture. Manhood means different things at different times to different people. We come to know what it means to be a man in our culture by setting our definitions in opposition to a set of "others"—racial minorities, sexual minorities, and, above all, women.²⁸

That for centuries men have regarded women as the "other" by which they can view and assert their manhood through suppression and victimisation of the sex they see as weaker than themselves is documented in both fact and fiction. However, it was only in the 'early 1980s' that 'the word "gender" [was used] to describe' the 'systems of sexual differentiation'.²⁹ Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks says that 'at that point, [historians] differentiated between "sex", by which they meant physical, morphological, and anatomical differences (what are often called biological differences) and "gender", by which they mean culturally constructed, historically changing, and often unstable systems of difference'.³⁰ This remains how the subjects are approached today, but for Victorians there was not this clear-cut division.

Nineteenth-century attitudes to the sexes were governed by perceptions of biological differentiation. There is a line in Ouida's novel, *Under Two Flags* (1867), which encompasses the idea of gender difference as the hero, Bertie Cecil, cries 'slow blinding tears; tears as sweet as a woman's in her joy, bitter as a man's in his agony'.³¹ Inherent in this quotation is the notion of the soft, delicate passivity of woman juxtaposed with the strength and active aggression of man. These concepts of gender by biological distinction were perpetuated by the Victorian medical profession. Medical articles from the mid-nineteenth century provided the basis for *fin-de-siècle* thought and show clear delineation between female and male maladies; women were classed under the uterine economy and men by the spermatic economy.³² John Gideon Millingen, writing in 1848, said:

Woman, with her exalted spiritualism, is [...] under the control of matter; her sensations are more vivid and acute, her sympathies more irresistible. She is less under the influence of the brain than the uterine system, the plexi of abdominal nerves, and irritation of the spinal cord; in her, a

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hysterical predisposition is incessantly predominating from the dawn of puberty. Therefore is she subject to all the aberrations of love and religion; ecstatic under the impression of both, the latter becomes a resource when the excitement of the former is exhausted by disappointment, infidelity and age—when, no longer attractive, she is left by the ebb of fond emotions on the bleak shore of despondency; where, like a lost wanderer in the desert, without an oasis upon earth on which to fix her straining eyes, she turns to heaven as her last consolation and retreat.³³

While this painted a bleak picture of the life awaiting a woman courtesy of her biological status, it was also, perhaps unwittingly, a censure on the men with whom she would interact as she suffered from their infidelity when young and desertion once past her prime; it actually clarifies the need for a solution to these problems. Thomas Laycock, writing in 1860, painted a similar, but more supportive, picture:

In woman, the breadth of the hips or pelvis, the glow of health on the cheeks and lips, the purity of the teeth, the luxuriant hair, the elastic step, the graceful easy carriage, indicate the mere corporeal qualities; the 'heaving bosom', the open brow, the sympathising smile, the gentle emotional voice, indicate her social and moral qualities. It is to her bosom woman clasps all that she loves, and it is by a sort of instinctive outness that she seeks solace and protection, when needed, on the firm and unyielding breast of her husband.³⁴

Lexical choice which indicated the difference between the 'heaving bosom' of the woman and the 'firm and unyielding breast' of the man, accentuated the distinction between the gender roles Victorians saw as prescribed by biological determination. This determinant positioning also served to prevent women from developing economic independence; in a discussion regarding the 'most unnecessary and injurious degree of sexindulgence under economic necessity' to which 'women are sacrificed' Perkins Gilman quotes from Grant Allen:

I believe it to be true that she [woman] is very much less the race than man; that she is, indeed, not even half the race at present, but rather part of it told specially off for the continuance of the species.³⁵

Women, Allen argues, were firmly defined by their ability to reproduce and not as thinking beings capable of action independent of this or of men. However, New Woman writers, in their subaltern counterpublics, came to realise this, and the ensuing need for change prompted them to promote ideas for counterdiscourses.

