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Familiar Forms, Strange Uses: Paratexts, Narrative Interventions, and the Queering of Possible Worlds in Illicit Narratives of Nineteenth-Century Britain

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FAMILIAR FORMS, STRANGE USES: PARATEXTS, NARRATIVE
INTERVENTIONS, AND THE QUEERING OF POSSIBLE WORLDS IN ILLICIT
NARRATIVES OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

by

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ABSTRACT

FAMILIAR FORMS, STRANGE USES: PARATEXTS, NARRATIVE INTERVENTIONS, AND THE QUEERING OF POSSIBLE WORLDS IN ILLICIT NARRATIVES OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

Jessica Saxon
Old Dominion University, 2019
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“Losing” one’s self in a story is one of the great pleasures of reading. Key to this act is the “transport” of the reader into the storyworld. Nineteenth-century British narratives offered various transport modes, including prefaces and footnotes designed to orient the reader to the storyworld and narrative interventions designed to align the reader with the values of that world. Yet this act of transport was fraught with tensions and anxieties in the nineteenth century. Worries about the dangers of reading, especially the dangers for women and the lower classes, abounded; much of the worry stemmed from fears that these readers would not be able to tell the difference between “good” and “bad” reading materials and between facts and fictions – that these readers would be tainted or corrupted by the act of reading.

Illicit narratives of the nineteenth century appropriated forms associated with more aboveboard narratives. In borrowing prefaces, footnotes, and the direct address of readers, these illicit narratives cloak themselves with the appearances of licit stories. Illicit narrative is not a genre – it is an umbrella term for those narratives classed by contemporary society as unsuitable reading materials. Gothic novels, sensation fiction, and erotica are illicit narratives as are newspaper reports and scholarly texts on taboo subjects. Rather than being a stable category, the term “illicit” is subject to change based on societal norms; that which was considered illicit in the 1830s may seem tame by the 1890s.

This project explores the uses of paratextual and narratorial interventions in a selection of illicit British narratives from the nineteenth century. Classifications of narratives as illicit are based on contemporary views of the narratives. Moreover, for the purposes of this project, only those illicit narratives centering on gender, sex, and sexuality will be considered. Drawing on the concept of possible worlds from narrative theory, this project explores the ways in which these interventions work with and against the content of the narratives to create queered possible worlds for the reader.

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For myself, if I'm being honest about it

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation explores paratextual and narratorial interventions in “illicit” narratives from nineteenth-century Britain, the ways in which these interventions queer the boundaries between the storyworld (a possible world cognitively constructed by audiences from the text created by the author) and the actual world (a world experienced by the reader outside of the text), and the ways in which these interventions create queered possible worlds of sexuality and gender. By “queer,” as discussed in more detail below, I mean the simultaneous blurring and foregrounding of the epistemological and ontological looseness of categories; I also use “queer” in both the nineteenth-century sense (meaning “odd” or “strange”) and in the twentieth- and twenty-first-century sense (connoting non-heteronormative gender identifications and/or sexualities). While the scholarship of others will form the foundation of my work on queering, possible worlds, and paratextual and narratorial interventions, the category of illicit narratives is one of my own making. Illicit narratives cross genres; they can be fiction or nonfiction and can be gothic, sensation, erotic, scholarly, or periodical texts – what links these texts under the aegis of illicit narratives is their focus on gender and/or sexuality and their contemporary reception as potentially dangerous reading materials. I use illicitness as a broad classification for narratives that push the boundaries of cultural mores regarding sex, gender, and sexuality. Sensation novels, gothic tales, pornographic¹ stories, newspaper reports, works of translation, and scholarly tomes can be considered illicit narratives if they transgress gender norms or explore sexual taboos in their pages. In some texts, gender/sexual transgression is an undercurrent, often hidden by larger themes of crime (as in sensation fiction) or the supernatural (as

¹ Erotica tends to connote high art forms that explore sex acts, whereas pornography tends to connote lowbrow explorations of sex acts; definitions of the terms frequently split along lines of “subjective interpretations of what constitute ‘acceptable’ sexually explicit images (erotica) and ‘unacceptable’ ones (pornography)” (Mourão 573). In order to avoid overlaying my judgement of these narratives’ contents and to deny attempts at distinguishing the highbrow from the lowbrow, I will be using the terms “erotica” and “pornography” interchangeably.

in gothic fiction). In others, the taboos are explicit (as in erotica, scholarly works on sexuality, and newspaper reports on sex crimes or “deviant” gender expressions). What binds these seemingly disparate genres are their engagements with non-normative gender and deviant sexuality, the contemporary criticisms of these texts as immoral and/or pornographic, and – most importantly for this study – their abundant uses of narrative interventions and paratexts. Moreover, in illicit narratives, these paratexts and narrative interventions operate in ways that – if not unique to illicit narratives – are formally distinct from such practices in more licit texts. In illicit texts, the paratextual and narratorial interventions both create and blur boundaries between the storyworld and the actual world – they help normalize these illicit storyworlds, while simultaneously destabilizing the reader’s actual world by queering the border between it and the storyworld. They normalize. They queer. They stabilize. They destabilize. Their narrative structures trouble the boundary between the storyworld and the actual world through their uses of more licit textual forms and/or their addressing the readers in the actual world. These interventions also push back against the central text, creating queered readings of the central narrative.

Writing/Reading Queerness

This dissertation is rooted in various senses of queerness and draws on multiple views of what queering encompasses. At its core, this project is grounded in feminist/queer narratology, a field that is an extension of queer theory, and it acknowledges the various ways in which queerness is enacted and the concept of queerness as an action or performance rather than a state of being or stable identity. Moreover, acts of queering as explored in this dissertation are acts of boundary and binary removal. However, such removals are also not stable or uniform acts; one text’s transgressions are another text’s normal. Paratexts and narrative interventions – to be defined in greater detail in subsequent sections – can be used as another means of understanding how narratives create various possible worlds for the reader and encourage the reader to create cross-

world identifications. The ways in which narratives construct gender and sexuality are frequently analyzed through the content of the narrative – the events, the characters, the dialogue, and so on. My focus, however, is on the ways in which formal elements – paratextual and narratorial interventions – also (de)construct gender and sexuality and engender possible worlds for the reader. To queer is to query. And this project is a queering/querying of narrative binaries and boundaries. I focus on the blurry distinction between the textual and the actual and on the ways in which assertions of narrative “truth”² are multiplied and undercut by paratextual and narratorial interventions. In selecting illicit narratives and formal elements as my objects of study, I am looking at the ways in which the marginal “small parts” of a narrative – a preface, a footnote, a direct address of the reader – can radically alter the narrative, sometimes subverting the central narrative and sometimes reinforcing the central narrative and sometimes doing both at once.

In order to better illustrate this idea of formal elements as queering elements, let’s start with a story – a fitting beginning for a project on narrative. I teach a lot of composition classes. These composition courses are gatekeeping courses – they are designed not only to teach students about reading, researching, and writing but also to teach students how to operate in a college. In these classes, I have lessons on rhetoric and documentation but also on how to navigate degree plans and set up advising appointments. Early in each semester, I teach students how to format papers in MLA (here’s how to set your fonts and spacing; here’s how to do a header; here’s what’s on the first page of an essay; here’s how to create hanging line indentations), and we talk about how the look of the paper is the shibboleth of college classrooms. One spring semester one of my best and brightest students chose to do his rhetorical visual analysis, which was the first paper of the semester, on the representation of gender in a selected advertisement. This student, Josh, had talked with me at

² “Truth” is, of course, a sticky concept. When discussing issues of narrative truthfulness in this project, I am referring to what the author or narrator claims to be real or true via the narrative.

length about his content and subject – and it was one of those papers that I just knew was going to be excellent even before I saw the final draft. But when I got his final submission, I was surprised by its appearance.

Josh was a very careful and thorough student. He liked to get things right. And yet his final paper was a mess when it came to formatting. In the header position, the first letter of his last name was in lower case and the rest of his name was in all caps. He had chosen nonstandard fonts for the paper – it wasn't in the default font for Word or Drive, but it also wasn't in Arial or Times New Roman. His spacing was all over the place. My first response was anger. How could he have messed such a simple thing up?! I'd lectured on MLA formatting; I'd walked students through making an MLA template for the paper; I'd created and posted a video lecture on formatting – format was supposed to be the easiest part of this first assignment. But then as I moved into the content of the paper – a beautifully executed analysis of visual representations of heteronormativity – I began to laugh...and to question his formatting choices. Had Josh used this messed-up version of MLA – a version so nearly the opposite of what he'd been taught that it could be read as a parody – in order to provide a visual signal to his reader about the queer content of his analysis? The more I read his paper, the more I appreciated his choice to play with formatting. And my comments on his paper praised his form and content, congratulating him on finding a way to repurpose MLA formatting to work with his analysis.

After I returned the graded papers to the class, Josh came to talk about his project. What I had read as formatting choices were, according to him, not choices but mistakes. He had formatted the paper at the eleventh hour without the help of any of the formatting guides – he'd accidentally put the caps lock on in his header, and he'd just picked a font that happened to be similar to the required fonts. What I'd read as a queering of standards via formatting choices had been the result of the author procrastinating on the formatting and not proofing his work. And yet the fact that his

formatting was accidental did not change the impact it had on me as a reader (or, luckily for him, his grade). His formatting choices – such a small part of the final product – had reinforced his queer reading of the advertisement by subverting norms and presenting the familiar in an unfamiliar/askew way. A similar tension between formal elements and content and the ways in which formal elements can both subvert and reinforce the content appears in nineteenth-century illicit British narratives.

Defining Illicit Narratives

Once upon a time, all novels were illicit. Leonard J. Davis in *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* outlines the fears in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when novels were new, that novels in transmitting stories that were framed as truthful were tricking people into believing lies. However, as novels became a more legitimate form in the nineteenth century, the fears about the dangers of novel reading shifted from all novels and all readers to some novels and some readers. Beginning in the eighteenth century, female novel readers were often held suspect – and novel reading was occasionally listed as a cause of women’s insanity and other medical maladies. Fears of “female quixotes” – women who misread novels by expecting their lives to mirror the action of the narratives – date back to the eighteenth century and are central to the plots of *The Female Quixote; Or, The Adventures of Arabella* by Charlotte Lennox and *Northanger Abbey* by Jane Austen. These fears extended into the nineteenth century, as Catherine Golden explores in *Images of the Woman Reader in Victorian British and American Fiction*:

Reading was damned because it was thought to damage a woman’s nervous system and reproductive health. Medical authorities linked excessive, unsupervised reading to a host of female reproductive ailments (for example, early menstruation, painful menses, infertility, etc.), insanity, and premature death. A woman’s biological differences – her greater sensitivity and sensibility – made her more susceptible to the effects of a novel. Countless

experts pronounced sensation novels, mysteries, and horror tales stimuli to avoid strenuously for physical well-being. (31-32)

Female readers, as Natalie Schroeder and other scholars have outlined, were, from the very emergence of the novel as a genre, warned specifically about romantic or sensational fiction because of fears they would give in to the passions and emotions that consumed the female protagonists of these narratives. Female readers received similar warnings about the dangers of reading gothic novels. And from the beginning of the novel genre, part of the fear of its effects on female readers was that many novels were written by women, thereby disrupting or circumventing patriarchal governance of women. Interestingly, male readers of sensation and gothic fiction were not warned about the dangers of giving into the passions and emotions of the male villains. Male readers of erotica were warned about the dangers – both physical and psychological – associated with consuming such texts. Female readers, however, were not warned of the dangers of reading erotica, likely because the moralists issuing these warnings could not imagine women reading such texts. In *Unauthorized Pleasures: Accounts of Victorian Erotic Experience*, Ellen Bayuk Rosenman discusses the lengthy history of diseases such as spermatorrhea allegedly caused by reading (or viewing) erotic texts; reading erotica was also said to further fan men's dormant unnatural or excessive sexual desires. And it wasn't just novels that were seen as dangerous – newspapers and other nonfiction forms could be dangerous reading materials.

The marker of illicit is a slippery and subjective one. What I read as naughty or taboo might be perfectly acceptable for another reader. When labeling nineteenth-century texts as illicit I am doing so based on nineteenth-century criticism of either the specific text or its genre as illicit. While texts can be read as illicit for a wide variety of reasons (representations of crimes, acts of violence, anti-religious messages, scenes of substance abuse, etc.), I am narrowing the scope of illicitness for this study to texts that present gender and/or sexuality taboos. Moreover, I am less interested in the

ways in which an individual reader (contemporary to the text's publication or otherwise) might construct a text as illicit and more interested in the ways in which a large group of readers or members of a society construct a text as illicit. Scholars and readers alike frequently use genre labels, but genre boundaries are slippery – much like the construction of illicitness. A novel such as *Jane Eyre* is not bound by any one genre – it is a bit gothic, a bit romance, a bit bildungsroman, and more. So while illicitness is not a genre but an umbrella term under which texts from a wide variety of genres can fit, the idea of illicitness is no more or less slippery than that of gothic, sensation, or any other generic term – neither illicitness nor genre conventions are static. Indeed, critics have stressed that the generic boundaries of texts most commonly labeled as illicit – sensation, gothic, pornography, scandalous news, scholarship on sexuality – are themselves especially unstable or queer.

Sensation novels were criticized during the nineteenth century for a variety of transgressions; not only were they filled with “unchecked passions,” but they were also the sites of “‘detailism,’ an extravagance of description that overturned realism’s mimetic function” (Bernstein 216). They were novels of a multitude of illicit desires:

Fashioning both female sensation reader and sensation heroine as Victorian psychos and ill-bred women, critics warned that these forbidden texts were product and cause of an incessant addiction or “craving for sensation,” an insatiable appetite shared by female characters and their reading clientele. In addition to the undertones of sexual promiscuity that qualify the “sensation” of this line of fiction, this dangerous “craving for sensation” is also linked to rampant consumerism, to democratic capitalism run amuck. Rather than the gentle and thrifty housewife of domestic ideology, sensation fiction constructs the madame monster of the marketplace, the woman dazzled by her desires for material acquisitions and sensual pleasures. (Bernstein 217)

Susan Bernstein's reading of the dangerous desires of sensation fiction for women echoes nineteenth-century fears about men who read too much pornography. The fiction has material consequences for the readers – a scandalous narrative can lead to ruination in the real world. In marking the real-world consequences for readers, Victorian culture implicitly acknowledged the slippage between the storyworld and the actual world.

Wildly popular during the middle and late nineteenth century, sensation fiction was viewed by contemporary critics “as an inherently scandalous genre” (Harrison and Fantina ix). This sneering attitude about the literary merit of sensation novels was prevalent in scholarly circles well into the middle of the twentieth century. While “some guardians of the Western canon” have maintained the position of sensation fiction as “critically suspect and inferior in comparison to ‘classic’ Victorian realism” into the twenty-first century, other scholars, starting in the 1970s, have realized the literary value of the genre (Harrison and Fantina x). Much of the scholarship on sensation fiction in the late twentieth century centered on cultural, feminist, postcolonial, and psychological readings of these texts. Kimberly Harrison and Richard Fantina, like scholars before them, acknowledge the difficulties of defining the sensation genre, and their edited collection takes the hybrid nature of the genre as its central focus: “Recognizing the difficulty of posing firm genre definitions, the [collected] essays highlight sensation’s hybridity – of form, of characterization, and of political ideologies reflected in the narratives” (xi). Examining the ways in which sensation borrows from and plays with other genres uncovers “the ideological interests that are served by genre distinctions that seek to oppose popular and ‘high’ literature” (Harrison and Fantina xiv). Harrison and Fantina query the ways in which “sensation novels take as their subject the domestic sphere, almost gleefully hammering at the Victorian facade of the harmonious home” (xv). Given that contemporary reviews of the text typically classified them as “lurid,”

Did the controversial representations of gender and sexuality and the broader critiques of Victorian society within the pages of the novels provoke broader social critique and erode Victorian values? Or did *the narrative structure* contain the criticisms, neatly wrapping them up so that the average reader was content to find that often the “moral” characters married, inherited wealth, and lived happily? (Harrison and Fantina xvi; my emphasis)

While Harrison and Fantina do not extend their queries on the normalizing function of the narrative structure to paratextual or narratorial interventions (instead focusing on plot structures that ultimately punish illicit behavior), such interventions – which are understudied components of the narrative structure – do work in sensation fiction (and other genres) to both critique and reinforce dominant cultural narratives about gender and sex.

Similar to Harrison and Fantina’s argument about the slippery definitions of the sensation genre, George Haggerty positions the gothic as a “bizarrely outrageous yet conventional form” (1), a statement that could be applied to other illicit narrative forms – including erotica – of the nineteenth century. For Haggerty, the gothic is inherently queer: “Gothic fiction offered a testing ground for many unauthorized genders and sexualities, including sodomy, tribadism, romantic friendships (male and female), incest, pedophilia, sadism, masochism, necrophilia, cannibalism, masculinized females, feminized males, miscegenation, and so on” (2). It is this view of the gothic that allows it to be classified with other illicit forms of narrative. In gothic (and in sensation) narratives, “terror is almost always sexual terror” (Haggerty 2), as opposed to pornographic novels in which the pleasure is almost always sexual pleasure. If, as Haggerty claims, “gothic fiction offered one semi-respectable area of literary endeavor in which modes of sexual and social transgression were discursively addressed on a regular basis” (3), then erotica often offered a completely unrespectable area for such explorations. In gothic fiction, the real lurks under the fantasy; “the Real is the rock upon which every attempt at symbolization stumbles, the hard core which remains the same in all possible

worlds” (□ □ ek qtd. in Haggerty 9). The gothic “is about reaching into some undefinable world beyond fictional reality, and that ‘beyond’ can never be pulled back into narrative control. That is why gothic fiction remains as queer as it is, and it also suggests why and how gothic remains to challenge the status quo and at the same time to expand its purview” (Haggerty 10). Yet as with sensation novels, discussions of the queerness and illicitness of gothic novels have generally been limited to the content of the narratives. Formal elements like prefaces, footnotes, and readerly addresses have not yet been central to such discussions. Authors of gothic novels frequently positioned their fictions as found manuscripts, and that positioning frequently occurred in a preface and through an invented editor who claims not to have written but to have discovered the subsequent story. The paratextual and narratorial interventions in gothic (and other illicit) narratives work towards this fundamental queerness of the genre – the interventions often masquerade as forms of narrative control but also often undermine the narrative control.

Sensation and gothic narratives were popular (if not always publically socially acceptable) texts existing on the boundary of the mainstream, but nineteenth-century erotic narratives, popular in their own right, could only be found in the shadowy world of sub rosa publications. Moreover, as sensation and gothic novels have increasingly been classified as literature worthy of scholarly attention and as having true literary merit, pornographic texts have not yet had their moment in the scholarly sun – in part because these texts are assumed, much like sensation and gothic texts once were, to be second-rate literary productions written by hacks who were content to reproduce the same story ad nauseam (person meets sexual partner, person engages in various sex acts with sexual partner, person finds another sexual partner; lather, rinse, wash, repeat). In *Unauthorized Pleasures*, as she closes a chapter on Walter’s *A Secret Life*, Rosenman asks, “Is sex monotonous? Judging from characterizations of pornography, one would be inclined to say yes. Pornography is accused of representing the same thing over and over again, mindlessly repeating sexual episodes that, except

for some peripheral window dressing (or undressing), are basically alike” (194). She feels “these declarations of boredom feel as compulsive and monotonous as Walter’s copulations are alleged to be. Perhaps Walter has become a figure of disidentification for these readers because he displays an unabashed appetite for sex that troubles ‘cool’ modern sensibilities as well as Victorian proprieties” (Rosenman 195). To Rosenman’s view, I would add the question of whether similar allegations of monotony and boredom can be levied against other forms of literature. Are all detective stories alike? All romances? Genre classifications are typically based on the basic pattern or content of the narrative, so the charges lobbed at pornographic texts are charges that could easily be applied to other genres of texts – and such charges were, in fact, lobbed against both sensation and gothic fiction for being “manufactured” narratives.³ Erotic, gothic, and sensation narratives were designed – much like the goods being churned out of factories – for popular consumption, and like those (allegedly inferior) factory goods were replacing (allegedly superior) artisanal goods, so too were illicit novels replacing high-minded literature.

Consumption is central to pornographic narratives. In *Governing Pleasures: Pornography & Social Change in England, 1815-1914*, Lisa Z. Sigel recounts an anecdote about Frederick Hankey eliciting a promise from Richard Burton that Burton would return from his next journey in Africa with a Dahomey woman’s “skin to bind Hankey’s volumes by de Sade” (50). Burton was not able to deliver on his promise, but “the symbol of Englishmen trafficking on black skin stripped from a living woman captures a certain peculiar logic. The combination of imperialism, sadism, and sexism signaled the emergence of a new relationship between sexuality and society; the word and the flesh

³ As Matthew Rubery illustrates in *The Novelty of Newspapers*, part of the popularity – as well as criticism – of sensation novels was their connection to newspaper reports; sensation novels were also known as “newspaper novels” and frequently read as filling in the gaps of stories ripped from crime reports and agony columns (65). Arguments about gothic fiction’s “tendency towards endless iteration” can be found in Robert Miles’s “Popular Romanticism and the Problem of Belief” (125). Stock titles such as “Mysteries of” or “Castle of” became a genre shorthand for gothic novels in circulating libraries (Jacobs 50), and such copycat titles enforced the notion of sameness or manufacturedness in the novels’ contents.

became bound together both literally and figuratively to form a new type of pornography” (Sigel 50). Members of the Cannibal Club and other mid-nineteenth-century pornographers adopted “the voice of an objective, impersonal observer” (Sigel 50). These authors used “third-person voice, along with the scholarly apparatus of footnotes, citations, and references, and invoked an objective ‘nature’ and ‘truth’ to bracket and support” the text (Sigel 62). During turn in the late nineteenth century towards consumerist pornography,

Pornographers stripped away characterization, plot, and setting, and opened up room for an intense formulaic focus on specific sex acts. Literary critics have lambasted these works for diminishing the artistry of writing about sexuality and for the growing perversity they displayed. *These critics have ignored how these works functioned as narrative*, however, just as they have avoided exploring changes in literary style in relationship to an altered marketplace. While luxury goods had always been served up to the leisure classes, entrepreneurial publishers exploited this trend by providing specialized texts for specialized tastes. The so-called perversity of modern pornography seems innately tied to these new market trends. (Sigel 82, my emphasis)

As with gothic and sensation fiction, the *how* of the narratives (as opposed to the *what* of the narratives) has been understudied – the ways in which the formal elements work to construct the narrative and to shape the reader’s engagement with the narrative need further examination. And paratexts are as ubiquitous and functionally ambivalent in pornography as they are in sensation and gothic fiction.

While the fiction genres falling under the umbrella of illicit narratives differ radically in their approaches to gender, sex, and sexuality, they were considered by contemporary critics as dangerous forms of reading. Davis notes that the early novel format in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries “was presented as an ambiguous form – a factual fiction which denied its fictionality and

produced in its readers a characteristic uncertainty or ambivalence as to whether they were reading something true or false” (36). It is this ambiguity that led to fears about “having the uneducated read novels since they might mistake fiction for history” (Davis 36). These fears extend into the nineteenth century, and as Richard Altick demonstrates in *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*, a wide variety of fiction and nonfiction narratives were labeled as dangerous for various reading populations throughout the century. Women readers of sensation fiction were warned not to believe that the actions of the narratives were real and not to give in to the passions that overtook the female characters in the novels; readers of gothic texts, both male and female, received similar warnings. Newspapers were often criticized, as Rosalind Crone notes in *Violent Victorians: Popular Entertainment in Nineteenth-Century London*, for bringing the sex, violence, and filth of the streets into respectable middle-class homes. Male readers of erotica were warned of the dangers of having an excessive sexual appetite and of acting on those desires. While the specifics of the complaints about reading shifted over the century, at its core is a fear of cross-world identification. Cross-world identification posits that the storyworld can bleed over into the actual world, and during the nineteenth century, one fear regarding cross-world identification is that the reader will be duped into believing something that is not true: “Novels work, then, by creating the illusion through the use of the median past and mimetic techniques that the text is somehow close to – if not completely – reality. The frame of the novel insists the work is true while the technique of the novel aims at creating the illusion of reality” (Davis 221). It is not only fictional texts that employ these techniques in order to assert the truth of their stories; nonfiction texts, especially when narrating improbable or taboo events, also use these techniques. These illicit texts were hazardous materials – and part of their construction as hazardous materials centers on their uses of paratextual and narratorial structures that worked to legitimate the texts as “true” and hence provoke cross-world identification.

Yet despite these similarities in public reaction, these genres are rarely (if at all) discussed at length together. Moreover, given the contemporary criticism of these storyworlds as damaging and dangerous for readers in the actual world, what is of particular interest to me are the ways in which these texts play with the principal of minimal departure – Marie-Laure Ryan’s theory, outlined in detail in a subsequent section in this chapter, that the reader assumes the storyworld to be closely aligned to the actual world unless given clues otherwise in the narrative. These illicit narratives frequently vacillate between minimally and maximally departing from the actual world, and it is often the paratextual and narratorial interventions that underpin these vacillations. Sometimes the interventions reinforce the alleged closeness between the possible world and the actual world, and at other times they reinforce the distance between two. The assertion of the “truthfulness” in both fiction and nonfiction narratives has a long history in England, according to Davis. Claims of verisimilitude are certainly not unique to nineteenth-century narratives. Early novels from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries often opened with assertions about the “truth” and accuracy of the text. For example, in Aphra Behn’s *Oronooko; or the Royal Slave*, the narrator claims, “*I do not pretend, in giving you this history of this Royal Slave, to entertain my reader with adventures of a feigned hero [...]; there being enough of reality to support it, and to render it diverting, without the addition of invention. [...] I was myself an eyewitness [...]*” (par. 1, my emphasis). Nonfiction texts such as newspaper articles or pamphlets purporting to be the last confessions of soon-to-be or recently executed criminals often also stressed the reliability of various witnesses or reporters in regards to events, but they also typically had a narrative structure, one perhaps more closely associated with storytelling. Other nonfiction texts such as histories and memoirs use various narrative techniques. And it is this overlap in fiction and nonfiction narratives of styles and techniques as well as the

relationship of these narratives to the reader's actual world that forms the basis of my analysis and of the bringing together of fiction and nonfiction in this study.⁴

Davis traces the overlapping concerns of fiction and nonfiction to the Early Modern era when novels were new and news was a novelty; he terms this overlap the “news/novels discourse” (49). Davis’s “news/novels discourse is characterized by a disinclination to distinguish between fact and fiction as a signifier of genre” (51). Davis claims that one characteristic of this discourse is its “emphasis on forcibly decreasing the distance between the reader and the text” (58) and the distance between the actual world and the storyworld. While the news/novels discourse does decrease the distance between the possible worlds of the narrative and the actual world of the readers, I argue that not only does part of the work of decreasing the distance occur via paratextual and narratorial interventions but also that these interventions can simultaneously increase the distance between the possible and the actual worlds. Especially in illicit narratives, this play via interventions between minimizing and maximizing the distance between the possible and actual worlds in a single text creates a queered reading of the central narrative, one that blurs both the border between storyworld and actual world and the border between text and paratext. This project draws on three theory frames: storyworlds and possible worlds; paratexts and narrative interventions; and feminist/queer narratology. In pulling together these three frames, I use a feminist/queer narrative lens to explore the unique ways in which illicit narratives use paratextual and narratorial interventions to construct possible worlds for the reader that allow for cross-world identifications regarding values about gender and sexuality. The ways in which illicit narratives intervene via direct address and paratexts is

⁴ I am, of course, not the first to explore nonfictive narratives alongside fiction narratives or to use the tools of literary analysis on nonfiction narratives. For more on these concepts, see Hayden White’s *The Content of Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* on the uses of narrative in historiography and David Herman’s *Basic Elements of Narrative* on using narrative theory and literary analysis in the study of nonfiction narratives.

radically understudied. These illicit narratives are not just illicit in terms of their contents but also in the ways they employ formal elements and rhetorical devices in their world construction.

Theoretical Framework, Part One: Storyworlds, Actual Worlds, and Possible Worlds⁵

The storyworld, a term coined by David Herman, refers to the ways in which the text prompts audiences to imagine/construct the world its characters inhabit as one that differs from the actual world that the reader inhabits. This theory is closely related to possible-worlds theory, but differs from most possible-worlds theory by stressing how storyworld construction is a cognitive act prompted by the author's narrative and the reader's interpretation of that narrative. Herman's storyworld focuses on the relationship between the text and the reader; the storyworld is only created when the reader interacts with the words on a page. Other terms for the textual world (such as "*diégèse*"⁶ or "fictional world"⁷) remove the reader from the equation – but without the reader, the text itself is a dead communication; narratives require a sender and a receiver in order for meaning to be made and communicated. Herman's storyworld dovetails with Ryan's theory of minimal departure and Richard Gerrig's theory of transport, both of which explain how the reader engages with and temporarily inhabits the storyworld. Departure and transport theories explain how a reader "gets into" a narrative. Gerrig "uses the metaphor of transportation to characterize how readers make sense of the storyworlds evoked through print texts" (Herman 119). Ryan's minimal departure theory, outlined in, among other places, "Fiction, Non-Factuals, and the Principle of Minimal

⁵ All too often narrative theorists use abbreviations for the actual world (AW) and possible worlds (PW). Here and throughout this dissertation, I will avoid such shortenings of terms; I find these abbreviations not only difficult to follow (especially in lengthy pieces) but also confusing. For example, when theorists such as Ryan feel the need to include an appendix defining the seven abbreviations used in an article – many of which are very similar to each other (AW and APW) – their uses of abbreviations have at that point served to obscure rather than illuminate their ideas.

⁶ Gérard Genette coined this term to "denote the fictional world of the characters" (Alber and Fludernick, par. 5). The interaction between the reader/receiver and narrative is separate from the fictional world of the characters; this interaction "is achieved through the narrating instance. For him, the narrator's speech act produces the story through the narrative discourse" (Alber and Fludernick, par. 5).

⁷ Ryan discusses fictional worlds in "Possible Worlds in Recent Literary Theory." While her discussion of fictional worlds does include an exploration of the reader's role in the transmission and creation of the fictional world, her term only applies to fiction narratives.

Departure,” holds that the reader will assume the storyworld is closely aligned with the actual world until given evidence to the contrary in the text. Minimal departure and transport theories describe the bridge between the storyworld and the actual world – narratives that fail to transport the reader or that fail to provide cues as to the how closely aligned (or how distant) the storyworld is from the actual world may also fail to create a complete bridge for the reader from the actual world into the storyworld.

The actual world is a possible world that the reader inhabits and is constructed by the reader based on their individual lived experiences, and a storyworld is a kind of possible world specifically created by audiences in response to the prompt of a narrative text. Possible-worlds theory was first developed by philosophers and was later applied to literary studies by narrative theorists. According to Ryan, in her succinct overview of possible worlds, the theory is relevant to literary studies because

(1) it regards statements about fiction as capable of truth and falsity, against the formerly prevalent views among philosophers that they are either false (for lack of referent) or indeterminate; (2) it assumes that the real world serves as a model for the mental construction of fictional storyworlds; but (3) it does not limit the fictional text to an imitation of reality, maintaining, on the contrary, that texts are free to construct fictional worlds that differ from [the actual world]. (“Possible Worlds” par. 6)

It is through the creation of possible worlds in narrative that storyworlds are constructed – the reader, based on the narrative, creates the storyworld as an internally consistent yet dynamic possible world. Thomas Pavel in *Fictional Worlds* and Lubomír Doležal in *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds* theorized two core tenets of possible-worlds theory: (1) the boundary between the possible worlds of a narrative and the actual world of the reader is permeable (Pavel 85) and (2) possible worlds are inherently incomplete (Pavel 75; Doležal, *Heterocosmica* 22). Pavel proposes “an external approach to fiction, which aims at gauging it against the nonfictional world, and an internal

approach whose purpose is to propose models representing the user's [the reader's] understanding of fiction" (43); these two approaches stand in opposition to "the classical segregationist view" of a non-permeable boundary between the actual world and the fictional world – meaning that literature has no bearing on the actual world and that the reader is not able to learn about the actual world through fiction (13). Narratives are products of specific times, places, and cultures, and as Pavel argues, the further away the reader is from the chronological, geographical, and cultural production of the text, the greater the distance between the reader's actual world and the narrative's storyworld.

While Doležal pushes against mimetic readings of narratives, the representational nature of narrative cannot be ignored. As Gerald Prince illustrates in "Narrative, Narratology, and Meaning," the actual world of the reader is the unavoidable measuring stick for assessing and engaging with storyworlds. Even in maximally departed worlds (such as fantasy, science fiction, and superhero genres), the reader measures the narrative against their⁸ notions of "realness" – while zombies, extraterrestrial life, and mutant crime-fighters might not be possible according to the ontology of the actual world, the characters (human or otherwise) in these maximally departed storyworlds are evaluated according to how realistic or plausible they are. Yet the wise reader also knows that such a basis for evaluation may not always be the most appropriate. As Doležal explains in *Heterocosmica*, when encountering Napoléon in a fictional text, the reader cannot help but associate that fictional Napoléon with the historical Napoléon (unless the reader has no idea who the historical man was) – and the reader will automatically overlay their knowledge of the historical man into the fictional character until the text provides information that distances the fictional Napoléon from the

⁸ Here and throughout this dissertation, I use "their" as a singular possessive and "them" as a singular pronoun when referring to "the reader" or "the author." Given the English language's unfortunate lack of a gender-neutral singular possessive or pronoun (other than "it," which is dehumanizing), "their" and "them" will have to suffice for now. Moreover, given this project's focus on gender – and the fact that gender is not a binary system – using "his/her" and "he/she" seems at best ignorant and at worst willfully oppressive. Gendered pronouns will only be used when the gender of the noun is specific and clear. Direct quotations from sources using "he" or "he/she" to refer to a singular reader or author will be transcribed as originally written.

historical Napoléon. I argue that the same principle holds true for paratextual forms like footnoting – the reader will automatically overlay their knowledge of footnoting as an element of factual texts onto the fictional text until the fictional text provides information that marks the footnotes as fictional and not factual. Doležel refers to this process as “authentication” and as “fictional facts” (*Heterocosmica* 146): “To exist fictionally means to exist in different modes, ranks, and degrees” (*Heterocosmica* 147). Authentication in storyworlds “is inscribed in the norms of the narrative genre” (Doležel, *Heterocosmica* 149). Hence, as components of narrative, narratorial and paratextual interventions become means of authentication in the storyworld and means of possible-worlds creation.

The storyworld is the world created by the author in the text and reimagined/reconstructed by the reader of the text. The actual world is the one in which the reader and the author are situated; their actual worlds may differ depending on time and location. The actual world is culturally, historically, and geographically mediated. The author’s and reader’s experiences in the actual world affect their construction, reconstruction, and interpretation of the storyworld. However, given (1) the variances in people’s actual worlds, (2) the possibilities opened via textual interpretation, and (3) the impossibility of ontologically complete textual realms, a universe of possible worlds and cross-world identifications can be created by the individual readers. Ryan notes that the presence of the fantastic or supernatural in a storyworld does not immediately negate cross-world identification or the relevance of the storyworld to the actual world:

In a work like *Doktor Faustus* by Thomas Mann, for instance, we are not only invited to grant equal credence within the fictional world (FW) [storyworld] to the musicological discussions and to the conversation of the hero with the devil, we are also entitled to regard the musicological discussions as (potentially) reliable information about AW [the actual world].

This flexible attitude toward textual statements can only be achieved within a semantic

framework allowing a pluralism of worlds of reference. (“Possible World in Recent Literary Theory” 531)

The impossibility of a gender-fluid, supernatural, monstrous beetle in the reader’s actual world does not negate potential warnings about imperialism present in Richard Marsh’s *The Beetle*; the impossibility of a continuous chain of forty male participants in a single sex act in *Letters from Laura and Evangeline* does not negate the reality of non-heterosexual desires and sexualities. Readers, “when reconstructing a fictional world, fill in the blanks left by the text by assuming its similarity to the actual world” (Ryan, “Possible Worlds in Recent Literary Theory” 533). But Ryan also cautions the reader: “Do not make gratuitous changes – your experience of reality can only be overruled by the authority of the text” (“Possible Worlds in Recent Literary Theory” 533).

The intersection of the storyworld and the actual world is a site of tension – the reader fills in information about the storyworld based on the actual world, but the storyworld does not always conform to the mold of the actual world:

This principle [“Do not make gratuitous changes – your experience of reality can only be overruled by the authority of the text”] may seem self-evident, yet its exact formulation and the delimitation of its range have caused difficulties. What conception of AW [the actual world] should be decisive in applying the principle? The version prevalent in the sender’s or in the receiver’s culture? Should special amendments be made for existential statements? (The principle should not be allowed to populate the world of fairy tales with airplanes and computers.) Does minimal departure entail a naturalistic bias or does it work equally well for fantastic texts? Can it distinguish relevant from irrelevant interpretive issues? In spite of these open questions, most proponents of PWT [possible-worlds theory] acknowledge the importance for the reconstruction of fictional worlds of a regulative principle using a stable world of reference. (Ryan, “Possible World in Recent Literary Theory” 533)

Ryan uses the term “textual actual world” to denote the world of the narrative as denoted by the text; the textual actual world is the center of the narrative universe and is surrounded by various possible worlds conjured by the narrative but not made explicit by the narrative. The author and reader (or sender and receiver in Ryan’s construction) each reorient themselves in order to cross from the actual world into the textual actual world and its possible worlds.

This reorientation to the narrative universe is a “playful recentering (which offers a PWT [possible-worlds theory] translation of the suspension of disbelief of Aristotelian poetics)” (Ryan, “Possible World in Recent Literary Theory” 533):

The participants in the fictional game know that there is only one actually actual world but for the duration of the game they agree to regard another world as actual. From the point of view of the “actually actual world”⁹ the worlds of fictions are textual creations populated by incompletely specified literary characters, but the reader caught up in a fiction experiences TAW [textual actual world] as real and its inhabitants as ontologically complete human beings existing independently from the text that recounts their actions. The possible-world formulation of the idea of fiction as make-believe thus explains the discrepancy between knowledge and behavior in the fictional experience, a discrepancy which enables readers to be emotionally involved in worlds and characters they know to be purely imaginary” (Ryan, “Possible World in Recent Literary Theory” 535-536)

For Ryan and other scholars, possible-worlds theory is not a “critical ideology, but a collection of analytical tools applicable to many disciplines, in the service of many purposes” (“Possible Worlds in Recent Literary Theory” 550). She envisions possible-worlds theory as a flexible tool that can

⁹ Because of the confusing nature of terms like “textual actual world” and “actually actual world,” after leaving this discussion of Ryan I will return to storyworld and actual world to describe the world of the narrative and the world of the reader. However, while I find Ryan’s terms maddening and frustrating, I do appreciate the ways in which terms like “textual actual world” and “actually actual world” signal the connections between the storyworld and the actual world, the ways in which these worlds bleed into each other, and the porous boundaries between them.

“infiltrate the treatment of a variety of cultural phenomena from a variety of points of view, in the same way that concepts of the Genette school of narratology infiltrated most brands of criticism and eventually spread into interdisciplinary discourse studies” (Ryan, *Possible Worlds in Recent Literary Theory*” 550).¹⁰

However, Pavel, Doležel, Ryan, and other theorists of possible worlds are typically more interested in the broad strokes of world creation: characters, events, and locations. Yet, it can be the smaller moments in the text – a preface, a footnote, a “dear reader” – that can also impact the ways in which the storyworld is reconstructed by the reader. Herman argues, “The representation also conveys the *experience* of living through this storyworld-in-flux, highlighting the pressure of events on real or imagined consciousness affected by the occurrences at issue” (xvi, his emphasis). He uses the term “qualia” to describe this representation and experience: “[N]arrative is centrally concerned with *qualia*, a term used by philosophers of the mind to refer to the sense of ‘what it is like’ for someone or something to have a particular experience” (xvi, his emphasis). How the storyworld “feels” to the reader is central to storyworld theory, and it is at this intersection between the reader and the text that cross-world identification can occur. In these small intervention moments, the reader can be unsure of which world they are in or are experiencing. Is the footnote an intervention within the storyworld? Or is it an intervention into the storyworld from the actual world? These paratextual and narratorial interventions are both of and in-between the storyworld and the actual world. And as such liminal elements, they often queer the narrative and the reading – they queer the qualia, “an unfamiliar term for something that could not be more familiar to each of us: *the ways things seem to us*” (Dennett qtd. in Herman 145; Dennett’s emphasis).

¹⁰ Ryan also notes in this 1992 article that she doesn’t “anticipate in the future a flood of papers and dissertations on ‘Possible Worlds in the (name century) (name language) (name politically relevant group) (name genre)’” (“Possible Worlds in Recent Literary Theory” 550). Sadly – or perhaps ironically – the earliest drafts of this project were entitled “Possible Worlds in Nineteenth-Century Illicit British Narratives.”

Possible-worlds theory works well in conjunction with a variety of other theoretical lenses – paratextual studies, narrative intervention studies, feminist and queer theories. In applying possible-worlds theory to the small parts of narrative (namely, paratextual and narratorial interventions), Herman’s positioning theory is a helpful supplement. Herman points to positioning theory as one means by which the storyworld is constructed by the small parts of the narrative: the theory “provides another way of characterizing as a basic element of narrative its grounding in contexts for communication” (55). The relationship between what Herman terms “the teller” and “the recipient” (or for this project the author/narrator and the reader) is central in positioning theory: “The telling of narratives functions to position both teller and recipient, and in some cases to contest positions associated with competing storylines, while conversely individual speech acts contribute to the formation of more or less convergent or conflicting storylines about self and other. In addition, the process of narration positions characters in storyworlds” (55). His example of positioning in narrative focuses on oral storytelling and the ways in which the teller uses speech acts to denote “racial as well as generational polarities” in a narrative that is – at least on its surface – about an encounter with a UFO (or possibly with the Devil) (Herman 56). However, positioning also works via rhetorical moves such as paratextual and narratorial interventions. In written narratives, the author or narrator can deploy paratexts and direct addresses of readers as a means of inscribing the storylines of the narrative. Much like speech acts, narrative descriptions, and other modes of positioning, paratextual and narratorial interventions work to construct the storyworld and to shape the reader’s interaction with the possible worlds. This project examines Victorian illicit narratives and the intersection of these narratives’ storyworlds and the Victorian reader’s actual world. The concept of “the Victorian reader” is, quite certainly, generalization; the lived experiences of British readers over the long nineteenth century are, of course, highly varied. However, in discussion of these readers’ actual world, I am referring to the most basic experiences of actuality shared by these

readers, namely their constructions of gender and sexuality.¹¹ The act of reading creates a contact zone between the storyworld and the actual world, and paratexts and direct address are one of many thresholds between the two.

Theoretical Framework, Part Two: Paratextual and Narratorial Interventions

Paratexts, as outlined by Gérard Genette, are those items not of the central text but attached to the central text: tables of contents, indices, prefaces, footnotes, illustrations, and so on. But the line between text and paratext is not always clear. What, if any, is the difference between a handful of paragraphs explicitly marked as a preface and a handful of paragraphs at the start of the first chapter that serves as a preface without being labeled as such? Is it only a paratext when explicitly marked as such? I would argue that both are paratextual, although marked paratexts have a higher degree of “paratextuality”¹² – that is, being marked as paratexts draws further attention to their separation from the central narrative, making them more obviously “paratext-y” than unmarked paratexts. Paratexts can be appended to or embedded in texts. What makes them paratextual is their function more so than their form. This fuzzy definition, however, raises some interesting questions. For example, are parenthetical insertions into a text paratextual? And what’s the difference – other than its location on a page – between a parenthetical insertion and a footnote? Much like the genre slipperiness discussed earlier in this chapter, paratexts are not always easy to define, and the difference between the text and paratext, like the differences among genres, is not always starkly delineated. There is a certain leakiness between the textual and the paratextual.