Men, on the other hand, were taught to celebrate puberty and, in William Acton's medical textbook of 1875, were advised that 'the healthy secretion of semen has a direct effect upon the whole physical and mental conformation of the man. A series of phenomena attend the natural action of the testicles which influence the whole system; gradually, in fact, forming the character itself³⁶ Pubescent boys were warned that 'a new power is present to be exercised a new *want* to be satisfied.³⁷ William Acton's italicisation of the words 'power' and 'want' allowed him to emphasise that these were normal biological reactions a man should expect and embrace. His article, however, warned men of the dangers of spermatorrhœa, a condition induced by loss of semen which would cause reduced vigour in a man: it warned voung men of the dangers of spending their semen in masturbation and condemned this practice vociferously. The essence of the manly man was seen as self-control and a healthy retention of his virility. Many contemporary mid-Victorian medical articles stated that if men or women were to oppose their natural states the result would be mental imbalance leading to insanity. Viewing the strength of medical opinion surrounding biological determination in the decades preceding the fin de siècle in concatenation with the travesties of the Contagious Diseases Acts, it becomes easier to understand the fundamental obstacles women had to combat and change. Max Nordau saw the relationship between sexes as influenced by the degeneracy of man:

The physiological relation of man to woman is that of desire for the time being toward her, and of indifference when the state of desire is not present.³⁸

This gives a rather grim picture not only of imbalance, but of probable unhappiness and suffering inflicted on a wife as a result of the vagaries of the husband. Nordau's quotation, like others, demonstrates the interdependence of medical and social gender hierarchies and renders it almost impossible to define the individual body as a separate entity from the social body. The combination of mid nineteenth-century medical implications continued in Nordau's *fin-de-siècle* attitude, exemplify the reality of embedded male thinking which sharpened women's sense that the time had come for change.

As a result of the constrictions imposed by the perpetrators of these patriarchal ideas, when *fin-de-siècle* women sought changes in perceptions of themselves and their potential, it was due to a sense of injustice with their predetermined societal roles and a need to improve their position. Mona Caird stated that

evidence is rapidly accumulating which makes it almost impossible to deny that the feminine constitution has been disastrously injured during the long ages of patriarchal rule, and that [the] beloved "sphere" of woman, where she was thought so safe and happy, has, in fact, been a very seed-bed of disease and misery and wrong, whose horrors will perhaps never be fully realised until the whole system has shared the fate of its fellows, and is looked back upon as we look back upon the practice of suttee or of slavery.³⁹

Mona Caird was not alone in likening women's lot to slavery; Marie Corelli, along with a group of like-minded society ladies, portraved the *fin-de-siècle* marriage market as 'a trafficking in human bodies and souls. as open and shameless as any similar scene in Stamboul [slave market]⁴⁰ These descriptions highlight what many considered an increasingly untenable position and, building on the examples of their foremothers, such as Josephine Butler, in the approach to the new century a number of women began to mobilise to form subaltern counterpublics when their safety, security, and resultant happiness seem to be imperilled. The legal improvements mentioned earlier highlighted the possibilities open to finde-siècle women, but did not make a broader cultural change accessible within a society which still saw a woman's raison d'être as marriage and motherhood. As more women agonised within the 'seed-bed of disease and misery and wrong', they saw traditional roles, and patriarchal abuse of women, as a hindrance to their future and rallied for change. It was, therefore, an involvement within a public sphere that women sought in order to be permitted a viable and visible futurity.

As their participation in the public sphere defined the apogee of manliness, men have, Kimmel argues, been constructed by collective signifiers to establish standards of behaviour which will 'grant [their] acceptance into the realm of manhood'.⁴¹ Fin-de-siècle magazines such as The Idler or The Strand Magazine promoted manly signifiers which included: a desire for adventure; pastimes and sports such as fishing, cricket, shooting, boxing and rugby; a sense of fair play; a chivalrous approach to the ladies and scrupulous cleanliness of both mind and body.⁴² At times of social crisis, these signifiers, perceived as having the potential to dangerously destabilise traditional male spheres, were emphasised more insistently and considered as 'those points of transition where old definitions no longer work[ed] and new definitions [were] vet to be firmly established'.43 This historic context helps to elucidate the problems faced by modern countries, including India and other countries that still demand female subjugation. The problem stems from the challenge to masculine spheres and roles as women seek rights for education and to move from

their traditional domestic functions in an attempt to enter the world of work and independence. Many males see this challenge as something they must react to, but their choice remains whether to continue 'grooming [...their] sense of entitlement' or to realise that change is imperative and seek for ways they can explore a corresponding state of flux to accommodate transformations that would be acceptable to both sexes. The same dilemma informed women's struggles in the *fin de siècle* as men held

it a slight not to be borne that anyone should impugn [their] essential manhood [... and that women become] real "traitors to their sex" [...when they] put upon their shoulders, as a glory and privilege, the burden of their own support.⁴⁴

This comparison of past and present arises from my argument that we cannot afford to have 'a traditional hermeneutical approach that attempts to exclude the observer's personal awareness from the understanding of relations in other times and places'.⁴⁵ While present and past situations are not directly transposable, it is to be hoped that writings exploring contentious gender relationships of the past may help provide a key to unlock those of the present and future. By investigating *fin-de-siècle* women's demands and then exploring how corresponding male authors negotiated the changes these wrought on masculinities, I hope to provide a picture of how men construct and transact collective signifiers to establish standards of behaviour which will 'grant [their] acceptance [and continuity in] the realm of manhood'.

This book aims to probe how Victorian masculinities responded to women's desire to change the *status quo* and to alter spheres which had allowed men to hold the balance of power both domestically and publicly. Rising challenges to traditional roles prompted much debate, both on the side of traditionalist, dominant discourse within the public sphere and of those of the reverse discourse, or subaltern counterpublics, seeking change. The selection of *fin-de-siècle* literature—by both male and female authors—explored will, I feel, reflect these arguments with the aim of investigating why women so vociferously sought change and how masculinities under threat responded to this. Joseph Kestner, in a discussion of the influence of *Scouting for Boys*, points out that

among the elements of this text [Scouting for Boys] most intriguing to cultural historians is its use of literature as a mode of imprinting

behaviours, attitudes and concepts about masculinity on its readers, both young men and their older mentors. $^{46}\,$

Kestner supports the idea of *fin-de-siècle* men using contemporary literature to inform how they viewed each other and how they received perceptions of manly attitudes and behaviour.⁴⁷ Within the era, a large selection of self-help books and magazines for both boys and men promoted these perceptions and this work includes a number of these. Ideas inherent in publications of this sort complement the study of the male-authored novels and short fiction chosen while displaying an interaction with some of the ideals New Women writers demanded of men.

In order to analyse authorial interaction clearly, the book follows a tripartite structure that addresses different aspects of *fin-de-siècle* gender issues. It is organised into three sections—'The Damaged Male', 'Marriage' and 'Society'—each containing three chapters; the first chapter of each section will examine a range of women's views and thus create a comparative platform for the male-authored texts. The second and third chapters of each section broach the masculine view by exploring issues through examination of Bram Stoker's novel, *Dracula* (1897), and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes tales (1887-1927) respectively.⁴⁸ This format allows me to probe some of the main discursive arenas within which the Woman Question was debated.

Section 1, 'The Damaged Male', addresses issues around perceived failures in masculinity which led a number of authors to investigate various aspects pertaining to this in response to changes associated with the Woman Question. This section investigates physical and mental gendered attitudes and behaviours implicated, by both the dominant and reverse discourses, as unsuitable for a nation approaching a new century. Chapter 1, 'The Cry for Change', explores the struggle New Woman writers had to be taken seriously by society, many of whose members saw them as harbingers of doom to femininity and procreation. The main catalyst which spurred women to unite against injustice by men was the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864-69 and the campaign against them led by Josephine Butler.⁴⁹ This theme forms the core of Sarah Grand's novel, *The Heavenly Twins*, and it is this text which underpins chapter 1 in order to explore perceptions of damaged masculinities and the contagion they spread.⁵⁰

The Acts, created in an attempt to control the spread of syphilis. mainly by soldiers returning from India, allowed the authorities to set up Lock Hospitals in garrison towns and ports where officers could arrest any woman suspected of being a prostitute and detain her until she was cleared of the disease. This led to abuse of many women by male staff of the Lock Hospitals and also to many respectable women being treated in the same way as prostitutes. Opinions surrounding the Acts were diverse: part of a 'report of the Royal Commission of 1871 insisted there was "no comparison to be made between prostitutes and the men who consort with them. With one sex the offence is a matter of gain; with the other it is an irregular indulgence of a natural impulse."⁵¹ Ellis Ethelmer (Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmv) conversely called it the 'subjugation of a slave class of women to the untempered sensuality of vicious men'.⁵² The public was alerted to the degradations caused by abuse of powers granted under the Acts when, in 1875, a respectable woman, Mrs Percy, committed suicide as she was unable to live with the shame and humiliation of wrongful arrest and abuse resultant of these practices.⁵³ Resentment prompted outrage among women as blame for the spread of syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases was placed solely on the female prostitutes while the authorities omitted to treat the clients. Campaigners were mobilised by their anger against the double standard whereby the men involved suffered no public consequences or shame for spreading disease, death and madness.