¹¹ For more from other scholars on Victorian morality and views on gender and sexuality, see Steven Marcus’s *The Other Victorians*, Michel Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality*, Ellen Bayuk Rosenman’s *Unauthorized Pleasures*, and Lisa Sigel’s *Governing Pleasures*. As Foucault and Rosenman both note, a fear about masturbation ruining boys’ minds and bodies ran through the century; while not all Victorians believed that masturbation was detrimental to a boy’s development, it certainly was a common view. The generalizations made in this project about Victorian views of gender and sexuality are rooted in what the Victorians themselves wrote on those issues; while not all Victorians held those views, there were the views of the vocal majority.

¹² Many thanks to Edward Jacobs for coining this term, which I have now unabashedly “borrowed,” in his comments on an early draft of this chapter.

Narrative interventions – the direct address of “you” or the “reader” – are also leaky forms. Narrative interventions, according to Robyn Warhol, have been misread as interruptions or signs of bad writing. I argue they are methods of cross-world identification and can be read as embedded paratexts. As unmarked embedded paratextual forms, narrative interventions have a lower degree of paratextuality – unlike a table of contents or an illustration, they are not immediately identifiable as a paratextual intervention. Yet the low degree of paratextuality does not negate the classification of narrative interventions as a form of paratexts. Narrative interventions are a common form of low-level paratext. Warhol argues, “Narrative interventions help to position the reader in relation to the text, [while] at the same time expressing the novelists’ own goals, either ironically or explicitly” (*Gendered* xii). “When the engaging narrator speaks to a ‘you’ that stands for the actual reader [...], the text produces a real event, an exchange of ideas that the novelist hopes will result in real consequences” via cross-world identification (Warhol, *Gendered* 203). Narrative interventions are a threshold and a site of transaction between the text and the reader. In thinking of paratexts, Genette draws on Philippe Lejuene’s work: paratextual interventions are “a fringe of the printed text which in reality controls one’s whole reading of the text” (Lejuene qtd. in Genette, *Paratexts* 2). Much like the fringe paratexts, the narrative interventions are an embedded fringe that also controls (or at least contributes in significant ways to) the reading of the text. The fringes of traditional paratexts and of narrative interventions are at once hemmed in by the central narrative and pulled loose from that narrative; they are within and without.

Discussions of paratextual and narratorial interventions necessitate discussions of the “reader.” The reader could also be labeled “the narrative audience” or “the receiver,” terms which cover a wide variety of narrative forms (written, verbal, visual, etc.). Given this project’s focus on written narratives and because terms like “narrative audience” and “receiver” minimize the act of reading the text, I prefer the term “reader.” In these written narratives, it is through the act of

reading that the storyworld is reconstructed and the possible worlds are imagined. Simply put, a reader reads – and this project focuses specifically on the ways in which a narrative constructs the reader. However, the term is a slippery one as “the reader” can (wrongly) signal a singular or even monolithic reader. Readers are historically and culturally situated; they are constructed by their own experiences as well as by the time and place in which they live. Readers in a society (say, England of 1862) *may* share certain values and assumptions, but they are by no means identical. The further apart in time, location, socio-economic status (and a whole host of other influences) readers are, the more different they are. One cannot make sweeping assumptions about these readers. Yet, one cannot ignore the readers either. Therefore, I will continue to use the term “reader” but acknowledge the constructed and subjective nature of the readers.¹³

Paratexts and narrative interventions are two of the myriad and overlapping means by which an author constructs a storyworld. Paratexts, as theorized by Genette in “Introduction to Paratext” and *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, and narrative interventions, as theorized by Warhol in *Gendered Interventions: Narrative Discourse in the Victorian Novel*, manifestly contribute to the ways in which the reader is transported into the storyworld, constructs the possible worlds, and views the narrative as minimally (or maximally) departed from the actual world. Such applications have the potential to augment narratological work on alethic (what is possible), deontic (what is allowed), axiological (what is valued), and epistemic (what is known) modes in storyworlds and readers’ engagements with storyworlds. Of these four modes, the deontic, axiological, and epistemic modes have the most immediate relevance to the study of paratexts and narrative interventions in illicit narratives: the epistemic mode is central in understanding the ways in which borders between the

¹³ Chapter four on narrative interventions will have a more detailed exploration of the reader in relation to narratives. In that chapter I explore various reader-response theories of the reader (namely, Wolfgang Iser’s “implied reader” and Garrett Stewart’s “conscripted reader”) and the ways in which an individual reader can respond to the rhetorical moves made in a narrative that attempt to shape their reading experiences.

storyworld and actual world are queered, the axiological system assists with analyses of morality in the illicit storyworld and its bearing on the actual world, and the deontic mode helps the reader orient themselves to the codes governing the storyworld. The examination of paratexts and narrative intervention provides a means for understanding the ways in which narrative structures help the narrator construct, deconstruct, and queer the reader's notions about the text's possible worlds and their own actual world.

In *Paratexts*, Genette explores the forms and functions of paratexts that he first outlined in "Introduction to Paratexts." Paratexts are "thresholds," sites of "*transaction*," the privileged site of a pragmatics and of a strategy, of an action on the public in the service, well or badly understood and accomplished, of a better reception of the text and a more pertinent reading – more pertinent, naturally, in the eyes of the author and his allies" (Genette, "Introduction" 261-262, his emphasis). Paratexts are those forms that surround, either spatially or culturally, the text. Spatial paratexts, like tables of contents, appendices, footnotes, and illustrations, are located before, after, under, or beside the text; they have a physical orientation in relation to the central text. Cultural paratexts, like the author's gender, age, or other biographical information, might not be physically connected to the text but are "in the air" around the text as the reader reads. Paratexts are often viewed as being in service to the central text. The story itself will make sense without the table of contents, the intertitles, the illustrations, or the preface; while paratexts can add to a narrative, their omission does not necessarily detract from the story. Moreover, while the author can include various forms of paratexts (and presumably only does so because the author believes the paratexts improve, supplement, or augment the central narrative – or because an editor or publisher believes so), the author cannot be assured that the paratexts will survive into later editions or that the reader will actually engage with the paratexts. As Kamilla Elliot argues in *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*, during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as illustrated novels for adult audiences fell out of favor due

to the rising popularity of films, editors and publishing houses generally stopped including the illustrations in their reprints of older illustrated texts. For example, of the three copies of *The Woman in White* on my own bookshelves, only one has the original illustrations (the Broadview edition), and the other two do not (the Penguin and the Oxford editions) – nor do the Penguin or Oxford editions mention that the original narrative was illustrated. Interestingly, all four of my copies of *Alice in Wonderland*, which unlike *The Woman in White* is seen as a “children’s book,” are illustrated. William Ainsworth’s *Jack Sheppard* makes sense without the illustrations, but as Laura Daniel Buchholz argues in “Illustrations and Text: Storyworld Space and the Multimodality of Serialized Narrative,” it makes a different sense with them. Even if a paratext survives the editor’s blue pencil, the reader may choose not to read or view the paratext. Footnotes in *Caraboo: A Narrative of Singular Imposition* can be ignored (as my sophomore students have repeatedly admitted to doing), even though his footnotes not only help explain key narrative points but also reveal some of the author’s biases and sympathies. The reader may also choose to read or view the paratext in a different order than the author anticipated. The reader may not read the preface to *The Law and the Lady* until after they finish reading the novel, or the reader of *She: A History of Adventure* may thumb through to view the illustrations before starting to read the narrative.

Genette provides a typology for several paratextual forms; however, this project will only focus on two: prefaces and footnotes (which Genette groups as “notes” in *Paratexts* along with endnotes and other notation forms). I limit my focus thusly in part for practical reasons of space, but also because these paratextual forms, along with narrative interventions, are ubiquitous in illicit texts and operate in the ways that queer actual and storyworlds. In his exploration of prefaces and footnotes in *Paratexts*, Genette creates a classification system of these forms: these paratexts can be “authorial” (by the actual author), “allographic” (by a person other than the author), or “actorial” (by a fictional character), and they can be “authentic” (by a real person), “fictive” (by an imaginary

character), or “apocryphal” (attributed to a real person but actually not by that real person or actually by an imaginary character) (*Paratexts* 178-179). Authorial and allographic paratexts are usually authentic, and actorial paratexts are usually fictive. While Genette defines the apocryphal paratext, he questions whether such paratexts actually exist and does not provide any examples for the apocryphal category. Authentic authorial prefaces can explain how the writer created the text, provide pertinent historical or background information, discuss revisions between editions, or fulfill a host of other functions. Other prefaces occupy a more liminal space in Genette’s classification system. Some novels have unsigned prefaces, leaving the reader to wonder if the actual author wrote the preface, if the preface is supposed to be by one of the characters, or if the preface was penned by some other actual or imagined entity. Genette acknowledges the contradictory nature of information given in paratexts in a single narrative: “[W]hat one paratextual elements gives, another paratextual element, later or simultaneously, may always take away; and here as elsewhere the reader must put it all together and try (it’s not always so simple) to figure out what the whole adds up to. And the very way in which a paratextual element gives what it gives may always imply that none of it is to be believed” (Genette, *Paratexts* 183). This tension among paratextual elements as well as between the paratexts and the text is fundamentally queer – there is no clear system that dictates what must be accepted and what must be rejected; instead the paratexts and the text support each other, clash with each other, bump up against each other, wink at each other, and complement – or even compliment – each other. As seen in chapters two and three of this project, in narratives with both prefaces and footnotes, the reader can simultaneously accommodate the claims of the preface (this is fiction) and of the footnotes (this is fact), discard one in favor of the other (this is fact, not fiction; or this is fiction, not fact), or shift between accepting both (sometimes this is fiction and sometimes this is fact). These competing paratexts queer the boundary between the storyworld and

the actual world, forcing the reader to make choices about what to accommodate and/or discard from the narrative. Paratexts can engage in world making and world deconstruction simultaneously.

While footnoting, as Anthony Grafton points out in *The Footnote: A Curious History*, was a common feature of some genres of nineteenth-century nonfiction writing, authentic authorial footnotes in fictional texts were less common, and fictive actorial footnotes in narratives were very rare. Scholarly works frequently use authentic authorial footnotes; the footnotes provide supplementary information, refer to other texts, and/or interject the author's editorializing commentary. In fiction, authentic allographic footnotes are common, especially in scholarly reprints of texts, but authentic authorial footnotes occur less frequently. However, such authentic authorial notes are not unheard of: Sydney Owenson's *The Missionary: An Indian Tale*, Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, and Anthony Trollope's *Can You Forgive Her?* include authentic authorial footnotes – Owenson litters her novel with footnotes about history, religion, politics, and geography, whereas Austen has one note that refers the reader to an edition of *The Spectator*, and Trollope interjects to make note of a link between a character and a real person. Rarer still are fictive actorial footnotes. Genette has "little to say about fictive actorial notes, generally attributed to a narrator-character," and he questions the categorization of such notes as paratext because "the semblance of notes obviously is part of the fiction – and therefore, indirectly, of the text" (*Paratexts* 342). While these fictional footnotes may be more closely intertwined with the text, they are spatially separate from the text. Like other forms of paratext, the reader can choose not to read these fictional notes, or a publisher can choose not to reproduce the notes – they are, after all, such little things, such minor intrusions, that surely no one would notice if they were edited out. However, such fictive actorial notes represent another form of threshold: the genre threshold between apparatuses associated with scholarly or "truthful" nonfiction texts and those associated with fictional texts.

Whereas paratexts are thresholds between the actual world and the storyworld that are usually spatially consigned to the fringes of the narrative (and, as is especially the case with illustrations, can be removed from later editions when the form falls out of favor), narrative interventions are thresholds embedded in the text itself. Narrative interventions are ruptures of the threshold between the storyworld and the actual world; these ruptures occur when the narrator directly addresses the “reader” or “you” or when the narrator directly refers to their act of writing the narrative. Much of Warhol’s work in *Gendered Interventions* builds on James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz’s rhetorically based work with narrators and readers. Phelan and Rabinowitz do not suggest that readings of narrative “should be reduced to the discovery of the author’s conscious intentions” (“Authors” 30) as conveyed through the narration, but they do suggest the connection between the author and the narrator can lead to new revelations about the narration. They support Wayne C. Booth’s construction of the implied author: the implied author concept “recognizes that writing narrative is inevitably an act of self-representation, [...] gives us a useful way to talk about intention, [...] explain[s] why we often come to know different versions of the same actual author in different texts, [...] and provides a means of discussing] texts with problematic authorship” (Phelan and Rabinowitz, “Authors” 31-33). However, the implied author is too vague and slippery a concept to be of sustained use. Instead, Warhol’s feminist approach to authors and narrators, which builds on rhetorical narratological concepts, seems more useful. Her view centers on embodiment:

Who is speaking? To whom? In what circumstances? These most basic questions of classical narrative theory provide the starting place for a feminist narratological study of narration.

For a gender-centered analysis, the personification of narrator and narratee implied in the usage “who?” and “to whom?” is entirely appropriate, because feminist narratology so often treats a text’s situation of enunciation as if it were an exchange between embodied persons.

(Warhol, “Authors” 39)

For Warhol, “the identity, experience, and socio-historical circumstances of the author – not to mention the reader – are important in understanding the ways that narrative participates in the politics of gender” (“Authors” 39); “too deeply invested in poststructuralism to place much value on ‘authorial intention,’ feminist narratology nevertheless asks how the author’s gendered experiences of a particular time in a particular place affects the structures he or she employs in putting together the story and discourse that comprise narrative” (“Authors” 39). Warhol’s position here (which is a distillation of her earlier *Gendered Interventions*) forms part of my rationale for examining functions of paratexts and narrative interventions without having to delve into debates about authorial intention and implied authors and instead allowing a focus on the ways those techniques function as components of storyworld construction vis-à-vis the reader’s actual world.

Phelan and Rabinowitz also explore the ways in which an actual reader (or narrative audience) receives a text. For Phelan and Rabinowitz, “an actual reader needs to recognize that it [a narrative] is an invented artifact [...] *and*, at the same time, to *pretend* to be a member of the narrative audience who takes what he or she reads as history and treats the characters as real. Having this double consciousness is another aspect of reading in the authorial audience of fiction” (“Reception” 140, their emphasis). The narrative audience is the actual reader/receiver of the narration; “the narrative audience considers the represented characters and events to be real and believes that the fiction narrated is a history. As opposed to the narratee, it is not so much a figure ‘out there’ in the text as a role that the text asks (or requires) the real reader to play” (Prince, “Reader” par. 13). The authorial audience is the audience the author imagines when composing the text, which may or may not be aligned with the narrative audience. “Much of the flavor of a work stems from the relationship between the authorial and narrative audiences,” including the ways in which the two audiences do not overlap (Phelan and Rabinowitz, “Reception” 142).

In *Gendered Interventions*, Warhol classifies two forms of narrative intervention strategies: the engaging narrator and the distancing narrator. A distancing narrator “who intervenes to address a narratee does so to set the actual reader [or narrative audience] apart from the ‘you’ in the text,” whereas an engaging narrator “strives to close the gaps between the narratee” and narrative audience (Warhol, *Gendered* 29). Rather than seeing narrative interventions as disruptions, intrusions, or signs of bad writing, Warhol explores how interventions in Victorian novels, especially interventions by engaging narrators, affect the narrative audience and connect the author to the audience through the narrator-narratee relationship. A possible effect of engaging narrative interventions is cross-world identification: in “Mimesis and Possible Worlds,” Doležel posits that “fictional worlds are accessible from the actual world only through *semiotic channels* by means of information processing. [...] [A]n actual reader can ‘observe’ fictional worlds and make them a source of his experience, just as he observes and experientially appropriates the actual world” (485, his emphasis). Engaging narrators attempt to align the actual reader and the “you” or “reader” addressed in the storyworld; if the alignment is successful and the reader does take up a position close to that of the textual “you,” then cross-world identification between the actual world and the storyworld is strengthened. Warhol argues, “Narrative interventions help to position the reader in relation to the text, [while] at the same time expressing the novelists’ own goals, either ironically or explicitly” (*Gendered* xii). “When the engaging narrator speaks to a ‘you’ that stands for the actual reader [...], the text produces a real event, an exchange of ideas that the novelist hopes will result in real consequences” via cross-world identification (Warhol, *Gendered* 203).

Narrative interventions are another means of transport into the storyworld, but they can also be a means by which the reader carries feelings, thoughts, or even the potential for action out of the storyworld and into the actual world. In *Venus in India*, the narrator directly invokes a predominantly female readership through the use of gendered descriptions and labels; “girl readers,” “gentle

readers,” and “fair readers” are among the many gendered references used by the narrator in the novel. While a female readership for novels might not be unusual for more mainstream genres, *Venus in India* is a work of erotica; therefore, addressing female readers signals the possibility of women consuming pornography. The narrative interventions create at least two possible forms of cross-world identification. The first form of cross-world identification is that it is acceptable for women to read erotica. If the text addresses women, then the text is appropriate for women and designed to be read by women. In the second form of cross-world identification, women are not the actual audience for the text. Instead, a male reader’s pleasure in reading an erotic text is augmented by his ability to imagine actual women also reading the novel; voyeurism and pleasure are doubled: the male reader can imagine the characters engaging in sexual activities in the storyworld, and he can also imagine women reading the same text in the actual world. It is the direct address of female readers through the engaging narrative interventions that make both forms of cross-world identification possible.

Narrative interventions can also take the form of a narrator relating to the reader their process of writing the text. Throughout *The Woman in White*, various narrating-characters take great pains to explain exactly how the narrative took its final shape. The narrators discuss the process by which interviews were collected and transcribed and by which other narrators were asked to contribute to the text. Nearly every narrator in the text discusses their process of writing. In pointing to the text as a written document, the narrators also assert the “truthfulness” of their accounts. Walter Hartright invokes legal documents and court procedures when referring to the text; rather than allowing the story to unfold, he insists on framing the narrative with claims of truth: “No circumstance of importance, from the beginning to the end of the disclosure, shall be related on hearsay evidence” (Collins, *The Woman* 9). Not only does Hartright directly address the reader, but he also directly engages with the process of writing and producing a text. He is a self-aware narrator

and writer, and he uses his self-awareness as another means of constructing the storyworld and aligning it with the actual world.

Paratextual and narratorial interventions work to construct and disrupt storyworlds via cross-genre and cross-world identification. Sometimes these interventions link the storyworld and the actual world, allowing the narrator, whether fictional or real, to support the claims of the central text. These intervention forms encourage minimal departure from the actual world, even when the narratives themselves may maximize the distance between the storyworld and actual world by presenting plots centering on immortal women, foreign vampires, lady detectives, doppelgangers, or other implausible elements. At other times, these interventions distance the storyworld from the actual world, allowing the narrator, whether fictional or real, to push against the claims of the central text. These forms encourage maximal departure from the actual world, even when the narratives themselves may minimize the distance between the storyworld and actual world by presenting plots centering on virtuous women, British adventurers, male detectives, twins, or other realistic elements. This is, of course, not to say that the reader who encounters paratextual and narratorial interventions that assert the “truthfulness” of the narrative will assume that the narrative is a factual account. However, the play between truth (in the sense of texts that offer a plausible model of the actual world, even if they are fictional) and fantasy can add to the pleasures and thrills of reading. It is highly unlikely that a reader of *Dracula* automatically believes that the novel is a factual account of real vampires and vampire hunters simply because the preface and the narrating-characters assert that the text is a collection of primary documents. But the preface and *faux* primary documents allow for another entrance into the storyworld and for a heightened enjoyment of the novel by allowing the reader to imagine the fiction as reality.

Paratexts and narrative interventions are another means of making the storyworld more complete, are connected to transport and the principle of minimal departure, are part of the bridge

(or wall) between the storyworld and the actual world, and facilitate (or impede) the crossing between the storyworld and the actual world. However, cognitivist narratology (home of possible-worlds and storyworlds theories), classical narratology (home of paratext theories), and rhetorical narratology (home of narrator/narratee theories) are all too often interested in finding universal solutions and concepts. Feminist/queer narratology tends to be interested in how specific texts or genres employ specific narrative concepts and in how narratives can slip out of the universal categories and become muddled. Taking classical, rhetorical, and cognitivist narrative theories and reworking them through a feminist/queer lens may result in a better understanding of how formal elements such as paratexts and narrative interventions work to construct the storyworld – and how those elements queer the storyworld. I pair illicit texts with these (perhaps also illicit) methods, as the strangeness of the narratives and the strangeness of the theory mirror each other. It remains to be seen what application this study has outside of such illicit narratives. But it is often in studying the fringes that the center becomes clear(er).

Theoretical Framework, Part Three: Feminist/Queer Narratology

In this study of paratextual and narratorial interventions in illicit narratives, I argue it is not that the narratives are making assertions about the real world but rather that they are employing paratextual and narratorial interventions in order to simultaneously assert and question the relevance of the storyworld to the actual world. It is not that authors are trying to create “real” worlds in the storyworld. It is not that reality is an objective “truth” about our lives. Instead, assumptions about reality and the actual world are touchstones for asserting “truth” (or plausibility) inside the storyworld and for blurring the distinction between the real world and various possible worlds. Moreover, by employing structures and techniques used in less transgressive texts, the authors of illicit narratives can be seen as parodying the licit texts and/or as signaling to the readers that the contents of their narratives should be taken on the same grounds as the licit ones. A purely

structuralist, rhetorical, or cognitivist narratological analysis of these paratextual and narratorial elements may not be the best avenue of interpretation. A feminist/queer narratological reading of these elements is more appropriate because of the pervasive ways in which (1) these paratextual and narratorial interventions disrupt the text, disturb the boundaries between licit and illicit textual forms, and create queer cross-world identifications and (2) these illicit narratives use formal elements (paratexts, direct address) to represent gender, sex, and sexuality and how these elements queer borders between the licit and illicit and between the storyworld and the actual world. Feminist/queer narratology is interested in deconstructing the dichotomy of form and content; it is not only the contents of a narrative that can be queer – it is also, according to feminist/queer narratologists, that the form can queer the contents and that the form can be queer itself.

Feminist/queer narratology builds on classical narratology but also incorporates components of rhetorical and cognitive narratologies into its theories. Moreover, feminist/queer narratology pushes back against the universalizing tendencies of classical narratology and looks for ways in which narrative structures can be read as resistant to or disruptive of the dominant discourse.¹⁴ It also pays close attention to gender and sexuality as presented through narrative structures and discourses. Given the focus of this dissertation on narrative features as well as on constructions of gender and sex in illicit narratives, feminist/queer narratology provides the structural, rhetorical, cognitivist, and gendered framework needed to illuminate the complex intersection of text, paratext, and reading in illicit narratives. This dissertation project seeks to answer the call from feminist/queer narratologists such as Abby Coykendall, Susan Lanser, and Warhol to find new applications for classical narrative theories – applications which extend or disrupt the canon. Theories of storyworld

¹⁴ As Warhol notes in *Gendered Interventions*, feminist (and later queer) narratology also draws on deconstructionist ideas; “deconstruction becomes a powerful tool for interpreting texts with an eye towards gender” (9). Many feminist/queer narrative theories are underpinned by deconstructionist views: “Deconstruction [...] is a useful way for the feminist critic to answer the question, What does this text mean? or, perhaps more accurately, What does this text signify?” (Warhol, *Gendered* 11). While this project does not directly engage with deconstruction as an independent theory frame, it must be acknowledged that deconstructionism is central to understanding feminist/queer narrative theories.

construction typically consider paratexts and narrative interventions as parts of the text. As Mary Elizabeth Leighton and Lisa Surridge illustrate in “The Plot Thickens: Toward a Narratological Analysis of Illustrated Serial Fiction in the 1860s,” the line between text and paratext is not always clear; illustrations, as they argue, can be read as paratext or a part of the text itself. I am less interested in defining solid boundaries between the text and its paratextual and narratorial markers because I do not think a solid boundary exists between the two – the boundary between the text and its paratextual and narratorial interventions is fluid, and it is that very fluidity that allows these interventions to queer the central text. In *Heterocosmica*, Doležel theorizes forms of narrative authentication in possible-world creation, and one potential avenue of inquiry based on his theory is the role of interventions in authenticating (and de-authenticating) the text. In knitting together theories of paratexts, narrative interventions, possible worlds/storyworlds, and feminist/queer narratology, a new understanding of the blurred – perhaps even parallax – boundary between the storyworld and the actual world comes into focus.

In the introduction to their edited collection, *Narrative Theory Unbound: Queer and Feminist Interventions*, Warhol and Lanser claim that feminist/queer narrative theory “has been widely credited with the ‘postclassical turn’; from a universalizing structuralism to a contingent understanding of ‘narrative grammar’ as inseparable [in Herman’s terms] ‘from questions about the contexts in which narratives are designed and interpreted’” (6). In a critique echoed by Coykendall later in the collection, Warhol and Lanser argue “feminist narratology’s canon has generally been too white, too heterosexual, too female, and too centered in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century fiction, while queer narratology has been centered mostly in twentieth- and twenty-first-century man-made films and novels, with Henry James as leading man” (10). Warhol and Lanser call for feminist/queer narratologists to “test our models against a broader range of world narrative forms and to learn from

that process the limits of our current understandings of narrative form and function” (10). Like Lanser and Warhol, Coykendall exposes several gaps in narrative studies on gender and sexuality:

Perhaps in consequence of the ongoing devaluation of feminist and queer studies, the latest collection in the discipline, *Current Trends in Narratology* (2011), features no contributions with an emphasis on gender or sexuality studies, while the preceding collection, *Postclassical Narratology* (2010), contains a lone chapter, Lanser’s own “Sapphic Dialogues,” which comprises less than 10 percent of the volume. (328)

Part of the problem is the “disproportionate amount of scholarship produced on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British women’s domestic fiction, which importantly, is likewise research on bourgeois Anglo-American heterosexuality, usually without class, sexual, or geopolitical parameters of that demographic explicitly acknowledged as such” (Coykendall 330). Cultural and political contexts are key, especially when examining gender and sexuality as presented in narratives.

However, the difficulty of addressing these contexts is linked to Shalyn Claggett’s “human problem.” The extratextual and the intratextual are inseparable when looking at narrative representations of sexuality and gender. Claggett suggests narrative explorations of character as a “potentially useful but as yet undertheorized areas of scrutiny” for understanding this human problem (355). But narrative interventions and paratexts, which have been staples of narrative theory for decades but have only rarely been included in discussions of extratextual significances and cross-world identification between the actual world and the storyworld, are also useful methods for extending the range of feminist/queer narratology. Claggett’s human problem is a question rooted in cognitive narrative theory:

In short, the interpretation of psychological data on narrative identity offers just one example of an area in which narratological techniques might be usefully employed to better understand human identity outside of the text. One way to get around an ideational impasse,

after all, is to come at it from the other side – not by examining how the real is represented or how the represented is like the real, but how the represented becomes real, in direct and measurable ways. (357)

One means by which we can conduct an examination of “how the represented become real, in direct and measurable ways” is by looking at the paratextual and narratorial elements in the texts and how these elements foster cross-genre and cross-world identification. In *Basic Elements of Narrative*, Herman outlines the four components of narrative: “(i) **situated-ness**, (ii) **event sequencing**, (iii) **worldmaking/world disruption**, and (iv) **what it’s like**” (xvi, his emphasis). Claggett’s human problem builds on Herman’s theories of worldmaking/world disruption and of the centrality of “*qualia*” or “what it’s like” (Herman xvi; his emphasis). More importantly for this project, it is at this *qualia* intersection between the storyworld and the actual world that certain forms of paratextual and narratorial interventions can queer the narrative and the reading experience.

A feminist/queer narratological approach to theories of paratexts, narrative interventions, the narrator, and the reader has the potential to shift, trouble, and even deconstruct these terms. Lanser queries “whether or when the marking of an author’s sex ([paratextually] on the title page or book cover) serves implicitly to mark the sex of a sexually unmarked narrator or whether a normative masculinity overrides that link” (“Queering” 254). In her analysis of *Written on the Body*, she concludes “that narratological practice has to do not only with science but also with desire” (Lanser, “Queering” 259). The preponderance of white, straight men in classical narratology helped to normalize whiteness, heterosexuality, and masculinity in narrative studies, which in turn made those norms invisible, giving the illusion of objectivity to narrative theory practices. Lanser argues “that sex is a common if not constant element of narrative *so long as we include its absence as a narratological variable*” (“Sexing” 87, her emphasis). Scholars and readers should be wary of texts that claim not to have much to say about gender and sexuality:

What we choose to support, to write about, to imagine – even in narratology – seems to me as much a function of our own desire as of any incontrovertible evidence that a particular aspect of narrative is (im)proper or (ir)relevant. [...] Perhaps, then, to “expand” narratology too far is to end up “queering” it – taking it from the straight and narrow path of structuralism’s binaries or trinarities into a more dauntingly indeterminate terrain. (Lanser, “Sexing” 93)

While Lanser is primarily interested in the construction of characters and authors in texts, the queering aspects of her analysis – and especially her calls for queering the distinction between form and content – have far reaching implications, especially when coupled with classical narrative theories. Paratexts and narrative interventions occupy formally and substantively liminal spaces in their texts – bound to the margins, appended to the narrative, and jutting out from the text, they are central to and separate from the narrative. As textual features, they fundamentally queer the distinction between the storyworld and the actual world.

In “Toward a Feminist Narratology,” Lanser argues that feminism and narratology can work well together, despite the seemingly unresolvable tensions between a politically oriented theory and a theory of poetics. As Kathy Mezei argues in *Ambiguous Discourse: Feminist Narratology and British Women Writers*, the “-ist” in “feminist” denotes a subject adhering to a belief system, but the “-ology” of “narratology” denotes an object of study – the two seem irreconcilable at first blush (2). In order to reconcile the two, scholars have “to recognize the dual nature of narrative, to find categories and terms that are abstract and semiotic enough to be useful, but concrete and mimetic enough to seem relevant for critics whose theories root literature in [what Judith Lowder Newton terms] ‘the real conditions of our lives’” (Lanser, “Toward” 344). Feminist/queer narratology is more interested in the gaps, in hard to classify structures, in the in-between-ness of narratives: “Perhaps narratology has been mistaken in trying to arrive at a single definition and description of plot [or other narrative

structures]” (Lanser, “Toward” 357). This need to find alternative methods of exploring narratives and discussing narrative functions is how my approach to paratexts and narrative interventions is a form of feminist/queer narratology.

Illicit nineteenth-century narrative studies is not a field or genre in and of itself. Instead, it is the intersection of several fields and genres: sexuality studies, gender studies, novel studies, gothic fiction, sensation fiction, erotic fiction, pornography studies, periodical studies, and other fields and genres. This dissertation will draw on a variety of scholarly works on narrative and poetics to explore the ways in which illicit narratives use and rework narrative structures associated with more legitimate narrative forms. In *Telling Tales: Gender and Narrative Form in Victorian Literature and Culture*, Elizabeth Langland argues that “novels, which represent worlds in formation, engage us because of the relationship they purport to establish with what [she] will call, for want of a better term, material reality. [...] *How* something is represented relates intimately to *what* is represented and *why*. And the complexity of the poetics, or the how, informs our perception of what is represented” (xv, her emphasis). Paralleling Langland, I will focus on poetics (the how of narrative structures) in order to examine the ways in which illicit narratives use paratextual and narratorial structures to queer the departure of their possible worlds and connect such worlds to the reader’s actual world.

Overview of Narratives Selected for Study

While paratextual and narratorial interventions have been topics of scholarship for several decades, the scholarship has been limited to aboveboard narratives. There is still much work to be done in how illicit narratives use these forms. The study of semi-respectable and even sub rosa narratives can lead to a fuller understanding of not only the literary culture of an era but also of the broader culture producing and consuming such works. Sigel situates her study of written and visual pornography within the concept of the “social imaginary,” which provides “people a way to organize their culture, to understand the actions, behaviors, artifacts, symbols, and signs among which they

live. It acts not only on people but also through people as they continually cast, recast, and reconstitute their milieu in meaningful ways” (2). The social imaginary is founded in part on storyworlds and possible worlds: as cultural artifacts, texts both reflect and help create meanings in the actual world. In her study of pornography, Sigel argues:

[T]he gulf between the realms of sub rosa writings and fine literature diminishes upon closer inspection. [...] Writers and audiences, ideas and attitude, genres and conventions overlapped between the sub rosa and aboveboard, creating a mixture more heady and potent than either alone. Pornography is not the “underworld” of Victorian literature, and the attempt to segregate it as such does an injustice to the complicated world of British society and cultural production. (10)

Her argument on the importance of studying pornographic texts is the foundation of my rationale for studying illicit narratives more generally and for examining several different genres of illicit narratives. Literature in all its forms – fiction, nonfiction, highbrow, lowbrow, popular, obscure, smutty, puritanical – form part of the social imaginary, and as such literature provides information about how a society saw itself, what a society hoped for itself, and what a society feared in itself and others: “Literature does not simply reflect the social constructions of its period; it numbers itself among them” (Stewart 6).

This dissertation explores several fiction and nonfiction illicit narratives. Each chapter will focus on a different intervention form (prefaces, notes, and direct address of the reader) and use three or four novels and two nonfiction narratives as a means of exploring the uses of the intervention. While the next section in this chapter will describe the body chapters, this section contains a brief overview of the selected narratives. Several of the selected narratives are well-known texts, and others are more obscure. However, each of the selected narratives meet the following criteria: (1) they can be classified as illicit narratives based on contemporary critiques of the texts

and/or the genres and (2) they contain at least two forms of paratextual and/or narratorial intervention. The selected texts are as follows:

Table 1: *Selected Narratives*

Author	Title	Year ¹⁵	Fiction/Nonfiction
John Mathew Gutch	<i>Caraboo: A Narrative of Singular Imposition</i>	1817	Nonfiction
Wilkie Collins	<i>The Woman in White</i>	1860	Fiction
Wilkie Collins	<i>The Law and the Lady</i>	1875	Fiction
Anonymous	<i>The Sins of the Cities of the Plain</i>	1881	Fiction
Richard Burton	<i>Kama Sutra</i>	1883	Nonfiction
Richard Burton	“Terminal Essay” in <i>Arabian Nights</i> ¹⁶	1885	Nonfiction
H. Rider Haggard	<i>She: A History of Adventure</i>	1887	Fiction
Walter ¹⁷	<i>My Secret Life</i>	1888	Nonfiction
Alan Dale ¹⁸	<i>A Marriage Below Zero</i>	1889	Fiction
Charles Devereaux	<i>Venus in India</i>	1889 ¹⁹	Fiction
Bram Stoker	<i>Dracula</i>	1897	Fiction

While most of the texts are from the 1880s, the selected narratives span nearly a century of publication from 1817 to 1897, and in each chapter the texts will be treated in chronological order within categories of fiction or nonfiction.

¹⁵ The publication dates provided for novels originally published as serials are not for their dates of serialization but for the first edition of the volume form of the text.

¹⁶ “Terminal Essay” is a blend of discursive and narrative styles. While the essay is a discussion of how and why Burton encountered the central narrative and a defense of its contents, it, like many histories, couches its discussions, explanations, and defenses in a narrative structure, hence its classification here as a narrative piece.

¹⁷ Walter is the pseudonym given to the author by his editor after his death. More information on his identity and use of a pseudonym will be given in the prefaces chapter.

¹⁸ Alan Dale is the pseudonym of Alfred J. Cohen. Cohen was a British ex-patriate who was living and working in New York City at the time of *A Marriage Below Zero*’s publication.

¹⁹ As with other works of pornography, the exact year of *Venus in India*’s publication is difficult to locate. While scholars agree the novel was originally published in Brussels or Paris, they vary on the year in which it was published. Milton Van Sickle places the publication of *Venus in India* in 1895. Sarah Bull, in “A Purveyor of Garbage? Charles Carrington and the Marketing of Sexual Science in Late-Victorian Britain,” notes the text was reprinted by Carrington in 1898, but she does not cite the original year of publication (57). In “Penetrating Boundaries: An Ethics of Anti-Perfectionism in Victorian Pornography,” Thomas J. Joudrey cites 1890 as the year the novel was first printed (424). Multiple online book sellers provide 1889 as the publication date, and the earliest publication date found in WorldCat is an 1889 edition published in Brussels.

Gutch's *Caraboo* is a news pamphlet about Mary Baker's²⁰ imposture as Princess Caraboo of Javasú. In the spring of 1817, a young woman dressed in "Asiatic costume" (Gutch 1) and speaking no English arrived at Knole Park in Almondsbury. Taken in by Mr. Worrell, the county magistrate, and his wife, the mystery woman revealed herself to be a lost princess. Various experts in East Asian history, culture, and language were brought in and supported the woman's claim. However, the imposture did not last long, and Princess Caraboo was eventually revealed to be Mary Baker, a runaway servant from Exeter. Prior to the discovery of her real identity, Princess Caraboo was the toast of society and attended a variety of private and public events. In her Caraboo persona, Baker was an exotic figure, wearing clothing too revealing for an English woman and engaging in decidedly unladylike behaviors (including climbing trees and throwing knives). Baker herself did not fit into British cultural norms – she broke class norms by running away from her employer and posing as a royal, and she broke gender norms by having a bastard child with a man from the continent.²¹

Gutch's news pamphlet was one of many reports on this imposture published in 1817. His publication contains a short preface, two illustrations of Baker/Caraboo, extensive footnotes, and an appendix containing words used by Caraboo with their English translations, characters and numbers invented by Baker, Baker's signature, a drawing by Caraboo/Baker of her voyage to England, and a collection of newspaper reports on Caraboo. Gutch also uses readerly addresses throughout the narrative. However, in spite of the wealth of interventions used, Gutch's *Caraboo* will only be discussed in detail in the chapter on footnotes.

²⁰ Here and throughout, I will refer to this person as Mary Baker; this is the name Gutch typically – but not exclusively – uses for her in his narrative. She used several aliases: Mary Willcocks (sometimes spelled Wilcocks), Mary Bakerstendht, Mary Beckerstein, and Mary Burgess. Gutch mentions these other names in his narrative and lists many of these aliases in the full title (*Caraboo: A Narrative of Singular Imposition, Practiced Upon the Benevolence of a Lady Residing in Bristol, by a Young Woman of the Name of Mary Willcocks, Alias Baker, Alias Bakerstendht, Alias Princess Caraboo of Javasú*).

²¹ Or maybe not. Gutch reports the claim that Baker was married to a foreign man "after two month's acquaintance [...] by a Romish priest" (Gutch 36), but he also casts doubt on that report – insinuating that Baker invented the story of the marriage in order to avoid claims her child was born out of wedlock. Regardless of whether the marriage actually occurred, her (alleged) husband disappears within two months of the (alleged) wedding. So Baker is at best an abandoned wife with an abandoned child and at worst an abandoned mistress with a bastard child.

Collins's *The Woman in White* and *The Law and the Lady* operate within the category of illicit narratives. *The Woman in White* uses elements of sensation and gothic fiction to tell the story, as edited and collected by Walter Hartright, of Laura Fairlie's cruel marriage to Sir Percival Glyde, and *The Law and the Lady* is a detective story, with sensation elements, that features Valeria Brinton as an amateur female detective. Both novels used gendered and sexual deviances as core threats to their protagonists. *The Woman in White* presents two women's bodies as interchangeable, one character as a "mannish" woman, and another as a "feminine" man. Moreover, the threat to Laura in the form of Glyde and Count Fosco is specifically a gendered threat: her lack of power and agency as a woman leaves her vulnerable to these men, so vulnerable that they are able, at least temporarily, to erase her identity and existence. This novel directly engages with the reader and contains two prefaces by Collins as well as a preface by Hartright, several illustrations, and footnotes; *The Woman in White* will be discussed in the chapters on prefaces and on footnotes.

The Law and the Lady follows Valeria's attempt to uncover the mystery of her husband's past. Shortly after marrying Eustace Woodville, Valeria discovers not only that Eustace married her under a false name (he is actually Eustace Macallen) but that Eustace was tried for the murder of his first wife, Sara. He was tried in Scotland, but the verdict was "not proven," which carried for Eustace the shame of not being exonerated of the crime. Upon Valeria's discovery of his history, Eustace flees to Europe, leaving Valeria to operate as a relatively independent woman in his absence. Valeria takes it upon herself to clear her husband of the crime, and she embarks on a detective mission. As in *The Woman in White*, the threats in *The Law and the Lady* are rooted in gender and sex: Valeria as amateur detective is an empowered agent who encounters various forms of deviance (allegations of Eustace having an affair while married to Sara, of him murdering her in order to marry another woman; assistance from morally suspect men like Miserrimus Dexter and Major Fitz-David) in order to bring the truth about her husband to light. Throughout the narrative, Valeria addresses her

readers. *The Law and the Lady* contains a preface by Collins, a single illustration (a reproduction of Valeria's signature in the wedding register), and footnotes; this novel will be explored in the chapters on prefaces and footnotes.

The Sins of the Cities of the Plain purports to be the memoirs of Jack Saul as collected and published by a Mr. Cambon.²² This pornographic narrative is, actually, a work of fiction, in spite of the claims by Cambon and Saul that the text is a memoir. The novel opens with Cambon's solicitation of Saul and their multiple sexual encounters before turning to Saul's narrative, which Cambon pays him to write, about his sexual adventures in the queer underground of late-century London. With its frank discussions of prostitution, homosexuality, cross-dressing, and other forms of sexual deviance, the novel is especially notable for its refusal to submit to social norms about such activities – the novel explicitly sanctions these sexual acts and constructs a storyworld in which these acts are normalized. Original editions of nineteenth-century erotica are notoriously difficult to find – many were destroyed by their owners or by concerned friends and family after their owner's death; regardless of the century, many people are likely squeamish about discovering their best friend's, spouse's, or parent's collection of pornography. Due to the inaccessibility of the original edition of the novel, it is impossible to name the paratexts that may have been attached to it. Did it have illustrations? Perhaps, but if so, they have been lost to time. However, the later editions of *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* that have survived do include the direct address of the reader and a preface by Cambon, which will be addressed in chapters on prefaces and narrative interventions.

In order to avoid charges of indecency, Burton published his translations of *Kama Sutra* and *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* (colloquially known simply as *Arabian Nights*) by subscription only and via a private press – a tactic also used by authors and publishers of erotica like *My Secret Life*. In publishing privately and for subscribers only, Burton tacitly acknowledges the illicit

²² The identities of Saul and Cambon will be discussed in detail in the chapter on prefaces.

contents of his scholarly translations – an acknowledgment echoed in contemporary reviews of the two texts. Unlike the other narratives studied in this dissertation, Burton is not the author of the narratives but the translator. In an effort to limit this project to a more manageable scope, only Burton's additions to his two translations in the form of prefaces, footnotes, and appendices will be addressed. *Kama Sutra* – a text that became synonymous in the twentieth century with sexual manuals – is a medieval Hindu guide to courtship, marriage, and sex. While frequently misread as a “how-to” guide to heterosexual sex, *Kama Sutra* covers a wide range of topics related to love, sex, and relationships. Burton penned two prefaces to his translation and littered the narrative itself with footnotes, and his prefaces and footnotes are filled with direct addresses to the reader. In his “Terminal Essay” – itself a paratext given its placement in an appended supplement to the narrative – Burton uses narrative interventions as well as footnotes in an attempt to legitimate his translation work and to defend himself against charges of obscenity. The prefaces and footnotes in *Kama Sutra* and the narrative interventions in “Terminal Essay” will each be discussed in subsequent chapters.

An imperialist gothic novel, *She* is rooted in fears of the supernatural and of the “Dark Continent.” Tantalized by the tale told by his friend Vincey, Horace Holly and his adopted son Leo Vincey (Vincey's biological son entrusted to Holly after his death) venture to east Africa to find evidence of the elder Vincey's wild story. After surviving a shipwreck, Holly and Leo find themselves in a mysterious land ruled by a supernatural white queen: Ayesha, “She-who-must-be-obeyed.” Upon learning that Ayesha is an immortal sorceress who has plans for world domination, Holly and Leo follow her to the Pillar of Fire so Leo, allegedly the incarnation of her long-dead lover Kallikrates, can join her in immortality, but Ayesha dies after entering the Pillar of Fire to show Leo how safe itself flames are. Holly and Leo throughout the novel are threatened by “unnatural” women and “savage” Africans. Haggard's novel frequently employs paratextual and narratorial

interventions: it has a preface, footnotes,²³ and direct address of the reader as well as illustrations (both facsimiles and drawings). *She* will form the core of the conclusion chapter.

Attributed to simply Walter, *My Secret Life* recounts one man's sexual activities over several decades. Unlike *Venus in India* and *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, both of which claim to be memoirs but are instead fictional accounts, *My Secret Life* has almost exclusively been classified by scholars as a nonfiction narrative. Given its obscene length – a total of eleven volumes – this project will only focus on the first three volumes of the narrative. Walter obsessively recorded every sexual event of his life as well as stories about his partners' sexual histories. *My Secret Life* contains three prefaces, one by the anonymous editor of the narrative and two by Walter; it also contains numerous addresses to the reader. As with *The Sins of the Cities of the Plains*, original editions of the text are not readily accessible, so any other paratextual interventions (illustrations, footnotes, etc.) are inaccessible. The prefaces and narrative interventions in *My Secret Life* will be discussed in their respective chapters.

A Marriage Below Zero is the third narrative in this project to openly address same-sex relationships – *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* and “Terminal Essay” also focus on the topic. However, unlike the other two narratives, which were privately published and were widely known and classified as pornographic in the nineteenth century, Dale's novel was published by a mainstream publisher (albeit in America). The novel was reviewed as “a remarkably indecent story [told] in a remarkably decent way” (“From *The New York Daily Graphic*” 196), “horrible, but

²³ In fact, Haggard's use of footnotes in *She* is an endless source of humor for Andrew Lang and Walter Herries Pollock in their parody *He*. Lang and Pollock open *He* with an “editor's introduction” and insert the first of many footnote exchanges between the editor and publisher in the opening sentence of the novel. The editor writes, “As I sat, one evening, idly musing on memories of roers and Boers, and contemplating the horns of a wendigo I had shot in Labrador and the head of a Moo Cow from Canada, I was roused by a ring at the door bell” (Lang and Pollock). Appended to “Moo Cow” is the following exchange in a note:

A literary friend to whom I have shown your MS. says a wendigo is Ojibbeway [sic] for a cannibal. And why do you shoot poor Moo Cows? – PUBLISHER.

Mere slip of the pen. Meant a Cow Moose. Literary agent no sportsman. – ED.

All right. – PUBLISHER. (Lang and Pollock).

readable” (“From *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*”), and “a saturnalia in which the most monstrous forms of human vice exhibit themselves shamelessly” (“From *Belford’s Magazine*” 197). However, even though the novel was criticized for being monstrous, horrible, and indecent, it – unlike the other two narratives on same-sex relationships – was not labeled as pornographic. The novel’s narrator is Elsie Ravener (née Bouverie), a rather unconventional young woman who detests being complimented by potential suitors and who sneers at loving couples at balls. She is initially attracted to Arthur Ravener because of his close friendship with Captain Jack Dillington. Neither Elsie nor her friend Letty Bishop, who first introduces Elsie to Arthur, suspect that Arthur and Dillington are lovers; however, several male characters treat Arthur and Dillington with contempt and vaguely hint that there is something “unnatural” or “unmanly” about one or both of the men. While Elsie suspects that her husband has been having an affair, Elsie can only think that Dillington was operating as a go-between for Arthur and some unidentified woman. It is only after Arthur flees from their long-delayed honeymoon in New York City with Dillington that Elsie first begins “to doubt if there were ‘a woman in the case,’ after all” (Dale 184). Two years after Arthur’s disappearance from New York City, she tracks Dillington and Arthur to a less-than-reputable Parisian hotel on the edge of the red light district. After learning that Dillington has been arrested for his involvement in “scandals” (Dale 189) and discovering Arthur dead by suicide in the suite he shared with Dillington, Elsie finally understands the truth of her relationship with Arthur, of his reason for marrying her, and of his relationship with Dillington. While *A Marriage Below Zero* contains a preface and multiple addresses to the reader, the novel will only be discussed in the chapter on narrative interventions.

Venus in India recounts Captain Charles Devereaux's²⁴ time in India during the Second Anglo-Afghan War. This novel, which masquerades as a travel narrative and memoir, focuses almost exclusively on Devereaux's sexual activities while deployed in India. The first volume focuses on his affair with Lizzie Wilson, the wife of an absent soldier, on her sexual history, and on the sex lives of various other men and women in the camp; the second volume follows Devereaux to another camp in the mountains and details his pursuit of the Selwyn sisters, the daughters of his commanding officer. The second volume concludes with the promise of more adventures to come in the third volume; however, the third volume, if it was ever written or published, no longer exists. As with other erotic narratives, the study of *Venus in India* is complicated by the fact that the original edition of the novel is no longer available. If the original volumes had prefaces, illustrations, or other paratextual interventions, they have all been lost. The surviving editions of the novel, however, do contain an abundance of narrative interventions – most of which, interestingly, address a female audience – as well as three footnotes. Devereaux's notes and readerly address will be discussed in chapters three and four, respectively.

Dracula is the quintessential vampire novel. Drawing on historical and cultural research as well as previously published vampire stories, Stoker's novel uses the supernatural to explore various late-century anxieties about gender, sexuality, and the empire. Dracula, the foreign invader, strikes at England by primarily targeting women, and his vampiric wives attempt to consume – both sexually and gastronomically – men. Ostensibly a collection of primary source documents, the novel, like *The Woman in White*, uses a multi-voiced narrative. Mina, much like Valeria in *The Law and the Lady*, becomes a detective of sorts and is praised for having “man's brains – a brain that a man should have were he much gifted – and a woman's heart” (Stoker 207). The novel contains an unsigned

²⁴ Like Cambon and Saul of *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, Devereaux is likely not a real person but rather an invented author or a fictional approximation of a real person. More about his identity and about the classification of the narrative as a novel rather than a memoir will be presented in the chapter on footnoting.

preface as well as several narrative interventions. However, this text will only be discussed in the chapter on prefaces.

My own readers, however, may be wondering about the selection of these texts given the feminist/queer narratological lens being used in this project: for a feminist/queer dissertation, there sure are a lot of white, cis-gendered, heterosexual male authors. In fact, all of the authors are dead white guys, and based on what is known of their biographies, most of them would have – had such terms been available to them – identified as cis-gendered and heterosexual.²⁵ I selected these texts in order to focus on the dominant patriarchal views of the era. By focusing on white male authors and issues of gender and sex, the dissertation examines how illicit narratives written by those in power (white, British, male, educated) can both undercut and reinforce the dominant narratives of gender and sex in the culture. Perhaps more importantly, focusing on texts by this hegemonic group foregrounds how paratexts and interventions are themselves queer textual forms that often deconstruct the attempt to use them as a means of patriarchal, heteronormative, and/or narrative power.

Chapter Descriptions

Rather than segmenting texts according to their dates of publication, genre labels, or thematic content, in chapters two, three, and four, the illicit narratives will be addressed according to their spatial features and their uses of various paratexts and narrative interventions – that is, by the location and mode of the intervention in relation to the central text: before, beside, and inside. Chapter two will explore the “befores” – prefaces that the reader encounters before the narrative content. Chapters three will address the “besides” – footnotes printed underneath the narrative content. Chapter four will explore the “insides” – the uses of engaging narrative interventions within

²⁵ Most but not all. While we do not know who the author of *The Sins of the Cities of the Plains* was (or, indeed, if there was only one author), many of the candidates suggested as the author engaged in same-sex activities and/or relationships; for more on the list of potential authors see Wolfram Setz’s introduction to the Valancourt edition of the novel.

the text itself. Each of these chapters will address a mix of British sensation, gothic, and erotic novels as well as illicit nonfiction texts from across the nineteenth century, and within each chapter, the narratives will be separated into sections as fiction or nonfiction narratives and then discussed in chronological order.

Chapter two, “The Bepores, Prefaces,” will delve into Genette’s classification matrix of preface types and functions: prefaces can be authorial (by the actual author of the text), allographic (by a real person, such as an editor, who is not the text’s author), or actorial (by a fictional character), and prefaces can also be authentic (actually written by the real person), apocryphal (attributed to one actual person but written by another), or fictive (by a fictional character). The chapter also explores Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek’s (rather unwieldy) categorization of prefaces according to tone and/or placement. Unlike Genette’s matrix, in which a preface can only occupy two categories, Tötösy de Zepetnek’s system allows a preface to be classified as any combination of tone and/or placement: “acknowledgement,” “apologetic,” “critical,” “dedicatory,” “ethical,” “explanatory,” “integral,” “preemptive,” “promotional,” and/or “subversive” (39-40). Building on Genette’s matrix and simplifying Tötösy de Zepetnek’s, I add that prefaces can be competing or supplementing. A competing preface marks the text as fiction, and then the text marks itself as factual (or vice versa). A supplementing preface works with the text to construct the narrative as factual or fictional. After outlining these forms, I will analyze the uses of prefaces in Collins’s *The Woman in White*, Collins’s *The Law and the Lady*, the anonymously published *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, Stoker’s *Dracula*, Burton’s translation of *Kama Sutra*, and *My Secret Life* by Walter. *The Woman in White* has three prefatory layers: an authentic authorial preface by Collins from 1860, an authentic authorial preface by Collins from 1861, and a fictive actorial preface by Hartright. In the 1860 and 1861 prefaces, Collins writes a competing authentic authorial preface to discuss his creation of the fictional narrative, and the supplementing fictive actorial preface allows Walter Hartright to proclaim the

truth of the narrative. In *The Law and the Lady*, Collins uses a competing authentic authorial preface to instruct readers in reading fiction. Mr. Cambon, the fictional collector of the narrative presented in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, pens a supplementing fictive actorial preface that frames the narrative as Jack Saul's autobiography. The preface to *Dracula* is another supplementing preface. However, unlike the other prefaces discussed in this chapter, *Dracula's* preface is very short and does not have a clearly identified author: it could be an authentic authorial preface, an authentic allographic preface, or a fictive actorial preface. Burton's translation of *Kama Sutra* is doubly prefaced: he includes both a "Preface" and an "Introduction" to his work. In his supplementing authorial authentic preface to the translation of *Kama Sutra*, Burton constructs the central text as a scholarly endeavor and notes the similarities between *Kama Sutra* and English medical texts on sexuality – and he reinforces the idea that his translation, while about sexuality and sex, is in service to science and humanity, that is, that the text is not pornographic. In his "Introduction," which is also supplementing, authorial, and authentic, Burton constructs a narrative of how his translation came into being and provides a historical context for the text; he again asserts that his work is not pornographic and that it has practical applications for the reader. *My Secret Life* contains three prefatory sections – an introduction by the editor and two prefaces by Walter. The "Introduction" is the first part of the narrative the reader encounters, but it was (allegedly) written several years after Walter's death; in it, the editor recounts how he came to possess the narrative and provides a rationale for his decision to publish the narrative. The first preface was written by Walter at some point during his life but before he had finished compiling the narrative; in this preface, Walter agonizes over whether he should burn or publish his manuscript, and he notes that, while his narrative is completely accurate, he has changed some details in order to conceal identities. The final preface, written several years after the first preface and perhaps towards the end of Walter's life, presents his continued doubts about publishing his magnum opus. In each of these narratives, the

prefaces provide hints about the content of the narrative while also making claims about the text's bearing on the reader's actual world.

In *Paratexts*, Genette uses the same classification matrix to describe prefaces as well as notes (footnotes, endnotes, etc.). Chapter three, "The Besides, Footnotes," will apply Genette's matrix to footnotes. As with prefaces, I argue footnotes can be categorized as competing or supplementing. While footnotes are commonly associated with scholarly and/or nonfiction writing, some nineteenth-century British novels used footnotes, and a few used fictive actorial footnotes (footnotes by fictional characters and written from inside the storyworld). Footnotes are relegated to the undersides of the text, but their existence and placement can radically change a reader's understanding of the storyworld. Given the prevalence of footnotes in scholarly or nonfiction texts, this textual form is another means by which fictional storyworlds can be reinforced or queered; the fictional narratives borrow authenticity from factual texts via form. Chapter three will examine the uses of footnotes in Collins's *The Woman in White* and *The Law and the Lady*, Devereaux's *Venus in India*, Gutch's *Caraboo: A Narrative of Singular Imposition*, and Burton's translation of *Kama Sutra*. Collins's novels employ fictive actorial footnotes. While the characters in *The Woman in White* and *The Law and the Lady* write their footnotes in an attempt to supplement the central narrative (that is, the characters use their notes to further "prove" their claims), the information in the notes is often undermined by later revelations in the narrative. The footnotes in *Venus in India* take on a scholarly air as they are exclusively notes on translations of non-English phrases. Gutch employs authentic authorial footnotes in his account of Mary Baker's imposture as Princess Caraboo of Javas; his footnotes alternate between being supplementing and competing. Burton's authentic authorial notes to *Kama Sutra* are supplementing notes that both reference scholarly sources and interject Burton's own ideas about sex and sexuality. As chapter three will argue, the footnotes create another bridge (or barrier) between the storyworld and the actual world and frequently serve either to legitimate the

content of the narrative or reinforce the author's/narrator's control over the narrative, although very often they do so only ambivalently or even deconstructively.

Chapter four, "The Insides, Narrative Interventions," will explore Warhol's engaging narrative interventions, in which the narrator, via direct address of the reader, attempts to close the gap between the storyworld and the actual world. Warhol believes that engaging narrative interventions, especially in realist novels, work to align the reader with the values of the text: in Warhol's example, the contemporary reader of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is drawn further into the storyworld via direct address and ideally emerges from the novel more invested in abolitionism. However, Warhol only situates her theory in realist novels; I will expand her theory by applying it to illicit genres. This chapter will also explore theories of the reader, including Garrett Stewart's concept of the "conscripted reader" and Wolfgang Iser's "implied reader." While illicit texts can use engaging narrative intervention to more closely align the reader with the storyworld, the inventions can also operate differently among the individual genres within the larger category of illicit narrative. In most illicit narratives, the direct address of the reader primarily works to engage the reader in the storyworld and to construct the narrative's relevance to the real world, but in erotica, the engaging narrative invention adds another layer of engagement: sexual voyeurism. This chapter will explore the uses of engaging narrative interventions used by the narrators of *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, Devereaux in *Venus in India*, Alan Dale in *A Marriage Below Zero*, Burton in his "Terminal Essay" in volume ten of *Arabian Nights*, Walter in *My Secret Life*. While the number and frequency of direct address varies widely across the selected texts, in each narrative, the author or narrator uses narrative interventions to make explicit links between the values of the storyworld and those of the actual world.

In the final chapter, I will pull together the threads of paratexts, narrative intervention, and the queering of possible worlds with an analysis of Haggard's *She*. The conclusion also will examine

the implications of the dissertation on the fields of narrative theory and nineteenth-century narrative studies. Haggard's novel employs all three intervention forms: preface, footnotes, and engaging narrative intervention. Using *She* as a springboard, I will reconnect the paratextual and narratorial interventions discussed in the previous chapters to work being done in feminist/queer narratology, namely how these forms queer narratives and how they reveal and conceal information about sexuality and gender. I will also look at ways in which these ideas can be applied to other genres.

Kathryn Hughes notes in her introduction to *Victorians Undone: Tales of the Flesh in the Age of Decorum* her fascination with the ways in which body parts can tell a story about the people to whom those parts belong and also about the larger culture in which that person lived. Much of Hughes's work has focused on historical biography, but often her research left her feeling empty – as though all the facts, figures, dates, and events of a person's life was not enough to fully capture who that person was:

I am the reader who feels chronically short-changed by the lack of physical detail in biography. What, I long to know, were people in the nineteenth century actually “like” – a word that has a long and distinguished heritage in the English language, one that tells of deep presence and profound affinity. Tell me about these people's books and their battles, their big love affairs and the little meanness by all means – but how did it feel to catch sight of them across a crowded room, or to find yourself sitting next to them at dinner? Did they lean in close and whisper, or stand at a distance and shout? Did they smell (probably, most people did) – but of what exactly? Were they natty or snobbish, a lip-licker or a nose-picker?” (xiii-xiv)

While her focus – how the body can illuminate the person and the society – is far from the focus of this dissertation, her drive is similar to mine. Like her, I am interested in the “dirty” side of culture, in the practices and beliefs held outside of the mainstream, in the “deviances” and “abnormalities”

to be swept under the carpet. Her focus is the physical body; mine is a body of illicit work.

Moreover, like her, I am constantly drawn to the small things – she studies bellies, fingers, toes, and beards, the individual parts that make the whole; I study the literary appendages, the prefaces, notes, and addresses that help create the storyworld of a narrative.

Hughes is careful to note that in writing a history of the body she is not rewriting histories or biographies but is instead providing a new avenue for understanding histories and biographies.

Hughes's cautioning word about her goals is similar to Warhol's statements about her work in *Gendered Interventions*. Warhol explains that she is not providing a new reading of the texts she is studying but rather is providing new ways of understanding how the texts create meaning; her focus is poetics:

I am more concerned with poetics than with thematic interpretation. My research provides no startling new readings of texts; on the contrary, the narrative strategies I analyze tend to reinforce, rather than subvert, the current readings of what these texts "mean." I emphasize instead how they "work" (or, in the case of masculine gendered novels, how they "play"), and I hope this emphasis will illuminate the impact that assumptions about poetics have had upon modern literary history, even in critical texts that do not address poetics explicitly.

(*Gendered* xv)

Rather than proposing a radical new reading of these narratives, I instead seek to understand how paratextual and narratorial forms work to construct meaning in the narratives. Walter's *My Secret Life* is, quietly clearly, a pornographic text – but the ways in which the interventions work to create that meaning outside of the story itself and the ways in which the interventions attempt to orient the reader to the values of the storyworld further construct the narrative as an illicit text. In choosing a model that focuses on rhetoric and poetics, I focus on how paratextual and narratorial interventions construct the reader and attempt to reflect/reshape the actual world. Stewart, in his exploration of

narrative interventions, suggestively claims “literature enters culture – penetrates and engages it – by the highly regulated routes of reading”; “the mimetic model” is not the best route for understanding “the relation between a text and its time,” and he argues that for a rhetorical “model that covers exactly the space *between*, its negotiated traversals, its bizarre interchanges” (6, his emphasis). For him, it is that in-between space in which “textual subjectivity spawned and disseminated” (Garrett 6) – to which I would add that it is also in the in-between-ness that such claims to textual subjectively are queered.

CHAPTER 2

THE BEFORES, PREFACES

An Embedded Metapreface in the Form of an Epigraph

The Preface or Introduction to a book is, I suppose, still in general skipped by at least more youthful readers.²⁶ It is later that a serious reader may discover that what is the first page of a book for the reader was the last for the author, and that a perusal of the preface may shed light on the whole book that will obviate later misunderstandings, give the reader a glimpse of the writer's mind as he drew to a close, as he saw his own work in a final perspective – so much so that even the reader who has *not* neglected it at the outset may be tempted to turn back and re-read, and for him too the first words become the last. This is not to say that all prefaces and introductions are important or interesting; not a few are more or less conventional acknowledgements of indebtedness and apologies for shortcomings. (Grierson and Wason 1, their emphasis)

A Proper Chapter Introduction

Part of the pleasure of reading a narrative, especially when reading for the first time, is the tension between wanting to know how it all ends immediately and enjoying the process of the story unfolding slowly. Like other readers, I cannot wait to find out how the plots are resolved, but simultaneously – if the story's good – I don't want it to be all over: I want to know, but I also do not want to know. When approaching a new text, I frequently try to ignore the preface because I do not want it to spoil the fun of the narrative. But sometimes I am too tempted by this paratextual form. I may thumb through the preface, scanning for clues about the plot while fearing finding those clues.

²⁶ This quotation comes from *The Personal Note; Or, First and Last Words from Prefaces, Introductions, Dedications, and Epilogues*, which was published in 1946. These “youthful readers” are readers born in the early twentieth century. Grierson and Wason, the authors of this quotation and the editors of the collection of prefaces, introductions, dedications, and epilogues, were both born in the mid-nineteenth century. Their complaint about “kids these days” ignores the criticism prevalent throughout the nineteenth century of prefaces, which will be explored in detail below.

Prefaces are often the first items a reader encounters after the cover and title page, and as such they can be key means by which the storyworld is constructed. However, while they work to construct the storyworld and are one way in which the reader is transported into the storyworld, the reader does not have to engage with these paratexts. The reader may choose to ignore the preface. The reader may decide to read the preface after finishing the narrative. The reader may read the text without an overt, conscious thought about the preface – perhaps because the preface is not clearly labeled as such but instead appears as part of the narrative itself. However, when a reader chooses to purposely engage with a preface, this reader’s interpretation of and engagement with the narrative takes on a more nuanced form.

In *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, Gérard Genette provides a taxonomy of preface types. However, Genette is more concerned with the *whats* of his classifications than with the *hows* and *whys* at the intersection of his classifications, the narratives, and the readers. Genette uses the same taxonomy for prefaces as he does for footnotes, as will be discussed in the following chapter. Prefaces can be authorial, allographic, or actorial and can be authentic, fictive, or apocryphal. For Genette, a preface always falls under two categories of the taxonomy: “The intersecting of these two categories – the preface-writer’s role in relation to the text (author, actor, or third party) and his regimes with respect to, shall we say ingenuously, ‘truth’ – gives rise to a double entry table containing nine possibilities under each category, hence (for the moment)²⁷ nine types of preface according to the status of the sender” (*Paratexts* 179). The preface-writer assumes one of three possible roles: if the preface-writer is the same person as the writer of the text; then the preface is

²⁷ Spoiler alert: Genette ultimately calls into question and dismisses the category of “apocryphal” later in *Paratexts*. Having been unable to find good examples of the apocryphal category, he later notes that the inclusion of the apocryphal category was “mainly on theoretical grounds” and “as a provisional step (while we wait discoveries to come, or achievements not yet published)” (Genette, *Paratexts* 190). While he claims there are no apocryphal prefaces, merely prefaces masquerading as apocryphal when in fact they are authentic or fictive upon closer inspection, he keeps the category in his discussion. One suspects that the symmetry of two categories with three possibilities in each was too beautiful to be let go of.

authorial; if the preface-writer is also one of the characters in the text, then the preface is actorial; if the preface-writer is neither the actual author nor a character but some other entity, (most commonly, according to Genette, an editor), then preface is allographic (*Paratexts* 179-180). In addition to occupying one of those three roles, the preface-writer assumes one of three regimes: if “the attribution to a real person is confirmed by some other (if possible, by *every* other paratextual sign,” then the preface is authentic; a preface becomes apocryphal when attribution “to a real person is invalidated by some paratextual sign”; if the preface-writer is a fictional creation, then the preface is fictive (Genette, *Paratexts* 179, my emphasis). Classifying preface-writers as authentic and authorial – the writer is a real person who wrote both the preface and the central text – or as authentic and allographic – the writer is a real person but not the author of the central text – is relatively straightforward; the author is typically marked as such on the preface page or on the title page. For example, Thomas Hardy’s authentic authorial prefaces to various editions of *Jude the Obscure* conclude with his initials as a signature, and the authentic allographic introduction to the Broadview edition of *Jude the Obscure* is by Cedric Watts, who is marked as the introduction’s writer by his position as editor on the title page. However, the classification of fictive allographic and fictive actorial prefaces can be more difficult. Lemuel Gulliver’s preface in Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* is a fictive actorial preface; Gulliver is a character created by Swift and is both the “author” of the preface and of the central narrative. *Gulliver’s Travels* is doubly prefaced: Gulliver “writes” the second preface, but the first preface the reader encounters is by Richard Sympson, Gulliver’s cousin who also claims the role of the narrative’s “publisher.” Sympson’s preface is ultimately a fictive preface, but Sympson’s role also illustrates the problems Genette encountered with the apocryphal category: in claiming to be the narrative’s publisher, Sympson initially claims to be a real person, or at least could be assumed to be the actual publisher of the text in the actual world, but in Gulliver’s preface and narrative, Sympson is “outed” as being as fictional as Gulliver is. Sympson is, perhaps, only

momentarily an allographic preface-writer as the reader works through any doubts as to Simpson being a real person.

Already strange in their mainstream contexts, prefaces take on a queered position in illicit texts. In *Narratives of Transmission*, Bernard Duyfhuizen discusses the ways in which prefaces fold the storyworld and the actual world into each other. Many prefaces include claims of authenticity, and when the preface is written by a fictional editor, “the editor’s assurances of authenticity are only aimed at his extradiegetic audience, and his suppression of secrets only concerns the extradiegetic society of the text. Of course, the parallels between the extradiegetic world and the extratextual world can be manifest, and those parallels serve whatever social and political functions a text might contain in addition to its aesthetic function” (Duyfhuizen 147). The social, political, and aesthetic functions of the textual world intertwine with those same functions in the actual world, thereby creating new possible worlds for the readers of these narratives. Cross-world identification occurs as the actual, textual, and possible fold into each other. To describe this folding of worlds, Duyfhuizen employs Jacques Derrida’s concept of paratextual/textual “double invagination”: “[T]he inside and the outside enfold one another to mark each as always at the same time the other. The frame, borderline, boundary, or margin of a text is supposed to mark out (to plot) its field of being, but at every edge Derrida finds the frame problematic and always already invading and invaded by the framed” (Duyfhuizen 157-158). The gendered nature of “invagination” is inescapable.²⁸ For Derrida and Duyfhuizen, a framed narrative is a space of folding and refolding, of concealing and presenting, of engulfing and birthing; they are spaces of contact – but they are not stable spaces; they are shifting, always liminal. In “The Law of Genre,” the presentation-turned-article in which Derrida

²⁸ It is exhausting to constantly encounter the female body as the archetype of mystery via sex and body parts in literature and in literary theory and criticism. The vagina has become ubiquitous as a shorthand for representing that which is desirable yet unknowable, that which is procreative yet hidden. One often wishes these (typically male) writers of metaphors on the mysteries of the vagina had greater imaginations. But what is one to do?

first theorized “invagination,” Derrida notes the gendered nature of the term “genre” and links the gendering of “genre” to the gendering of “invagination.” Derrida “remind[s] the Anglo-American reader that, in French, the semantic scale of genre is much larger and more expansive than in English, and this always includes within its reach the gender” (“The Law” 221). The boundaries of genres and genders do not fit neatly into binaries – rather genres and genders operate within much more complex, layered, and intersecting systems of classification. However, leaving aside for the moment problems with invagination’s stereotypes about women and women’s bodies, the core concept of the problematic nature of preface materials remains. Derrida and Duyfhuizen correctly identify the preface as a contact zone that can fundamentally shift a reader’s understanding of the storyworld, and both men query the core functions of prefaces.

Knowing what kind of preface is present in the text is only the first step. The second step is examining how the preface functions in relation to the rest of the text and how it might shape the reader’s construction of the storyworld. Prefaces were common features of writing in the nineteenth century, but the prefaces in illicit narratives function differently in relation to both the storyworld and the actual world than those found in more mainstream narratives because prefaces to illicit narratives are in a unique position to distinguish and/or blur the differences between the reader’s actual world and the storyworld. This chapter builds on Genette’s taxonomy of prefaces and engages with Derrida’s and Duyfhuizen’s gendered views of invaginated prefaces in order to examine these uses of prefaces in illicit texts to construct gender and sexuality within the storyworld, to bridge the storyworld and the actual world, and to bolster claims of narrative authority; it also revises a taxonomy of prefaces introduced by Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek and introduces Josephine Donovan’s subversive feminist history of prefaces in framed-novelles.

The Past Is Prologue: A Brief History of the Preface

There is no definitive history of the preface in literature. There are collections of prefaces that have been stripped of their central texts. There are analyses of specific prefaces by specific authors. But there is no overarching history of the preface, which is puzzling given the preface's lengthy history and ubiquity. Perhaps reason there is no history of the form is that prefaces can be tricky forms to pinpoint. Some prefaces are labeled as such and are clearly differentiated in the text. Others go incognito as an "introduction" or a "note."²⁹ Still others are blended into the central text and are only recognizable as prefaces once they have been read. Synonyms for "preface" abound: "introduction," "preamble," "prologue," "foreword," "front matter." "Preface," "introduction," and "foreword" are frequently used interchangeably.³⁰ "Preamble" connotes legalistic writing, and "prologues" are more typically associated with plays. "Front matter" is a broad but generally scholarly or bibliographical term that can also include other paratextual features like the title page, an illustration, or a table of contents. Because a preface is typically (and deceptively simplistically) defined as a short text that introduces or precedes another longer text, the word "seems to have a [wide] variety of meaning and usage" (Tötösy de Zepetnek 9). Unlike footnotes and narrative interventions, prefaces are slippery and hard to pin down. Are the opening paragraphs to Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko; or, The Royal Slave* prefatory remarks? They are not labeled as such. They are not marked as separate from the central text. Yet, they can be read as a preface – the paragraphs

²⁹ Genette distinguishes these prefatory notes from textual notes (which he simply calls "notes"): "A note [i.e., a non-prefatory textual note] is a statement of variable length (one word is enough) connected to a more or less definite segment of text and either placed opposite or keyed to this segment" (*Paratexts* 319). However, he also remarks on the "very close relation of continuity and homogeneity" between prefaces and notes (Genette, *Paratexts* 320). In keeping with Genette's systems, I will continue to distinguish between prefaces labeled as "notes" (the subject of this chapter) and textual notes (specifically footnotes, the subject of the subsequent chapter).

³⁰ Anecdotally, when I have encountered these three forms in novels, "forewords" have usually been by editors, "introductions" have been by editors and/or authors, and "prefaces" have been by authors and/or characters; if all three are present in a novel, the "foreword" comes first, followed by the "introduction," and then the "preface."

introduce the narrator to the reader and situate the story of the central text in the larger context of the need for the story to be told, both of which are common prefatory functions.

The embedded preface in *Oroonoko* likely stems from the framed-nouvelle genre, one of several genres that gave rise to the modern novel. In her exploration of women writer's contributions to the early novel genre, Donovan cites the link between the framed-nouvelle and the novel: "The framed-nouvelle was the dominate genre in prose fiction in the late medieval to early modern period, until it was superceded [sic] by the novel. It is an assemblage of short tales that are linked by a frame narrative, usually that of the social interaction among the [intradiegetic] story tellers" (29). Donovan argues that women writers of framed-nouvelles viewed the frames as contact zones connecting the author, the text, and the reader; the frames, therefore, could be used "for feminist comment on and/or ironic treatment of the inset materials" (x). One of preferred methods for such subversion of patriarchal norms was casuistry: "Emerging in the late Middle Ages, casuistry is a method whereby general rules are adapted, modified, or interrogated through the investigation of a particular case that problematizes the rule" (Donovan x). Using casuistry, these authors argued that "circumstantial details can change the purport of any given case," that "paying attention to the particularities of an individual's situation" was necessary (Donovan xi). Stemming from these framed-nouvelles, novel prefaces frequently employ casuistic arguments on the novel's content as some sort of an exception to various societal rules or norms. Behn's female narrator who argues for her right to tell the story (thereby subverting patriarchal values about women's roles in public society and in writing) lies at a transition point between the framed-nouvelle and the novel.

While prefaces (and preface-like structures) may be difficult to identify – seemingly falling into the gap of "I know one when I see one" – the form spans literary history. Tötösy de Zepetnek notes that "the longevity of the preface is evident in both oral and written literature" (11), citing "the author's 'introduction' to the tale of Gilgamesh" as one of many early examples of the form (11).

Tötösy de Zepetnek argues that the preface is a genre and “a constant and significant part of all ‘telling’” (11). If the preface is a genre, its generic (and spatial) boundaries – indeed, its very existence as a genre – are difficult to define, and Tötösy de Zepetnek concedes that “the acceptance of the preface as a genre in manuals of literary terms or genres is limited” (11). In seeking to define the preface as a genre, Tötösy de Zepetnek argues that such a definition “is best formulated by the question ‘What does it do and how?’ This question combines the notion that the preface is a genre, on the one hand, with a typology of the preface, the ‘how,’ on the other” (15). The generic markers of the preface are, for me, less important than the function of the preface, the ways in which prefaces shape and interact with the central narrative. I argue that a better question about prefaces is “How does it function, and why is it there?” – a question that combines a typology with an analysis of its functions, both independent of the central text and in conversation with the central text.

While Tötösy de Zepetnek’s *The Social Dimensions of Fiction: On the Rhetoric and Function of Prefacing Novels in the Nineteenth-Century Canadas* is limited to Anglo-Canadian and Franco-Canadian novels, his work points to the tendency of asserting the truthfulness of the text in prefaces, a trait that Leonard J. Davis explores in his discussion of the news-novel discourse in *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* and that Donovan examines in *Women and the Rise of the Novel*. Davis argues for the connection between the rise of newspapers and the rise of the novel and for the ways in which newspapers and novels borrowed from each other: newspapers employing narrative techniques and novels employing “based on a true story” stances. Donovan, on the other hand, argues for the presence of feminist casuistry in early novel forms – for the ways in which fiction was employed by women writers to make larger arguments about the role of women in the actual world. Both Davis and Donovan point to the ways in which the storyworld and the actual world inform each other and have porous boundaries. Historically, in English language texts from a variety of nations, prefaces have frequently notes that the novel is based on facts. Tötösy de Zepetnek

theorizes that tendency via a formula: “Fact + Fiction = Novel (FFN)” (89). In these factual fiction prefaces, “the prefacer wants to assure the reader, on the one hand, that the novel is based on facts. On the other hand, the assurance is constructed semantically within the parameters of literature: the story was ‘told’ and ‘watched,’ and then written” (Tötösy de Zepetnek 90). The opening paragraph of *Oroonoko* is an excellent example of a factual fiction preface. This style of preface seems to have been especially common in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, the first and second prefaces to *The Castle of Otranto* work within these fact-fiction parameters: the first preface attempts to situate the events in the actual world, and the second preface acknowledges the fictionality of the text and locates the events within a storyworld. Factual fiction, while a common prefatory form, was certainly not the only common form of preface in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. What may be termed “theoretical” prefaces were also popular. Such prefaces provided a theory context for the central text; the preface to William Wordsworth’s *Lyrical Ballads*, as discussed later in this chapter, is both a factual fiction preface (it asserts that the poems are based on people and events in the actual world) and a theoretical preface (it outlines Wordsworth’s philosophy/theory of poetry).

Interestingly, while the preface remained a popular form in nineteenth-century literature, the form was also viewed with some suspicion by their authors. Prefatory remarks were *de rigueur* yet also heavily critiqued. In the June 1859 edition of *The Southern Literary Messenger*, a satirical piece by “G. Buggini Wufficks” entitled “The Polite Art of Novelling: A Didactic Fiction,” the author clearly states: “RULE. No Preface. EXAMPLE. Jane Eyre [sic]” (442). Although the first edition of *Jane Eyre* was not prefaced, the second and third editions published in December 1847 and April 1848 contain prefaces, and the 1847 preface is a rather lengthy explication of morality and conventionality that opens with the assertion that while “a preface to the first edition of *Jane Eyre* [was] unnecessary [...], this second edition *demands* a few words of both acknowledgement and miscellaneous remark”

(Brontë 3, her emphasis). Wufficks, allegedly a London bookseller and critic, warns of the deceptive nature of prefaces: “Prefaces are not what they purport to be; they are, properly, Conclusions, and, as such, should be placed at the end not the beginning of the Book” (441). Wufficks, however, acknowledges that while prefaces are misplaced conclusions, some sort of opening remarks may be needed in a novel. With tongue firmly in cheek, he suggests authors create a negative chapter, “a chapter anterior to the first chapter, and mark[ed as] thus: Chap. -1” (Wufficks 441). Like the murderer in a horror film, prefaces are hard to kill, and even once they seem dead, they pop up in new ways. The use of what Genette terms “later prefaces” (*Paratexts* 239) – prefaces added to subsequent editions – was ubiquitous in Romantic and Victorian novels. *Jane Eyre*, *Frankenstein*, *Lyrical Ballads*, *Oliver Twist*: all have new prefaces for subsequent editions; while some (like *Jane Eyre*) only had prefaces after the first edition, others (like *Frankenstein*) have prefaces that shift radically in taxonomy and function between first and subsequent editions. These later prefaces frequently attempt to tell the reader how to engage with the narrative or to correct erroneous readings of the first edition; didacticism is a core function. And it is this didactic impulse in prefaces that make prefaces such an easy target of critique – both satirical and earnest – during the nineteenth century.

Nearly thirty years prior to Wuffick’s tongue-in-cheek dictums on prefaces, J. S. B.³¹ in *The Imperial Magazine; Or, Compendium of Religious, Moral, and Philosophical Knowledge* penned “Observations on Prefaces,” a more straight-laced work than Wuffick’s. B. notes “that there is no part of books so much neglected, so seldom perused, by the bulk of readers, as prefaces, requires no argument to prove” (825). He points to the disgust readers and authors share for authorial prefaces; these authorial prefaces are, as already seen in Wuffick’s critique, primarily didactic, and B. argues that the didacticism of the preface spoils the entertainment to be had by reading the novel. The reader falls

³¹ The author is only referenced as J. S. B. of Bristol. I can find no reference outside of the magazine to the author’s identity. Given that *The Imperial Magazine* seems to exclusively publish male authors, I refer to J. S. B. as male, although I fully acknowledge such a reference may be erroneous.

into one of two categories: the reader who ignores the preface in order to jump ahead to the potential delights of the story and the reader who engages with the preface only “to forget what they contain as soon as they arrive at the conclusion” (B. 826). Authors dislike writing prefaces, according to B., because of how difficult it is for authors to make prefaces “delectable” (826). Neither reader nor author enjoys the preface, and yet prefaces doggedly remain attached to texts. So if prefaces cannot be removed from texts, then they must be improved. B. sets out a list of rules that should govern these disorderly paratexts; he enumerates that prefaces “*should be as brief as possible*,” “*novel and entertaining*,” “*in general, specimens of the work they precede*,” and “*vehicles of truth*” (827-828, his emphasis). Authors who adhere to these four rules need not fear that their prefaces will “be passed over unnoticed, or noticed with only contempt and disapprobation” (B. 828). He closes his article with a lamentation about what he perceives as a decline in quality literature due to these unruly prefaces. If prefaces were “what they ought to be, they would be pilots to guide us safely and pleasantly into the channels of knowledge through which we have to sail” (B. 829). However, some prefaces – like those found in illicit narratives – are not the pilots navigating the reader “safely and pleasantly” through the sea; some are the shifting shoals, rocky outcroppings, and choppy waters into which the reader find themselves thrown.

In an unpublished white paper, “Joseph Conrad and the Art of the Preface,” G. G. Harpham explores the liminal nature of prefaces but also cites prefaces as locations of “reduced tensions”:

Prefaces are written after the book but read before the book. In temporal terms, therefore, they occupy a liminal phase between the writing and the reading of the book, marking a frame and mediating between the two activities. This mediating function accounts for the disproportionate importance a preface can, on occasion, assume: although it is neither the writing nor the reading, it can serve to justify and rationalize the one and to circumscribe and direct the other. The preface is where the author asserts ownership of the book, directing the

reader to use it in certain ways [...]. For both reader and writer, the preface is a space of reduced tension and correspondingly free communication [...]. In terms of communication, the preface makes perfect sense; it accords with our most routine models of social exchange. (qtd. in Tötösy de Zepetnek 20).

Harpham's view of prefaces as tensionless spaces, however, ignores the complex interplay between the preface and the text. While it is a space in which the author can theoretically speak more directly to the reader, as Tötösy de Zepetnek illustrates, the author can use the preface to create additional tension between the "truth" of the storyworld and the actual word, and as Genette illustrates, prefaces are not the sole domain of the actual authentic author. Prefaces, as Derrida argues in "Outwork, Prefacing," are fundamentally strange forms filled with tensions and erasures:

Prefaces [...] have always been written, it seems, in view of their own self-effacement. Upon reaching the end of the *pre-* (which presents and precedes, or rather forestalls, the presentative production, and, in order to put before the readers' eyes what is not yet visible, is obliged to speak, predict, and predicate), the route which has been covered must cancel itself out. But this subtraction leaves a mark of erasure, a *remainder* which is added to the subsequent text and which cannot be completely summed up within it. Such an operation as this appears contradictory, and the same is true of the interest one takes in it. (9, his emphasis)

The free exchange between writer and reader imagined by Harpham is, on deeper exploration, a much more fraught exchange. Prefaces are not the tensionless spaces posited by Harpham, nor are they "an empty husk, a piece of formal refuse, a moment of dryness or loquacity" as outlined by Derrida ("Outwork" 9). Prefaces are filled with potentials, with promises of what is and what might be in the narrative. While some prefaces are most assuredly rather dry, the form allows the preface-writer (whether authorial, allographic, or fictive) a space to play, to create expectations by and of the

reader. The preface is not only temporally queer, as Harpham and Derrida argue; the preface's contents are also queer – and the queering of time and content in prefaces is inseparable. This simultaneously proleptic and analeptic intervention – ideally read before the text and usually written after the text's completion – fundamentally shifts the reader's interaction with the text, assuming, of course, that the reader chooses to engage with the intervention. And it is this point of the reader's choice in engagement with the preface that cannot be ignored. How and when the reader engages with the preface shapes the reader's entrance into the storyworld and shapes the reader's construction of possible worlds.

Preface Forms & Functions

Genette's classification system of prefatorial roles (authorial, allographic, actorial) and regimes (authentic, apocryphal, fictive), already outlined in this chapter, is foundational to preface studies. However, these categories can complicate the notion of "truth" in prefaces:

The presence of senders described as "fictive" or "apocryphal" may seem to run counter to the general principle that requires us to take the paratext at its word and to the letter, suspending all disbelief – indeed, all hermeneutic capacity – and accepting it as given. [...] In other words, the official version of the status of the paratext is in some cases an official *fiction* that the reader is invited to take no more (and undoubtedly even less) seriously than we take, for example, some "diplomatic" that is meant by general agreement to conceal a truth that everyone perceives or guesses but whose disclosure would benefit no one. (Genette, *Paratexts* 182)

In thinking about paratexts in fiction, Genette acknowledges the contradictory nature of information given in a single narrative's various paratexts; "what one paratextual element gives, another paratextual element, later or simultaneously, may always take away; and here as elsewhere the reader must put it all together and try (it's not always so simple) to figure out what the whole adds up to.