Chapters 2 and 3, 'Monstrous Masculinity' and 'Homosocial Symbiosis', explore discursive ideas of masculinity following the Acts and Butler's campaign: the rakish male, together with his lax attitudes towards women and sex, fuelled 'anxieties about 'moral contagion''.⁵⁴ This led to a pathological distrust of anyone who was not 'white, male, middle-class [and] English'.⁵⁵ It thus became important to reinforce modes of masculinity which would appear as the antithesis of the unhealthy, irrational libertine, a figure who, since Samuel Richardson's 1748 novel, Clarissa, had been defined by the machinations of Robert Lovelace.⁵⁶ Themes of disease and licentiousness which were prevalent in the fin de siècle, also served to bring to public attention men who did not conform to (healthy) sexual practices viewed as normal and manly, especially in the wake of the Labouchère Amendment.⁵⁷ Included as a rather strange afterthought to the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 (which sought to 'make further provision for the Protection of Women and Girls' by raising the age of consent from twelve to sixteen). Amendment 11 made it

easier to prosecute men participating in homosexual liaisons. Added under 'Outrages on Decency', it stated that

Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is a party to the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and being convicted thereof shall be liable at the discretion of the court to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years, $[...]^{58}$

Probably intended to stop the trade in the prostitution of young boys, Labouchère's amendment made it much easier to prosecute homosexuals as previously the law had required proof of penetration and now extended punishment to 'gross indecency'. It is, famously, the Act under which Oscar Wilde was convicted and jailed. Together with the influence of Nordau's book, *Degeneration*, Wilde's very public conviction caused anxiety which made some men rethink their behaviour to add the assertion of 'straight' masculinity to that of upright, traditional manliness.⁵⁹

In Stoker's novel, Dracula, and Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, both authors constructed characters who reassured the fin-de-siècle reader that chivalrous manliness would prevail. Each created interaction with the ubiquitous bounder who forced the heroes to continuous vigilance against debauched purposes. Chapter 2 investigates Jonathan Harker who. isolated in Castle Dracula, has no one to reassure him when his masculinity is attacked by evil and the debauchery of the female vampires; it is not until he escapes and returns to England that he can reinforce his manliness with help from both wife and friends. The hyperbolic evil of Dracula served to magnify the dangers this level of moral dissoluteness would pose not only to society, but to manliness itself. Chapter 3 explores the symbiosis of Holmes and Watson as they support each other within a relationship that allowed purposeful performance of their masculinities as they negotiated adapting roles; damage, sloth and mental weakness had to be overcome within the self. In turn, these male-authored texts informed men's need for adventure and homosocial closeness as tools to explore possibilities surrounding the maintenance of normative masculinity. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick says that 'men's heterosexual relationships [...] have as their raison d'être an ultimate bonding between men; and that this bonding, if successfully achieved, is not detrimental to "masculinity" but definitive of it'.60 Homosocial bonding was thus imperative to representations of manliness in the *fin de siècle*, allowing men to collectively seek, identify and repel aspects of 'damaged' behaviour. Being included within a bond

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that gave access to multiple viewpoints in a supportive, manly way permitted the participants to develop the confidence to deconstruct the causes of damaged and damaging behaviour and use the findings to support manly evolution; both Stoker and Conan Doyle showed a developed intuition that men were unable to do this alone and indicated, in the works I have chosen, the various strategies that men collectively used to support changes in their masculinities.