And the very way in which a paratextual element gives what it gives may always imply that none of it is to be believed” (*Paratexts* 183). For Genette, if the sender (writer) of the preface is a complex entity to nail down, the addressee (reader or narratee or audience or recipient) is much simpler “because the preface, in its very message, postulates that its reader is poised for an imminent reading of the text (or, in the case of a postface, has just concluded a reading), without which its preparatory or retrospective comments would be largely meaningless and, naturally, useless” (Genette, *Paratexts* 194).

Turning to the function of prefaces, Genette asserts that the primary function of an original authentic authorial preface is “*to ensure that the text is read properly*” (*Paratexts* 197, his emphasis). He argues that during the nineteenth century prefaces turned away from explanations of the value of the content of the text and towards instruction on how to appropriately read the text (*Paratexts* 209-210).³² However, in order to instruct the reader, the author must have a clear vision of the intended audience for the text, an audience that is gendered. In examining the function of prefaces in novels, Genette argues that “a function that is more or less inevitably reserved for works of fiction, particularly novelistic fiction, consists of what I will call (with the touch of suspicion that adheres to the term) professing the work’s fictiveness” (Genette, *Paratexts* 215). He points to a number of novels that warn the reader not to mistake fiction for fact in the preface. But what happens when a text is prefaced by such a warning but the narrative itself asserts the “truth” that the story is “real”? Is that another case of paratextual elements contradicting the central texts (and perhaps even other paratexts) in a single narrative? And if so, what is the function of the contradiction? Moreover, assertions in the preface that deny “‘any resemblance’ to real events or characters has always had the

³² Genette’s claims about the didactic turn is similar to Garrett Stewart’s argument about shifts in didactic addresses of the reader in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; Stewart’s argument on this shift will be explored in greater detail in chapter four.

double function of protecting the author from the potential consequences of the ‘applications’ and, inevitably, of setting readers in search of them” (Genette, *Paratexts* 218).

Genette also wonders at the lack of original postfaces to texts, especially given the preponderance of original prefaces. Why, he wonders, would authors not delay an explanation of the text until after the reader has had the chance to actually read the text? What is the purpose of an explanation of the thing before encountering the thing? He decides that,

Ultimately, the basic reason for the shortage seems to me very clear: placed at the end of the book and addressed to a reader who is no longer potential but actual, the postface certainly makes more logical and more relevant reading for that reader. But for the author, and from a pragmatic point of view, the postface is much less effective, for it can no longer perform the two main types of function we have found the preface to have: holding the reader’s interest and guiding him by explaining why and how he should read the text. (Genette, *Paratexts* 238).

Later prefaces – those only published with subsequent editions of a text – are typically designed to respond to criticism of a previous edition of the text. Later prefaces operate like postfaces, but rather than being attached to the end of the narrative, these are attached to the beginning of new editions of the text. Rather than assuming what the reader may or may not have understood in the narrative (which is the difficulty of the postface form), the later preface is frequently a response to actual readers. Overall, prefaces are mirror-like structures in texts:

I am writing a preface – I see myself writing a preface – I describe myself seeing myself writing a preface – I see myself describing myself... This endless reflecting, this self-describing in a mirror, this staging, this playacting of the prefatorial activity, which is one of the truths of the preface – all these the fictional preface brings to their ultimate fulfillment by passing, in its own way, over to the other side of the mirror. (Genette, *Paratexts* 292)

Like all paratextual forms, the preface is a threshold. Yet more than other paratexts, the preface is much more malleable and mutable. Its function shifts radically based on the position of its alleged author in relation to the narrative. Some prefaces address a general reader. Others respond to a specific critic. Some offer explanations of how or why the narrative was written. Others instruct the reader on how to read the narrative. Others still point to differences between one edition of the narrative and another edition. Some point to the practical knowledge to be gained by reading the narrative. Others insist on the fictionality of the narrative. Yet each preface moors the narrative in the reader's and the author's actual world. The preface is both a barrier between the actual world and the storyworld and the threshold between the two worlds. The reader, Alice-like, stands on the outside of the narrative looking in, and once inside the narrative can gaze back through the mirror to see both the actual world and storyworld at once.

Tötösy de Zepetnek expands Genette's classification system (and ultimately replaces Genette's system) with his own categories of prefaces. For Tötösy de Zepetnek, the role of the preface-writer (authorial, allegorical, actorial) and the "realness" of that author (authentic, apocryphal, fictive) is less important than the function of the preface. According to his system, "the characteristics of the different preface types have been designated as follows": "acknowledgement," "apologetic," "critical," "dedicatory," "ethical," "explanatory," "integral," "preemptive," "promotional," and/or "subversive" (Tötösy de Zepetnek 39-40). An acknowledging preface thanks those who assisted the author and "is often conceptually similar to the characteristic of dedication, although this is often only implied" (Tötösy de Zepetnek 39). An apologetic preface "contains some sort of apology directed to an individual or the readership," although Tötösy de Zepetnek does not note whether the apology must be a genuine one or whether it can be ironic or tongue-in-cheek (39). A critical preface is characterized by an interpretative stance on "the preface, the novel, or any other literary text, an ideology, a literary figure, the readership, a social group, etc."; this category "may

overlap with the ethical” category (Tötösy de Zepetnek 39). He notes that a dedicatory preface and dedication are not the same: “As there are many novels with a *bona fide* dedication, i.e., typographically separated and short, the difference between a dedicatory preface and a dedication is that the preface may be titled ‘dedication’ or the preface, titled as such, has a dedicatory paragraph or section in it” (Tötösy de Zepetnek 39). The ethical preface has “explicit or implicit value judgement(s) of a moral (moralizing), ethical, religious, humanistic, social, economic, political, or generally ideological nature,” whereas in an explanatory preface “the author explains the historical background of the novel or provides a geographical description of the novel’s setting” (Tötösy de Zepetnek 40). Unlike the other characteristics he lists, the integral preface is defined by its location, rather than its contents; the integral preface “is not set apart from the text of the novel” (Tötösy de Zepetnek 40). In the preemptive preface, the author “anticipates and therefore attempts to defuse criticism of his work by readers, critics, academics, or his peers, etc.” (Tötösy de Zepetnek 40). The promotional preface has “the implicit, or, as in most cases, the explicit intention to promote the novel or some aspect of the novel,” and the subversive type “is ironic, satirical, or humorous with regard to either the preface itself or the work” and “may also contain ironic, satirical, or humorous reference to the readers, critics, the publisher, etc.” (Tötösy de Zepetnek 40).

Tötösy de Zepetnek’s list of preface characteristics, while potentially useful, is also a bit garbled – there is too much overlap among some of the characteristics, and the list switches among categorizing by the characteristics of the preface’s contents, tone, and format. A more useable revision of his characteristics, one that would work well in conjunction with Genette’s classification matrix, would divide the characteristics into three sets: content, tone, form. The content characteristics could include acknowledgement (the author thanks others for their assistance in producing the text; the author may also dedicate the work to a person or a group of people), evaluation (the author presents an evaluation of the text, other texts, ideologies, other people, etc.),

and explanation (the author provides an overview of the text's genesis or contents). The tone characteristics would include authoritative, subversive, moralistic, preemptive, and promotional stances. And the format characteristics would be integrated or separated. In this content-tone-form matrix, the preface to *Oroonoko* would be both evaluative (the narrator apologies for the quality of her telling) and explanatory (she discusses how she came to know the story), it would also be both preemptive (she points to her own faults as narrator before her readers or critics can) and authoritative (she claims her right to tell the story), and it would be integrated (the preface is part of the central narrative, not a separate section). And in Genette's classification matrix, the same preface would be fictive actorial – Behn is not the voice in the preface, rather it is a fictionalized version of herself who speaks in the preface. By blending Genette's and Tötösy de Zepetnek's classifications, a fuller vision of the form and function of the preface comes into view.

However, when working with either classification matrix it is important to keep in mind that both Genette and Tötösy de Zepetnek warn that their classifications are not absolute and different readers may place the same preface in different categories based on their individual interpretation of the text: "[T]he designation of a preface's characteristics is more than often not potentially ambiguous" (Tötösy de Zepetnek 38). And it is this ambiguity at the heart of prefatory materials that makes them ripe for exploration, especially in the context of illicit narratives. Moreover, it is this fundamental ambiguity of prefaces that allows the paratextual form to operate in relation to the central text in ways that are fundamentally queer. The preface blurs the distinction between the storyworld and the actual world, between the role of the fictive preface-writer and the actual author as preface-writer. Prefaces, when the audience chooses to read them, shift the reader's understanding of the storyworld, often times in ways that undercut a narrator's stated purpose in the text or that undercut the reader's own expectations of the narrative. As explored in the next chapter,

prefaces, like footnotes, often appear at first glance to be normative, expected features of a text, but on deeper inspection, the form actually operates in subversive ways.

Prefaces & Illicit Texts

Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*, Collins's *The Law and the Lady*, the anonymously published *The Sins of the Cities of the Plains*, Richard Burton's translation of *Kama Sutra*, *My Secret Life* by Walter, and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* represent not only several genres of illicit narrative but also several different preface categories. *The Woman in White*, *The Law and the Lady*, *Kama Sutra*, and *My Secret Life* all have separated authentic authorial prefaces. Collins's preface to *The Law and the Lady* has an authoritative tone and explanatory and evaluative content. *The Woman in White* is trebly prefaced. Collins writes two authoritative, explanatory, and evaluative prefaces for *The Woman in White*, one in 1860 and another the following year. The novel opens an integrated fictive actorial preface penned by Walter Hartright, and Hartright's preface has an authoritative and moralistic tone and explanatory and evaluative content. *Kama Sutra* is doubly prefaced: Burton writes both a "preface" and an "introduction" to his translation of the text.³³ *Kama Sutra's* "Preface" is explanatory, and Burton strikes an authoritative, promotional, and preemptive tone; its "Introduction" is evaluative, explanatory, authoritative, promotional, and preemptive. In *My Secret Life*, the reader encounters an unnamed editor's "Introduction," a separated authentic allographic preface that explains and evaluates the narrative's contents and employs an authoritative and promotional tone, before Walter's "Preface" and "Second Preface," two separated authentic authorial prefaces that provide further explanation and evaluation of the narrative's contents and employs an authoritative, promotional, and moralistic tone. Stoker's *Dracula* has a separated,

³³ Technically, Burton's *Kama Sutra* is trebly prefaced. After Burton's "Preface" and "Introduction," the original author of the narrative opens the text with what Burton translates as "Introductory Preface." However, given the focus in this dissertation on nineteenth-century illicit texts by British authors, this "Introductory Preface" is beyond the scope of this study.

explanatory, and authoritative preface; this short unsigned and unattributed preface might be authentic authorial or fictive actorial. *The Sins of the Cities of the Plains*, an anonymous pornographic novel attributed to Jack Saul, also has a separated fictive actorial preface; Cambon, the authoritative preface-writer in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plains*, explains the genesis of the narrative. While the prefatorial materials in these texts work differently in terms of content and tone, each is a threshold of verisimilitude – some work to construct the “truthfulness” of the narrative, but others negate the “realness” of the narrative; some are a part of the storyworld, but others are more closely aligned with the actual world. Moreover, each preface addresses constructions of gender and sexuality – typically linking issues of verisimilitude to issues of gender and sex, such that the queering of the threshold between actual and storyworlds accompanies and initiates a queering of gender and sex categories.

Prefaces were ubiquitous in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature – they are found in aboveboard, fringe, and sub-rosa narratives, in fiction and nonfiction narratives. And as we have seen in the discussion of the history of prefaces, prefaces were deemed necessary – a narrative “needed” a preface. The preface in some way signaled the legitimacy of the text and/or its author, even when one preface undermined another, as in the two prefaces to Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*. William Marshal, the alleged translator of *The Castle of Otranto*, opens the first edition’s preface with claims of truth: “The following work was found in the library of an ancient Catholic family in the north of England. It was printed at Naples, in the black letter, in the year 1529. How much sooner it was written does not appear” (Walpole 3). Rather than being an invented narrative, the preface frames the narrative as a found and legitimate document. Positioning himself as an authority while also attempt to preempt criticism of the text, the narrator continues in the historical vein, noting that given the age of the text certain pieces of historical evidence have been lost to time:

If the story was written near the time when it is supposed to have happened, it must have been between 1095, the era of the first crusade, and 1243, the date of the last, or not long afterwards. There is no other circumstance in the work that can lead us to guess at the period in which the scene is laid; the names of the actors are evidently fictitious, and probably disguised on purpose; yet the Spanish names of the domestics seem to indicate, that this work was not composed until the establishment of the Arragonian kings in Naples had made Spanish appellations familiar in that country. The beauty of the diction, and the zeal of the author (moderated, however, by singular judgment), concur to make me think that the date of the composition was little antecedent to that of the impression. (Walpole 3)

While asserting the truthfulness of the found document, the narrator notes that not all of the text's facts can be verified; the date the text was written is uncertain and can only be narrowed to a one hundred and forty-eight year span, and the people in the text have been given false names in order to protect their identities. Yet, while the date and names have been lost, the text, the preface asserts, is real and true. The first preface concludes with a final fact-fiction statement:

Though the machinery is invention [that is, the supernatural events are not real], and the names of the actors imaginary, I cannot but believe that the groundwork of the story is founded on truth. The scene is undoubtedly laid in some real castle. The author seems frequently, without design, to describe particular parts. *The chamber*, says he, *on the right hand; the door on the left hand; the distance from the chapel to Conrad's apartment*: these and other passages are strong presumptions that the author had some certain building in his eye. Curious persons, who have leisure to employ in such researches, may possibly discover in the Italian writers the foundation on which our author has built. (Walpole 6, his emphasis)

Acknowledging that the work is, at least in part, fictional, Marshal invites the reader to research the events and locations presented in the text and offers as evidence of the truthfulness of the narrative

the author's use of specific details, which clearly must mean that the author had firsthand experience, as though no author could ever invent directions or specific locations.

The second preface, however, undoes all the work of the first preface. After the positive reception of the novel, Walpole unmask himself as the author of the fiction and apologizes for his deception. Walpole, writing about himself as the author in the third-person,

ask[s] pardon of his readers for having offered his work to them under the borrowed personage of a translator. As diffidence of his own abilities and the novelty of the attempt, were the sole inducements to assume the disguise, he flatters himself he shall appear excusable. He resigned the performance to the impartial judgement of the public; determined to let it perish in obscurity, if disproved; nor meaning to avow such a trifle, unless better judges should pronounce that he might own it without blush. (7)

What was initially published as a true but embellished history has transformed into a fictional narrative. Walpole uses this second preface to explain his rationale – and to offer a not-quite apology – while also situating his own novel in the larger context of great writers like Shakespeare and Voltaire who have, like Walpole, created something new in the world of literature.³⁴ He closes the second preface thusly: “I might have pleaded, that having created a new species of romance, I was at liberty to lay down what rules I thought fit for the conduct of it: but I should be more proud of having imitated, however faintly, weakly, and at a distance, so masterly a pattern, than to enjoy the entire merit of invention, unless I could have marked my work with genius as well as originality” (Walpole 12). Noting that the fictive actorial (or possibly fictive apocryphal) original preface could be considered part of the new romance genre he has created, Walpole argues that the original preface was not deceptive but rather imaginative and inventive.

³⁴ Interestingly, the second preface to *The Castle of Otranto* also has a rather lengthy footnote written by Walpole. As I argue in chapter three, footnotes can be read as a means of legitimating a text, especially a text at the fringes of mainstream literature.

William Wordsworth in his 1800 “Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*” also points to the experimental nature of his volume and to the need for a preface to explain the experiment to his readers – a claim originally made in the 1798 “Advertisement” to *Lyrical Ballads*. And as with Walpole, Wordsworth in both the advertisement and the preface issues a not-quite apology for the contents of his text as well as a statement about the truths that underpin the collected poems. Just as Walpole in the second preface claimed that, while the novel was a fiction, the text was based on natural truths about humanity, Wordsworth argues that “The tale of Goody Blake and Harry Gill is founded on a well-authenticated fact which happened in Warwickshire. Of the other poems in the collection, it may be proper to say that they are either absolute inventions of the author, or facts which took place within his personal observation or that of his friends” (“Advertisement” par. 5). In the lengthier preface, Wordsworth, like Walpole, discusses the newness of his creation – something that several of the later illicit preface-writers also do. The language of the collected poems may be disturbing to some readers because Wordsworth was patterning it on the everyday language of the common man; he argues that he was purposefully blending the high art of poetry (or even, Poetry) with the lower dialects of common Englishmen. The fiction has a factual basis, and it is that basis in reality that heightens the fiction.

Illicit narratives borrow the preface from more aboveboard texts such as *The Castle of Otranto* and *Lyrical Ballads* – and in their borrowing they make the prefatory form more subversive while simultaneously attempting to frame their narratives as less subversive. Moreover, despite the diversity of preface forms and functions, each of these illicit texts uses the preface style to legitimate the central text by providing reassurances that it is “just a story,” by telling the reader how to interact with the narrative, or by putting the narrative at a safe distance from the reader’s actual world. The prefaces assist with the boundary crossing – or transmission, to use Duyfhuizen’s term – between the actual world and the storyworld. In particular, the prefaces attempt to help the reader navigate

the potentially perilous connection between the illicit narratives on their actual world. The fictive actorial prefaces frequently provide an intradiegetic guide – a character who is “in the know” about the rules and operations of this strange storyworld – for the reader. The authentic authorial prefaces, on the other hand, frequently attempt to reassure the reader that they are safe from the dangers presented in the narrative, either because the narrative is ultimately just a fiction or because the real people represented in the text are temporally, geographically, and/or culturally removed from the reader’s lived experiences. These guides are constructed so as to be ignored at the reader’s potential peril. Yet that exact explanatory tone of prefaces, regardless of the preface type, ironically highlights the strange and blurry border between story and actual worlds. The prefaces, especially separated prefaces, are liminal – neither fully of the narrative nor fully outside of the narrative. Moreover, prefaces are continually self-referential – they comment on the narrative, shaping the reader’s encounter with the narrative and insisting on correct ways to read. Illicit narratives deploy prefaces to subvert gender and sexuality norms and to foster cross-world identification.

Fiction & Prefaces: *The Woman in White*, *The Law and the Lady*, *The Sins of the Cities of the Plains*, and *Dracula*

The Woman in White was first published in serial form, starting in November 1859 and ending in August 1860, in *All the Year Round*. The first chapters of the text as presented in *All the Year Round* open with a “Preamble” to mark the start of Walter Hartright’s narration. Given the narrative’s concern with judicial systems, the original label of “Preamble” is noteworthy because of the legal and political connotations of the term. In framing his prefatory remarks as a preamble, Hartright adds a layer of legal authority to the text – a coopting move that works to legitimate the narrative. In the later volume formats, Collins drops the “Preamble” marker and renames the opening of the narrative as “*The Story begun, by WALTER HARTRIGHT, of Clement’s Inn, Teacher of Drawing.*”

Regardless of the label Collins uses, the opening paragraphs of the novel operate as a fictive actorial

preface in which Hartright explains the need for telling (and reading) the narrative. Hartright is conscious of writing “introductory lines” (Collins, *The Woman* 9) – and he echoes (or even forecasts, given that Hartright’s narrative predates Collins’s authentic authorial prefaces) Collins’s prefatory comments on the unique style of the story: each character will narrate the story in turn. Weirdly, Hartright in the opening paragraphs (in the sections labeled as the “Preamble” in the serial) refers to himself in third-person: “the writer of these introductory lines (Walter Hartright, by name)” (Collins, *The Woman* 9) and “Let Walter Hartright, teacher of drawing, aged twenty-eight years, be heard first” (Collins, *The Woman* 10). Hartright’s introduction of himself, especially when framed as a “preamble,” provides the narrative’s opening with an air of the courtroom; in many respects, Hartright’s remarks sound like a person introducing a witness to the jury – more specifically, Hartright sounds like a man representing himself in court and introducing himself, via third-person, to the judge and jury.

These introductory comments about “the writer of these lines,” his age and profession, and his being the first of many voices to be heard work in conjunction with Hartright’s other prefatory comments about how “the events which fill these pages might have claimed their share of public attention in a Court of Justice” (Collins, *The Woman* 9). Hartright explains that he and Laura Fairlie no longer have a legal recourse available; instead Hartright will use the narrative to present his case to the public:

Thus, the story here presented will be told by more than one pen, as the story of an offence against the laws is told in Court by more than one witness – with the same objective, in both cases, to present the truth always in its most direct and intelligible aspect; and to trace the course of complete series of events, by making two persons who have been most closely connected with them, at each successive stage, relate their own experience, word for word.

(Collins, *The Woman* 9)

The narrative is immediately aligned with court procedures, which also assists the reader's transport into the storyworld by drawing on the reader's knowledge of how courts work (or are supposed to work). The storyworld, like the actual world of its Victorian readers, is a world of justice denied or delayed, and given nineteenth-century Britain's obsessions with newspapers and true crime stories, Collins via Hartright links the reader's actual world expectations and assumptions about legal systems to the storyworld, thereby facilitating the reader's transport. Not only is the reader transported into the story but the reader is also positioned as the jury (or perhaps even as the judge) at this trial. Moreover, the references to the legal system in the preface further mark the text as an illicit narrative – the courts are filled with murderers, liars, thieves, blackmailers, and other criminals, just as the storyworld is filled with such characters.

Hartright switches to first-person narration after this opening prefatory section, and he maintains first-person narration through the text. So why open with the alleged distance of an extradiegetic, third-person narrator? What is to be gained by the distance? What is the difference between “the writer of these introductory lines (Walter Hartright, by name)” and “I, Walter Hartright, pen these lines”? In a text in which gender and power are entwined, Hartright's narrative moves in the prefatory paragraphs construct a storyworld in which objectivity is valued – the truth is out there and able to be understood by an impartial or collective observation; there is one correct version of the story of Laura Fairlie and Anne Catherick – and the value of objectivity in the storyworld, a value explicitly tied to masculinity and masculine narrative control, are first signaled in Hartright's appeals to laws and justice and through his self-positioning as a third-person narrator. Hartright's turn from extradiegetic to intradiegetic narration also mirrors the slipperiness of identity in the central narrative; few characters are who or what they seem to be. Stamping the narrative with the opening illusion of third-person objectivity, Hartright moves the storyworld into more and more subjective positions as the narrative progresses. Having established his authorial control in the

opening paragraphs, Hartright later undermines his own authority by admitting that the names have been changed, some narratives have been edited, and that certain events did not happen in the way he first explained them.³⁵ Moreover, Hartright's prefatory statements are mirrored in Collins's prefatory statements in the 1860 edition: should a careless reader of the 1860 volume edition ignore Collins's comments about the construction of the narrative, the reader would encounter the same comments within the storyworld about the construction of the narrative – comments from a character who is purportedly the author of several parts of the narrative and who edits the narratives of other characters.

In addition to Hartright's "Preamble"-turned-unmarked-preface, *The Woman in White* has two authentic authorial prefaces: one to the 1860 edition and another to the revised 1861 edition.³⁶ In the 1860 preface, Collins explains his writing processes and narrative techniques – and he distances the preface from the storyworld by acknowledging his authorial hand in creating the fiction. Marking the narrative as "fiction" in the first sentence of the 1860 preface, he goes on to note that "the story of the book is told throughout by the characters of the book. They are all placed in different positions along the chain of events; and they all take up the chain in turn, and carry it on to the end" (Collins, *The Woman* 3). Hartright in his fictive actorial preface notes that "when his experience fails, he will retire from the position of narrator; and his task will be continued, from the point at which he has left it off, by other persons who can speak to the circumstances under notice from their own

³⁵ Hartright, late in the third volume, writes "for her sake [Laura's] I tell this story under feigned names" (Collins, *The Woman* 543); this is the first mention that the names used in the narrative are assumed names. In a footnote, which is will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, Hartright notes that Marian's diary has passages that have been omitted, although he assures the reader that these omitted passages "bear no reference to Miss Fairlie or to any persons with whom she is associated in these pages" (Collins, *The Woman* 162n). And finally, as will be discussed in the next chapter, Hartright in the third volume states "there were passages in [Marian's] diary, relating to myself, which she thought best that I should not see. Accordingly, she read to me from the manuscript, and I took the notes I wanted as she went on" (Collins, *The Woman* 436); this statement contradicts earlier statements that Hartright was the one to have edited Marian's diary.

³⁶ These two authorial prefaces are only separated by a few months: the 1860 preface is dated in August, and the 1861 preface is dated in February. Collins does not sign either preface, but he marks both with an address: Harley Street, London. Collins's home was 12 Harley Street, and it was at this residence that he wrote *The Woman in White*. While Collins does not include the number on Harley Street, he does carefully mark his prefaces with his location and the date.

knowledge, just as clearly and positively as he has spoken before them” (Collins, *The Woman* 9).

When read in sequence, the 1860 preface and Hartright’s opening paragraphs link the author and the narrator – while clearly two separate entities (one actual and one fictional), both operate within gendered positions of textual authors: the storyworld is at their fingertips and theirs to control. Collins and Hartright position themselves as the male authority figure in charge of a collective narrative society, a society which includes several women. Their writings are a form of patriarchal governance, one that produces truth but is also entertaining. Like Hartright, Collins claims to be creating a new narrative form, one that is rooted in the uses of witnesses in courts but that has never before appeared in novels. Collins’s preface postdates Hartright’s preamble, but Collins’s preface is placed before Hartright’s in the non-serialized editions of the novel: Collins’s preface is simultaneously temporally after Hartright’s and spatially before Hartright’s. Via his preface, Collins attempts to wrestle narrative control away from the fictional Hartright, to position himself as the sole male authority in the text or to signal Hartright as his authority by proxy (in much the same way as Hartright seeks to control Fairlie’s narrative in the text). Patriarchal order is always hierarchical: Hartright controls the narratives of other characters via his preface, and Collins controls the storyworld as well as the reader’s transport into the storyworld via his preface.

After two paragraphs on his narrative experiments, Collins then turns his 1860 preface to welcome his “English and American readers” who first encountered the narrative in its original periodical form and also his “new class of readers” who are encountering the narrative in volume form (*The Woman* 3; 4). His welcome to these old and new readers becomes another means of exerting his narratorial control and authority; through his welcome, he notes the trans-Atlantic reach of his literature and places himself next to Charles Dickens as a giant of literature. And then perhaps echoing the cries from Dickens’s readers to “spare Little Nell” in the serial edition of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Collins notes the feedback from his readers “to be careful how I treated them [Marian

and Laura]” (*The Woman* 4). Collins also discusses his use of “many models, some living, some dead” for Count Fosco in order to make the character “true to nature” (*The Woman* 4). Just as Hartright takes pains to assure his readers that the narrative is truthful, Collins takes similar pains to assure his readers that the narrative, while a fiction created by him, is representative of actual people and of plausible events. Moreover, he glosses over the changes he made to the text between the serial and volume publications: the novel “has been carefully revised; and that the divisions of the chapters, and other minor matters of the same sort, have been altered here and there with a view to smoothing and consolidating the story” (*The Woman* 4). Like Hartright, Collins notes his editing hand without listing the specifics of his changes; instead, he simply assures the readers that any changes are for the best.

He concludes the 1860 preface with an appeal to his literary critics, asking them not to spoil the ending of the narrative in their reviews and not to give away too many of the details of the plot: “If he [the critic] tells all, in any way whatever, is he doing a service to the reader, by destroying beforehand, two main elements in the attraction of all stories – the interest of curiosity, and the excitement of surprise?” (Collins, *The Woman* 5). Collins’s prefatory moves to control the reader’s experience with the narrative and to bolster his authority over the text extends to an attempt to control critiques and reviews of the narrative. He urges the critics not to ruin the fun of the story for the new readers. Collins wants the narrative to unfold naturally before the reader and to not have the reader’s expectations of the text colored by reviews. However, these desires are undercut by the very presence of Collins’s own preface; he insists on framing the narrative with his own words while simultaneously insisting the other men’s words on the text be limited or even completely omitted. Collins, like Hartright, seeks to be the sole voice of authority in the narrative.

All parts of the 1860 preface reinforce the idea that *The Woman in White* is a work of fiction created by Collins – an idea that is immediately negated by the first lines of the narrative itself as

Walter Hartright asserts his position as author and editor of the true story of Laura Fairlie. The preface and the narrative clash, and the reader must work to engage with the text as a collection of primary documents after the author's assertions about his writing processes. The crossing from the preface into the narrative is a rough one, requiring the reader to quickly reorient themselves from being told that the narrative is fiction to seeing the narrative as truthful (at least according to the narrators in the storyworld). Yet the key commonality that smooths this transition is the presence of a masculine organizational/authorial leader in both the actual world and the storyworld.

However, Collins's 1860 is not the only preface he wrote to *The Woman in White*. In 1861, he wrote a shorter preface. Noting the popularity of the novel, he states that "this volume scarcely stands in need of any prefatory introduction on [his] part" (Collins, *The Woman* 6) – and then he immediately moves into a prefatory introduction. Unlike the 1860 preface, which focused on the function and construction of the narrative, this second authentic authorial preface focuses on the narrative's basis in reality. While not the "true" story that the narrators assert it to be, *The Woman in White* is at least founded in legal fact: "The 'law' in this book has been discussed, since its publication, by more than one competent tribunal, and has been decided to be sound" (Collins, *The Woman* 6). As with the 1860 preface, the 1861 authentic authorial preface mirrors issues raised by Hartright in his fictive actorial preface – this time, however, the mirrored concern is about the law, not the narrative structure. Collins also addresses his reading public in this preface and acknowledges the role of the reader in not only making the novel successful but in justifying his claims that the narrative is well executed. And one of the reasons implied by Collins that his novel is well executed is that his readers can see themselves in the characters presented: "The only narrative which can hope to lay a strong hold on the attention of readers, is a narrative which interests them about men and women – for the perfectly obvious reason that they are men and women themselves" (Collins, *The Woman* 7). The "they" is, syntactically, the actual readers, but the "they"

could also refer to the characters as the previous sentence focuses on the need for realistic and believable characters; both the readers and the characters can be “men and women themselves.” The 1861 preface provides a smoother transition into the “truthfulness” of the storyworld. Where the 1860 preface repeatedly asserted that the novel was a work of fiction, the 1861 preface positions the narrative as factual fiction, as a fiction rooted in reality. The horrors presented in *The Woman in White* – a woman wrongly imprisoned by her husband in an asylum, the body of one woman mistaken for the body of another, a husband’s cruelties, the international intrigues of a spy ring – are technically fiction, but Collins takes pains to note that they are not complete fictions. Laura, Marian, Count Fosco, and the others are the workings of Collins’s imagination, but Collins argues that they are realistic (if not actually real) and that the events of the novel have an actual legal basis. As Matthew Rubery notes in *The Novelty of Newspapers*, part of the thrill of reading a sensation novel was the ways in which the novel pulled on true crimes and trials as reported in newspaper. In the 1861 preface, Collins explicitly links legalities of the storyworld to the legalities of the actual world. This connection to the courts further marks the content of the novel as illicit. Yet by also reinforcing that the novel, while based on facts, is still completely fictional, Collins’s preface operates within the parameters set by J. S. B. in “Observations on Prefaces” – Collins via the preface helps the reader to navigate the content of the narrative and to arrive safely at the story’s conclusion without mistaking the story as factual.

In *The Law and the Lady*, Collins eschews the preface in favor of a “NOTE: *Addressed to the Reader*” (6). Although Collins is adamant that he has “no Preface to write” for this novel (*The Law* 6), what the difference is between this note and a preface remains unclear. Collins addresses his audience as a singular reader and as “you,”³⁷ although the content of the prefatory note is likely not

³⁷ It is possible this singular reader addressed in the preface is John Forster, Charles Dickens’s biographer. Dickens died five years prior to the publication of *The Law and the Lady*, and Forster’s multi-volume *The Life of Charles Dickens* began

meant for just one person as it has been appended to a publication intended for a large readership. His tone signals his frustration, although the exact source of the frustration is also unclear. Is he responding to a critic (or to several critics)? To letters from readers? To other authors? Regardless of the obscured source of his frustration, it is clear that it is the misunderstandings on someone's part about the line between fiction and truth is the object of his frustration. He quips, "I have only to request that you will bear in mind certain established truths, which occasionally escape your memory when you are reading a work of fiction" (Collins, *The Law* 6). This preface steadfastly insists that the work is fiction – a claim that clashes with Valeria Brinton's position as author and editor of the central narrative. As with the prefaces to *The Woman in White*, authorial control is central to the preface of *The Law and the Lady*. Collins attempts to shape the reader's understanding of the narrative by reminding the reader that the work is a fiction and then by outlining how the reader should interact with the narrative. The narrative itself upends patriarchal order – at least temporarily: Valeria acts as an independent woman who operates largely outside of masculine control. The preface's reminder that the text is fiction provides a barrier between the storyworld and the actual world; however, that barrier is porous. The narrative may be fiction, but Collins again invokes the truthful foundations on which his fiction lies, much as he did in the prefaces to *The Woman in White*.

The rest of this note (which Collins claims is not a preface) instructs the reader in how to read not only *The Law and the Lady* but also fiction in general:

Be pleased, then to remember (First): That the actions of human beings are not invariably governed by the laws of pure reason. (Secondly): That we are by no means always in the habit of bestowing our love on the objects which are the most deserving of it, in the

publication the year after Dickens's death. Collins and Dickens were friends and collaborators, and Forster's jealousy over that relationship is evident in *The Life of Charles Dickens*: "The reader of John Forster's standard biography of Dickens will not sense the force of this relationship [between Collins and Dickens], Forster's jealousy of his own place near Dickens having influenced him to undervalue Collins" (B. Booth 113). However, while Collins may have had Forster in mind as a likely detractor of his fiction, there is no conclusive evidence pointing to such a link.

opinions of our friends. (Thirdly and Lastly): That characters which may not have appeared, and Events which may not have taken place, within the limits of our own individual experience, may nevertheless be perfectly natural Characters and perfectly probable Events, for all that. Having said these few words, I have said all that seems to be necessary at the present time, in presenting my new Story to your notice. (Collins, *The Law* 6)

One can almost see Collins's furrowed brow and gritted teeth as he wrote those sentences. As with the 1861 preface to *The Woman in White*, Collins seems to want both to have his work be read as truthful and verisimilar and to have his work be read as the product of his imagination. Moreover, he seems to be arguing that what this unidentified "you" has labeled as faults with the narrative are the very things that make the narrative realistic and believable. The fictional characters, like actual people, are not always rational. The fictional characters, like actual people, do not always fall in love with those their friends approve of. The fictional characters, like actual people, may not be like characters/people we know, but that does not make them any less realistic. It is their flawed nature that makes these characters verisimilar. According to Collins, just because "you" have not experienced events such as the ones detailed in the narrative, it doesn't mean that the events haven't happened to someone or that the events are impossible. The limits of the actual lived experiences of this "you" are not the limits of reality; therefore, the limits of the actual lived experiences of this "you" are not a reliable yardstick for the verisimilitude of the narrative. Collins's argument is somewhat circular – the real is embedded in the fiction, making the fiction an extension of the real; so while the fiction is not real, it is in a sense the truth. However, while he does not have the ability to describe it as such, what Collins is describing is the theory of minimal departure – that the actual reader assumes the storyworld is aligned with the actual world unless given cues otherwise. Valeria's storyworld, while fictional, is very similar to the actual world, and the actual Victorian reader can

(and perhaps should) simultaneously consider the characters as fictional and real, as of the storyworld and of the actual world.

Collins's prefatory note on minimal departure is echoed and queered by an embedded prefatory note in the narrative. In the second paragraph of volume two's first chapter, Valeria comments on the transcript of Eustace's trial. She finds "a Note" on "the second page of the Trial" transcripts (Collins, *The Law* 119). This fictional note to the fictional trial "assure[s] the reader of the absolute correctness of the Report of the Proceedings" (Collins, *The Law* 119). "The reader" of the trial's prefatory note is, at first blush, the intradiegetic reader – that is characters in the storyworld like Valeria who might read the transcripts. But it is also, via minimal departure, the actual extradiegetic reader; Valeria reproduces the entire trial transcript, thereby conflating the intra- and extradiegetic readers and further minimizing the distance between the storyworld and the actual world. Valeria remarks, "It was some relief to me to discover this Note, and to be satisfied at the outset that the Story of the Trial was, in every particular, fully and truly told" (Collins, *the Law* 119). Interestingly, this fictional prefatory note, which assures the fictional reader within the storyworld of the truthfulness of the transcript, is immediately followed by a list of "the actors in the Judicial Drama" (Collins, *The Law* 119). Even the format of the list of "actors" at the trial mimics the presentation of characters at the start of plays; the first three names on the list, which set the formatting pattern for the rest of the names, look like this:

THE LORD JUSTICE CLERK,	}	Judges on the Bench.
LORD DRUMFENNICK,		
LORD NOBLEKIRK		

The "note" before the trial and the list of "the actors" following the note provide an interesting tension between the truthful and the fictional, with the note attempting to prove the accuracy of the following material and the list overlaying connotations of theater, fiction, and entertainment onto

the reading of the trial. And this connection between trials and public entertainment was not uncommon during the nineteenth century. In addition to accurately finding the innocence or guilt of accused parties, trials were also public spectacles – along with any accompanying executions. While the findings of the court should be truthful, there was also the expectation of entertainment in court proceedings (at least for those parties not directly involved in the trial).

In the opening of the second volume, novel, trial transcript, drama, and preface forms all collide, and in this collision, the distance between the world of the narrative and the world of the actual reader nearly vanishes: fiction, fact, and factual fiction blur into one another. Moreover, the speed with which Valeria moves from the truth of the trial's preface to the "actors" in the trial is startling – and in many respects, her quick movements between the two echo the sudden shift from Collins's prefatory notes on the novel as a factual fiction and Valeria's opening statements on the truthfulness of her narrative. The movement between the "truth" of the trial according to its note and the description of the participants in the trial as "actors" mirrors Collins's prefatory statement on real and fictional "characters." He describes people in the actual world as "characters," noting that the actual reader not having encountered such "characters" in the actual world does not negate their existence in the actual work; in short, Collins argues that just because "you" don't know such people doesn't mean they don't exist – there are worlds, both actual and story, that exist outside of an individual's view/perception. As with his work in *The Woman in White*, *The Law and the Lady* focuses on the intersection of gender and law through marriage rites and rights. While Hartright in *The Woman in White* works to contain and control the female narrators in the text by asserting his role as editor, Valeria Brinton has more consistent control of her own narrative in *The Law and the Lady*. With the exception of transcripts of the court proceedings and of various diaries and letters, Valeria's is the dominant voice in the text; she only surrenders narrative control when primary documents are needed to support her story, and she consistently surrounds these embedded

documents with her own opinions about their contents. As the (possibly) titular lady³⁸ of *The Law and the Lady*, Valeria, while working to maintain her femininity, engages in the decidedly unfeminine tasks of becoming a private investigator and an author. In his preface, Collins notes the fictionality of the novel's particulars, but he also attempts to frame the broader generalities of the narrative as being based in the actual world of the reader. While Valeria is fictional, women do indeed enter into traditionally male spheres such as private investigation and writing either as career women or as dilettantes. Collins's preface, however, also serves the additional role of controlling the gendered and sexual deviances presented in the text by enforcing their fictionality. In allowing the reader to see these non-normative characters and actions as safely contained within the storyworld – as having little to no connection to the reader's actual world – the deviances can be written off as mere fictions. There is no danger of meeting these sorts of people in the real world; they are safely stowed in the pages of the narratives.

Moreover, in explicitly acknowledging that human actions are rarely governed by reason, Collins dismantles the notion that men are the rational sex and women the irrational sex; rationality is not the domain of either men or women, and in *The Law and the Lady*, if any character can have a claim to being the most rational, it is Valeria, a claim that undermines the Cartesian mind-body split by aligning a woman with logic. Most of the male characters in *The Law and the Lady* are ruled by their emotions: Eustace is described by Valeria as being susceptible to wild mood swings, and he flees the country once Valeria discovers his history; Major Fitz-David, who passively assists Valeria in her search for the truth, is shaped by his vanity and lust; and Miserrimus Dexter, another of Valeria's reluctant male assistants, is literally half a man (born with a body that ends at his waist) whose sanity is questionable and who is deeply interested in "womanly" crafts such as needlework.

³⁸ The novel never specifies who the "lady" is. It is also possible Sara Macallan is the "lady" of the title. It is also possible that both Sara and Valeria are that "lady," with the later replacing the former as the lady of the house and as the narrative's centerpiece.

In the preface, Collins asks his reader to bear in mind that “the actions of *human beings* are not invariably governed by the laws of pure reason” (*The Law* 6, my emphasis) – in using a gender neutral term, Collins subtly removes the link between woman and emotion and men and reason, a removal that is continued in the narrative. Following Collins’s warnings to the reader about both the fictionality of the narrative and the kernel of truth about human behavior that informs the narrative, the storyworld contains a deviant woman who is subversively as legitimate as the men, deviant or otherwise. The men and women in the story are deeply flawed – and Collins argues that these flaws are what make them factual fictions: no real woman is ever as good as the mythical “angel in the house,” and few real women in contemporary England had the freedom and agency afforded to Valeria; yet, somewhere between these extremes, women exist in the actual world.

While Collins attempts to clarify the difference between himself as the actual author of his novels and his narrating characters in his prefaces, the author of *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* blurs the distinction between fact and fiction in his narrative. The novel opens with a separated, labeled introduction by Mr. Cambon (no first name given) that frames the central narrative; the author of the central narrative is allegedly Jack Saul – but whether Saul is an actual author or a fictive author (perhaps based on a real person) is debatable. There was a historical Jack Saul in Victorian London; he was a prostitute who testified in the Cleveland Street scandal and trial in 1889.³⁹ *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* was published in 1881, several years before the historical Saul came into the mainstream public eye via reports of the Cleveland Street scandal and trial. However, at the time of publication, the historical Saul was already a well-known figure in London’s sexual underground.

There is no evidence that the historical Saul wrote or was involved with the publication of *The Sins of*

³⁹ In the 2014 introduction to Valancourt edition of *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, editor Wolfram Setz provides information on the historical Saul: “In 1889, the Cleveland Street scandal caused a stir, being concerned with the telegram messengers in the service of Queen Victoria, who earned some extra money [as prostitutes serving a same-sex clientele] in a house on Cleveland Street. In the trial Jack (or John) Saul is one of the most important witnesses, ‘by then in his late thirties’ and ‘still a professional Mary-Anne’” (ix).

the Cities of the Plain. Wolfram Setz argues that James Campbell Reddie was the likely author of the novel, even though he died three years prior to the novel's publication and likely had an unnamed co-author working on the project with him (xvi-xvii).

Regardless of the identity of the actual author, Cambon provides an "Introduction" to the narrative attributed to Saul. This preface-writer, who refers to himself as "the writer of these notes" (*The Sins* 3) in the opening sentence and who is only named via dialogue later in the introduction, recounts meeting Saul and having multiple sexual encounters with him. Saul in the central narrative addresses his memoir to "Sir" (*The Sins* 10), not to Cambon – in fact, Cambon's name is so buried in the text and so infrequently used that the incautious reader may miss his name. Cambon's name may be easy to miss, but the illicit nature of the narrative is not; *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* immediately⁴⁰ and explicitly takes same-sex desire as its focus and as the rationale for presenting the narrative itself. During post-coital conversation Cambon "asked him [Saul] how he had come to acquire such a decided taste for gamahuching, to do it so deliciously as he did" (*The Sins* 7). When Saul replies that his story is too long to recount at the moment, Cambon offers to pay Saul to write down his narrative: "And the arrangement was made for him to compile me 'The Recollections of a Mary-Ann,' which I suggested ought to be the title, although he seemed not at all to like the name as applied to himself" (*The Sins* 7). The sex-for-pay turns into writing-for-pay, but the goal of both the paid sexual encounters and the paid memoir is sexual pleasure, both for the fictional Cambon and the actual reader. The writing deal is sealed, according to the preface, with a sound round of sado-masochistic birching. In fact, each round of writing and revision concludes with (is rewarded by?) "a delicious turn at bottom-fucking" (*The Sins* 10).

⁴⁰ The illicit contents of the narrative are first forecast by the novel's title which references the biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah. While the biblical story of these cities does not explain what the sins of these people were or why exactly God destroyed their cities, Sodom and Gomorrah over the centuries became a by-word for sexual sins, with Sodom becoming synonymous with sexual "deviances" between two men.

In Cambon's preface, writing and what he explicitly calls "fucking" between men are closely entwined actions. Writing and fucking are both actions that require activity – and production – on part of the participant(s); the writer and the lover must each work to achieve their end goals and to satisfy their reader and lover. Reading and sexual voyeurism, on the other hand, require a different level of engagement. *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* plays with these roles of writer/reader and lover/watcher. In many respects, Saul does the work of the text: he is both author and lover/prostitute throughout. Cambon, like the reader, occupies a more passive role as the author's patron and as the lover-turned-voyeur. By the end of his introduction, Cambon apparently grows weary of his own sexual encounters.⁴¹ He turns to voyeurism:

A week after this first introduction Jack came again, and brought the first instalment of his rough notes, from which this MS. is compiled. *Of course* at each visit we had a delicious turn at bottom-fucking, but as *the recital of the same kind of thing over and over again* is likely to pall upon my readers, I *shall omit a repetition* of our numerous orgies of lust, *all very similar* to the foregoing, and content myself by a *simple recital of his adventures*. (*The Sins* 10, my emphasis)

Thus ends the preface. Much like other prefaces, this one offers an explanation of how the central narrative came into being. Cambon's preface asserts the truthfulness of the central narrative and casts the central narrative as another man's memoir. However, the content of *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain's* preface is a radical departure from that of the others discussed in this chapter. The other prefaces are primarily concerned with accounting for the creation of the central narrative and with telling the reader how to read the central narrative. Cambon's preface relegates such concerns to a more minor position and highlights the sexual encounters between himself and Saul.

⁴¹ In *Unauthorized Pleasures: Accounts of Victorian Erotic Experiences*, Ellen Bayuk Rosenman asks, "Is sex monotonous? Judging from characterizations of pornography, one would be inclined to say yes. Pornography is accused of representing the same thing over and over again, mindlessly repeating sexual episodes that, except for some peripheral window dressing (or undressing), are basically alike" (194). Rosenman's questions echo Cambon's statements about growing weary of his own sexcapades – his interest in Saul's sexual adventures alleviates his boredom with his own sex life and allows him to live vicariously through Saul, much as *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* might do for its actual reader.

While this emphasis on sex is certainly not surprising in a pornographic novel, what is surprising is the casual way same-sex desire and other non-normative desires are treated in the text. Cambon picks up Saul from Leicester Square. Attracted by his “tight-fitting clothes” and “that lump in his trousers” (*The Sins* 3), Cambon invites Saul to his home. On the first night, after a fine dinner, they kiss, they “frig” themselves and each other, they “gamahuche,” they engage in “birching,” and they “bottom fuck.” It is notable that these sexual terms are not defined or commented on: “frigging” is masturbation (either by oneself or by one’s partner), “gamahuche” is fellatio, “birching” is a whipping, and “bottom fucking” is anal sex. By simply dropping in these terms without explanation, Cambon subtly naturalizes the storyworld of London’s homosexual culture. The uninitiated can work out the meanings of the terms from the context: “‘Now kneel down and gamahuche me,’ I [Cambon] said [to Saul], ‘whilst I can frig your lovely prick with my foot’” (*The Sins* 6). Prefaces are often explanatory, but Cambon’s preface refuses to explain the world of gay men to the reader. In focusing on how he met Saul and how the subsequent narrative was created, Cambon immediately normalizes the storyworld – the lives of gay men is not extraordinary or in need of explanation to outsiders according to the preface; what is extraordinary is Saul’s willingness to write an account of his experiences and Cambon’s chance encounter with Saul.

Cambon, however, quickly tires of recounting his own repeated encounters with Saul. Of the forty-nine preface paragraphs, only nine paragraphs address how the manuscript was written, and at least half of those paragraphs also include mentions of sex as well as writing. The rest focus on sex. But having detailed the sexual pleasures of that first night, Cambon forebears the particulars of their subsequent sexual encounters. Having delivered the manuscript to him, Cambon (presumably like the reader) is more interested in the voyeuristic pleasure associated with reading Saul’s narrative and in learning about the life of a prostitute and other people’s sexual encounters. Cambon fades quietly into the background after the preface. The reader hears no more from him. He does not interject

himself into Saul's narrative. He does not conclude the narrative with a postface. The narrative is divided into two volumes, and the second volume does not contain any prefatory remarks. The second volume opens with the title "JACK SAUL'S RECOLLECTIONS (*continued*): SOME FROLICS WITH BOULTON AND PARK." After the title interlude, the narrative continues with Saul visiting Ernest Boulton (also known as Stella) and Frederick Park (also known as Fanny).⁴² Having brought the narrative to the reader, Cambon disappears.

Cambon's preface is a multi-faceted boundary crossing. It moves from the everyday to the demimonde, from the assumptions of a heteronormative society to the world of queer men and sex-for-pay. It situates writing as an act parallel to prostitution and reading as an act parallel to voyeurism, and it introduces the novice to the world of vice. It is a literal introduction to the worlds of prostitution and homosexuality through Cambon. Cambon introduces himself to Saul on the streets and then introduces Saul to his readers via the preface; Saul, in turn, introduces Cambon and the reader to the wider world of queer men in London. Moreover, in couching the preface in an alleged memoir and by having the fictional character share the name and traits of the actual Jack Saul, Cambon's preface reminds the readers that the line between the storyworld and the actual world is very fine.

Unlike the prefaces of *The Woman in White*, *The Law and the Lady*, and *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, all of which are written by clearly marked authors (be they actual or actorial), the preface to Stoker's *Dracula* is not signed or attributed to Stoker or to any of the characters. Stoker employs the multi-voiced format that Collins claims to have pioneered decades earlier in *The Woman in White*. Yet,

⁴² While Saul would not become a well-known figure in newspapers until several years after the publication of *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, Boulton and Park were already (in)famous in the wake of their arrests and trials in 1870 and 1871. Moreover, *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* was published the same year as Park's death, perhaps attempting to capitalize on Boulton's and Park's names. Interestingly, the narrative does not explain who any of these people are; the fictional characters intermingle with characters based on actual people with no distinction between the fictive and the real. There are no footnotes to help the uninitiated reader understand these characters. So a reader unfamiliar with the Boulton and Park case could misread the Fanny and Stella sections as being about fictional characters rather than real people.

unlike Collins, Stoker does not open his text with his rationale for using a multi-voiced narrative – rather he allows the narrative to seem “naturally” multi-voiced. He does not point out the technique – the technique simply emerges from the narrative and is forecast by the preface. And the preface opens the narrative with a tease and a mystery: papers have been put together by someone about something for some purpose, but the reader is not given any clues as to the content of the narrative. Instead, the author of preface is more intent on discussing the truthfulness and accuracy of the narrative and less interested in preparing the reader for the content of the narrative, leaving the reader as surprised as the narrators and characters as the plot of a vampiric invasion of London unfolds. The brief preface to Stoker’s *Dracula* occupies a less certain position within Genette’s taxonomy. The preface has no signature, no use of first-person, and no marker of whether the preface-writer is intradiegetic or extradiegetic. A nameless author opens the narrative, which is itself written, recorded, transcribed, and/or pasted in by multiple characters, with a statement on the collective and collaborative nature of the central text:

How these papers have been placed in sequence will be made manifest in the reading of them. All needless matters have been eliminated, so that a history almost at variance with the possibilities of later-day belief may stand forth as simple fact. There is throughout no statement of past things wherein memory may err, for all the records chosen are exactly contemporary, given from the stand-points and within the range of knowledge of those who made them. (Stoker 5)

The preface could be read as an authentic authorial preface or as a fictive actorial preface. Over the course of the narrative, Mina emerges as the most likely writer of the preface, but that disclosure unfolds slowly and in pieces. But there is no definitive conclusive evidence of who the author of this separated preface is. Given its position between the title page, marking a male author, and the opening chapter, written by a male character, the reader can be forgiven for assuming a male voice

in the preface. And this assumption of a male preface-writer dovetails with Mina's various "masculine" traits as described by other characters. As Van Helsing remarks, "Ah, that wonderful Madam Mina! She has man's brains – a brain that a man should have were he much gifted – and a woman's heart. [...] You tell me she has wrote all, then she must consult with us [...]" (Stoker 207). Van Helsing has just learned of Mina's transcription efforts (which had been disclosed to the reader several chapters prior along with Mina's role in putting the transcribed texts in chronological order – in the order of the final narrative), and in learning of her efforts, Van Helsing explicitly recasts her as a "mannish" woman, much like Hartright's casting of Marian in *The Woman in White*. Mina gains agency throughout the narrative. No mere damsel in distress, Mina's activities are central to the defeat of the vampire. If the preface is by Mina, it is yet another example from the narrative of the ways in which gender expectations and performances are queered: the assumed male voice of the preface is most likely (but not certainly) a woman's voice.

If Mina is not the preface-writer, Jonathan is the next most likely candidate. The papers that make up the body of the narrative are last seen in his hands at the end of the novel. In his concluding note, which operates as a fictive actorial postface, Jonathan writes:

I took the papers from the safe where they had been ever since our return so long ago. We [Jonathan and Mina] were struck with the fact, that in all the mass of material of which the record is composed, there is hardly one authentic document; nothing but a mass of typewriting, except the later note-books of Mina and Seward and myself, and Van Helsing's memorandum. We could hardly ask any one, even did we wish to, to accept these as proofs of so wild a story. Van Helsing summed it all up as he said, with our boy on his knee: –

"We want no proofs; we ask none to believe us! This boy will some day know what a brave and gallant woman his mother is. Already he knows her sweetness and loving care;

later on he will understand how some men so loved her, that they did dare much for her sake.” (Stoker 326-327)

If Jonathon is the preface author, then his postfatory remarks conflict with his prefatory remarks. The preface asserts the truthfulness and accuracy of the documents, but the postface states that most of the documents are transcriptions of originals and that the originals have all been lost. The act of transcription opens the door for error – that which is copied from lost documents cannot be verified. The narrative certainty of the preface fades by the postface. Moreover, Jonathan is careful to note Mina’s agency in recording the various narratives – without her work, there would be no record, original or transcribed, of the early events of the narrative. Without supporting original documents, trust must be placed in Mina’s ability to faithfully and unerringly transcribe. As the invisible hand of transcription, Mina’s work is essential to the men’s destruction of Dracula. If Jonathan is the preface-writer, perhaps his statements on the authenticity of the narrative is the first of many chivalric acts by the male characters to protect female characters.

Yet if so, the proclamation of the truth of the narrative subverts itself; when a character loudly insists on the accuracy of an account without provocation, the careful reader has reason to immediately doubt the accuracy. In proclaiming the accuracy of his wife’s work, Jonathan, perhaps unwittingly, casts doubt on the narrative before it begins. However, if Mina is the preface author, a different tension between the preface and postface arises: the contradiction between a woman’s account and a man’s account. Perhaps the difference between the preface’s certainty and the postface’s doubt can be traced to the difference in Mina’s and Jonathan’s experiences with Dracula. Jonathan, while threatened by the vampire women in Dracula’s home, is not bitten by them, whereas Mina is bitten by Dracula and falls under his sway. She experiences the power of the vampire firsthand, and Jonathon does not. The difference may account for her certainty and his doubt.

Dracula, like *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, is a more overtly queer text, especially in its American edition. Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal note in their critical edition of *Dracula*:

In all British editions, Dracula says only: “To-morrow night, to-morrow night is yours,” but in the 1899 American edition, this sentence begins with the line “To-night is mine,” stating baldly that Dracula plans to feed on Jonathan. Stoker’s deletion of this sentence was understandable, for it leads to a different novel, one probably unpublishable in 1897 England; Stoker may have imagined that the America that produced his hero Walt Whitman would be more tolerant of men feeding on men. (Stoker 52n)

Even without the American addition of Dracula’s lust for Jonathan’s blood, *Dracula* is a novel that continually subverts gender norms. Lucy entertains four suitors at once. Her suitors are frequently more interested in each other than in her. Mina is seduced away from her husband. Three undead women attempt a banquet/orgy with Jonathan as the centerpiece. Yet even before the central narrative opens, the preface begins to queer the story. *Dracula*’s preface appears after the dedication and before the first chapter. The dedication is clearly an authentic authorial piece; Stoker dedicates the text his friend “Hommy-Beg,” a nickname for Hall Caine (3). The first chapter is marked as “Jonathan Harker’s Journal” (Stoker 9). The preface, unsigned, sits between the two and refuses to account for itself: the preface offers an explanation while simultaneously opening new gaps and pointing to an utter lack of clarity. It can be read as a Collins-esque explanation of the multi-voiced narrative structure. It can be read as Jonathan’s attempt to control the narrative, a narrative bookended by his voice. It can be read as Mina’s interruption into the narrative that has been bookended with her husband’s doubting voice. Each variation is plausible, but none is a certainty.

This ambiguity presented in the preface extends into the central narrative: Mina’s role as a “New Woman” undercuts masculine authority, and Dracula’s invasion of English soil undercuts imperial authority. *Dracula* centers on the instability of the world – and while the literal vampires of

the narrative are no threat to the reader, many of the other threats, specifically the threats associated with subverting gendered norms, do cross from the storyworld into the actual world. The veneer of safety, certainly, and control presented in the preface is undercut time and again in the narrative. Potentially read as a voice of masculine authority, the preface stands in contrast to the impotent men in the narrative – men who cannot protect Lucy, Mina, or England and whose triumph in the final pages comes at a great cost. The discovery of Mina’s hand in the creation and survival of the narrative makes her role as the preface-writer all the more likely, and her position as the preface-writer is, as seen in other narratives discussed in this chapter, one of control and authority, realms of the masculine rather than the feminine in the nineteenth century. He who controls the preface controls the reader’s entrance into the storyworld and controls the central narrative. Yet she who controls the preface without revealing her identity undermines ideas about narrative control and queers gendered notions of authority and authorship.

Nonfiction & Prefaces: *Kama Sutra* and *My Secret Life*

Burton’s translation of *Kama Sutra* is doubly prefaced. It opens with a brief essay labeled as “Preface,” and then it continues with a longer essay labeled as “Introduction.” In the second paragraph of the preface, Burton provides an overview of the text’s structure: the “Preface” focuses on the life and works of the author of *Kama Sutra*, Vatsya; the “Introduction” will focus on historical and cultural contexts for the central text; and then the original Sanskrit narrative will follow the prefatory materials:

While the Introduction will deal with the evidence concerning the date of the writing, and the commentaries written upon it, the chapters following the Introduction will give a translation of the work itself. It is, however, advisable to furnish here a brief analysis of works of the same nature, prepared by authors who lived and wrote years after Vatsya had

passed away, but who considered him as the great authority, and always quoted him as the chief guide to Hindoo [sic] erotic literature. (*Kama Sutra* xxix)

This passage is the first mention of the text as an erotic text; the paragraph previous to this passage focuses instead on the text's exploration of "love": "In the literature of all countries there will be found a certain number of works treating especially of love" (Burton, *Kama Sutra* xxix). Burton notes that *Kama Sutra* is "the standard work on love in Sanscrit [sic] literature" and that the words "Kama Sutra" translate as "Aphorisms on Love" (*Kama Sutra* xxix). The novice reader might be forgiven for briefly misunderstanding the focus of *Kama Sutra* as a text on romantic – perhaps even chaste – love. But any potential for misreading is eliminated by Burton's subsequent statements on the *Kama Sutra* as "the chief guide to Hindoo erotic literature" (xxix).

The bulk of the preface identifies and summarizes other erotic works "procurable" (*Kama Sutra* xxix) – a word laden with connotations of sex, especially sex for pay – from medieval India. The preface ends with an erotic description of a woman and an address to Burton's English readers. Burton describes the Lotus woman, or the *Padmini*, as "the type of most perfect feminine excellence": "Her face is pleasing as the full moon; her body, well clothed with flesh, is soft as the Shiras or mustard flower, her skin is fine, tender and fair as the yellow lotus, never dark colored. [...] Her bosom is hard, full and high [...]. Her yuni resembles the opening lotus bud, and her love seed (Kama salila) is perfumed like the lily that has newly burst" (*Kama Sutra* xxxii). His use of the present tense and emphasis on sensory details teasingly implies an immediacy and intimacy, as though Burton is describing a woman standing before his eyes as he writes – or as though to conjure an erotic image for the reader of a readily available woman. After this description, which is carefully couched in a scholarly preface, Burton teases the reader with lists of other kinds of women and "their days of enjoyment, their various seats of passion, the manner in which they may be manipulated and treated in sexual intercourse" (*Kama Sutra* xxxii) – but unfortunately, "the details [of

these women] are so numerous, and the subjects so seriously dealt with, and at such length, that neither time nor space will permit of their being given here” (*Kama Sutra* xxxiii). A reader looking for erotic thrills in a scholarly translation would have been well baited by Burton’s tease.

Burton’s intermingling of the erotic and the scholarly is a queering of genre boundaries – academia is typically not the place one seeks sexual thrills. Moreover, Burton directly links the storyworlds of his preface and the central narrative to his contemporary British reader’s actual world. The sexual pleasures to be experienced in medieval India are roughly the same as those to be experienced in late nineteenth-century Great Britain. The Lotus woman, so erotically and immediately described by Burton, may be a figure from medieval India, but her traits – her body and her sexual desires – cross the centuries; remove the exotic markers of Hindu culture (the references to the lotus blossom, the Hokila bird, and the Brahmins), and the Lotus woman could be any woman from any time or culture. Should the incautious reader miss the parallels to contemporary culture, Burton concludes the preface with explicit links between medieval India and contemporary England. Subsequent to the description of the Lotus woman and the brief mentions of other types of women, Burton discusses “one work in the English language [that] is somewhat similar to these works of the Hindoos [sic]” (*Kama Sutra* xxxiii). Written by “T. Bell, M.D.,”⁴³ *Kalogynomia: or the Laws of Female Beauty*, “illustrated with twenty-four plates,”⁴⁴ is a treatise on women’s beauty and on sexual intercourse (Burton, *Kama Sutra* xxxiii). Burton also recommends *The Elements of Social Science or Physical, Sexual, and Natural Religion, with a Solution of Social Problems* “by a Doctor of Medicine,

⁴³ “T. Bell” is “thought to be” the pseudonym of John Roberton, a Scottish surgeon and author of several works of “pseudo-medical erotica” (B. White 418).

⁴⁴ Burton does not tell his reader what the plates illustrate. Are they anatomical drawings of reproductive systems? Are they erotic drawings of sex acts? Are they a mix of the two – or neither? The thorough researcher who decides to find Bell’s book will encounter a prefatory “nota bene” about the plates: of the twenty-four total plates, “Plates 10, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 24 should not be carelessly exposed either to Ladies or Young Persons. These Plates are therefore stitched up separately” (i). In the subsequent description of the plates, plate ten, for example, is listed as “External Views of the Male and Female Organs of Generation” (Bell ii), and plate twenty-four shows “Common Displacement of the Uterus” (Bell iv). Plates fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen – plates deemed by Bell as suitable for all readers – present three different views of *Venus de Milo*.

London, Edward Truelove, 256, High Holborn” (*Kama Sutra* xxxiii).⁴⁵ Both Bell’s and Truelove’s texts can be read as scholarly treatises on sexuality or as erotica (in much the same way as the *Kama Sutra* can produce two such readings), and Bell’s and Truelove’s works were condemned as obscene during the nineteenth century (just as Burton’s *Kama Sutra* was).⁴⁶ With these two recommendations, Burton works to further close the gap between the storyworld of *Kama Sutra* and the actual world of the reader; not only do the contents of *Kama Sutra* have relevance to contemporary readers, but the eager researcher into matters of sexuality now has two additional texts to consult.

In the preface’s final two paragraphs, Burton attempts to hammer home the closeness of the storyworld to the actual world. He transitions from the scholarly to the personal:

After the perusal of the Hindoo work, and of the English books above mentioned, the reader will understand the subject, at all events *from a materialistic, realistic and practical point of view*. If all science is founded more or less on a stratum of facts, *there can be no harm in making known to mankind generally certain matters intimately connected with their private, domestic, and social life*.

Alas! *complete ignorance* of them has unfortunately *wrecked many a man and many a woman*, while a little knowledge of a subject generally ignored by the masses would have enabled numbers of people to have understood many things which they believed to be quite incomprehensible, or which were not thought worthy of their consideration. (Burton *Kama Sutra* xxxiii, my emphasis)

⁴⁵ Truelove is, wonderfully, not a pseudonym. He was an English doctor and a “radical publisher” (D’Arcy 429); an advocate for contraception, his publications led to charges of obscenity, and “the resulting trials gave much publicity to the contraceptive movement in England” (Lieberman 318). Unfortunately, Burton gets his citation wrong in attributing *The Elements of Social Science or Physical, Sexual, and Natural Religion, with a Solution of Social Problems* to Edward Truelove; the book was actually written by George Drysdale. In his preface, Drysdale thanks Edward Truelove “for the service he has done me in its publication” (front matter). For the sake of clarity in quoting from Burton on the book, however, I will follow Burton in naming Truelove as the author.

⁴⁶ For more on Bell’s and Truelove’s work, including charges of indecency and obscenity, see Brenda M. White’s “Medical Police. Politics and Police: The Fate of John Roberton” and F. D’Arcy’s “The Malthusian League and the Resistance to Birth Control Propaganda in Late Victorian Britain.”

Burton directly implores his British readers to apply the lessons of *Kama Sutra* to their own lives. He asks them to imagine both the damage done by their ignorance and the possibilities stemming from their enlightenment. He also places sex squarely in the sciences and scholarship – rather than being a sordid topic, sex is an object worthy of study (and perhaps an object of study for which the dictum “practice makes perfect” holds true). In switching between the erotic and the scholarly in the preface, Burton allows two possible entryways into the central narrative: one possible reader is explicitly looking for sexual thrills, and the other is explicitly approaching the text for objective knowledge. But the two entryways do converge – the seeker of erotica might learn something, and the seeker of knowledge might find subjective pleasures in the pages. But either way, the preface – especially these concluding paragraphs – blurs what might seem the safe historical, geographic, and cultural border between the world of British men and women and the world of instructive *Padmini*.

While the preface explicitly addresses the erotic content of the central narrative, Burton’s “Introduction” assumes a more scholarly tone – any passions aroused by the description of the Lotus woman are quickly doused in cold water. The majority of the introduction is devoted to providing context for the translation and attempting to locate the year of the original publication. According to Burton, the exact time during which Vatsya lived and wrote is not known; however, he attempts to extrapolate a possible date range based on the various historical references provided in Vatsya’s writing. While most of the introduction is concerned with Burton’s attempts to uncover information about this lost author, the introduction opens with Burton’s role in rediscovering *Kama Sutra*. He notes that he kept finding references to “the sage Vatsya” in another text he was translating,⁴⁷ so “naturally questions were asked [by Burton] who the sage was, and the pundits

⁴⁷ This other text is *Anunga Runga*, a medieval Sanskrit text about sex and love which Burton co-edited with Frederick Foster Arbuthnot. *Anunga Runga* was originally Arbuthnot’s project, and he later enlisted Burton’s help in “finishing” the translation (Lutz 209). However, Burton, “finding [Arbuthnot’s] creation ‘rather dull,’ [...] reworked it, not only giving it a bright grace but subtly infusing it with his own thoughts on sex and love, especially in evidence in the introduction,

replied that Vatsya was the author of the standard work on love in Sanscrit literature, no Sanscrit library was complete without his work, and that it was most difficult now to obtain in its entire state” (Burton, *Kama Sutra* xxxv). So while Vatsya was unknown to the colonizers, his work was well known by the colonized as their cultural “standard,” perhaps further whetting Burton’s desire to uncover Vatsya’s works.

Burton took the original scattered versions of *Kama Sutra* and, in true colonial fashion, “improved” them: “Copies having been obtained [from “libraries in Benares, Calcutta, and Jeypoor”], they were then compared with each other, and with the aid of a commentary called ‘Jayamaugta’ a revised copy of the entire manuscript was prepared, and from this copy the English transition was made” (*Kama Sutra* xxxv). The “chief pundit,” whom Burton does not name, certifies in Burton’s introduction that “the accompanying manuscript [in Sanskrit] is corrected by me after comparing four different copies of the work” (*Kama Sutra* xxxv), and this pundit notes:

This work is not to be used merely as an instrument for satisfying our desires. A person acquainted with the true principles of this science, who preserves his Dharma (virtue or religious merit), his Artha (worldly wealth) and his Kama (pleasure or sensual gratification), and who has regard to the customs of the people, is sure to obtain the mastery over his senses. In short, an intelligent and knowing person, attending to Dharma and Artha and also to Kama, without becoming the slave of his passions, will obtain success in everything he may do. (*Kama Sutra* xxxvi)

Burton inserts this pundit’s words without commentary into the introduction. The pundit’s warning that sexual pleasure is not the sole purpose of the text echoes Burton’s view in the preface that there are historical as well as practical purposes to reading the narrative. The pundit also hints that, while

conclusion, and annotations” (Lutz 209). Arbuthnot and Burton’s *Anunga Runga* was not published until 1885, two years after *Kama Sutra*, but the translation work on *Anunga Runga* predates the start of work on *Kama Sutra*.

there is greater knowledge to be gleaned from the text, erotic accounts await the reader, hints echoing Burton's erotically charged description of the Lotus woman in the preface.

Because Burton does not identify this "chief pundit," the reader may assume him (and the pundit is identified by Burton as male) to be Indian, especially given the etymological link between "pundit" and "pandit": "a learned or wise person; a person with knowledge of Sanskrit and Indian philosophy, religion, and law; a Hindu priest or teacher[;] sometimes used as a title of respect" ("pundit, n."). If this pundit is an Indian scholar, then his embedded introductory words can be read as a warning not to eroticize or exoticize the people or the culture that produced and continues to read the narrative. Moreover, this erasure of the man's name mirrors the larger erasure of native identities via colonialization even as his discussion of Hindu culture attempts to make the culture of the colonized not only visible to the British but also historically significant. The chief pundit's promises that the text can give the reader "success in everything he may do" (*Kama Sutra* xxxvi) are firmly couched in Hindu cultural references, perhaps signaling that the text – and the rewards to be gained by following its principles – are only for Hindu peoples, not British. The pundit not only claims the historical value of *Kama Sutra* but notes the practical applications for the information in the text – applications perhaps only meant for Indian populations or perhaps, as Burton asserts in the preface, meant for any and all readers (Hindu or Christian, Indian or British, male or female, scholarly or lay).

However, this chief pundit may not be an Indian scholar. He may be Frederick Foster Arbuthnot, the man with whom Burton translated *Ananga Runga*: "Arbuthnot carried on an extensive search throughout India for multiple copies, since many were incomplete or corrupted, settling finally on three Benares, Calcutta, and Jaipur."⁴⁸ Using the same process as with the *Ananga Runga*, [Arbuthnot] had an English version ready for Burton to peruse when he arrived in Bombay

⁴⁸ These are the same three cities Burton identifies in the introduction; he spells "Jaipur" as "Jeypoor."

[...]” (Lutz 211-212). Why would Burton fail to acknowledge Arbuthnot as the person who collected the various manuscripts? Why would he cloak a fellow English scholar in language connoting a Hindu scholar? Perhaps in erasing Arbuthnot and connoting a Hindu scholar, Burton hoped to bolster the appearance of authenticity. Perhaps the narrative would “feel” more authentic to the British readers if a mysterious – or even mystic – local scholar was the one who unearthed the text and then submitted the raw materials to Burton’s capable, imperial hands. Regardless of the identity of this chief pundit, the preface and introduction when read together create interesting tensions about the roles of the reader, the translator, and the text – as well as about the relationship between the colonizing nation and the colonized nation. Burton’s preface and introduction create a multiverse of possible worlds, worlds that can complement each other and worlds that can clash with each other. These prefatory materials both insist on the presence of a safe distance between the British reader’s actual world and the foreign storyworld. But they also deconstruct that safe distance by insisting on the lessons to be learned by the British readers – and by insisting that such illicit knowledge is beneficial to the British readers.

My Secret Life has a three-fold preface: an “Introduction” by the unnamed editor of the text, a “Preface” by the anonymous author, and a “Second Preface” also by the anonymous author. In the central narrative, the unnamed author is given the pseudonym of Walter by the unnamed editor; however, this pseudonym, while hinted at in the “Introduction” by the editor, is not presented until the body of the narrative. In order to keep the distinction between the “Introduction” author and the “Preface” and “Second Preface” author as clear as possible, the “Introduction” author will be referred to throughout this chapter as the Editor and the “Preface” and “Second Preface” author will be referred to as Walter, even though that name does not appear until later in the text. *My Secret Life* purports to be an autobiography, specifically a sexual autobiography. The multi-volume tome was published anonymously. Unlike *Venus in India* and *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, *My Secret Life*

has typically been treated by scholars as a nonfiction text, albeit it one prone to embellishment. According to Walter in the first preface, the original format of the narrative was a diary; he claims to have transformed the diary into a more novel-like format in his later years. The *faux* diary/autobiography format is a common one in erotica; Deveraux claims *Venus in India* as a memoir, and *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* also works within autobiographical formats. Yet *My Secret Life* is continually classified by scholars as a work of nonfiction.⁴⁹ Regardless of the truthfulness or accuracy of Walter's account, his framing of his narrative as a memoir facilitates cross-world identification – if these things can happen to Walter, then they can happen to the reader.

The first prefatory item the reader encounters is the Editor's "Introduction." The Editor provides information on how the narrative came to be published. Yet, in spite of the attempt to illuminate the *hows* and *whys* behind the memoir's publication, the "Introduction" raises more questions than it answers. The "Introduction" opens with this statement: "In 18— my oldest friend died" (Walter, "Introduction" par. 1). While this dating trope is common in nineteenth-century novels, it is surprising to encounter such an incomplete date in a nonfiction work. When did this friend die? And what was that friend's name? The mysteries presented in the "Introduction" only grow as this section progresses. The reader learns the Editor was the executor of this friend's estate as well as of the friend's wife, who died a year after the friend. When initially entrusted with the memoir, the Editor is given the "huge parcel," which was "carefully tied up and sealed," by his friend, later pseudonymously revealed as Walter. This friend, who was "suffering from a lingering illness," tells the Editor, "Take care of, but don't open this [...]: if I get better, return it to me, if I die, let no mortal eye but yours see it, and burn it" ("Introduction" par. 1). Three years after the friend's death, the Editor rediscovers the packet while searching for some other documents. He

⁴⁹ Scholars who classify *My Secret Life* as nonfiction include, but are not limited to, Steven Marcus in *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Century England*, Michel Foucault in volume one of *The History of Sexuality*, and Ellen Bayuk Rosenman in *Unauthorized Pleasures: Accounts of Victorian Erotic Experience*.

reads it, and “its contents astonished” him (Walter, “Introduction” par. 2). The Editor, while still not having disclosed what the text is about, writes, “The more I read it, the more marvelous it seemed” (Walter, “Introduction” par. 2). To be sure, the contemporary reader of *My Secret Life* would have known that the text was a pornographic text; would-be buyers of early versions of the memoir would have had to subscribe to the publication, a common means in the nineteenth century of avoiding obscenity and censorship laws, and those readers who had borrowed the memoir from others would have also likely had a general idea about the kind of book they were asking for. In effect, the lack of information combined with statements about how wondrous the narrative is becomes a tease. The “Introduction” reveals and conceals; it beckons and retreats.

Yet for all of its teasing nature, the “Introduction” also employs a serious tone when discussing the merits of the publication. While the first two paragraphs of the “Introduction” attempt to draw the reader into the storyworld, the last two paragraphs strike a more scholarly tone:

At length I came to the conclusion knowing his [Walter’s] idiosyncrasy [sic] well, that his fear was only lest any one should know who the writer was; and feeling that *it would be sinful to destroy such a history*, I copied the manuscript and destroyed the original. He died relationless.⁵⁰

No one now can trace the author, no names are mentioned in the book, though they were given freely in the margin of his manuscript, and I alone know to whom the initials refer. If I have done harm in printing it, I have done none to him, have indeed only carried out his evident intention, and given to a few a secret history, *which bears the impress of truth on every page, a contribution to psychology*.⁵¹ (Walter, “Introduction” pars. 3-4; my emphasis)

⁵⁰ Given the amount of sex Walter has with women in the eleven-volume series, it seems highly unlikely that he fathered no children. The Editor probably means that Walter died without acknowledging – and perhaps without even being aware of – any children produced by the decades of heterosexual activities described in the memoir.

⁵¹ First published in 1888, *My Secret Life* predates the modern usage of “psychology.” The Editor is not referring to a modern sense of a psychological study but instead to the older meaning of the term: the study of the soul.

By invoking weighty terms like “history” and “psychology,” the Editor is elevating the book to a worthy object of study – no longer mere smut, *My Secret Life* has important information to convey to the reader. The Editor’s lofty view of *My Secret Life* as well as the Editor’s stubborn refusal to acknowledge the explicit sex contents (and perhaps coupled with the literal weightiness of the multi-volume book) can be read as an attempt to transcend the confines of the pornographic genre. Moreover, the Editor’s assertion of the value of the narrative beyond the gratification of sexual desires could potentially provide a cover for himself and for the reader, protecting him from charges of disseminating pornography and the reader from charges of buying and reading pornography. Much like *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, *My Secret Life* can be read as a sort of ethnography, potentially allowing the reader to safely distance themselves from the erotic contents of the narrative by assuming a scholarly, scientific stance.

The first textual hints at the pornographic content of *My Secret Life* appear in the second paragraph of Walter’s “Preface” with a discussion of *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, colloquially known as *Fanny Hill*. Originally serialized in the 1740s, *Fanny Hill* is perhaps one of the most widely read works of British erotica. Walter notes that he first read *Fanny Hill* at the age of twenty-five, the same age at which he decided to begin his record that would eventually become *My Secret Life*. Echoing the weighty tones of the “Introduction,” Walter situates his own writing in the context of history and the pursuit of truth. He claims to have been inspired by *Fanny Hill* to create an accurate record of men’s sexual experiences: “*Fanny Hill* was a woman’s experience. Written perhaps by a woman, where was a man’s written with equal truth?” (Walter, “Preface” par. 3). Walter is incorrect on two counts in his reading of *Fanny Hill*: it is not a memoir, and it was not written by a woman. John Cleland wrote *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* in the epistolary novel form popular in the middle and late eighteenth century. However, for Walter, if *Fanny Hill* is an accurate record of a woman’s sexual activities, then Walter believes that men’s experiences needs to be accurately recorded as well.

Fanny Hill was widely recognized as a work of fiction by the nineteenth century, so Walter's claims that it is a nonfiction memoir are baffling. For a man who is so well versed in erotica, his erroneous categorization of *Fanny Hill* as autobiography seems like a glaring error. However, it is possible that his faulty categorization of the text as nonfiction serves as a tongue-in-cheek acknowledgement of his own work's fictional status. Walter claims that his text is as truthful *Fanny Hill*: if *Fanny Hill* is a memoir, then so is *My Secret Life*; if *Fanny Hill* is a novel, then so is *My Secret Life*. Could this be a wink to other bibliophiles about the fictional nature *My Secret Life*? Perhaps. Walter does repeatedly discuss how his view of erotica developed as he delved deeper in the sub rosa world. Perhaps only the novice reader would be foolish enough to misunderstand *Fanny Hill* – or *My Secret Life* – as a legitimate memoir. Perhaps only the initiated would understand both narratives as novels.

Walter also notes how his view of erotica has shifted over time. What seemed improbable when he was twenty-five seems more probable when he is forty-five:

When I began it [this record of his sexual experiences], I had scarcely read a bawdy [sic] book, none of which excepting "Fanny Hill" appeared to me to be truthful, that did, and it does so still; the other telling of recherche [sic] eroticisms, or of inordinate copulative powers, of the strange twists, tricks, and fancies, of matured voluptuousness, and philosophical lewdness, seemed to my comparative ignorance, as bawdy imaginings, or lying inventions, not worthy of belief; although I now know by experience, that they may be true enough, however eccentric, and improbable, they may appear to the uninitiated. (Walter, "Preface" par. 2)

Without directly invoking his reader in that statement, Walter does imply a parallel between his younger self's disbelief of the events presented in pornographic texts and the possible disbelief of his own reader in the events he has recorded. But for the initiated neither these unnamed works of erotica nor Walter's narrative will defy belief. For the novice reader of erotica, Walter's story of his

shifting views serves as a warning – a warning similar to the one found in Collins’s preface to *The Law and the Lady*: just because you have not seen or done these things does not mean that others have not seen and done them. This warning opens the novice’s eyes to new possible worlds of sexual experience, ones that may initially seem improbable but that are, according to Walter, very possible in deed.

Continuing to compare his work to *Fanny Hill*, Walter repeatedly points to defects in this “woman’s” work of pornography. Walter firmly states that *Fanny Hill* is, in his view, an accurate representation of women’s sexual experiences and was written by a woman. But he believes this woman’s account of women’s sexual lives is filled with faults, ones that Walter seeks to correct in his own record:

That book [*Fanny Hill*] has no bawdy word in it; but bawdy acts need the bawdy ejaculations; the erotic, full flavored expressions, which even the chastest indulge in, when lust, or love, is in its full tide of performance. So I determined 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 truth, and without regard whatever for what the world calls decency. (“Preface” par. 3)

Fanny Hill may contain sex acts, but according to Walter, it is missing the lusty, passionate, “full flavored” words to appropriately describe the sex acts – *Fanny Hill* is a chastely written narrative about sex. Walter insists that his narrative of “the poetry of copulation” will call “a spade, a spade” (“Preface” par. 3). Walter also hints that the female author of *Fanny Hill* is limited by her gender and society’s expectations of women; she cannot be as bawdy as Walter, even when explicitly discussing sex because women are incapable of writing in such a manner. Moreover, with his use of terms like “ejaculations” to describe how the writing style of *Fanny Hill* is lacking detail, Walter hints that a woman writer cannot as effectively describe sex acts because her body lacks the ability to properly ejaculate – either on paper or in bed. Only a man can call forth such powerful ejaculations.

Turning from the inspiration provided by *Fanny Hill*, Walter explains the history of the narrative. He began writing at the age of twenty-five, and the first round of writing lasted for “many years” until he “tired of it and ceased” (Walter, “Preface” par 4). Ten years after quitting the diary, Walter picks up his pen and paper again after meeting “a woman, with whom, or with those she helped me do; I did, said, saw, and heard, well nigh everything a man and woman could do with their genitals, and began to narrate those events, when quite fresh in my memory, a great variety of incidents extending over four years or more” (“Preface” par. 4). After a second break in the record, Walter returns to fill in information about the missing years of his “youth, and early middle age; which included most of gallant intrigues and adventures of a frisky order; but not the more lascivious ones of later years” (“Preface” par. 5). He again sets his writing aside during the first of many bouts of illness,⁵² and each time he falls ill, Walter considers burning his work. Walter’s detailed account of narrative’s creation – with the majority being written contemporaneously with the events – bolsters his claim that all of the events recorded as truthful and accurate; nothing has been embellished, and nothing has been omitted for the sake of decency. He continually points to his outstanding memory, and his discussion of the accuracy of his record is worth reading in its entirety:

I had from youth an excellent memory, but about sexual matters a wonderful one. [...] I recollect even now in a degree which astonishes me, the face, color, stature, thighs, backside, and cunt, of well nigh every woman I have had, who was not a mere casual, even of some who were. The clothes they wore, the houses and rooms in which I had them, were before me mentally, as I wrote, the way the bed, and furniture were placed, the side of the room the

⁵² Neither Walter nor the Editor name the prolonged, reoccurring illness that eventually led to Walter’s death (and his wife’s the following year). While it is possible Walter contracted a sexually transmitted illness and later died due to that illness (and that his wife died of the same illness), there is no evidence of exactly what medical conditions Walter (and his wife) had.

windows were on, I remembered perfectly, and all the important events I can fix as to time, sufficiently nearly by reference to my diary, in which the contemporaneous circumstances of my life are recorded.

I recollect also largely what we said, and did, and generally our bawdy amusements. Where I fail to have done so, I have left description blank, rather than attempt to make a story coherent by inserting what was merely probable. I could not now account for my course of action, not why I did this, or said that, my conduct seems strange, foolish, absurd, very frequently, that of some women, equally so, but I can but state what did occur.

In a few cases, I have for what even seems to be very strange, suggested reasons, or causes, but only where the facts seem by themselves to be very improbably, but have not exaggerated anything willingly. When I have named the number of times I have fucked a woman in my youth, I may occasionally be in error, it is difficult to be quite accurate on such points after a lapse of time. But as before said in many cases the incidents were written down a few weeks and often within a few days after the occurred. I do not attempt to pose as a Hercules in copulation, there are quite sufficient braggarts in that head, much intercourse with gay women and doctors, makes me doubt the wonderful feat in coition, some men tell of. (Walter, "Preface" pars. 7-9)

More so than his sexual prowess, it is his memory and accuracy that are points of pride for Walter – demurring to call himself a sexual Hercules, he does expound at great length on his Herculean memory. Walter promises that, unlike other men's, his tales of coition will not be exaggerated.

However, it is the high degree of accuracy that makes Walter fearful of publication; he worries about revealing his identity (and, to a lesser extent, the identities of others) and about public sanctions in response to his sex life. In order to protect himself (and others), Walter notes that he

has changed names and locations. And his notation of the changes is as thorough and detailed as his explanation of his preternatural memory:

The christian [sic] name of the servants mentioned are generally true ones, the other names mostly false, the phonetically resembling the true ones. The initials nearly always the true ones. In most cases the woman they represent are dead or lost to me. Streets and bawdy houses named are nearly always correct. Most of the houses named are now closed or pulled down; but any middle aged man about town would recognize them. Where a road, house, room, or garden is described, the description is exactly true; even to the situation of a tree, chair, bed, sofa, pisspot. The district is sometimes given wrongly; but it matters little whether Brompton be substituted for Hackney, or Camden Town for Walworth. Where however owing to the incidents it is needful, the places of amusement are given correctly. The Tower, and Argyle rooms, for example. All this is done to prevent pain to some, perhaps still living, for I have no malice to gratify. (Walter, "Preface" par. 10)

Walter is keen to locate his narrative in real places in England while simultaneously covering his tracks in order to keep his identity and the identities of others secret. This tension between accuracy and secrecy is highlighted in much of the front matter of the narrative, starting with the title and moving through the prefatory materials. A secret life is no longer secret once it has been published – the private has been made public, and the intimate has become known. Pornography and voyeurism are inseparable; by definition, pornography is sexually explicit material designed for consumption by the reader/viewer – the narrated sex acts are “watched” by the reader. Yet while making his sexcapades public, Walter also seeks a modicum of privacy; he protects his name, other people’s names, and some locations.⁵³

⁵³ Similar protections are taken in twenty-first-century pornography, perhaps most notably the use of stage names by some actors in pornographic films.