Victorian ideas regarding evolution contributed substantially to debate regarding the marriage market, which is addressed in Section 2. In the wake of Darwin, evolutionary science combined with social eugenicist ideas to drive concerns regarding the future of mankind. This section examines perceptions of harmful practices for both sexes inherent in the economics of choosing a life partner. The subject of marriage, more than any other, created a number of subaltern counterpublics which made room for heated debates regarding women's sphere and whether changes would be detrimental or beneficial. The section examines how lack of education available to women forced them to almost sell themselves to the highest bidder in the search for a comfortable future and, as an extension of this. how men of limited means often used the marriage market to seek social or financial gain instead of searching for real love and companionship. Eugenicist thinkers of the time also compounded the problems as they sought ideal mothers to ensure a strong primogeniture, thus securing the continuance of robust, morally-upright, Englishmen. Perkins Gilman, expanding on the magnitude of female sacrifice, called the *fin-de-siècle* obsession with perfect motherhood 'matriolatry' and labelled it 'a sentiment so deep-seated, wide-spread and long-established as to be dominant in every class of minds'.⁶¹ However, while this appears to be an astute observation, the debate surrounding marriage was complicated as some feared that, if allowed a role in the public sphere, women would cease to become fit mothers and could possibly become caricature versions of manliness. The women authors selected in chapter 4, 'Vicarious Sacrifice', show a desire to negotiate many of the practices surrounding marriage while condemning a number of them outright. The chapter opens with a discussion of Eliza Lynn Linton's 'Wild Women' articles, published in The Nineteenth Century, and Mona Caird's reply, in the same publication, which gives an insight into the breadth of feeling that surrounded ideas of marriage and the Woman Question.⁶² This is followed by a study of the relation between novels such as Caird's Daughters of Danaus (1894), Ella Hepworth Dixon's The Story of a Modern Woman (1894) and Marie Corelli's The Sorrows of Satan (1895), which all

explored the complex dichotomy of freedom and confinement within marriage.⁶³ Within the two following chapters, male and female relationships in Stoker and Conan Dovle's tales support the investigation of these themes from male-authored perspectives. From these, there emerges a consensus of opinion between many male and female authors that changes in marriage market practices needed to be implemented in order to form more balanced life partnerships based on deep love and respect. In order to successfully negotiate change, authors considered various possible paradigms of behaviours which challenged the standards required not only by the New Woman, but also by men searching for a new aspirational manliness which demanded a more equal, supportive wife. While the genders were not in complete agreement on how to solve the issues pertaining to marriage market manipulations, there were convergence points which contested the idea of the female body as a consumptive commodity. The texts chosen in this section investigate the intertextual negotiations regarding an amenable path towards more equal partnerships.

The issues examined in sections 1 and 2 lead into section 3 which looks at ideas and problems regarding how society adapted to both the New Woman and the corresponding changes in masculinities. Women's desire to examine possibilities within a wider social sphere, and to seek degrees of autonomy out with the home, provided guandaries for both male and female authors in the fin de siècle. These attempted moves brought to the fore the socially-created prejudices women were forced to struggle against in a bid for personal freedoms that would allow them to actualise their desires. Diana Postlethwaite's comment 'there is no joyous "Reader, I married him" for these heroines', is an apt summation of prevailing ideas in many *fin-de-siècle* novels.⁶⁴ Social strictures precluded success for some, while others used available support mechanisms, such as feminist literature or a network of like-minded, sympathetic men and women, to help them contend for autonomy. Similar struggles, with contrasting outcomes, are investigated in a discussion involving Kate Chopin's novel, The Awakening (1899), and Sarah Grand's two-part bildungsroman, Adnam's Orchard (1912) and The Winged Victory (1916).⁶⁵ Whilst the novelists were writing in different countries, the obstacles women faced were very similar and including their works provides a more holistic view that gender issues were not simply confined to English women. Annetta Kelley says that 'the infamous "Yellow Book" was part of Chopin's regular reading' and, in fact, Chopin's own Manuscript Account Book shows that, in April 1895, she submitted a (now

lost) short story called 'Lilacs' to The Yellow Book in the hope that they would include it.⁶⁶ This suggests that Chopin's ideas were in harmony with some of the contributors to The Yellow Book and that she wished to participate in the debate.⁶⁷ Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* had been published in America in 1893 indicating that there was an intercontinental sharing of ideas which led to an intertextual dynamic between New Women authors of these countries who sought to overcome social strictures and gain the right to self-determination.⁶⁸ In response to this, authors such as Conan Dovle and Stoker, both of whom travelled regularly to America, wrote characters who attempted to create a balance between physical and cerebral activity that allowed them to reassess their own masculinities. Their heroes attempted to do this while supporting others to negotiate traditional gender roles in relation to 'the structure of men's relationships with other men' and constrictions imposed upon these by society.⁶⁹ Attempts at reform in both *Dracula* and the Sherlock Holmes stories show that it was difficult for men to change patterns which had dominated their behaviour for centuries. However, in various Holmes stories, and in Stoker's novel, there are New Woman figures to whom the men respond in ways that suggest men could utilise emerging ideas as a catalyst for change. In this way, both authors encouraged the sexes to work together for improvements in socially-conditioned gender expectations that would allow them to move forward in support of each other. Male-authored texts thus helped to allay the worries of a society in flux and supported explorations of masculinities threatened by outdated conventions. The desire for social improvement was a goal shared by a number of male and female authors.