Walter concludes his first preface with an insistence that his account is “as true as gospel” (“Preface” par. 12). While this assertion may be worrisome to readers steeped in religious history,⁵⁴ Walter seems to use the phrase to not only reinforce the truthfulness (or even Truthfulness) of his account but also to class his account with other texts worthy of reading. However, in spite of his repeated claims of the truth of his narrative, the final word of the first preface is “lie”: “But when those are mostly correctly given this is intended to be a true history, and not a lie” (Walter, “Preface” par. 12). Taken as a whole, his first preface is remarkable for his insistence that the narrative is true, even though Walter notes he has altered certain details, and that the narrative has historical, psychological, and even philosophical import, even though he noted that his goal in writing the narrative was to write a bawdier version of *Fanny Hill* from a man’s perspective. The first preface attempts to preempt criticism of the narrative as being fiction, embellished, or mere smut without a higher social purpose. Without directly invoking the reader, Walter addresses the reader at nearly every turn, and he quietly separates his readers into two categories: the novice and the initiated. The novice reader will have a different reading experience than the initiated reader, and at various points in the “Preface” Walter seems to include little in jokes for the initiated reader.

If the overriding tone of Walter’s “Preface” is certainly and authority, then the predominant tone of his “Second Preface” is doubt and insecurity. Significantly shorter than the “Preface,” the “Second Preface” is a scant four paragraphs, and his questions outnumber his statements. “Some years have passed away since” Walter wrote the “Preface,” and yet in spite of his arguments for publication in that preface, he still has not printed his work. In the intervening years, Walter claims to have “gone through abnormal phases of amatory life, have done and seen things, had tastes and

⁵⁴ Walter’s metaphor of his narrative being “as true as gospel” does not bear weight under closer inspection – or is perhaps yet another wink to a knowing reader that the account is fictional. While Walter claims his accounts were largely written contemporaneous to the events, the four canonical gospels were not – each was written decades after Jesus’s life. Walter offers a singular account of events, whereas the four canonical gospels offer variations on Jesus’s biography. Moreover, the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were not the only gospels written; there were dozens of other gospel accounts of Jesus’s life that were omitted from the Bible in the early years of the Church.

latches which years ago I thought were the drams of erotic mad-men” (“Second Preface” par. 1). His accounts of these “abnormal phases” have swollen his narrative to an “unmanageable bulk,” and he queries “shall it, can it, be printed?” although it is unclear whether his question about printing has to do with the pornographic content or the sheer size of the text (Walter, “Second Preface” par. 1). He also continues the argument from the first preface about the historical and cultural value of his record: “It would be a sin to burn all this, whatever society may say it is but a narrative of human life, perhaps the every day life of thousands, if the confession could be had” (Walter, “Second Preface” par. 2). Walter ponders how common the sexual experiences he recorded actually are – and how monotonous sex can be:

What strikes me as curious in reading it, is the monotony of the course I have pursued toward women who were not of the gay class; it has been as similar, and repetitive as fucking itself; do all men do so, does every man kiss, coax, hint smuttily, then talk bawdily [sic], snatch a feel, smell his fingers, assault, and win, exactly as I have done? Is every woman offended, say no, then oh! blush, be angry, refuse, close her thighs, after a struggle open them, and yield to her lust as mine have done? [...] Have all men had the strange latches which late in life have enraptured me, though in early days the idea of them revolted me? I can never know this, my experience if printed may enable others to compare as I cannot.

(“Second Preface” par. 3)

However, in spite of his worries about the repetition of events in his narrative, he still believes that his record is not only of interest to the public but also to history. In the prefatory materials Walter and the Editor attempt to transcend the pornographic and elevate the work to primary source worthy of scholarship and historical consideration.⁵⁵ In fact, there is relatively little mention of sex –

⁵⁵ And Walter is correct in his view; *My Secret Life* has become a foundational text for studies of Victorian erotica and sexuality. Given how few scholars work in the field of nineteenth-century pornography (as opposed to, say, studies of

or explicit descriptions of sex (as found in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*'s "Introduction") – in the prefatory materials. And the Editor seems to have been convinced by Walter's claims in the two prefaces about the larger historical and cultural value of the narrative. The Editor's "Introduction," which precedes the prefaces, notes that the narrative serves greater purpose. The Editor believes the narrative will be a benefit to society and to history; no mere work of pornography, the text, according to the Editor and Walter, transcends sexual pleasure to become a legitimate historical document.

It is unclear whether these prefatory materials serve to clear Walter's or the Editor's conscience for having published a diary of sex acts or to calm the nervous reader who might be more comfortable reading an eleven-volume history rather than a bunch of smut – and they may, in fact, serve both purposes at once. Walter and the Editor certainly do appear wary of publication; however, that wariness, especially on Walter's part, might be false modesty – or a concern about running afoul of obscenity laws in publication.⁵⁶ But the introductory passages also serve to minimize the distance between the storyworld and the actual world: if Walter's sexual desires and sex acts are acceptable, then so too are the reader's. The introduction and prefaces create a deontic system of sexual acts that condones many heterosexual⁵⁷ desires and actions – the sphere of acceptable sex in *My Secret Life* is much broader than that of mainstream late nineteenth-century society: woman in the narrative (and in the first preface) are represented as having sexual desires as

Jane Austen's novels), *My Secret Life* appears in hundreds of academic articles and books, placing it on par with texts such as *The Pearl*.

⁵⁶ Like most works of erotica (as well as semi-pornographic narratives like Burton's translation of *Arabian Nights*), *My Secret Life* was published on the continent and only available by subscription. The second edition of the narrative was "privately printed for subscribers" in Amsterdam: "This first reprint of 'My Secret Life' is for private distribution among connoisseur collectors. It is strictly limited to four hundred and seventy five copies, all of which have been subscribed prior to publication" (Walter, front matter) This note on publication, coupled with the prefatory materials, reinforces the idea of *My Secret Life* as a lofty and legitimate text, despite its explicit depictions of sex, worthy of reading by "connoisseurs."

⁵⁷ While the prefaces are vague about what kinds of sex acts will be recorded in the central narrative, the prefaces do clearly focus on heterosexual acts. In the narrative itself, Walter does not approve of men taking a "passive" role in sex or sex acts between men. Walter's view of acceptable sex is certainly more liberal than the pervading views of sex in the late nineteenth century, but he still does ascribe to the view that same sex acts are abnormal or deviant.

well as agency, the reading of pornographic narratives is considered (at least by Walter) as normal, and Walter's midlife leches, while something Walter as a younger man would have been shocked by, are described as a passing phase which other have also indulged in. Moreover, in his insistence that his sexual desires and actions are similar to other people's, Walter's two prefaces attempt to connect the reader and the storyworld. Walter's reported actions validate the reader's desires and actions, and the reader's desires and actions (not least of which is the act of reading Walter's narrative) validate Walter's experiences.

Conclusions

By the middle of the nineteenth century (if not earlier), the preface form had a double position: it was necessary and unnecessary, to be believed and to be mistrusted, to be read first and to be read last. Seemingly innocuous at first, prefaces are strange textual appendages: they are written after the central narrative but designed to be read before it; they have instructions on how to read the text which are frequently ignored by readers; and they contains spoilers on the narrative's contents that can radically shift a reader's interaction with the text. Their ubiquity masks their strangeness. Nineteenth-century British narratives were so frequently prefaced that the prefaces could easily fade into the background – perhaps much as advertisements on websites have faded into the background of the twenty-first-century reader's interaction with online texts: they are there but to be ignored unless something out of the ordinary attracts attention.

Prefaces are transactional spaces, but they can also be transgressive spaces. While Duyfhuizen does not engage directly with illicit narratives, he notes that many narratives center on “disruptions or transgressions in this system of transmission – illegitimate births, stolen legacies, illicit seductions, intercepted messages – [therefore,] we must look for similar transgressions in the framing structure” (158). Prefaces are sites of tension. In some, the authors, whether actual or fictional, attempt to alleviate tension by reminding the reader that the narrative is only a fiction,

thereby attempting to remove the narrative from the actual world and temper the dangers associated with its illicit contents. In others, the authors attempt to heighten the tension by connecting the events of the narrative with the actual world. And in still others, the authors attempt to both alleviate and heighten the tension – much like Collins does in *The Law and the Lady* by stating that the narrative is completely fictional but is also founded in fact. As with other paratextual forms, what the reader chooses to do with the preface (read it, ignore it, skip it, delay it, skim it, trust it, distrust it) varies: “Readers may accept or dismiss such prefaced or appended interpretations, but to see editors [or other preface-writers] as only a ‘bridge’ or ‘intermediary,’ suggesting that they only passively transmit the text, is to read incompletely” (Duyfhuizen 135). Prefaces are active spaces, regardless of whether or when an individual reader chooses to engage with that space. Even if ignored, the presence of the preface haunts the reading of the narrative and may at any point pull the reader back to it as a guide for reading the narrative’s possible worlds.

Queerness in literary and textual studies can be, as noted in the previous chapter, a notoriously difficult idea to pin down. And while queerness may be most associated with the content of a piece of writing, the format and location of the writing may also have queering elements. The ways in which these narrative spaces (spaces of transmission, of tension, of strangeness, of the strange masquerading as the normative, or of the normative attempting to appear strange) are keys to understanding the construction of the storyworld, the influence of the actual world on the storyworld, and the existence of possible worlds created in the gaps between and bridges connecting the actual world and the storyworld. Nineteenth-century illicit British narratives appropriated the preface form and reconfigured it to their own needs. In some illicit narratives, the use of the preface is a throwback to the ways in which prefaces in early novels attempted to disguise fiction as factual. Borrowing from prefaces such as the original preface to *The Castle of Otranto*, these illicit narratives attempt to conceal their fictional contents by asserting the truth of the events; the unsigned preface

to *Dracula*, Hartright's preamble to *The Woman in White*, and Cambon's introduction to *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* are excellent examples of such attempts. Other illicit narratives attempt to legitimate their contents by pointing to the fictionality of the narratives and to the creativity needed to create such a complete and engaging storyworld. Borrowing from prefaces such as the second preface to *The Castle of Otranto* or the preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, these illicit narratives attempt to reveal the fictional contents by discussing the craft with which the contents were created – Collins's prefaces to *The Woman in White* and *The Law and the Lady* fall into this category. In nonfiction narratives, the prefaces to illicit narratives often attempt both to assert the truthfulness and accuracy of the central narrative and to align the reader with values presented by the author in the preface. In *Kama Sutra* and *My Secret Life*, the reader of the preface is teased with the potentially salacious contents of the narratives while also being primed by the preface authors to agree with the authors' positions and values and to view the contents as more than just obscene materials.

The Sins of the Cities of the Plain, *Kama Sutra*, and *My Secret Life*, the most overly illicit narratives discussed in this chapter, have prefatory materials disclosing, with varying levels of detail, the erotic scenes awaiting the reader in the central narrative. The preface is a tease – a tease that is rooted in the assertions that the narratives are factual and accurate. Each preface is also an introduction for the novice reader into the demimonde of sex presented in the narratives. Moreover, prefaces assure the reader that the sexual delights presented on the page are ones the reader can find in their own lives. The represented sex has the potential to be embodied and enacted in the actual world. Each preface also creates an air of social acceptability for the illicit contents. These three preface-writers attempt to assure the readers that the sex presented in the text is natural and normative, rather than unnatural and deviant. Cambon, Burton, and Walter, respectively, push back against popular contemporary views regarding gay men as aberrations, regarding women as passionless objects, and regarding sex as confined to heterosexual marriages. Given the narratives' explicit engagements with

sex acts and desires, the prefaces are a necessary form – they are designed to ease the reader into the deep waters of sex. Cambon's, Burton's, and Walter's separated prefaces are a gateway from the reader's world into the narrative's world, and they work to reassure the reader that, however strange and distant the narrative world may be from the reader's own experiences, the narrative's world is a part of the actual world. The threshold and the crossing from one world to the next is a safe one. While the contents might be exotic and erotic, the preface-writers position themselves as trusted guides: they are the pilots navigating the textual waters for the readers as outlined J. S. B.'s *The Imperial Magazine* article, but where J. S. B. imagined pilots leading the readers into channels of aboveboard knowledge and reading, these preface-writing pilots lead their readers into the deep waters of sexual knowledge frankly discussed. While the reader seeking sexual thrills in these text may be pleased by the preface-writer's insistence on the connection between the storyworld and the actual world, a moralist reader, perhaps looking for evidence of obscenity in the texts in order to decry their publications, would be horrified at the depths to which the pilots have traveled (or sunk).

To extend the piloting metaphor to the preface-writer of *Dracula*, the reader may find herself aboard a ghost ship via the preface. Unsigned and unattributed, the preface asks the reader for their trust and patience as the narrative unfolds and assures the reader of the truthfulness of the narrative. But the voice of the preface is impossible to identify. Who exactly is steering this ship? And why should the reader trust this entity? More so than the other prefaces examined here, the preface to *Dracula* sets a tone of mystery rather than certainty. There is no doubt by the end of Cambon's, Burton's, or Walter's prefaces that central narratives will focus on sex; there is no doubt by the end of Collins's prefaces that the reader will be encountering works of fiction. But the preface-writer of *Dracula*, while making assertions about the accuracy of the collected papers, opens a gap in the authenticity of the narrative by omitting their name and relation to the narrative – and strangers, according to conventional wisdom, are not to be trusted.

Collins's prefaces to *The Woman in White* and *The Law and the Lady* highlight the distance between the storyworld and the actual world. In each preface, he marks his work as fiction while also noting how his fiction is based on plausible events and character types. These events and people may be fiction, Collins warns, but that does not mean they are solely imaginary. The real and the fictive are intertwined. And while Collins repeatedly notes that he is the sole creator of these inventive and innovative narratives, he also asserts the value of the fictional narratives by connecting his stories to the actual world. No mere fictions are his novels – there are lessons to be gleaned: lessons about morality and virtue but also about how to read and understand fiction and about how to compartmentalize the real and the fictional. Collins's prefatory thresholds are pulsating – they connect the storyworld and the actual world, and they disconnect the storyworld and the actual world. The door between the two is neither open nor closed but in a constant state of movement, unstable and unsettled. In both prefaces, his promises of safe navigation through the unseemly topics of the narrative (which he only hints at) are promises rooted in the fictionality of the narratives. Yet, perhaps fearing that a fully invented narrative may not fully engage the reader's attention, Collins repeatedly turns to the accuracy of his novels in reflecting actual laws, customs, and human behaviors.

In his study of *La Folie du jour*, Derrida describes the opening of the narrative as invaginated: “The inclusion (or occlusion, inoclusive invagination) is interminable, it is an analysis of the account that can only turn in circle in an unarrestable, inenarrable and insatiably recurring manner [...]” (“The Law of Genre” 217). Putting aside the troublesome use of the female body in Derrida's metaphor, he is correct in his assertion that the preface is inherently subversive. Quite often, the preface breaks the barrier between the storyworld and the actual world – either in claiming that the storyworld has no bearing on the actual world or that the storyworld overlaps with the actual world; regardless of how the preface breaks that barrier, the linking of the possible worlds of the narrative

to the actual world of the reader forces the reader to consider the possible connections between those world. The preface attempts to “conscript” the reader – to use Garret Stewart’s term discussed in the later chapter on narrative intervention – by shaping the reader’s expectations of the narrative before encountering the central narrative. Prefaces, like footnotes (the subject of the next chapter), are liminal spaces in the narrative – neither fully of the story nor completely separate from the story – prefaces loop the storyworld and actual world into each other; as Derrida suggests, there is no edge, only folds. Each narrative discussed in this chapter utilizes the preface format, but the function of the preface varies. Yet it is the appearance of the preface – that well-worn and immediately recognizable format – that is of note. Given the ubiquity of the preface in the nineteenth century, it seems as though no narrative can be properly presented to the public without a preface. Even narratives published without prefaces in their first editions frequently acquired one or more prefaces in their subsequent editions. Just as no respectable person would appear without a hat, no narrative should appear without a preface. But much like clothing, the appearance of that which is respectable can easily be copied by those who are not as respectable: the hat belonging to a lady can also be the hat belonging to the prostitute, the preface belonging to a mainstream narrative can be copied by narratives on the fringe. The preface format gives the illicit narrative the outward appearance of more licit narratives, furthering queering genre boundaries. And as Derrida notes, genre and gender are entwined concepts – the queering of genres becomes a queering of genders and of modes of gendered authority in the narratives.

CHAPTER 3

THE BESIDES, FOOTNOTES⁵⁸

A superscripted asterisk, Arabic numeral, Roman numeral, or other mark appended to a word, phrase, or sentence breaks the flow of the reading process by encouraging the reader to scan to the bottom of the page to read additional information – information that may or may not be pertinent to the narrative at hand. What does the author or the narrator want to say to the reader in the footnote? Do they want to provide key historical or cultural detail? To insert a witty aside? To slam a critic? To cross-reference information from earlier in the narrative or from an outside source? To make note of a quotation of particular importance to this narrative moment? To insert an opinion on an event or character? The reader won't know the function until they skip out of the central narrative to read the small print at the bottom of the page. The footnote marker is a tease – it draws the reader's attention away from the central text with the promise of something extra, something new, something that doesn't quite fit in with the narrative flow but that is also, potentially, too good or important to be omitted.

Footnotes are common in nonfiction, namely in scholarly nonfiction. It is not surprising to encounter footnotes in a scholarly work like Richard Burton's translation of *Kama Sutra* (although the actual contents of his footnotes might have been rather surprising for some readers),⁵⁹ but footnotes in a news pamphlet or a novel are – as Gérard Genette notes in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* – much less common and much more surprising to encounter. In this chapter, after

⁵⁸ I am fairly certain that it is required for all twenty-first-century historical analyses of footnotes to begin with a footnote. The subtitle title (*A Curious History*) to Anthony Grafton's *The Footnote* is formatted on the cover as a footnote. On the cover of Chuck Zerby's *The Devil's Details: A History of Footnotes*, the title ends with a footnote that reads "Being a concise and definitive account of the footnote from its murky birth to its fertile middle years to its endangered present, beset as it is by careless writers and indifferent editors and thoughtless readers and penny-pinching publishers; an account, moreover, enhanced by copious documentation, enlightened by countless quotations from wise councilors, lightened by many passages of delightful humor, and yet entirely unafraid of controversy or sex."

⁵⁹ As Grafton points out in *The Footnote: A Curious History*, the tongue-in-cheek footnoting of scholarly works does not begin with Burton: Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is filled with footnoted "religious and sexual irreverence" that "amuse[d] his friends and enrage[d] his enemies" (1).

providing a brief history of footnoting in order to situate the nineteenth-century uses of the form in context, I will explore the uses of footnotes in a variety of nineteenth-century illicit fiction and nonfiction narratives using Genette's classification matrix of roles and regimes from *Paratexts* and will illuminate the ways in which footnotes create various possible worlds. While footnoting in the nineteenth century is by no means limited to illicit texts, these texts contain an abundance of footnotes and use the form in ways that other more licit works do not – the footnoting threshold operates differently in illicit texts, creating blurred boundaries between the text and the paratext as well as between the storyworld and the actual world and working to construct additional possible worlds of gender and sexuality.

Noteworthiness: A Brief History of the Footnote

In *The Footnote: A Curious History*, Anthony Grafton locates the birth of the footnote in Western writing between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Renaissance authors modeled their writings on the ancient Greek and Roman texts – and these classic authors did not cite or annotate their works (Grafton 29). Instead, Greek and Roman authors assumed their readers would be familiar with the materials being referenced, thereby making footnoting, citing, or annotating moot (Grafton 29-30). Yet, something shifted in this attitude towards citation and annotation between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Grafton notes that, while it is tempting to locate the birth of the footnote in the Enlightenment era due to its emphasis on science, logic, reason, and methodology, such as location is incorrect (Grafton 191). By the time of the Enlightenment, certain rules of footnoting had been in place for nearly a hundred years – footnotes were to be expected in scholarly writings and the rules of footnoting were so firmly rooted that authors (and their critics) only made note of those whose footnotes broke the rules (Grafton 197).

In its earliest form dating from the late sixteenth century, footnoting was a scholarly apparatus. Footnotes were used to cite sources, to mark discrepancies among sources, to call out

critics, to cross-reference ideas, and to insert the author's opinion on the topic at hand. In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literary texts, footnotes were, according to Grafton, limited to scholarly reprints or corrected editions of works of literature; the footnotes were largely written by scholars and critics, not by the literary authors themselves.⁶⁰ While Grafton does not explore uses of footnotes in novels – or footnoting in any literary context other than Alexander Pope's *Dunciad* and scholarly reprints of literary works – he explores footnotes as legitimate scholarly apparatuses, albeit ones that are sometimes mocked or parodied by those outside of scholarship or that are on the receiving end of scholarly critiques. It is from this foundation that the footnoting strategies of nineteenth-century literature are built. Nineteenth-century British literature in its many forms employed footnoting: footnotes appear in novels, in poetry, in pamphlets, and in scholarship – in fiction and nonfiction, in illicit and licit texts. I argue that in borrowing the format, which was already tinged with the subversive given its uses to undercut critics, to insert opinion, and to communicate inside jokes as well as to cite sources, from the more legitimate realm of scholarship, writers of nineteenth-century illicit texts who employed footnotes sought to borrow the legitimacy associated with the practice of footnoting. If, as Grafton argues, the rules of footnoting and their association with scholarship had been firmly in place since the seventeenth century, then the contemporary readers of these footnoted illicit texts would have brought with them their understanding of these rules and contexts to their reading of the illicit text. Footnoting by the nineteenth century was part of the “cultural odor”⁶¹ of the reading public.

In spite of their potentially subversive uses, however, footnoting has been – and continues to be – read as a dull textual construct. Noel Coward once quipped “that having to read a footnote

⁶⁰ One notable exception is Alexander Pope's *Dunciad*. His footnotes, according to Grafton, were savage; “Pope commented at length on both the excellences of his own works and the immense, irremediable stupidity of his opponents. He used the footnote throughout as the hockey-masked villain in an American horror film uses a chain saw: to dismember opponents, leaving their gory limbs scattered across the landscape” (114).

⁶¹ “Cultural order” was coined by Kōichi Iwabuchi in *Recentering Globalization*; the term refers to the “whiff” of a specific culture attached to a translated or adapted text in another culture.

resembles going downstairs to answer the door while in the midst of making love” (qtd. in Grafton 70). That view of the footnote is perhaps only relevant to the more staid and dour citation or cross-reference footnotes. Many footnotes, both in scholarship and elsewhere, could be said to do the reverse: reading the footnote resembles having some mundane household drudgery interrupted by making love. Footnotes can be welcome, witty diversions from otherwise decidedly un-fun texts. Moreover, footnotes can create a secondary narrative line, one “which moves with but differs sharply from the primary one. In documenting the thought and research that underpin the narrative above them, footnotes prove that it is a historically contingent product, dependent on the forms of research, opportunities, and states of particular questions that existed when historians went to work” (Grafton 23). Yet for all of their prevalence and their associations with heavy-handed writing styles, footnotes are an understudied form: “The frequency with which footnotes appear [...] stands in striking contrast to the minimal amount of scholarly attention that footnotes have received” (Reiss qtd. in Grafton 26).

While footnoting had been a textual feature for at least two centuries prior, “In the eighteenth century, literary footnotes burgeoned and propagated like branches and leaves in a William Morris wallpaper” (Grafton 111),⁶² and that propagation continued well into the nineteenth century. It was also during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that illicit and even sub rosa texts in addition to more respectable literature adopted the footnote: “The garret-dwellers of Paris’s Grub Street, the poor devils of literature used the appurtenances of historical learning to pretend that their pornographic novels about randy royals were actually sober ‘secret histories’ of court life, based on genuine letters, clandestine memoirs or other unimpeachable sources” (Grafton 111). While most British erotica writers largely preferred other paratextual interventions in their narratives, the

⁶² Grafton’s comparison of eighteenth-century footnotes to William Morris designs has bothered me for at least two years. Morris is firmly a nineteenth-century figure. Why use his designs as a metaphor for the excesses of eighteenth-century footnotes? Wouldn’t a reference to Rococo make more sense?

footnote did work its way into other illicit nineteenth-century texts and into at least one pornographic British narrative, Charles Devereaux's *Venus in India*. Because footnoting was already an established format by the nineteenth century, these illicit writers could borrow and play with the form to bend it in new and subversive ways.

For all of the serious scholarly associations of the footnote, the footnote (true to its doubling nature) was also associated with the comic, the witty, and the barbed: "The literary food chain already included prominent sharp-toothed annotators as well as soft, juicy authors, and commentary was already seen as an established literary genre susceptible to artistic effort and comic effort" (Grafton 121). If nonfiction authors used the footnote as artistic spaces to insert devastating critiques of scholarly enemies or witty asides, then fiction authors used the footnote as quasi-scholarly spaces to insert cross-references and to legitimate their writing. Not only could footnotes bolster and protect arguments via cross-references and citations, they could also simultaneously present and conceal scandalous information: for example, in examining Pierre Bayle's *Historical and Critical Dictionary*, which Grafton argues is the source of the modern footnote, Grafton notes that Bayle's critics "wondered if Bayle hoped to hide the most scandalous and irreverent bits of his work from censorship by placing them in his apparatus rather than in the text" (198). The footnote came to serve many functions, and these multiple functions could coexist in a single form. Even though "footnotes guarantee nothing, in themselves," they have become (for better or worse) a symbol of careful research and documentation, of in-depth knowledge, of bloviated writing styles, and of juicy tidbits (Grafton 235).

Grafton notes the Penelope-esque weaving, unweaving, and reweaving present in footnoting techniques: "Footnotes and text will come together again and again, in ever-changing combinations of patterns and colors. Stability is not to be reached" (233). Nineteenth-century British writers, especially writers of illicit narratives, embraced the unstable nature of notations in their texts. Using

the historical novel – a genre rooted in fiction and borrowing from history – as well as scholarly histories and popular newspapers – genres heavily invested in narrative forms – as both precedent and analog, nonfiction and fiction authors used footnotes for new purposes. Matthew Rubery in *The Novelty of Newspapers: Victorian Fiction after the Invention of the News* and Lennard J. Davis in *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* both illustrate the influence of nonfiction narratives, namely newspapers, on fiction narratives and the ways in which fiction borrows various styles from nonfiction writing. Rubery notes “newspaper[s] [...] changed the way novelists thought about the formal aspects of their craft including voice, aesthetic distance, and, in some cases, the very grounds for realism” (4). Sensation novels, especially those by Wilkie Collins, are lawyerly and frequently take as their subjects topics “ripped from the headlines” of the newspapers. Other novelists create narratives in which characters cut and paste newspaper articles into their texts. Given the increasing popularity of serialized novels in newspapers that culminated in the Victorian period, this news/novel connection, as outlined by Davis, is not surprising. British (and American) literature (and movies and TV shows) have had a long-standing interest in being “based on a true story.” Yet, by incorporating notes into this news/novels discourse, illicit nonfiction and fiction writers push the boundaries of this realistic discourse, blurring the border between the actual world and the storyworld created by the text.

Footnoting Forms & Functions

While Grafton assumes that footnotes are forms the reader knows when they see them, Gérard Genette clearly delineates the features of “notes” (which encompass footnotes, endnotes, and marginal notes). Footnotes are one type of note – and footnotes appears with greater frequency than any other note form in illicit nineteenth-century narratives. However, Genette’s work on notes as a paratextual form, which underpins this chapter on footnotes, is not interested in the differences

among footnotes, endnotes, and marginal notes; he groups them all in a single category as “notes.”

The “note” is:

a statement of variable length (one word is enough) connected to a more or less definite segment of text and either placed opposite or keyed to this segment. The always partial character of the text being referred to, and therefore the always local character of the statement conveyed in a note, seems to me the most distinctive formal feature of this paratextual element, a feature that contrasts the note with, among other paratexts, the preface – including those prefaces or postfaces that are modestly entitled “Note.” (Genette, *Paratexts* 319-320)

While the form and function of notes differ from those of prefaces, Genette uses the same classification matrix for notes and prefaces. Notes, like prefaces, “have a temporal distribution that accords with the three relevant occasions: original notes, or those in the first edition [...]; later notes, or those for the second edition [...]; [and] delayed notes” (Genette, *Paratexts* 320). Moreover, as with prefaces, notes can appear or disappear from one edition of a text to the next, and the author does not always have control over whether their notes are reproduced in future editions. Notes are classified by three roles: “authorial,” “allographic,” or “actorial” (Genette, *Paratexts* 178-179). An authorial footnote is by “the author (real or alleged, hence some twists and turns in perspective) of the text” (Genette, *Paratexts* 178), an actorial note is by “one of the characters in the action, when there are characters and action” (Genette, *Paratexts* 179), and an allographic note is by “a wholly different (third) person” who is neither the author of the text nor a character within the text (Genette, *Paratexts* 179). The difficulty in assigning roles in Genette’s classification matrix is that occasionally texts do not provide clear cues as to who the writer of the footnote is – it could be the author, a character, or an editor. As such, there is often overlap in these roles, and the exact

classification of a particular note may be the source of ongoing debate, an ambiguity in voice that footnotes in illicit narratives especially exploit.

In addition to these three roles, Genette also classifies notes according to three regimes: “authentic,” “apocryphal,” or “fictive”⁶³ (*Paratexts* 179). A note is authentic “if the attribution to a real person is confirmed by some other (if possible, by *every* other) paratextual sign” (Genette, *Paratexts* 179, his emphasis). The note becomes apocryphal “if the attribution to a real person is invalidated by some paratextual sign” (Genette, *Paratexts* 179). A fictive note is attributed to an imaginary person, typically a character in a narrative (Genette, *Paratexts* 179). Just as the boundaries among authorial, allographic, and actorial are blurry, so too are those among authentic, apocryphal, and fictive; moreover, “the combinatorial set of possible relations is obviously very rich” (Genette, *Paratexts* 323):

One possibility is an authorial note to an authorial text (this is the most common case in discursive works); another is an authorial note to a narratorial text (*Tom Jones*); or an authorial note to an actorial text or to a speech by a character (Stendhal); a pseudo-editorial note to an actorial text (*La Nouvelle Héloïse*); an editorial note to an authorial, narratorial, or actorial text (critical editions); or an actorial note to a narratorial text (*Finnegans Wake*). And this list does not preclude other, rarer situations or the coexistence (very common and already considered) of notes attributed to several senders: author + editor (critical editions), fictive author + real author (Scott), author + actor (*Tristram Shandy*), multiple actors (*Finnegans Wake*), and others.

Finally there are cases of notes with embedded enunciating: this is the situation for all notes

⁶³ Here, I cannot help but note my disappointment in Genette’s (or his translator’s) breaking of the alliteration; after authorial, allographic, actorial, authentic, and apocryphal, the final classification of fictive falls like a thud. Sadly, despite my disappointment over the final f-sound, I am also at a loss of how to maintain the alliteration as I can find no synonym for “fictive” that begins with an “a.” Perhaps it is too much to expect the poetic in the theoretical. This disappointment also applies to the uses of these terms in Genette’s work on prefaces, discussed in the previous chapter; however, footnoting such disappointment felt more appropriate in a chapter on footnoting, rather than in a chapter in prefaces.

that include quotations (third party cited by author) or for critical notes mentioning, for example, an epitextual authorial commentary (author cited by third party). (Genette, *Paratexts* 323)

Perhaps more so than prefaces, the sender of the notes in a given text may be difficult to decipher, especially in fictional narratives. Is the footnote by the character? By the author? By some other writer? The answer is not always readily apparent. Moreover, “notes, even more than prefaces, may be statutorily optional for the reader and may consequently be addressed only to certain readers” (Genette, *Paratexts* 324). Unlike prefaces, notes may be only intended for some – but not all – readers of the text.

In his examination of authorial notes in discursive texts, Genette remarks that there is something musical about notes: “The chief advantage of the note is that it brings about local effects of nuance, or sourdine, or as they say in music, of *register*, effects that help reduce the famous and sometimes regrettable linearity of discourse” (*Paratexts* 328; his emphasis). Notes, in both discursive and narrative texts, create layers of meanings and tones, and “if the note is a disorder of the text, it is a disorder that, like some others, may have its proper use” (Genette, *Paratexts* 328). But that notion of a note’s “proper” use is a highly subjective one. A note that the author might consider necessary may seem superfluous to the editor or the reader. There is no standard for what should be noted and what should be in the text itself. Moreover, on closer inspection, the only difference between a parenthetical aside and a footnote may be their different spatial locations, and the difference made by the choice of placement is typically, to use Genette’s phrasing, one of register. Notes may be the most liminal of these transitional and transactional paratextual spaces: “Their strategies’ importance will perhaps offset the enviably disappointing nature of a ‘genre’ whose occurrences are by definition irregular, divided up, crumbly, not to say dustlike, and often so closely connected to a given detail of a given text that they have, as it were, not autonomous significance: hence our uneasiness in taking

hold of them” (Genette, *Paratexts* 319). More ink has been spilled over the preponderance of notes being nuisances than any other paratextual form. And it is perhaps because, unlike a preface, illustration, bibliography, appendix, which are confined to a particular space, the note can multiply, tribble-like, to consume a text. Notes have become a symbol of all that is wrong with discursive writing – heavy-handed notes that litter the pages with definitions, explanations, and citations and that distract the reader from the central point of the text. Yet is precisely because notes are so associated with drab scholarly writing that notes continue to surprise – the witty aside embedded in a note in a discursive text or the unexpected use of a note in a fictional narrative.

Genette is ultimately, and perhaps fittingly in a discussion of footnotes, of two minds about notes as paratextual elements. A note, such as the authentic authorial note, can be “a local detour or a momentary fork in the text, and as such [...] belongs to the text almost as much as a simple parenthesis does. With this kind of note we are in a very undefined fringe between text and paratext” (Genette, *Paratexts* 328). His ambivalence about the paratextual nature of notes is most pronounced in his (limited) discussion of fictive actorial notes; Genette has “little to say about fictive actorial notes, generally attributed to a narrator-character [...]. Here again [as with original author notes], the semblance of notes obviously is part of the fiction – and therefore, indirectly, of the text” (Genette, *Paratexts* 342). While Genette seems uncomfortable with the slippery nature of note forms, I argue that it is their very slipperiness – even leakiness – that is their essential nature. Notes ooze out of the text, into the margins, and then back into the text. Moreover, this slipperiness, this leakiness, is not just limited to fictive actorial notes but to all notation forms.

Although Genette has “little to say” about fictive actorial notes, such notes are a fruitful theoretical ground. Shari Benstock, in “At the Margins of Discourse,” seeks to fill in the gaps regarding fictive actorial notes left by Genette. As I am, Benstock is “intrigued by a far less customary practice among writers, one that may occur in fewer texts than can be counted on one

hand: the use of footnotes in literary texts to extend, explain, or define the fictional premises of the work” (204). Benstock situates footnoting in fiction – and perhaps also by extension footnoting in non-scholarly nonfiction texts such as news pamphlets – in the context of scholarly notations:

Such notations clearly derive from their scholarly counterparts, and the critical tradition leaves traces in this new context; the referentiality, the marginality, the inherently ambivalent stance of the scholarly note are reflected in the literary counterpart. Most often, this new form displays its sources by defying them and the tradition from which they arise. Thus, footnotes in fictional texts do not necessarily follow the rules that govern annotation in critical texts: they may or may not provide citation, explication, elaboration, or definition for an aspect of the text; they may or may not follow “standard form”; they may or may not be subordinate to the text to which they are affixed. Most significant, they belong to a fictional universe, stem from a creative act rather than a critical one, and direct themselves toward the fiction and never toward an external construct, even when they cite “real” works in the world outside the particular fiction. The referential and marginal features of these notes serve a specifically hermeneutic function; to the extent that notions in fictional texts negotiate the distance between the writer and the reader, they do so in terms that differ radically from those of scholarly discourse. (Benstock 204-205)

Footnoting conjures the air or attitude of scholarship even when it appears in non-scholarly texts. Moreover, footnoting, a marginal textual feature, also exists in between the fictional world and the actual world, and much like narrative interventions (the subject of chapter four), the footnotes work to create or minimize the distance between the reader and the text. Footnotes lie at borders: between scholarship and non-scholarship, between text and metatext, and between storyworld and actual world.

Malcah Effron, building on Genette and Benstock, classifies fictive actorial footnotes as “artificial” paratexts:

The artificial paratexts, despite calling attention to the textuality of these novels, also work to establish their realism by implying that the characters and the extratextual reader live in the same world. [...] As the footnotes cross physical textual boundaries to establish reality by writing in the margins of the page, these narratives reinforce their adherence to generic boundaries, underscoring their fictionality. (203)

Effron’s “artificial paratexts” are an answer to Genette’s problem of notes being essentially of the text. Genette queries whether fictive actorial notes are actually paratextual features; Effron’s solution is that such notes are paratextual and textual simultaneously. While Effron, Benstock, and Genette do not directly link the ways in which footnotes cross textual boundaries to theories of possible worlds, each theorist does move towards such a link. Bound in fine print to the bottoms of pages, footnotes also leap out at the reader – especially when footnotes are encountered in unfamiliar places. And many footnotes engender a new reading of the possible world of the text and perhaps also of the reader’s actual world. Footnotes are of the text and separate from the text. Some footnotes are symbiotic supplements to the text, while others are parasites, draining away at the text and even explicitly contradicting the text. In fictional narratives, locating the footnote in relation to the storyworld can be difficult – even circular at times. Footnotes in fictional narratives represent a border crossing:

As the footnotes are able to cross the border between the narrated events and the reader because of their marginal position, they create a reality effect by placing the characters in the narrative and the readers *of* the narrative on the same plane of reality. These footnotes can be attributed to characters within the narrative [...]. Because these footnotes are attributed either to diegetic characters or to conversations between the characters and the author, they

also imply that the characters break through the narrative frame to participate in extratextual reality. (Effron 203, his emphasis)

It is this reality effect, especially in illicit narratives, that creates multiple possible worlds for the reader.

Footnotes & Illicit Texts

Several illicit texts from Britain in the nineteenth century use footnotes: John Mathew Gutch's *Caraboo: A Narrative of Singular Imposition*, Collins's *The Woman in White* and *The Law and the Lady*, Burton's translation of *Kama Sutra*, and Devereaux's *Venus in India*, to name only a few. These texts, both fiction and nonfiction, cover illicit topics. *Caraboo: A Narrative of Singular Imposition* is a newspaper pamphlet exposing servant Mary Baker's imposture as Princess Caraboo of Javasuu. *The Woman in White*, a sensation novel, explores the physical, mental, and sexual dangers encountered by Laura Fairlie. *The Law and the Lady*, a hybrid detective-sensation novel, follows Valerie Brinton as she investigates the death of her husband's first wife and the accusations that her husband murdered his first wife. *Kama Sutra* translates a Hindu manual on life and sex for a British audience. *Venus in India* is a pornographic novel that parodies memoir and travel narratives. While not every illicit narrative of nineteenth-century Britain has footnotes, many do – it is clearly not a genre requirement that an illicit text have footnotes, but illicit texts do have an abundance of paratextual and narratorial interventions, including footnotes.

In nineteenth-century fiction, the form is more abundant in illicit texts than in licit texts, but there were licit texts – ranging from aboveboard scholarship to fiction – that employed footnotes. In Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, the sole footnote is an instruction to see also “a letter from Mr. Richardson, No. 97. vol. ii Rambler [sic]” (18n). Elsewhere in the novel, the narrator refers to *The Spectator*, which like *The Rambler*, was a didactic periodical, largely aimed at the rising middle-class. However, both periodicals ended in the mid-eighteenth century, decades before the action or

publication of *Northanger Abbey*, so these references, especially the mention of a specific volume and issue of *The Rambler*, which has been relegated to a footnote, perhaps signals that such advice is no longer relevant. This sole footnote relies on the reader's knowledge of *The Rambler* in order to complete the joke about Catherine's inability to live up to the standards prescribed by the periodical. The reader who is able to find the second issue of the ninety-seventh volume of *The Rambler* from Tuesday, 19 February 1751 – whom one might imagine as a nineteenth-century newspaper packrat or as a twenty-first-century casual Google searcher – could find the letter referenced and read its advice for young women on appropriate public and interpersonal behavior and then find the ways in which Catherine violates those precepts. But for all other readers without access to that issue of the periodical or without knowledge of the didactic tone of Richardson's publication, the joke in the footnote is missed.

Anthony Trollope in *Can You Forgive Her?* intervenes in the narrative to insert a footnote on the naming of a minor character in the novel after a character in one of William Thackeray's novels: "Ah, my friend [Thackeray, who died the year before the novel's publication], from whom I have borrowed the scion of nobility! Had he [Thackeray] been left with us he would have forgiven me my little theft, and now that he has gone I will not change the name" (192n). Unlike the inside joke presented in *Northanger Abbey*, the note in *Can You Forgive Her?* is a personal lamentation inserted into the storyworld by the author. Moreover, Trollope's note signals the fictionality of the narrative's storyworld; the note reinforces that Trollope is the creator of this fictional world and that, for all the mimetic qualities of the novel, the novel is fiction and the characters are fully invented by the author (even if the author has borrowed a character's name from another author). Unlike the uses of notes in illicit fiction which blur the distinction between the storyworld and the actual world, the note in *Can You Forgive Her?* sharply divides the fictional narrative from the actual world of the author and the readers.

Uses of footnotes in licit fictional narratives are rare. More common are notes in illicit fictional narratives. Illicit fictional narratives typically have only a few footnotes, but the illicit nonfiction texts are heavily footnoted. *The Woman in White*, *The Law and the Lady*, and *Venus in India* each have three footnotes. A scholarly work about sex and sexuality (and therefore also straddling the line between illicit and licit), *Kama Sutra* has seventy-six footnotes – in spite of Burton’s claim in his introduction that his translation “has been prepared in complete accordance with the text of the manuscript, and *is given, without further comments, as made from it*” (Burton xxxviii, my emphasis). *Caraboo*, a semi-salacious news pamphlet, has twenty-six footnotes. The presence and number of footnotes in Burton’s and Gutch’s nonfiction are perhaps to be expected. Given the use of footnotes in other nonfiction texts, the reader is perhaps not surprised when encountering them in Burton’s scholarly translation or in Gutch’s pamphlet. Moreover, Burton’s and Gutch’s as well as Devereaux’s notations work within the typical uses of footnotes as outlined by Grafton – they provide additional details, define terms, and offer space for the translator or author to interject opinion in an otherwise (allegedly) objective publication. Footnotes in these and other texts can be classified not only according to Genette’s matrix of authorial, allographic, actorial, authentic, apocryphal, and fictive positions in the narrative but also by their supplementing or competing function in relation to the narrative. A supplementing note works with and supports the central narrative and/or other paratexts, whereas a competing note works against and opposes the central narrative and/or other paratexts. While the footnotes in these illicit texts vary greatly in their content and form, they all serve the fundamental purpose of queering the representation of authority and constancy in the central narrative. Narrative control is at the heart of these notations. Moreover, the footnotes attempt to connect the storyworld with the actual world, to facilitate the reader’s crossing from the actual world into the storyworld. In doing so, these notes help create possible (and often conflicting) worlds of truth, authority, and control.

Fiction & Footnotes: *The Woman in White*, *The Law and the Lady*, and *Venus in India*

Collins's *The Woman in White* has only three footnotes. All of the footnotes are written by the narrative's primary fictional author and editor, Walter Hartright, and all discuss the formation and editing of the central text. While Hartright and other characters discuss the act of writing their individual narratives, at three textual moments Hartright chooses to comment on the central narrative through footnotes rather than inserting the commentary directly into the central narrative. In a narrative whose entire third and fourth paragraphs in the opening chapter are consumed with a discussion of how and why the narrative has been constructed in the manner that it has – with each character becoming the narrator when they have witnessed a particular event – and in a narrative prefaced, as we have seen in the previous chapter, with Collins's own discussion of the new technique of using multiple narrators in a single narrative, the use of footnotes becomes even more interesting. The footnotes reinforce Hartright's role as the collector and editor of the narratives – they are a means of asserting his textual authority and control. Moreover, Hartright chooses to footnote the narratives of his gender and cultural inferiors: Marion Halcombe, a mannish woman but a woman nonetheless; Mr. Fairlie, an effeminate, invalid man; and Pesca, a foreigner. The footnotes subtly reinforce Hartright's masculine control over the narrative and its narrators.

The Woman in White's first footnote appears at the start of Marian's narrative of her time with Laura Fairlie at Limmeridge House. Interestingly, while the previous narrators – all men – have explicitly stated their reasons for writing, Marian's contribution to the story is via her diary entries. Hartright opens the novel with a statement on the need to tell the story in order for justice to be served, even if official court justice is servant to the “long purse” and makes justice via the court system impossible in the case he is about to present (Collins, *The Woman* 9). Hartright then turns the narrative over to Vincent Gilmore who “write[s] these lines at the request of [his] friend, Mr. Walter

Hartright” (Collins, *The Woman* 127). Like Hartright, Gilmore, a solicitor, has a very specific purpose in putting his pen to paper:

They [the lines he writes] are intended to convey a description of certain events which seriously affected Miss Fairlie’s interests, and which took place after the period of Mr. Hartright’s departure from Limmeridge House. There is no need for me to say whether my own opinion does or does not sanction the disclosure of the remarkable family story, of which my narrative forms an important component part. Mr. Hartright has taken that responsibility on himself; and circumstances yet to be related will show that he has amply earned the right to do so, if he chooses to exercise it. The plan he has adopted for presenting the story to others, in the most truthful and most vivid manner, requires that it should be told, at each successive stage in the march of events, by the persons who were directly concerned in those events at the time of their occurrence. My appearance here, as narrator, is the necessary consequence of this arrangement. I was present during the sojourn of Sir Percival Glyde in Cumberland, and was personally concerned in one important result of his short residence under Mr. Fairlie’s roof. It is my duty, therefore, to add these new links to the chain of events, and to take up the chain itself at the point where, for the present only, Mr. Hartright has dropped it. (Collins, *The Woman* 127)

Like Hartright, Gilmore carefully explicates his purpose within the larger narrative and clearly marks his own narrative as being reliable. Like Hartright, he is conscious of the part his narrative will play in the larger story. Like Hartright, he writes his part of the narrative after the events have occurred. But Marian, who is the story’s third narrator, does none of these things: she does not explicate her purpose at the start of her narrative, she does not protest as to the truth of her writings, she is not conscious of herself as anything other than a diarist, and she writes her narrative concurrent with the events. And it is her narrative that prompts Hartright’s first footnote. The footnote is appended to

the five asterisks placed after the intertitle (“*The Story continued by MARIAN HALCOMBE, in Extracts from her Diary*”) and after the date and location of the narrative (“Limmeridge House, Nov. 8th”) but before the first lines of her diary entry (Collins, *The Woman* 162). The five asterisks denote omitted sections of Marian’s diary, and in the footnote, Hartright – not Marian – writes, “The passages omitted, here and elsewhere, in Miss Halcombe’s Diary, are only those which bear no reference to Miss Fairlie or to any persons with whom she is associated in these pages” (Collins, *The Woman* 162n). Marian’s narrative breaks the pattern established by the previous two narrators – a pattern that is resumed by subsequent narrators who also preface their writings with discussions of why they have taken up their pens.

Hartright’s note explaining the omissions in Marian’s diary operate on several levels. He chooses not to insert a preface to Marian’s diary, instead relegating his words to the bottom of the page. He asserts editorial control over her narrative – something that he did not do for Gilmore’s narrative, signaling a gendered difference: a man’s words need no further explanation but a woman’s do; a man’s words should be taken as legitimate but a woman’s need the words of a man appended to them to legitimize them. Moreover, Hartright’s and Gilmore’s writing are intended for the public, for a larger reading audience, whereas Marian’s is intended for private and personal use. But who exactly in the storyworld chose what would be omitted from Marian’s diaries? Did Hartright have full access to her diary? Was he the one who decided what to expunge and what to retain? Or was it Marian who edited her own diary? The passages in the diary were omitted, according to the footnote, and it is implied that they were omitted by Hartright. But Hartright does not explicitly claim his editing hand in the note – assigning him as the diary’s editor and the footnote’s author relies on the use of third-person to refer to “Miss Halcombe” in the annotation and on Hartright more clearly being the author of the next two footnotes. While such issues of authorship and editing may seem minor, in the larger context of the narrative – a story of men working to rewrite women’s

lives – the footnote is yet another instance of such patriarchal rewriting of women’s lives (textual or lived). Hartright’s level of intervention into Marian’s life and of rewriting or editing her life is certainly minor compared to Count Fosco’s and Sir Percival Glyde’s interventions in and rewriting or editing of Laura Fairlie’s and Anne Catherick’s lives. But it also signals the acceptability of a man’s editing hand and narratorial control over women’s lives. Fosco and Glyde are villains, but even protagonist Hartright cannot avoid such interventions in and control over the lives of women. The revisions Fosco and Glyde make to Laura’s and Anne’s lives are disastrous – the women are imprisoned and tormented because of these men’s interventions. The revisions Hartright makes to Marion’s life are presented as minor but necessary to protect Marion. Yet Hartright’s editing of and footnote to Marion’s diary remind the reader that all women’s lives are potentially subject to such reworking at the hands of men – whether such reworkings are a boon to the women depends on whether the editing man is her ally.

Moreover, Hartright’s note at the start of Marian’s diary opens gaps in the narrative. Hartright claims to have edited out parts not relevant to the central narrative. But how such a decision about what was and was not relevant is not made clear in the note. Hartright, rather vaguely, claims he only removed sections that “bear no reference to Miss Fairlie or to any persons with whom she is associated in these pages” (Collins, *The Woman* 162n). This claim could cue some readers to question what exactly what was omitted from the diary and what might have also been omitted from the central narrative. The footnote is one of many instances in the text that opens up questions about Hartright’s narrative reliability. Lastly, while this note may not directly intervene in the actual world of the reader, it reinforces the gendered norms of the Victorian actual world as part of the storyworld. In both worlds, narrative control is also masculine control. A woman, especially a woman as unconventional as Marian, cannot be given free reign over a narrative. This note becomes all the more interesting in light of the final section of the novel in which Marian loses her narrative

voice completely – her words and actions are all filtered through Hartright’s writing. Moreover, in the third section of the narrative, Hartright explains in more detail the process of using and editing her diary – and his explanation contradicts his footnote. Whereas the footnote implies his editorial control, Hartright writes in the novel’s final section that “there were passages in this diary, relating to myself, which she thought best that I should not see. Accordingly, she read to me from the manuscript, and I took the notes I wanted as she went on” (Collins, *The Woman* 436). The footnote implies that Hartright had complete editorial control over Marian’s diary, but the later narrative explicitly undermines Hartright’s control – the earlier diary passages were doubly edited: first by Marian as she omitted sections while reading her diary aloud to Hartright (and apparently never allowing him to see the original document) and then by Hartright as he made notes of what he thought important from Marian’s reading. The footnote to Marian’s diary points out the omissions in her narrative, cueing readers to wonder what might have been left out and imagine the events marked by the ellipses. But at the same time, the footnote attempts to reassure readers that Hartright’s narrative control and authority is absolute – only to have Hartright later in the text undermine the very authority he asserted in his note.

The second note in *The Woman in White* is appended to Mr. Fairlie’s narrative. Again, Hartright appears to be the author of the footnote. The footnote is attached to the intertitle (“*The Story continued by* FREDERICK FAIRLIE, ESQ., *of Limmeridge House*”); in the note, Hartright writes, “The manner in which Mr. Fairlie’s Narrative, and other Narratives that are shortly to follow it, were originally obtained, forms the subject of an explanation which will appear at a later period [that is, later in Hartright’s narrative]” (Collins, *The Woman* 338n). Fairlie, Laura’s invalid uncle, is constructed throughout the text as effeminate and sexually non-normative. The footnoting of his narrative and Marian’s also strengthens the connection between the two characters; while at first blush, Fairlie and Marian are very different characters, their non-normative gender performances

link them. The womanish man and the mannish woman must be brought under Hartright's narrative control. It is notable that, like the intervention appended to Marian's narrative, Hartright again chooses to footnote Fairlie's narrative rather than to preface it – and as with the footnote to Marian's diary, this footnote is placed in the text before Fairlie's own words, giving Hartright, not Fairlie, the first word in this section of narrative, even though the content of the note is at the bottom of the page. The tension in placement – both before Fairlie's (or Marian's) words and underneath Fairlie's (or Marian's) words – is part of the queering of the textual spaces. Before yet also under, Hartright's footnoted words are meant to control and clarify the reading of the central narrative and to color the way in which the reader interprets the central narrative.

Fairlie's narrative contribution opens with his annoyance at being asked to write. He notes that he has been "threatened" (apparently by Hartright, although Fairlie does not clarify the source of the threat – nor does Hartright in his note) with unnamed "consequences" if he does not contribute to the larger narrative (Collins, *The Woman* 338). Fairlie also, unlike previous narrators, casts immediate doubt on the veracity of his narrative: "I will endeavor to remember what I can (under protest), and to write what I can (also under protest); and what I can't remember and can't write Louis [his much-put-upon servant] must remember, and write for me. He is an ass, and I am an invalid: and we are likely to make all sorts of mistakes between us. How humiliating!" (Collins, *The Woman* 338). Fairlie makes his reluctance (if not outright resistance) to write his narrative clear, and Hartright's footnote darkly hints that there is some sort of story to be told about how the narrative was forced out of Fairlie. In the third section of the novel, after Hartright reveals the actual process by which Marian's diary was accessed, Hartright also details the process of obtaining narratives from others presented earlier in the text; his goal "was to gain as much additional evidence as I could procure from other people, without exciting suspicion" (Collins, *The Woman* 436). However, Fairlie's narrative is not included in Hartright's discussion – Hartright explains how

the narratives surrounding Fairlie's were obtained but makes no mention of how Fairlie's was because Hartright had yet to request information from Fairlie. It is only after Hartright has gathered information from other narrators that he realizes Fairlie may have key information:

There are passages in Mrs. Michelson's narrative which show the Count found it necessary to place himself in communication with Mr. Fairlie; and there may be circumstances which compromise him in that proceeding. While I am away, Marian, write to Mr. Fairlie, and say that you want an answer describing exactly what happened between the Count and himself, and informing you also of any particulars that may have come to his knowledge at the same time, in connexion with his niece. Tell him that the statement you request will, sooner or later, be insisted on, if he shows any reluctance to furnish you with it of his own accord.

(Collins, *The Woman* 481)

The details of procuring Fairlie's narrative are less salacious than hinted at by Hartright's footnote and Fairlie's opening statement. But both Hartright's footnote and Fairlie's narrative delay that knowledge, and it is Hartright – not Fairlie – who reveals the “truth” of Fairlie's contribution – that Hartright asked Marian to ask Fairlie for information and to make sure Fairlie knew the request was not optional (although Hartright, like Fairlie, omits the consequences Fairlie might face for a refusal). Moreover, Hartright's footnote works to undermine Fairlie's outrage – Hartright's calm note stands in opposition to Fairlie's bluster and anger, implying that Fairlie's emotional (womanish) outburst needs to be tempered by Hartright's logical (mannish) note. And as Fairlie quickly contradicts himself (for example, snapping that Louis “is an ass” and then claiming Louis “is not quite such an ass as I have hitherto supposed” a mere four sentences later [Collins, *The Woman* 338; 339]), Hartright via the legalistic footnote becomes the voice of reason. Hartright does not allow Fairlie's narrative to stand without comment. His dislike of Fairlie is obvious from the start of his own narrative about his time at Limmeridge House. If Hartright is not yet master of Limmeridge

House at the time Fairlie writes his narrative, then the editing Hartright – the man who becomes the master of Limmeridge House in the final pages of the narrative – analeptically exerts his authority over Fairlie.

The sections after Fairlie's are by Eliza Michaelson, the housekeeper at Blackwater Park; Hester Pinhorn, Fosco's cook; Alfred Goodricke, a doctor; Jane Gould, a servant; and a tombstone. After these sections, Hartright resumes his narrative, and his footnote to Fairlie's narrative also covers Eliza's, Hester's, Goodricke's, Jane's, and the tombstone's narratives. It is notable that, other than the doctor's and the tombstone's contributions, all of the other narratives are by women or by an effeminate man. The doctor's contribution, unlike the others collected by Hartright, is not a narrative but a copy of a letter certifying Laura's death – Goodricke has not written anything specifically for Hartright; instead, Hartright seems to have found and reproduced the doctor's official letter. The tombstone is Laura's, and again, Hartright has found and reproduced the writing on the tombstone. But Fairlie's, Eliza's, Hester's, and Jane's contributions are original pieces solicited for Hartright's narrative – and as such, they fall under Hartright's narratorial and editorial control. Moreover, Hartright's note lumps Fairlie's, Eliza's, Hester's, and Jane's narratives, all of which have been written at his request, as being the narratives by the same kinds of people. Eliza, Hester, and Jane are servants; therefore, all three women are Hartright's gendered and social inferiors. By placing Fairlie's narrative with these women's narratives and connecting his narrative to theirs via his footnote, Hartright's footnote becomes another means of marking Fairlie as a lesser man due to his effeminate behavior.

The final footnote in *The Woman in White* appears in Hartright's own narrative and is again written by Hartright. The footnote is appended to Hartright's introduction of Pesca's story, which is embedded within Hartright's own narrative: "In his [Pesca's] smooth-flowing language – spoken with a vehement agitation which betrayed itself in the perpetual working of his features, in the

wildness and the suddenness of his foreign gesticulations, but never in the raising of his voice – I now heard the words which armed me to meet the last struggle that is left to record” (Collins, *The Woman* 574). In the footnote appended to that sentence, Hartright writes, “It is only right to mention here, that I repeat Pesca’s statement to me, with the careful suppressions and alterations which the serious nature of the subject and my own sense of duty to my friend demand. My first and last concealments from the reader are those which caution renders absolutely necessary in this portion of the narrative” (Collins, *The Woman* 574n). Hartright in his footnote redefines Pesca as his friend – at the start of the novel, Pesca is an acquaintance of Hartright’s, a man Hartright regards with bemusement. In the novel’s opening chapters, Hartright describes Pesca as a blustering and jolly – if not cocky – man who owes Hartright his life after a near-drowning experience. As Pesca proves his usefulness to Hartright (both in recommending the job at Limmeridge at the start of the novel and in exposing Fosco as a member of the Brotherhood at the novel’s close), Hartright more frequently refers to the man as his friend, even as his view of Pesca shifts from harmless if irritating foreigner to dangerous international operative. Hartright omits portions of Pesca’s narrative in order to protect Pesca, a man who turns out to be a spy. However, these omissions are marked not only by the footnote but also by several statements within the central narrative. This final footnote both reinforces Hartright’s trustworthiness as an author and editor; as with the note to Marian’s diary, this note works to assure the reader that only information not directly pertinent to the case has been omitted. Moreover, any omissions from Pesca’s statement serve to protect Hartright’s friend and ally against death (a high stake not associated with omissions from Marian’s diary whose censored portions were likely mundane details of her life or information that might cause Marian embarrassment). Yet, again Hartright footnotes the statements of a person who is not his equal: Pesca is a foreigner. Hartright, the upstanding paragon of middle-class masculinity and morality, exercises editorial control over women, over an effeminate man, and over a foreigner.

The act of footnoting in the novel is an attempt by Hartright to construct himself as a reliable narrator and editor – yet the notes also undermine his credibility and authority as they clash with Hartright’s own explanations and with other characters’ views of events. Hartright repeatedly asserts that he and the other narrators are telling a true story, one that if given its day in the courts would stand up to legal scrutiny – yet Hartright also withholds until nearly the end of the text that he has told “this story under feigned names” (Collins, *The Woman* 543). While both the central narrative and Hartright’s footnotes purport to explain the truth of Laura’s marriage and Anne’s death, Hartright’s own notes highlight the incompleteness of the central narrative – and highlight Hartright’s shortcomings as the text’s authoritative voice. In attempting to control these footnoted narratives, the notes themselves expose the gaps in the larger text and become another textual means by which Hartright’s lack of control and authority are exposed. The footnotes, heavy with their connotations of scholarly and/or nonfiction texts, add weight to Hartright’s claims. And the notes, like Hartright’s statements about truth, reach out from the storyworld and into the reader’s actual world. The reader of the novel brings with them their views of footnotes, namely their use in nonfiction texts. But the footnote also works on a different level – more than just supporting Hartright’s claims about the accuracy of the story, they also provide another insight into the text’s constructions of a gendered hierarchy. Hartright, the heteronormative middle-class Englishman and the author and editor of the narrative, sits at the top of the hierarchy: it is he who controls the order in which the narrative is presented, who tasks others with contributing to the narrative, and who revises and edits the contributions. Footnotes are another tool of his authority. Marian and Pesca are closest to Hartright’s equals within the text: Marian is consistently described as a woman with masculine traits, and Pesca, while also of the middle-class, is Italian. Fairlie, a member of the upper class and Hartright’s employer, should be Hartright’s superior, but his effeminate character place him firmly beneath Hartright in the heteronormative gendered hierarchy of the novel – Fairlie’s

effeminacy negates his wealth and social standing, thereby also bringing him under Hartright's narratorial and editorial control. Eliza, Hester, and Jane, whose narratives are controlled by the same footnote that controls Fairlie's, as servants and women are similarly under Hartright in the hierarchy – and the placement of these women's original narratives under the same editorial control as Fairlie's further signals Fairlie's effeminacy by allowing the text to group them all together.

Unlike the male-dominated narrative of *The Woman in White*, *The Law and the Lady* is written and edited by Valeria Brinton. The novel recounts her marriage to Eustace Woodville (later revealed to be Eustace Macallan) and follows her investigation into her husband's double life and his alleged murder of his first wife (Sara Macallan). With the exception of the final chapter, Valeria uses her maiden name in the narrative – even accidentally signing as Valeria Brinton in the wedding registry – and she largely operates as a single woman (albeit as a single woman with the privileges of a married woman). However, even though Valeria narrates the story, two of the three footnotes are by Mr. Playmore, a lawyer, perhaps as a means of subtly overlaying masculine control on a woman's story. The final footnote is penned by Valeria and is a cross-reference for the reader to an earlier chapter; however, in the footnote, unlike in the central text, Valeria distances herself from the writing in the note, referring to herself as “the writer of this narrative” (Collins, *The Law* 374n), even though she does not use such a phrase in the central narrative and litters the narrative with first-person pronouns when discussing her authorial acts. In the note, unlike in the central text, Valeria un-genders herself with the third-person self-reference – or even engenders herself as masculine in the note.

Both of Playmore's two footnotes are legalistic; in them he makes note of problems with reconstructing a diary written by the first Mrs. Macallan, a document which was not available during Eustace's trial but that would have potentially exonerated him. The first footnote is appended to Playmore's reconstruction of the recently rediscovered torn pages written by Sara:

Note by Mr. Playmore: – The greatest difficulties of reconstruction occurred in this first portion of the torn letter. In the fourth paragraph from the beginning, we have been obliged to supply lost words in no less than three places. In the ninth, tenth, and seventeenth paragraphs the same proceeding was, in greater or less degree, found to be necessary. In all these cases, the utmost pains have been taken to supply the deficiency in exact accordance with what appeared to be the meaning of the writer, as indicated in the existing pieces of the manuscript (Collins, *The Law* 362n).

What Playmore does not tell Valeria (or the reader) is what exactly was missing and replaced. For example, the fourth paragraph, which Playmore notes needed at least three words supplied, reads in its entirety: “Yes: I have had enough of my life. Yes: I mean to die” (Collins, *The Law* 362). Clocking in at a scant thirteen words, three of which were missing, this fourth paragraph absolves Eustace of the allegation that he murdered his first wife by presenting her statement that she plans to kill herself. Playmore views the reconstructed diary as legally sound evidence. But the footnote, which is designed to present information about how the diary was reconstructed in order to further validate its contents, also opens questions about how exactly the pages were reconstructed, where the missing words were in the original sentences, and which words are original to the diary and which have been added by Playmore. Playmore’s footnoting and editing of Sara’s diary parallels Harttright’s footnoting and editing of Marian’s diary in *The Woman in White*; in both cases, the notation highlights the epistemic flaws in the allegedly complete record of the storyworld.

Given his role as the (supposedly) careful legal researcher, it is no surprise that the second footnote is also by Playmore. His second footnote appears at the end of the reconstructed document:

Note by Mr. Playmore: – The lost words and phrases supplied in this concluding portion of the letter are so few in number that it is needless to mention them. The fragments which

were found accidentally stuck together by the gum, and which represent the part of the letter first completely reconstructed, being at the phrase, “I spoke of you shamefully, Eustace”; and end with the broken sentence, “If, in paying me this little attention, you only encouraged me by one fond word or one fond look, I resolved not to take –” With the assistance this afforded to us, the labour of putting together the concluding half of this letter (dated “October 20”) was trifling, compared with the almost insurmountable difficulties we encountered in dealing with the scattered wreck of the preceding pages. (Collins, *The Law* 366n)

Playmore returns to the same subject as his first footnote: he attempts to overlay certainty onto the uncertain reconstruction of the diary entries. He begins his note with a contradictory statement on how so few reconstructions were needed that there is no need to note them and then immediately launches into a discussion of the “trifling” amount of work needed to put this letter back together. Given that it is in this diary entry that Sara provides details about her suicide plan, it is lucky for Playmore, Valeria, and Eustace that the evidence is (allegedly) so clear and so undamaged and that the diary that could ultimately exonerate Eustace was in such (perhaps suspiciously) pristine condition. Playmore’s footnote, like his previous note, is designed to provide an air of certainty for a dubious piece of evidence. The text remains silent on the issue on the faithfulness of the reconstructed diary. But the presence of the footnote itself attesting to the veracity of the reproduced entries does open room for doubts. Had the diary been reproduced without much information on the state of the diary when retrieved from the rubbish heap, the diary would seem like a much more legitimate piece of evidence.

Playmore⁶⁴ becomes Sara's posthumous editor; he supplies words that he *thinks* Sara meant to use – or the words he needs her to have written in order to exonerate Eustace – without any clear understanding of Sara's original intentions. The dead woman cannot speak for herself, so Playmore reproduces and reconstructs her voice. Valeria as narrator and editor of the narrative allows Playmore's narrative intrusion, allows him to reveal (or rewrite) Sara's thoughts and motives. As with Marian's diary entries in *The Woman in White*, Sara did not intend for her diary to be shared with an audience – Marian and Sara write privately and for personal purposes, but their diaries ultimately become public documents to be potentially used in legal proceedings. However, while Marian is afforded a level of privacy via Hartright's editing of her diary and is allowed to consent to her diary being shared (at least in a redacted form), Sara does not. Her diary is exhumed from a rubbish heap after her death. She is not able to verify the legitimacy of the diary's contents or to approve of Playmore's editing of her work. Instead it is Playmore who legitimates her text in her absence, and Valeria inserts Playmore's reconstructed diary into her narrative. It is possible Valeria simply submits to her lawyer's authority when she accepts the reconstructed diary without questioning its legitimacy. However, it is also possible that she unquestioningly accepts Playmore's evidence because it is proof of her husband's innocence. Valeria begins her investigation with the assumption of her husband's innocence and with the explicit goal of clearing his name; her detective work is inherently biased. While Valeria can play at being a lady detective, she needs the professional assistance of a man like Playmore in order to validate her suspicions, even if that man's methods are dubious. Playmore's footnotes, a form long associated with legal writings, become a subtle means of his narrative control. They allow him to overlay his words on Sara's writing and to get her writings to say the "right"

⁶⁴ It is worth noting here the connotations of Playmore's name: "play" and "more." His name perhaps undercuts his serious role in the text as a male legal authority. His name could even connote the level at which he has "played" with Sara's words. Like Hartright in *The Woman in White* (a man who, unlike the novel's male villains, has his heart in the right place) who writes when prompted by his heart, Playmore plays with texts.

words. Moreover, in allowing his footnotes to remain and ignoring what exactly he corrected in the diaries, Valeria allows Playmore to act as an authority in the text, one to whom she as amateur lady detective consistently defers, while also allowing him to undercut his authority through the very footnotes he writes in an attempt to position himself as authoritative.

The final note of the novel is (apparently) by Valeria, and her sole footnote is a rather cryptic one, especially in light of the explicit detective work she has done in her narrative:

Note by the writer of this narrative: – Look back for a further illustration of this point of view to the scene at Benjamin’s house (Chapter XXXV), where Dexter, in a moment of unforgivable agitation, betrays his secret (or, rather, a part of his secret) to Valeria. (Collins, *The Law* 374n)

In the central text, Valeria has been explicit about her role as the author of the narrative and has consistently used the first-person when referring to herself. Yet, strangely, in the footnote, if she is indeed the author of the note, she refers to herself in the third-person. Is Valeria adopting an objective third-person stance in the note in order to make the footnote seem more legitimate? Is the footnote an intervention by Collins and therefore an authentic authorial note rather than a fictive actorial note? This text is, once again, silent on such issues. This final footnote points the reader to a previous chapter of the narrative, yet does not explicitly name the section or page being referenced. The reader is left to return to chapter thirty-five to scan for where Dexter may have slipped up – or to decide that it is too much trouble to look up the passage and take the narrator’s word as truth or to ignore the footnote entirely. It appears the note refers to this passage: “‘I entirely agree with you,’ he [Dexter] answered, without an instant’s hesitation. ‘Mrs Beaulieu is an innocent woman. The defence at the Trial was the right defence after all.’ He folded his arms complacently; he looked perfectly satisfied to leave the matter there” (Collins, *The Law* 277). Dexter knows that Mrs. Beaulieu did not murder Sara because he knows that Sara committed suicide. Moreover, while Valeria seems

to have written the entire narrative after discovering her husband's innocence, her reaction to Dexter's statement is not altered by proleptic knowledge. After his announcement that Sara was not killed by Mrs. Beaulieu, Valeria writes:

I was not of his mind. To my own amazement, I now found myself the least reasonable person of the two!

Miserrimus Dexter (the use the popular phrase) had given me more than I had bargained for. He had not only done all that I had anticipated, in the way of falsifying Mr Playmore's prediction – he had actually advanced beyond my limits. I could go the length of recognizing Mrs Beaulieu's innocence; but at that point I stopped. If the Defence at the Trial was the right defence – farewell to all hope of asserting my husband's innocence! I held to that hope, as I held to my love and my life.” (Collins, *The Law* 277)

Valeria offers no hint in this moment of the truth of Dexter's statements.

Rather than allowing the reader to miss the clue from earlier, the footnote points back to the passage to show the reader the clue. However, in relegating such important information to a footnote, the reader may still miss the message. Therefore, it is important for the narrator to note that Dexter slipped up earlier in the text, but the information is not so important as to warrant inclusion in the main text. Moreover, other clues in the text as to the means of the first Mrs. Macallan's death are not referenced via footnote or even in the central text. So what makes this passage important enough to be referenced in a footnote? And what prevents Valeria from including Dexter's semi-confession in the central text? Is she parroting the form first introduced into the text by Playmore? Is she coopting the textual authority of the footnoting form in order to further cement her position as an astute, albeit amateur, detective? Or is “the writer of this narrative” the actual author? Is it an authorial interjection from Collins to point out his own cleverness in embedding such a clue in previous chapters? The footnote doesn't read like a statement from Collins himself –

and Collins seems to have preferred using prefaces to insert his own positions into his novels. But the text offers no definitive answer as to who authored the final footnote. Valeria is the most likely author, given her position in the narrative as its author. Yet if she is the author of the note, there is no clear rationale for her reference to herself in the third person. Her identity is clouded – queered even – by the footnote. And in obscuring her gender in the footnote, Valeria is able to coopt a position of masculine, legal authority by mirroring the form used twice by Playmore in the narrative.

The final footnote becomes even stranger in light of the text that follows it. The note is appended to the end of a letter from Playmore to Valeria; the letter takes the form of legal questions and answers about facts related to Eustace’s trial. The letter is embedded in the narrative as a long quotation, and the footnote is attached after the closing quotation marks, suggesting again that it is Valeria, not Playmore, who wrote the note. While Playmore is clearly marked as the author of the previous two notes (both open with “Note by Mr. Playmore”), this final note is not. The previous two notes were appended to Sara’s writing, and this final note is appended to Playmore’s writing. The three notes together create an interesting symmetry: Playmore annotates Sara’s work, and in turn, his work is annotated by Valeria. This symmetry suggests Valeria’s growing confidence in her position as a textual authority. Yet, once again the text – written by Valeria – undermines this authoritative stance. In the footnote as the disembodied “writer of the narrative,” Valeria points to an earlier moment in which Dexter had nearly revealed the truth about Sara’s death. But in the sentences following the note, Valeria as the narrator makes no mention of Dexter’s error. When asked by Mr. Benjamin, another lawyer, if “there is any point you [Valeria] can think of that is still left unexplained,” she writes, “There was no point of any importance left unexplained that I could remember” (Collins, *The Law* 374). Dexter’s slipup is important enough to warrant a cross-referencing footnote, but not important enough to be part of the central text or mentioned to one of her lawyers. Yet another instance of a misstep by Dexter is included in the narrative and presented

just two paragraphs after Valeria's assertion that no important information about the case had been omitted from Playmore's summary. Valeria turns her conversation with Benjamin to the topic of why Mrs. Beaulieu did not marry Eustace after the trial. Benjamin's reply "exactly coincided with what Miserrimus Dexter has told me – as related in the thirtieth chapter of my narrative" (Collins, *The Law* 375). In the text, Valeria cross references an instance in chapter thirty; in the note, "the writer of the narrative," cross references an instance in chapter thirty-five.

Throughout the narrative, Valeria is an amorphous character. She is Valeria Brinton (the unmarried woman), Valeria Woodville (a woman married to a man under his false name), and Valeria Macallan (an identity unknown even to her until after her marriage). She is a devoted wife and an amateur detective. She is both proudly and hesitantly the self-proclaimed author and editor of the narrative. And nowhere in the text is her pride and hesitancy in her position as a textual authority more evident than in her footnote – the one portion of the text she does not claim as her own in the first-person. She has analeptically pinpointed an epistemic moment that went unnoticed by the other characters, specifically the male lawyers, but she pinpoints that moment via a third-person reference. The central narrative is filled with slippery characters and events – no one is who they initially seem to be. And the final footnote reinforces that slipperiness – Valeria ungenders herself in the note, refers to herself in the third-person, and marks herself as the keenest observer in the narrative. While Playmore's two footnotes call into question the reconstruction of Sara's writings (and her life and death), Valeria's cements her position as the text's author and authority but also strips her of her voice and gender.

Venus in India, like *The Woman in White* and *The Law and the Lady*, also has three footnotes. But unlike the two novels by Collins, there is debate over the fictionality of *Venus in India*. In his introduction to a twentieth-century reprint of *Venus in India*, Milton Van Sickle steadfastly refers to the narrative as a nonfiction memoir. He argues, while "Captain Charles Devereaux" is likely a

pseudonym, “the author was undoubtedly stationed in India [...], for he has more than a passing acquaintance with the locale” (Van Sickle 11). Van Sickle notes that the text contains “a few minor [historical] mistakes, but these are mistakes which a writer could easily make, looking back on his sojourns in India from a distance of ten or fifteen years” (11). Van Sickle takes the position that all events recounted in the narrative, with the exception of the story of Mrs. Searles exclusively “specializ[ing] in Viceroys” (11), are true, even though there is no historical evidence to support such assertions. However, Van Sickle’s position on the nonfictionality of the narrative seems to be an outlier – most scholarly classifications of the text label it as a novel, and libraries list the text under “fiction” subject headings. Given the lack of external sources supporting Devereaux’s story (much less his existence) and given the longstanding tradition of pornographic fiction masquerading as memoir, the text is best classified as fiction. However, in his uses of footnoting, Devereaux aligns his text with nonfiction writings like *Caraboo* or *Kama Sutra*. His three notes have a distinctly scholarly flavor to them: all three are translations of Latin or French phrases used in the narrative.

The first note in *Venus in India* is appended to a letter Devereaux receives from a soldier. In the letter, Devereaux is told that in the room adjoining his “is one of the loveliest women and best of pokes! Verbum Sap!” (41). In the note, Devereaux writes that J. C., the author of the letter and a lower ranking soldier, likely “means to quote Terence, ‘Dictum sapienti sat est’ (A word to the wise is sufficient)” (41n). Interestingly, while Devereaux feels the need to translate the Latin phrase for his audience, he does not feel the need to note who Terence is or where the quotation came from. The specifics of the Latin quotation are not necessary – rather it is the veneer of cultivation, education, and class associated with Latin that is key. Moreover, in translating the quotation for his readers, Devereaux implicitly acknowledges that his reader is no scholar of foreign languages while simultaneously marking himself as such a scholar (or at least well-schooled enough to have a smattering of foreign languages under his belt). The footnote is a little wink – it allows Devereaux to

position himself as a man of letters via his knowledge of Terence and the original Latin phrase (which has been paraphrased by J. C.); it is positioned rather breezily in the text, as a casual dropping of knowledge for the potentially unlettered reader and also as a sign to lettered readers of Devereaux's status.

Later in the narrative, Devereaux detours from telling of "the road leading to the sweet little mounds of Fanny and Amy Selwyn" into a paragraph about how he did not form close friendships with his "brother officers" (146). He resumes his tale of seduction after the paragraph on his lack of male friendships, stating "However, *revenons a nos moutons!*" (Devereaux 146, his emphasis); he then provides a translation of the French phrase in a footnote: "Let us get back to the subject!" (Devereaux 146n). While Devereaux is content with providing a rather aboveboard translation of the French colloquialism, Justin O'Hearn, the editor of the 2013 edition of *Letters from Laura and Eveline*, offers a different variation of the phrase. *Letters from Laura and Eveline* is the sequel to *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, and the pornographic text follows the mock marriages of Laura and Eveline, two "hermaphrodites," and their honeymoons. In one of Laura's letters, she uses the English version of the phrase as literally translated from French: "But to return to our mutton – as the French say – Rasper was now putting cold cream on the head and shaft of his enormous prick [...]" (*Letters* 21). In an editorial footnote, O'Hearn provides a definition of the phrase from the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "Women's flesh sought for the satisfaction of male lust; loose women, prostitutes collectively. Hence also women's genitals; copulation. Now chiefly in to hawk one's mutton: (of a woman) to flaunt her sexual attractiveness, to solicit for lovers" (*Letters* 21n). Perhaps Devereaux's use of a less raunchy version of the phrase is meant to be tongue-in-cheek – his readers who are in the know might be able to identify his sly wink and understand implicitly what else the phrase could mean. The subject of the text is also the "mutton" of the text – it is Devereaux's sexual adventures with a wide variety of women. The consumption connotations of his turn of phrase supplement the

ways in which Devereaux devours women in his narrative – and the ways in which his readers also devour the narrative itself. The note also becomes a break in Devereaux’s veneer of writing a travelogue and memoir. In using the French phrase and in creating a notation for the phrase that at once calls attention to the phrase and glosses over the sexual connotations of the colloquialism, Devereaux peels back the curtain and reveals (but only to the readers knowledgeable about the connotations of the term) his true subject: it is not the war or the army or his command posts or his journeys – it is sex.

In his final footnote, Devereaux supplies a second French phrase with footnoted translation when discussing a letter from his wife Louie: “She [Louie] said my letters had been written in such increased low spirits, unlike myself, that she was getting more and more alarmed, and that *conte que conte*, she would come and join me, she did not know where, but she would find out in Bombay landing” (Devereaux 197-198, his emphasis). In a footnote, he translates the French phrase as “Cost what it may” (Devereaux 197n). As with his first footnote, in this third footnote, Devereaux’s notation is for a term used by another character. Moreover, this final footnote is the only footnote attached to a statement not related to Devereaux’s sexual pleasures. In the passage attached to the first note, J.C. teases Devereaux with the promises of sexual delights available with a nearby woman. In the passage attached to the second note, Devereaux is explicitly discussing his sexual activities. But in this final footnoted passage, it is the potential of sexual neutering, not pleasure, that is raised. Prior to the letter from Louie about her desire to come to him in India, Devereaux had been recounting his “ravishing dreams” about former lovers and his recovery via “a most prolific wet dream” from a temporary impotence (196; 197). However, no sooner does Devereaux find his “dear old tool to [his] joy and delight, standing as full as in the days of yore” (197) than he receives Louie’s letter about her intended voyage to see him. This footnoted passage contains the promise of ending his extramarital dalliances – a rather high cost for Devereaux indeed. Moreover, Devereaux has

consistently portrayed his marriage as not being an obstacle to his affairs. So when Louie writes of her plans to visit, Devereaux is shocked that his sport may be coming to an end. His ability to sustain his affairs with the Selwyn sisters would be undercut by Louie's appearance – her letter temporarily neuters him. For the twenty pages after Louie's letter, Devereaux is abstinent; he fears his wife's arrival, and that fear prevents him from pursuing other women. He is only free to renew his pursuits after news of Louie's near-death experience reaches him. And it is because of the high price Louie must pay into order to allow Devereaux's sexcapades to continue that her French phrase must be translated for readers who do not know the language. Louie and her young daughter fall down a set of stairs during her voyage to find her husband, and Louie nearly dies as a consequence and suffers through the miscarriage of her son. "Cost what it may," indeed. The footnote reinforces the power Louie has over Devereaux, and it highlights the fact that his affairs have a high price attached to them. By calling attention to the phrase and its translation, Devereaux pauses his writing to reflect on the morality of his actions, a strange moment in a pornographic text.

In translating these three uses of Latin and French, Devereaux marks himself as an educated man – and marks his reader as potentially less educated. However, Devereaux sprinkles untranslated non-English words throughout the novel: "*sotte voce*" (81; 244, his emphasis), "*dishabille*," (243, his emphasis), "bahut salaam" (259), "Amour vicit omnia" (273), "sina qua non" (311). So why translate some phrases, including a commentary on the translation of one phrase, and not translate others? There is no clear pattern to Devereaux's uses of and notations for non-English phrases. Had he used non-English terms without translations in the footnote, the implied reader would have been constructed as a world-wise fellow traveler, perhaps Devereaux's equal. But the implied reader of *Venus in India* is a more slippery construction, and the use of notes work with the central text to such slippery ends. Devereaux's novel is a pornographic text under the guise of memoir and travelogue. And while Devereaux does assume (as will be further illustrated in chapter four) that his readers are

sexually experienced, the novel does have a didactic thrust. The notes work with this didacticism – the reader not only learns about sexual positions and pleasure but also a smattering of Latin and French phrases. While footnoting in a work of fiction may be startling to encounter, footnoting in a pornographic text is more startling. The basic function of erotica is sexually arousing the reader. However, Deveraux's notations literalize Coward's quip about footnotes in a narrative being like a ringing doorbell during sex; in Devereaux's narrative, sex scenes are actually interrupted by footnotes. However, in borrowing footnoting from more serious (or at least less sexy) forms of writing, Devereaux creates an air of respectability: if his pornographic novel is footnoted, then it looks like a more mainstream text. Moreover, given the explanatory nature of his footnotes, the reader might actually learn something – something outside of sex – from the text. Deveraux goes to great lengths in his narrative to convince his readers that *Venus in India* is not a novel but a memoir, and footnoting is another means of creating the illusion that the text is a memoir – of blurring the line between the storyworld and the actual world.

Nonfiction & Footnotes: *Caraboo* and *Kama Sutra*

Unlike the sparse footnoting in *The Woman in White*, *The Law and the Lady*, and *Venus in India*, Gutch's *Caraboo* pamphlet is filled with footnotes. Its fifty-six pages contain twenty-six footnotes, averaging roughly one footnote for every two pages of text. Gutch's footnotes are authentic authorial notes and are both supplementing and competing. Generally, the footnotes operate in support of the central narrative and in support of the view of Mary Baker (the alleged Princess Caraboo of Javasú) as a fraud and a contemptable woman. These supplementing footnotes add information on Baker's previous imposture as a French woman, her work in Exeter as a servant, her alleged marriage, names and credentials of others in the narrative, geographical locations, translations of non-English words, and many other factual insertions. The supplementing footnotes account for the vast majority of the notes on the text – but there is one notable use of a competing

footnote, one that works against the construction of Baker as a villainess and betrays some of Gutch's sympathies for her. This competing footnote is located in the final pages of the narrative and is appended to an account of Baker having set fire to two beds in a house where she worked as a servant: "Undoubtedly the greatest blot upon her character! But as the present Narrative may be depended upon as *a statement of every material fact*, which has been deemed worth recording relative to this singular creature, it would have been wrong to suppress such an occurrence" (Gutch 51n, his emphasis). This note is suffused with Gutch's sympathies towards Baker – he, for the first time in the narrative, appears to wish he could have concealed some damning information about Baker, and in the footnote, he struggles with his decision to include the information in the text. In writing an accurate account of her life and her imposture as Caraboo, Gutch must include the arson incidents. But he laments in the notes the necessity of such an inclusion, wishing instead that he could have omitted such a terrible truth about her. He acknowledges in the footnote, not in the central narrative, that he had the authorial control to conceal this crime from the readers – and he hints that her acts of arson are the worst things that she has done. In doing so, Gutch opens the door in the footnote for viewing her imposture as a harmless lark, especially when compared to the fact that she set fire to two beds on two separate occasions (the narrative is not clear about whether the beds were occupied at the time) and attempted to blame "a fellow servant, whom she did not like," for the fires (51). It also reinforces Gutch's position as a reliable narrator and faithful editor. He notes that he could have omitted his incident but that, in the interest of narrative truth, his potential sympathies cannot be allowed to outweigh "*a statement of every material fact*" (Gutch 51n). Much like Harttright, the truth of the narrative and his position as a reliable narrator in control of strange narratives are important to Gutch.