To provide a pattern of continuity within each of the sections, the first chapter of the three areas considers the woman's view of the topic: Nicola Thompson states that 'Victorian women novelists [had] inherently complicated and conflicting positions on the "woman question" and these are considered in chapters 1, 4, and 7.⁷⁰ As not all *fin-de-siècle* women were committed fully—or at all—to the feminist cause, there were significant nuances within their writings which indicated various changes they sought to promote. Authors such as George Egerton and Kate Chopin advocated sexual freedom and horrified critics with their explicitness. While not willing to go quite as far, Mona Caird, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Olive Schreiner believed in freedom of choice for women in all aspects of life that would enable them to live independent of men should they so choose, and on an equal footing if they chose to marry. Pertinent concerns that women might become 'masculinised' were

mirrored in the writings of authors such as Sarah Grand, who believed in sexual purity: her main concerns were inequality within marriage along with the damage diseased men brought to sheltered and unsuspecting wives and families. Ouida, whose earlier writings belong more in the sensation genre, moved, in the fin de siècle, to compose tales which envisaged independence, choices and a sense of self for her heroines that moved from the traditional bounds of marriage. Marie Corelli, who strongly admired Ouida, spread her opinions on politics, publishing and the marriage market through her *fin-de-siècle* bestsellers; her ideas are interesting as she imparts them from the viewpoint of a single, financiallyindependent woman who supported both her father and brother with her earnings. Those less willing to accept change included Eliza Lynn Linton and Mrs Humphrey Ward, both of whom wrote fiction alongside nonfiction articles deprecating the New Woman and the horrors she would inflict on the *status quo*. As this is only a small indicative selection, it can be seen that, among women themselves, there were complex and conflicting opinions on their perceived future which created a number of subaltern counterpublics seeking their own space within the public sphere. Setting out the women's discursive field is important for an appreciation of how far men were prepared to negotiate in order to provide encouragement and support for changes that were being sought.

Differences of opinion were also prevalent on the male side of the debate, but my choice of lead male authors, Bram Stoker and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, allows an examination of the possibilities of changes in gender positions and conventional strictures placed on both men and women. The second chapter in each section uses Stoker's Dracula to probe the dangerous repercussions which surrounded the diseased rake figure: Stoker also manoeuvred around the relationships of men and women in a climate of personal change and societal flux. Dracula is not a text that has been traditionally associated with promoting feminist ideas. but I believe that Stoker carefully considered the position and type of woman the future needed alongside how his male characters negotiated the corresponding challenges to their masculinities. There has been criticism of Stoker as having misogynistic tendencies: Showalter accuses him of writing a 'gang-rape', of making Mina 'a dangerous hybrid' and erroneously states that 'all Dracula's victims are women', despite his treatment of poor Renfield and the fact that the Count manages to dispose of the complete, all male, crew of the Demeter-he is particular in only choosing women for transmogrification.⁷¹ Stoker, however, did recognise the evolving gender climate and I consider how he indicated this in the

treatment of his characters; Stoker used his anti-hero as the antithesis of desirable manhood which allows a juxtaposition between the rakish Dracula, and the Crew of Light who mirror contemporary self-help literature to display healthy, manly attitudes.⁷² The contrast between Dracula's solitude and the homosocial bond of his hunters is important both for the way Stoker illustrated the renegotiation of traditional roles and to indicate how difficult it was, and still is, for established gender traits to adapt to changing needs.

The third and final chapter of each section evaluates the Sherlock Holmes stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. These tales provide a wideranging view of many aspects of fin-de-siècle gender issues; the construction of the two protagonists indicates a morphogenesis of masculinities to meet the correspondingly evolving society. Forms of manliness at variance with those shown by the heroes are highlighted and dealt with and I propose reasons why, in the era of Jack the Ripper, contemporary readers found reassurance in Holmes. Conan Doyle, who also wrote many adventure stories for boys, sought a path which maintained certain traditional aspects of manliness while considering how both men and women might successfully navigate some fluidity in their performed gender roles. Holmes and Watson, set within a recognisable social landscape, heartened their readership with a variety of scenarios which re-defined, challenged and re-established a number of social and gender boundaries. Dissemination of these ideas through his stories was profoundly influenced by their appearance in the *Strand Magazine* and the popularity of this feature suggests society's acceptance of Conan Doyle's ideals

Combining these diverse aspects of *fin-de-siècle* writing will, I hope, give a view of levels of resistance and acquiescence on both sides of the spectrum within a time where gender issues were as imperative to men as they were to women. Perceptions of masculinities were, and continue to be, of the utmost importance if men and women are to be able to surmount their traditional prejudices regarding socially-learned gender positions and commit to supporting and valuing people for the gifts they can bring to the development of humanity, regardless of their sex. Freedom to access the function in society that one aspires to should be a basic right, and neither a threat nor a privilege—it would appear, from modern ideas and world events, that this is still not the case. While studying *fin-de-siècle* literature highlights the differences between the two sexes, it also shows a significant degree of correlation within their ideals; it serves to introduce

the possibility that female independence, rather than being a destructive force, could benefit relationships and society in general. What man has to develop, even now, is self-belief in the performance of his masculinity. That many strong men can see 'independent, capable women' as a positive, supportive element in society has become more of a reality in the present day and is encouraging, but, from extreme examples such as those mentioned at the beginning, it becomes apparent that much work has yet to be done to support and define masculinities perceived as under threat from gender negotiations.

Notes

⁶ Details of the Married Women's Property acts, the Matrimonial Causes Acts and the Contagious Diseases Acts can be found in Elizabeth M. Craik, ed., *Marriage and Property* (Great Britain: Aberdeen University Press, 1984).

⁷ Details of these and other opportune changes pertaining to women can be found, among others, in Carol Dyhouse, *Feminism and the Family in England 1880-1939* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); Jane Robinson, *Bluestockings: The Remarkable Story of the First Women to Fight for an Education* (London: Penguin, 2009); Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Penguin, 1991).

⁸ The term 'androcentric' is attributed to Charlotte Perkins Gilman; she uses it to describe 'a masculine culture in excess'. Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1911), *The Man Made World* (New York: Cosimo, 2007), p. 7.

⁹ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p. 2. (Ideas pertaining to Habermas's theories of the Public and Private Spheres, as discussed in this thesis, can be found in this volume.)

¹ Bob Marley, 'Get up, Stand up' (Jamaica: April, 1973), copyright, Bob Marley and Peter Tosh.

² Francis Elliott, *The Times* (Friday 21st December 2012), p. 35.

³ Michael Roper and John Tosh, eds., *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 8.

⁴ Anne Humphries, 'Breaking Apart: the Early Victorian Divorce Novel', Nicola Diane Thompson, ed., *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 43.

⁵ Humphries, 'Breaking Apart: the Early Victorian Divorce Novel', p. 51.

¹⁰ Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 3.

¹¹ Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 4.

¹² Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', *Social Text*, No 25/26 (1990), p. 72.

¹³ Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', p. 72.

¹⁵ The concept of a dominant discourse creating a space for the emergence of a reverse discourse is a Foucauldian theory and can be found in Michael Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: The Will to Know* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990). (Originally published in French (Paris: Gallimard, 1976).)

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, Archaeology of Knowledge (Oxford: Routledge, 2002), p. 28.
 (Originally published in French (Paris: Gallimard, 1969).)
 ¹⁷ Olive Schreiner, Letter to Havelock Ellis on 29th March, 1885 in Schreiner's

¹⁷ Olive Schreiner, Letter to Havelock Ellis on 29th March, 1885 in *Schreiner's Letters, Volume 1: 1871-1899*, ed. Richard Rive (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1888), p. 63.

¹⁸ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation Between Men and Women* (1898) (New York: Prometheus Books, 1994), p. xiii. (All future reference to this text will be to this edition.) (A fuller discussion on the legal position of women in the nineteenth century can be found in Phillip Mallett, 'Woman and Marriage in Victorian Society' in Elizabeth M. Craik, ed., *Marriage and Property*, pp. 159-189.)

¹⁹ Writers such as: Elaine Showalter, Angelique Richardson, Sally Ledger, Lucy Bland, Sandra M. Gilbert, Susan Gubar and Julia Kristeva are among the well-recognised names who discuss issues pertaining to feminism. Masculinities are similarly examined; those contributing to this debate include: Michael Kimmel, John Tosh, Richard Dellamora, J.A.Mangan, James Walvin, Michael Messner and Joseph Bristow. There are many other names in both fields; this is only a small illustrative selection.

²⁰ Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Penguin, 1991) and *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Culture* (New York: Picador, 1997).

²¹ Angelique Richardson, *Women Who Did: Stories by Men and Women, 1890-1914* (London: Penguin Books, 2002).

²² John Tosh, A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England (London: Yale University Press, 1999).

²³ Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: Feminism, Sex and Morality* (London: Tauris Park Paperbacks, 2002).

²⁴ Michael Kimmel, *The Gendered Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 94.

²⁵ Michael Kimmel, *Gender and Men's Studies: Peril or Promise*, L.S.E. Public Lecture (16th January 2012).

²⁶ Leo Braudy, From Chivalry to Terrorism: War and the Changing Nature of Masculinity (New York: Vintage, 2003).

²⁷ Roper and Tosh, eds., *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain Since 1800*, p.
12.

²⁸ Michael Kimmel, The *Gender of Desire: Essays on Male Sexuality* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), p. 25.

²⁹ Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender in History* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), p. 2.

¹⁴ Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', p. 67.

³² For a fuller discussion and examples of articles pertaining to these ideas, see: Jenny Bourne Taylor and Sally Shuttleworth, eds., Embodied Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts 1830-1890 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

John Gideon Milligen, The Passions; or Mind and Matter (London: J. and D. Darling, 1848), p. 157 in Taylor and Shuttleworth, eds., Embodied Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts 1830-1890, p. 169.

³⁴ Thomas Lavcock, Mind and Brain: or. The Correlations of Consciousness and Organisation: Systematically Investigated and Applied to Philosophy, Mental Science and Practice (1860), 2nd edn. 2 vols. (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1869), vol. 2, p. 481 in Taylor and Shuttleworth, eds., Embodied Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts 1830-1890, p. 178.

³⁵ Perkins Gilman, Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation Between Men and Women, p. 172. (The original quotation is from Grant Allen, 'Woman's Place in Nature' in *The Forum*, Vol. 7 (May, 1889), pp. 258-263.)

³⁶ William Acton, The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs in Childhood, Youth, Adult Age, and Advanced Life Considered in their Physiological, Social and Moral Relations (1857), 4th edn. (London: John Churchill, 1865) in Taylor and Shuttleworth, eds., Embodied Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts 1830-1890, p. 212.

Acton in Taylor and Shuttleworth, eds., Embodied Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts 1830-1890, p. 212. [Italics are in the original text].

³⁸ Max Simon Nordau, *Degeneration* (seventh edition) (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1895), p. 168. (Reprinted by Forgotten Books, 2012).

³⁹ Mona Caird, *The Morality of Marriage* (London: George Redway, 1897), p. 13. (All future references will be to this edition.)

Marie Corelli, Lady Jeune, Flora Annie Steel, and Susan, Countess of Malmesbury, The Modern Marriage Market (London: Hutchinson, 1898), p. 38. (All future references will be to this edition.) ⁴¹ Kimmel, *The Gender of Desire*, p. 33.

⁴² Jerome K. Jerome, ed., *The Idler*, Vol. VI. (August, 1894 to January, 1895) (London: Chatto and Windus, 1895).

George Newnes, ed., The Strand Magazine, Vol. II. (July to December, 1891).

⁴³ Kimmel, *The Gender of Desire*, p. 26.

⁴⁴ Grant Allen, 'Plain Words on the Woman Question', Fortnightly Review, 46:274 (October 1889), pp. 452-453.

Richard Dellamora, Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism (London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), p. 218.

⁴⁶ Joseph A. Kestner, Sherlock's Men: Masculinity, Conan Doyle, and Cultural History (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), p. 1.

⁴⁷ There were many books, magazines and journals which proposed attitudes of masculinity to both men and young boys such as, The Idler (London: Chatto and Windus, 1892-1911): The Strand Magazine (London: George Newnes, 1891-

³⁰ Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender in History*, p. 2.

³¹ Ouida (Louise de la Ramée), Under Two Flags (London: Chatto & Windus, 1890), p. 590.