Gutch is less charitable to Caraboo elsewhere in the texts and his notes. In writing of her alleged marriage, Gutch at length notes,

Whether she was really married to this foreigner, or whether he had seduced, and afterwards deserted her, has not been clearly ascertained. There is little doubt, but that it was from this man who had probably associated with Malays, or was acquainted with their language, that she picked up the Eastern words and idioms which she used, as well as that knowledge of some Asiatic customs, which so effectually enabled her to effect her imposition. This person's name was Bakerstendht or Beckerstein. (56n)

While Baker's sexual history is only implied in the central text, the footnote clearly marks her as a ruined girl – Gutch expresses doubts over her having been legally married to this man, which in turn makes the baby born of this union an illegitimate child. Nothing, it seems according to this footnote, about Baker is legitimate: not her marriage, not her child, not her history, not her name, not her identity. Also, rather than being the virtuous kidnapped princess, Baker is instead at best an abandoned wife and at worst a woman who lived with and had sex with a man she was not married to. As Caraboo in the central text, Baker is described as behaving in ways inappropriate for an English woman: she climbs trees, throws knives, and wears clothing that reveals her legs and arms. However, these non-normative traits are accepted behavior since she is not English. But once Baker's English identity is discovered, her non-normative behaviors are quickly re-inscribed as serious aberrations, and her sexual history is then fodder for public examination. Moreover, the footnote also calls into question Baker's ability to create such a close approximation of an "Asiatic" woman; Gutch notes that it was likely her non-English "husband" who taught Baker some words and customs that she used as Caraboo, implying that a servant and a woman would not have been able to so thoroughly fool "experts," all of whom are men, without the aid of a man while also simultaneously aligning Baker with foreign preferences and aligning the foreign with the dubious.

However, this same note also opens a gap in Gutch's authoritative stance in the text. He points out that the facts presented in the central narrative may not be facts. Little about Baker's life

before becoming Caraboo is known, and even less is certain about her relationship with this man (not even his name or whether they were actually married). If she had married this man and he had abandoned her, Baker would have been the victimized wife; if she had been seduced by this man, then she would be the fallen woman. But Gutch does not know and cannot prove anything about this relationship. Instead, his narrative relies on hearsay and gossip about Baker. His note about her marriage/seduction at once validates his narrative as an actual record of events and also invalidates his narrative by failing to present the entire truth to the readers, a failure rooted in the impossibility of knowing Baker's full story. On its surface, the note supplements the text and points to Gutch as a reliable narrator. On closer inspection, the same note competes with Gutch's assertions in the central narrative that there is one truth to be told about Baker and her imposture and that Gutch knows all the relevant facts of her case. In this sense, the note is more closely aligned with the ways in which Collins's narrators use footnotes in *The Woman in White* and *The Law and the Lady*. Gutch, Hartright, and Playmore each attempt to use footnotes to bolster their claims of the truthfulness of their narratives, but the footnotes often undermine these claims by exposing gaps between what is said to be true by a narrator and what is later revealed to be true. Such epistemic gaps reveal the subjective nature of truthfulness and the impossibility of a complete recounting of events.

Another of Gutch's footnotes that ventures into epistemic gaps and possible worlds is found early in the text. Baker attempted to travel to America, perhaps because she suspected others were starting to unravel her imposture. Baker unfortunately misses her boat and returns to Mrs. Worrall's house to continue her hoax: "Disappointed in her intended escape to America, she appears to have reconciled herself to stay a little longer under Mrs. W.'s protection" (Gutch 17). Gutch inserts an asterisk after "America" and appends his footnote to that introductory clause: "What an impression her visit would have made, had the Princess of Javasus escaped to America or elsewhere, leaving this imposture undiscovered?" (17n). Prior to this notation, Caraboo had been unmasked as Baker via

two paratextual and one textual references (the title, a portrait of her with her name and her alias, and a reference to Mary Baker's autobiography in the appendix), and up to this notation, Gutch avoided textual references to her as either Baker or Caraboo. Yet, in this notation he imagines her as Caraboo in America, not as Baker – as though, had she not been unmasked as a fraud in England, she would have become Caraboo and been able to erase her identity as Baker. This note also opens an avenue into possible worlds in which her imposture goes unnoticed or unchallenged. The footnote is an open-ended question, not a statement, allowing the reader to imagine several possibilities of what could have been had Baker not missed her ship. But the phrasing implies that the imposture would not have been discovered in America or another country or that news of the imposture would not have made it back to England from elsewhere. Fate worked in the Worralls' favor when Baker's attempted flight to America was foiled by a scheduling mix-up. There is also a hint of awe in Gutch's note – he seems well aware of how easily others were drawn into her imposture, and he seems to admire her ability to make such an impression. Yet his repeated use of "escape" in both the central text and footnote denotes his stance as to the criminality of her actions; she attempts to flee from her fraud, and in doing so, her flight becomes another marker of her guilt via the (faulty) social assumption that the innocent never attempt to run away. This footnote is the only instance in Gutch's narrative that encourages speculation on what might have been – on possible worlds that could have been. This encouragement to speculate is at odds with the central text and the other notes, all of which attempt to reveal what actually happened. Fictional possibilities are engendered by the notation. While Gutch does not entertain such possibilities in the narrative nor does he elaborate in the note about how he may have imagined those possibilities, the note encourages the reader to imagine Caraboo at large and undiscovered in another country. The note, in conjunction with notes about her acts of arson, may also reveal some of Gutch's sympathies

towards Baker – just as he wished he could have concealed her arson, he may also wish she could have evaded capture.

If Gutch uses an abundance of footnotes in his pamphlet, Burton litters his translation of *Kama Sutra* with notes. The notes begin rather staidly – Burton annotates the text in conventionally scholarly ways by noting translations of various words, providing biographical information about various historical figures, and explicating various secular and religious customs. However, by the eleventh footnote, Burton begins to interject his own opinions: “The author [of *Kama Sutra*, not Burton himself] wishes to prove that a great many things are done by people from practice and custom, without their being acquainted with the reason of things, or the laws on which they are based, and this is perfectly true” (12n). It is a minor incursion into the text, but it is the first small step Burton takes towards using notes to insert his own opinions about the text, about the culture that produced the text, and about the culture in which he lives. In a moment of what might be termed “Britsplaining,” Burton comments on the lengthy rhetoric employed in the text: “This is a long dissertation very common among Sanscrit [sic] authors, both when writing and talking socially. They start certain propositions, and then argue for and against them” (*Kama Sutra* 35n). Seemingly unaware of the irony, Burton continues for a total of one hundred and twenty-six words in this footnote to explain the long-windedness of the original author.

Eventually, Burton begins via his annotations to provide explicit sexual advice to his readers. The first such intervention occurs at the end of the first chapter in the second part of the text:

This paragraph should be particularly noted, for it specially applies to married men and their wives. So many men utterly ignore the feelings of the woman, and never pay the slightest attention to the passion of the latter. To understand the subject thoroughly, it is absolutely necessary to study it, and then a person will know that, as dough is prepared for baking, so

must a woman be prepared for sexual intercourse, if she is to derive satisfaction from it.

(Burton, *Kama Sutra* 36n)

Ignoring the unevenness of his comparison of proofing dough to sexual foreplay, Burton makes clear reference to the importance of sexual satisfaction for all parties involved and to the need to understand women's sexual desires – regardless of when or where these women live. He does not name his contemporary British audience, but the connection is still clear. In a later chapter in the same part, Burton returns to the theme of mutual pleasure:

Men who are well acquainted with the art of love are well aware how often one woman differs from another in her sighs and sounds during the time of congress. Some women like to be talked to in the most loving way, others in the most lustful ways, others in the most abusive way, and so on. Some women enjoy themselves with closed eyes in silence, others make a great noise over it, and some almost faint away. The great art is to ascertain what gives them the greatest pleasure, and specialties they like best. (*Kama Sutra* 60n)

In an instructional narrative about love, sex, and life in medieval India, Burton uses the footnotes to create connections between the culture written about in the text and his own contemporary culture – and to cross from the historical, academic, orientalist realm of the text into his contemporary reader's bedroom.

Burton also draws connections between the history of the central text and the fiction being produced in his own culture. The central text argues that “a girl forcibly enjoyed by one who does not understand the hearts of girls becomes nervous, uneasy, and dejected, and suddenly begins to hate the man who has taken advantage of her; and then, when love is not understood or returned, she sinks into despondency, and becomes either a hater of mankind altogether, or, hating her own man, she has recourse to other men” (Burton, *Kama Sutra* 84). Burton links those statements to contemporary novels: “These last few lines have been exemplified in many ways in many novels of

this century” (Burton, *Kama Sutra* 84n). Burton in his illicit work in *Kama Sutra* peeks out from his scholarly positions to note the literary. While Burton does not name the genres in his footnotes, his connection of rape, coerced sex, and unrequited love to novels implies he is thinking of illicit novels, especially sensation and gothic novels – but also perhaps erotic novels. His translation of *Kama Sutra* was largely received by his contemporary audience as a pornographic, rather than scholarly, text, but his note blurs the distinction among novels, history, and scholarship – the pornographic and the scholarly, according to Burton, do not have to be mutually exclusive categories.

While the content explicitly deals with sex and sexuality, the narrative takes the form of an aboveboard translation of a culturally significant text. The narrative is not overly erotic, unlike *Venus in India*, but it does deal more directly with sex than *The Woman in White*, *The Law and the Lady*, or *Caraboo*. Perhaps more so than the content of the narrative, Burton’s notations move the text towards more illicit poles. In drawing connections between medieval Indian sexuality and contemporary British sexuality, Burton opens possible worlds not only of sexual desires (especially for British women) but also of potentially uncomfortable comparisons between the colonizers and the colonized. If Indian and British populations have similar sexual practices and desires, what else might they have in common? And how might that commonality fly in the face of colonial order, which is built on oppression, subjugation, and othering? While the majority of Burton’s footnotes to the translation make note of historical events and locations and comment on the strangeness of medieval Indian practices (especially religious/magical practices) to the British public, his notes on the practices and ideas shared by Indian and British peoples compete with his assertions that Indians (medieval or contemporary) are completely foreign. The text and most of the footnotes focus on the specific views and actions of medieval Indians, but a few of Burton’s notes assert claims about the universality of sex. In one of his universalizing notes, which competes with other textual assertions, Burton quotes Honoré de Balzac in untranslated French: “On peut tout attendre et tout supposer

d'une femme amoureuse" (*Kama Sutra* 144n). The quote comes from Balzac's *La Comédie humaine*, and it translates loosely as "we can expect and assume everything about a woman in love." The "woman in love" is not bound to a single time, culture, or place: she is contemporary, she is historical, she is Indian, she is British, she is French, she is all women. Such movements towards universalizing sexual desires (especially sexual desires for women) perhaps underpins contemporary British views of the text as pornographic. Much like the representations of women as lustful beings in *Venus in India* and other erotica, *Kama Sutra* explores women's sexuality and affirms their desires – and Burton then links the affirmations from medieval India to contemporary Great Britain. He builds possible worlds of universal sexual desires – and of connections between the colonizer and the colonized – through his notations.

Conclusions

Footnotes denote the very constructedness and incompleteness of the narrative – someone purposefully inserted the notes into the narrative, and the notes were deemed necessary by this someone because there was more to the story being presented in the narrative. Possible worlds of a story are always incomplete – there is no full or complete narrative; there is always more that can be told. Footnotes point to the limitations of the narrative and of the storyworld. Footnotes queer the illusion of authority and constancy presented in the narrative, especially in illicit narratives. They also stress the readerly connection between the text world and the actual world – reading footnotes and attempting to locate the voice of the footnotes (intradiegetic, extradiegetic, supplementing, competing, textual, actual) can blur the boundary between the narrative and the actual world. Footnotes themselves are strangely licit and illicit. They connote scholarship, facts, and research, but they also connote witticisms, inside jokes, and opinions. They are of the text and separate from the text. Footnotes form "a line that sometimes acknowledges and admits readers within its circumference but sometimes excludes them, fences them off from the closed space of the scholarly

activity” (Benstock 204). Moreover, “by crossing the visual border between the reading and the reader, these footnotes call attention to the physicality of these texts, and thus to their generic tropes, transgressing the boundary between their appearance as reality and their existence as fiction” (Effron 216). In a paper presented at the 2007 Modern Language Association conference, Edward Maloney posited the “double work” of footnoting in fiction: “This ‘double work’ (Maloney 11) succeeds because of the footnotes’ position in the visual borders of the narrative. As outside the body of the narrative, the footnotes appear extratextual, but as a part of the text, they remain part of the fiction” (Effron 216). Footnoting, in fiction as well as nonfiction, is internal and external – a queered position.

Queer theory often plays with interiority and exteriority, strange doublings, and distorted mirrors, and it also works to dismantle binaries and to foreground the performativity and contingency of identities and facts. Footnoting is an excellent vehicle for such actions. While footnotes are allegedly staid addendums to scholarly texts, footnotes do not always operate within those parameters. Footnotes can become funhouse mirrors – reflecting distorted images from the text back into the text. While footnotes also allegedly offer clarification of points made in the text, footnotes can also obfuscate, providing more questions than answers. In illicit narratives, footnotes operate on the assumption of the reader’s familiarity with footnoting – especially with footnoting as an accurate academic or legal form. When footnotes are then applied to more salacious reading materials, the authors and narrators play with the literary assumption about footnotes. At the most basic level, footnotes offer a veneer of verisimilitude; footnoting becomes a device in the “reality effect” as outlined by Roland Barthes. The notes, tucked away at the bottom of pages and printed in small fonts, become one of the numerous ways in which the text “feels real” to the reader. By conventional cultural logic, if notes are commonly associated with truthful and even scholastic writings and if *this* text has footnotes, then *this* text must be truthful.

But the notes are not always what they seem in illicit narratives. In all five of the illicit narratives considered in this chapter, the notes also work to convince the reader of the truthfulness of the narrative. But in many of these narratives, the notes themselves frequently call into question the truths asserted in the narrative and/or the alleged objectivity of the author or narrator. Moreover, in all but the notes to *Venus in India*, the footnotes highlight gendered differences between characters in fiction and between author or translator and subject in nonfiction. The gendered focus of the footnotes in those four texts are attempts to shore up the illusions of masculine textual authority, even in *The Law and the Lady* which is primarily narrated by a woman. But that focus also works to open gaps in the constructedness of gender and authority, often times undermining the assertions of narratorial completeness and authority. Interestingly, the notes in *Venus in India* focus on class distinctions more than gender distinctions – perhaps because as a work of pornography (the most illicit of the illicit narrative forms discussed here) gender and sex are central to the narrative itself (and therefore are not fodder for footnotes). Devereaux's notes work to re-enforce the alleged respectability of the narrative. Devereaux takes great pains in the central narrative to construct his sexcapades as a legitimate memoir. The footnotes, with all of their aboveboard connotations, creates an atmosphere of legitimacy. Smut, if properly annotated, can appropriate a veneer of respectability – if only at first glance. The appearance of notes in *The Woman in White* and *The Law and the Lady* also work towards a Barthesian reality effect, but the notes in these novels center on gender and power. Hartright's note in *The Woman in White* and Playmore's notes in *The Law and the Lady* rework women's writings, bending the women's works to the men's needs, and Hartright's other notes take similar editorial control over non-normative men's writings. Notes become a means of exerting narratorial control over these subordinate voices in the text. Women's words cannot be accepted by these male narrators without a note on why these women were allowed to participate in the narrative.

Footnotes are also masculine – and even imperialist – realms in *Caraboo* and *Kama Sutra*. Gender, empire, and control mix together in Gutch's and Burton's footnotes. The footnotes in *Caraboo* reinforce the truthfulness of Gutch's narrative. If Baker invented Caraboo and Javasus, Gutch brings to bear the full force of scholarship and expert opinions to unmask her imposture. It is not just Gutch's voice that reveals Baker's true nature; it is also learned men. Gutch's decision to footnote the narrative is intriguing for the length and detail of his notes. Several times Gutch chooses to footnote important information rather than include it in the central narrative. And occasionally Gutch's sympathy for Baker at being thus exposed to the public eye is communicated via his notes. While Gutch seeks to re-inscribe appropriate feminine behavior, Burton seeks to expand the limits of appropriate femininity to include an acknowledgement of women's sexual desires and sexual pleasure. In his footnotes, Burton connects the advice about sex, pleasure, courting, and marriage in *Kama Sutra* to his contemporary British readers – both male and female. Burton's notes work towards a sexual liberation (of sorts). More so than the notes in *Caraboo*, *The Woman in White*, *The Law and the Lady*, or *Venus in India*, the notes in *Kama Sutra* create a bridge between the narrative and the actual world. As a historical document, *Kama Sutra* (like *Caraboo*) is rooted in the actual world. Yet the people of *Kama Sutra* are foreign to Burton and his readers in many respects: they are a historical people, and they are not British. However, in the notes, Burton aligns these medieval foreign people with his contemporary British readers, and he argues that the two populations are not as different as they first may seem (at least not in the bedroom). The central narrative of *Kama Sutra* is explicitly instructional: do this, do that, do not do this other thing. Burton's annotations of the narrative, while often providing historical or cultural context or tongue-in-cheek commentary, are also occasionally explicitly instructional; in the notes, he argues that the instructions in *Kama Sutra* are not just for the narrative's original intended audience but are also

instructions that can (and what's more, should) be applied to a contemporary British audience with little to no editing.

Across all five works examined here, while the function of the footnotes varies from text to text, the uses of the footnotes and the separation between the text and note remain of interest. Of and separate from the central narrative, “the note is a fairly elusive and receding element of the paratext” (Genette, *Paratext* 342). The contents of the notes are worth inclusion, according to their authors, but not so worthy as to be included in the central narrative. They are hiccups in the storyworld – outbursts from the storyworld which cannot be contained within the narrative. For Genette, “incorporation into the text would entail some loss or impairment,” and “incorporating a digression into the text might well mean creating a lumpish or confusion-generating hernia” (*Paratexts* 328). But the note can also be seen as a lumpish form, jutting out from the text and calling attention away from the central narrative to a small tangent. Simultaneously internal and external,

The footnote creates the mode of nonfiction rather than fiction; as Peter Cosgrove notes, rhetorically, it has ‘the privileged exteriority of the independent witness’ (133). However, Cosgrove also notes that this privileged form ‘becomes part of the forms of persuasion, and in fact the most insidious of all the forms – that which disclaims any intention to persuade’ (133). This insidious persuasion occurs as the footnotes seek to persuade us of the text’s nonfictional status through their undeclared mimicry of generic forms. So, the footnote serves as a reality effect not only in Roland Barthes’s original sense of the wealth of minute details that overwhelm the description of the scene to create a believable situation (14), but also in that the paratextual material formats the text so that it appears in the generic mode of nonfiction rather than fiction. Consequently, the extratextual reader initially shares the narrative audience’s belief in the reality of the narrative’s events. (Effron 204)

Footnotes are slippery. Notes, like other paratextual and narratorial forms, reach out from the text to the reader in the actual world. They are a border crossing – one heavily laden with assumptions about the scholarly, academic, and even bland nature of the form. Footnotes consistently surprise. They are the devastating critique buried in marginalia. They are comic relief in a dry text. They are an injection of the discursive into a narrative. Footnotes operate at the news/novels intersection – nineteenth-century writers of illicit narratives repurposed the form, long associated with discursive writing. In these illicit narratives, the notes can serve several functions (explanations, references, opinions) and operate in a variety of classifications (authorial, actorial, authentic, fictional, supplementing, competing). There is no universal pattern to the uses of notes in these texts – perhaps because of the inherent slipperiness of the form itself, as illustrated by Genette, Benstock, Effron, and Grafton.

Much like narrative interventions (the subject of the following chapter), notes are textual disruptions that blur the distinction between the storyworld and the actual world. Much like prefaces (the subject of the previous chapter), notes are seemingly extraneous material appended to a narrative but can also radically shift the meaning of the text for the readers who are willing to delve into them. The notes are embedded in the text (like narrative interventions) and on the borders of the text (like prefaces). Bound to the margins and to the text itself, footnotes operate in a position between the preface and the narrative intervention. The very liminality of the footnote form works within these illicit narratives as another means of communicating themes of gender, sexuality, and control. Footnotes in illicit narratives are a kind of border crossing; they bridge parts of the narrative, and they bridge the storyworld and actual world. In illicit texts, the footnotes mimic a style more commonly associated with licit discourse; the footnote format itself is a format of the legal and scholarly discourse, and its use in illicit narratives is designed to play on those associations. The creators of the footnotes in these illicit texts frequently use the notes to create a sense of epistemic

(and even ontological) fullness. But the content of the notes also frequently undercuts that fullness by either directly contradicting the central narrative or by pointing to new gaps in the text. In queering the alleged fullness and authority of the narrative, these paratextual features create new possible worlds that undermine assertions about control and authority and that stand in opposition to heteronormative cultural values. Placed in illicit texts – texts that are already swimming against the mainstream – these notes doubly undermine such values. In *The Law and the Lady*, Valeria frequently behaves in non-normative ways: she is a detective, and she operates as an independent woman. While she is reinscribed as a normative woman by the end of the narrative, the notes point to ways in which women's lives have been rewritten by men to suit a particular narrative – Sara's diary has been reimagined and rewritten to exonerate Eustace. In *The Woman in White*, Hartright attempts to control feminine/effeminate voices in the narrative like Marian's and Fairlie's; yet, those very same voices continually elude his authority. Devereaux's notes attempt to control the genre of the text more than the content; the aboveboard connotations of footnoting clash with the pornographic nature of the narrative. Gutch's notes open more questions about the nature of the experts who have unmasked Caraboo and about Baker's life – questions that are not given answers either in the notes or the narrative. Burton's notes frequently conflate medieval India and contemporary Britain while simultaneously pointing to India – both contemporary and historical – as foreign and exotic. The footnotes play with textual ideas about authority and gender. They open strange possible worlds of non-normative behaviors, despite their authors' attempts to use the notes to normalize, control, or erase such behaviors.

CHAPTER 4

THE INSIDES, NARRATIVE INTERVENTIONS

(You doing ok? Dissertations sure are long. But I've got good news, dear reader; we are more than half way home.)

The lure of narrative interventions for me is the promise of a secret shared between me and the text. Reading is an intimate act, and these narratorial interventions, which acknowledge my act of reading (or if not my actual act of reading then the fact that an imagined reader somewhere at some time was reading the text), can make an already intimate act more intimate. The text shares its secrets with me. It tells me that I should (or should not) be sympathetic to a character. It tells me that the moral compass of the narrative is correct and strokes my ego when I agree. It reaches out from the storyworld into the actual world. And it does this (or at least attempts this) with all readers – narrative interventions are promiscuous. “The reader” and “you” are constantly changing – the actual reading “you” might not be the one initially imagined by the narrator or author, but any “you” will do.⁶⁵ The “you” and “the reader” are fixtures in a narrative that employs such terms, even though the actual reading “you” multiplies and shifts over centuries and cultures. For such little words, “you” and “reader” can have a tremendous impact on the reader’s engagement with the text. They bridge the storyworld and the actual world. They point out from the narrative to the person holding the narrative in their hands. Embedded within the narrative, these narrative interventions are both of the narrative and separate from the narrative. Often they are personal invitations for the reader to judge or reflect on the events of the text – to engage on a deeper level with the narrative. Often found in sentimental or didactic texts, these narrative interventions frequently work to align the reader with the emotions or morals espoused in the text. And unfortunately, in the twentieth and

⁶⁵ Walt Whitman’s “Whoever You Are Holding Me Now in Hand,” which is unfortunately outside of boundaries of this dissertation, is an excellent example of the intimacy and danger of reading and of the promiscuous narrator addressing a singular “you” that could be any and all “yous.”

twenty-first centuries, such narratorial interventions have become synonymous for some scholars and critics with sentimental or moralistic drivel.

Yet such a sweeping generalization about narrative interventions is unjustified, as illustrated by Robyn Warhol in *Gendered Interventions: Narrative Discourse in the Victorian Novel* and by Garrett Stewart in *Dear Reader: The Conscripted Audience in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*. Rather than being dismissed *a priori* as signs of bad writing, sentimentality, or didacticism, narrative interventions require a more detailed exploration. Illicit narratives often use narrative interventions – but the ways in which these texts employ such interventions are radically different from the ways in which realist texts (which are the focus of Warhol’s and Stewart’s scholarship) employ them. In *The Footnote: A Curious History*, Anthony Grafton compares footnotes to “waste products” (6); footnotes are overlooked by scholars – yet if “the exploration of toilets and sewers has proved endlessly rewarding to historians of population, city planning, and smell,” then so too do footnotes merit scholarly attention (6). Grafton’s analogy of footnotes as garbage can be extended other literary “waste products” like the direct address of the reader. Narrative interventions are instead a viable and productive avenue of scholarly inquiry, especially for inquiries into the creation of storyworlds and into the relation between actual worlds and the possible worlds of the narrative.

Narrative interventions utilize metalepsis. In *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, Gérard Genette describes metalepsis as a crossing from one diegetic level into another; metalepsis “is a paradoxical contamination between the world of the telling and the world of the told” (Pier par. 2). Warhol argues that metalepsis is a tool of narrative interventions: “both distancing and engaging narrators use metalepsis in establishing their relation to their characters” (*Gendered* 39). Narrative interventions are forms of metalepsis designed to, according to Warhol, either distance the reader from the narrative or to align the reader with the narrative. The reader is hailed via metalepsis as a

“you” or “reader.” However, the crucial difference between metalepsis and narrative intervention is how the text rhetorically constructs the reader’s reaction to being hailed.

Narrative interventions are generally considered components of narrative discourse, not as paratextual elements. However, I argue that narrative interventions are best viewed as paratextual interventions. Genette defines paratexts as those elements in the book but not of the narrative – they are narrative appendages.⁶⁶ Genette and other scholars of paratextual interventions have focused on titles, illustrations, notes, appendices, blurbs, dust jackets, and other textual accoutrement, but narrative interventions have yet to be examined or classed as a paratextual form. In his conclusion to *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, Genette points to the gaps in his work and to the ways in which other scholars can expand his work on paratexts, but he also issues a caution about expanding the definition of paratexts to the point of absurdity. Genette warns of “the imperialist temptation to annex to this subject everything that comes within its reach or seems possibly to pertain to it. [...] Inasmuch as the paratext is a transitional zone between the text and the beyond-text, one must resist the temptation to enlarge this zone by whittling away in both directions” (*Paratexts* 407). However, expanding paratexts to include narrative interventions is not “rashly proclaiming that ‘all is paratexts’” (Genette, *Paratexts* 407). Genette notes that “most essential of the paratext’s properties [...] is functionality”: “Whatever aesthetic intention may come into play as well, the main issue for the paratext is not to ‘look nice’ around the text but rather to ensure for the text a destiny consistent with the author’s purpose” (*Paratexts* 407). Narrative interventions rarely “look nice,” but the author or narrator includes such direct addresses in an attempt to shape the reader’s reaction to and interaction with the narrative – thereby “ensur[ing] for the text a destiny consistent with the author’s purpose.”

⁶⁶ Or perhaps they are narrative appendixes, in the sense of the body organ. They can be removed if deemed troublesome. They can be ignored, especially when they work seamlessly with other parts. And sometimes they erupt.

Much as prefaces and notes have been denigrated by literary critics, so too have narrative interventions, and narrative interventions operate in ways similar to other, more traditional forms of paratexts. They are in the book but not of the narrative – they explicitly reach out from the storyworld into the actual world. They can significantly shape the reader’s understanding of the text, but as with other paratextual forms, the reader does not have to engage with the narrative intervention – the direct address of the reader can be ignored in the same fashion as the preface and the notes. Moreover, the removal of the narrative intervention does not necessarily significantly change the central narrative. The intervention can augment the narrative. But in the same way as the story can still stand without its title, drawings, prefaces, or notes, the course and content of the narrative is little changed by the removal of references to “you” or “the reader.”⁶⁷ Given the close parallels between narratorial and paratextual interventions, narrative interventions in this chapter will be considered as a paratextual form.⁶⁸

Finally, before moving further into a discussion of narrative interventions, a word of caution is advisable. This chapter does not seek to explore how actual nineteenth-century British readers would have read and responded to various narratives. Such data about those individual readers is not available – and while studies on how actual individual readers interact with text are incredibly interesting, such studies lie at the intersection of literary studies and neurobiology and neuropsychology (the last two of which I am in no way qualified to speak on). This chapter is rooted firmly in literary studies and narrative theory. Narrative interventions are not about how an individual reader interacts with a text; such interventions are instead about how the author or narrator of the text imagines and interacts with the reader. I use “reader” to signify the imagined real

⁶⁷ The exception here is second-person narratives wherein the “you” is a character in the narrative. However, such uses of “you” in second-person texts do not qualify as narrative interventions and will not be discussed in this chapter.

⁶⁸ Warhol hints at such links between paratextual and narratorial interventions in the third chapter of *Gendered Interventions*. In discussing Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Mary Barton*, Warhol notes how Gaskell’s use of an authentic authorial preface and the narrative interventions in the novel work to connect the reader to the storyworld. I am thankful that Warhol did not pursue such links any further or else I could not have a dissertation topic.

reader as created by the author and the narrative: “The main question [...] is not what readers think of novels, but how they are thought by such novels” (Stewart 396). In this sense, the “reader” marks the real world person the author or narrative imagines to be holding and reading the narrative – the “reader” is located outside of the storyworld and in the actual world and is engaged in the act of reading the narrative. This chapter explores how, via narrative interventions, the text creates and interacts with its “reader.” If in the course of the chapter reference is made to the real individual reader, such as reference will be marked as different from any other uses of the “reader.”

There are an abundance of names for this kind of reader in narrative studies, each with slightly different meanings: Walker Gibson uses “mock reader”; Wayne C. Booth and Wolfgang Iser use “implied reader”; Stewart prefers “conscripted reader”; and James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz as well as Warhol use “actual reader.” However, I prefer simply “the reader,” and I use that term to denote both the actual person reading a text as well as the person imagined by the author and/or narrator to be reading the text; as Phelan and Rabinowitz note, the position of the reader necessitates a “double consciousness” (“Reception” 140) – the reader must imagine themselves as the person being addressed by the narrative and as their actual selves. In narrative interventions, the reader has the double position of being both an actual individual reader in the actual world and the imagined reader constructed by the storyworld. In using the term “the reader” to mean the actual reader, which is different from Gerald Prince’s narratee (a fictional “listener” inscribed by the narrative), I follow Warhol’s use of the term in *Gendered Interventions*: “When I want to point to the relation between those fictive figures and the receiver of the text, the person – whoever it might be – who actually holds the books and reads, I call this latter entity ‘the reader.’ The actual reader, is, after all, an essential link in the chain of communication a text represents; without a receiver to process the text, the text lies inert, silent” (30). While a reader may never be certain when reading a text about the reliability and accuracy of the narrating-I, the reader always “know[s] whether the

narrative ‘you’ resembles oneself, and surely the way one experiences the fiction is affected by how personally one can take its addresses to ‘you’” (Warhol, *Gendered* 32). Unlike the implied reader (the reader as imagined by the author) who only exists as the narrative is being read, the concept of “the reader” (or “the actual reader”) acknowledges that the narrative can influence the reader long after the narrative has been concluded, that the information, feelings, and values presented in the storyworld can have an impact on the reader’s actual world.

The Difficult History of Narrative Interventions

Unlike prefaces and footnotes, the history of the direct address of the reader is much more difficult to chart. Prefaces may not have yet had definitive histories of the form written, but as a stand-alone and textually labeled form, they are typically readily identifiable. While some prefaces might be embedded and unlabeled, most prefaces are separated from the central narrative and labeled, although some go incognito as introductions, notes, or preambles. Footnotes have in recent decades become the subject of scholarly interest, and at least two histories of the footnote have recently been published. More so than prefaces, footnotes are easily identified by their location and size: they are attached to the central narrative by a symbol or number, they are located at the bottom of the page, and they are in a smaller font than the central narrative. While prefaces can masquerade as embedded and unmarked portions of the narrative, footnotes – as well as endnotes and embedded notes, two variations on the form – are harder to disguise. Narrative interventions, on the other hand, are always embedded: they are never labeled, they are never separated from the central narrative, and they are almost never visually differentiated from the central narrative (except for rare instances of “you” or “reader” being italicized or underlined). Because they are such integrated components of the narrative, tracing the history of direct address of the reader is difficult.

Added to this difficulty in tracing the form’s history is the problem of defining uses of direct address in a text. When direct address takes the form of a specific readerly address (such as the

classic – or clichéd – “dear reader”), the form is easy to identify: it is clearly a finger pointing out of the text to the reader of the text. But when it takes the form of an address to a “you,” its categorization is much more slippery. If one is able to weed out uses of “you” in a text that occur between characters (typically in dialogue or an intradiegetic apostrophe), then any remaining uses of “you” can likely be sorted into one of two categories: the direct address of the reader or an instance of second-person narration – with the distinction between the two being the level of textuality and diegesis. Second-person narrative and its uses of “you” are beyond the scope of this chapter and project. Instead, narrative addresses by a first- or third-person narrator to “you,” which are used in the same manner as addresses to “the reader,” will be the focus of this chapter. Such addresses to “you” and “the reader” are extratextual – they cross from the storyworld into the actual world, and as such crossings, they can be considered in the same vein as paratextual elements.

Narrative interventions may have their roots in the early modern period when views of reading transitioned from a passive activity to an active one. In *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England*, Stephen Dobranski argues that beginning in the seventeenth century “the act of reading was literally a *co-laboring*: writers invoked readers who had to participate in various ways to determine the text’s meaning” (17, his emphasis). Iser and Stewart locate the rise of direct address of readers in the novels of the eighteenth century and note a shift in the ways in which such addresses are used in the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century, when novels were new, the “reader was cast by the author in a specific role, so that he could be guided – directly, or indirectly, through affirmation or through negation – toward a conception of human nature and of reality, [but] in the nineteenth century the reader was not told what part he was to play” (Iser, *The Implied Reader* xiii). According to Stewart, the newness of the novel form required instruction from the narrator or author to the reader on how to approach or interact with the text: “Eighteenth-century novels teach us how to read them, and in the process they are not above pedagogical disclaimers, apostrophic words to the

wise, and rhetorical pop quizzes along the way” (61). As novels became less, well, novel, the use of readerly address shifted. Throughout the nineteenth century, “acclimation [bred] a further ambition. Taking fictional competence for granted, nineteenth-century novels teach us less how to read them than what reading them might teach us” (Stewart 61). The didactic impulse shifted from how a reader should approach such a novel form to how this no-longer-novel form could impact the reader.⁶⁹ This new didacticism is perhaps most apparent in what Warhol terms “engaging narrative interventions,” readerly addresses that cross from the narrative into the actual world and attempt to shape a reader’s interpretation of the text as well as their real-world views and actions.

Warhol locates the formation of direct address of readers in the nineteenth-century split between “literature” and “rhetoric” (*Gendered* 194). She argues that, prior to the nineteenth century, addresses to a “you” or “reader” were at home in fiction and nonfiction alike and that various turns in the genre of literature – and the novel, specifically – produced critical anxieties about direct address. Starting in the nineteenth century and continuing through the twentieth century,

Many theories of literature take for granted a split between genuine “literature” and “rhetoric” – the first being language that functions entirely for art’s sake, the second being language with designs upon the extratextual world. In earlier periods, when formal distinctions between literature and rhetoric were less strictly drawn than they have been since the nineteenth century, an address from within a text could be taken for granted as one of the many means by which a writer could use to gain access to an audience’s emotional or intellectual response. For the past two centuries, however, idealist literary theory has been

⁶⁹ A modern parallel might be changes in how hyperlinks were marked in the early days of the internet versus contemporary means of marking hyperlinks. When I was first surfing the web in the mid to late 1990s, many of the hyperlinks were labeled with a “click here” to instruct the novice internet user that there was something more to be read or seen. Twenty years later, I typically only see instructions to “click here” in emails; articles now embed the hyperlink in part of a regular sentence without any instruction as to how the reader should interact with the blue or red underlined text.

devising ways to separate authorial address to readers from actual communication. (Warhol, *Gendered* 194)

Narrative interventions are as old as storytelling when the sender and the receiver were often in the same place at the same time. It is only with the advent of new definitions of what constitutes “literature” in the nineteenth century that misgivings about the form begin to circulate.

In his synthesis of critiques of narrative “intrusions,” Richard Stang notes that many of the criticisms of such interventions link the direct address of the reader to the author’s preference for “telling” rather than “showing” – the distain for narrative interventions stemmed, for many nineteenth-century reviewers, from a view that such interventions were signs of laziness on the author’s part. In addition to being signs of authorial laziness, the interventions were also criticized for breaking the illusion of the fiction in novel; by invoking the reader, the author was reminding the reader of their act of reading and of the separation between the storyworld and the actual world. For example, in May 1864, a critic for the *National Review* complained about Anthony Trollope’s *Barchester Towers*:

[The novel] might have been better, if he would have refrained from frequently and somewhat offensively coming forward as author to remind us that we are reading a diction. Such intrusions are as objectionable in a novel as on the stage: the actor who indulges in extempore and extra-professional hints and winks to the audience, and the author who interprets this characters to introduce himself to our notice, are alike guilty of a violation of good taste. (qtd. in Stang 95)

The intrusions by the author or narrator were widely viewed as overly didactic and largely unnecessary. Nearly a decade prior to the critique of Trollope’s interventions, a reviewer for the *Edinburgh Review* stated that the “first rule” for authors is “stick to your story; whatever you add that is not part of it, though ever so valuable in itself, will be an incumbrance [sic]” (qtd. in Stang 96-97).

Lying under these critiques seems to be an anxiety about the role and function of fiction. Should novels serve a social or political purpose? Or are they merely forms of entertainment?

Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century reviewers and critics lacked the terms “transport” and “storyworld,” but their critiques of direct address do center on the entertainment value of novels and the ways in which direct address interferes with a reader’s ability to become fully immersed in the story. Writing in 1917, William Lyon Phelps points to Henry Fielding’s “intrusions” in *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* as the starting point of “a bad precedent in English fiction” (47). Fielding’s “intrusions” set the standard for the form in later English novels, particularly for didactic and sentimentalist authors, a form which ultimately “destroy[s] the illusion” (Phelps 48). While Phelps does not clarify what he means by “the illusion,” he seems he is referring to the illusion of fictionality – the author or narrator when addressing the reader destroys the “illusion” that a narrative like *Tom Jones* is actually just a novel. As the novel form – and the public’s taste in reading – evolved over the nineteenth century, reviewers began to critique novels that did not allow the reader to draw their own views about the stories, that attempted to force, frequently via narrative interventions, the reader to interact with the narrative in one specific way.

Narrative Intervention Forms & Functions

Discussions of narrative interventions in narrative theory are typically rooted in discussions of rhetoric and structuralism. While Warhol’s theory of engaging narrative interventions will form the core of this chapter’s theoretical framework, her work cannot be understood without an exploration of the ways in which terms such as “reader” have been theorized in narratology. Booth’s *The Rhetoric of Fiction* is a foundational text for scholars of readerly address and narrative intervention – most work on such interventions is rooted in Booth’s theory, either as an extension of his ideas or as a counterargument. To read is to have a foot in two worlds: the world of the narrative and the world of the reader’s daily life, and it is this dual positioning of the reader that is explicitly addressed

via narrative intervention. As Booth notes, while he will “surrender” to the pronouncements of the narrator, “in no case [does he] pretend that [he is] not reading a novel” (53).

In order to explain the complex and shifting nature of the interactions among authors, narrators, and readers, Booth devised a binary system. The actual author and the actual reader reside in the extratextual world; they are only connected via the narrative that the actual author writes and the actual reader reads. The implied author and the implied reader exist within the text and are fictionalized versions of the actual author and the actual reader as imagined by the actual author. Booth’s implied author is the actual author’s “second self” (70). In each act of writing, the actual author creates new implied authors, creations that are more or less representative of the actual author. The implied author is neither the actual author nor the narrator but is sometimes – although not always – somewhere between the two:

It is a curious fact that we have no terms either for this created “second self” or for our relationship with him. None of our terms for various aspects of the narrator is quite accurate. “Persona,” “mask,” and “narrator” are sometimes used, but they more commonly refer to the speaker in the work who is after all only one of the elements created by the implied author and who may be separated from him by large ironies. “Narrator” is usually taken to mean the “I” of a work, but the “I” is seldom if ever identical with the implied image of the artist. (W. Booth 73)

The implied author (as well as the implied reader) is a liminal figure; the implied author exists in the text and outside of the text and is connected to how the actual reader make sense of the text: “in short, the intuitive apprehension of a completed artistic whole; the chief value to which *this* implied author is committed, regardless of what party his creator belongs to in real life, is that which is expressed by the total form” (W. Booth 73-74, his emphasis). If the implied author is a semi-fictional/semi-modified version of the actual author, then the narrator is a fully invented intratextual

creation. However, Booth does not theorize a counterpart to the narrator; Prince's later concept of the "narratee" completes Booth's system by creating an entity to complement the narrator.

Just as the actual author is a living, breathing, actual person, so too is the actual reader. The actual reader is fully extratextual. Whereas there is (usually) only one actual author of the text, the actual reader is any person who chooses to read the text. While the actual author may be anonymous or use a pseudonym, the actual reader is (almost always) unknown to the actual author. The implied reader, however, is an invention of the actual author – and like its corollary the implied author, the implied reader occupies a liminal space. The implied reader is created and conjured by the act of reading. For Booth, it matters little whether the actual author wrote a text with their audience in mind. What matters instead is that every text attempts to control the actual reader's interaction with the text: "Every literary work of any power – whether or not its author composed it with his audience in mind – is in fact an elaborate system of controls over the reader's involvement and detachment along various lines of interest" (W. Booth 123). One way by which the actual author (or implied author or narrator) attempts to control the actual reader is via the construction of the implied reader – and it is this attempt at control that forms the foundation of Warhol's work on engaging and distancing narrative interventions and of Stewart's conscripted reader: "Regardless of my real beliefs and practices, I must subordinate my mind and heart to the book if I am to enjoy it to the full. The author creates, in short, an image of himself and another image of his reader; he makes his reader, as he makes his second self, and the most successful reading is one in which the created selves, author and reader, can find complete agreement" (W. Booth 138). But the separation between the actual reader and the implied reader is no more complete than that between the actual author and the implied author; Booth notes "the divorce between my ordinary self and the selves I am willing to become as I read is not complete" (138).

Iser, building on Booth's implied reader, separates his theory of the implied reader from previous theories of the "contemporary reader" and the "ideal reader." The "real reader" or the "contemporary reader" can be sorted into three categories – "the one [category] real and historical, drawn from existing documents, another two [categories] hypothetical: the first constructed from social and historical knowledge of the time, and the second extrapolated from the readers' role laid down in the text" (Iser, *The Act of Reading* 28). For Iser, the notion of the "contemporary reader" is highly problematic because reconstructing a real historical individual reader and their reaction to a text relies on finding documents with an account of that person's reading. The contemporary reader is, largely, an unknowable reader. The "ideal reader" is the counterpart to the contemporary reader. If the contemporary reader is virtually impossible to reconstruct via historical documents, the ideal reader "is a structural impossibility" and is likely the product of "the brain of the philologist or critic himself" (Iser, *the Act of Reading* 28). Moreover, "the ideal reader, unlike the contemporary reader, is a purely fictional being; he has no basis in reality, and it is this very fact that makes him so useful: as a fictional being, he can close the gaps that constantly appear in any analysis of literary effects and responses. He can be endowed with a variety of qualities in accordance with what problem he is called upon to help solve" (Iser, *The Act of Reading* 29).

Iser's solution to the problems associated with the contemporary and ideal reader classifications is the "implied reader": "the concept of the implied reader designates a network of response-inviting structures, which impel the reader to grasp the text" (*The Act of Reading* 34). Iser's implied reader is tied to authorial intent:

It is the way in which this world is constructed that brings about the perspective intended by the author. Since the world of the text is bound to have variable degrees of unfamiliarity for its possible readers (if the work is to have any "novelty" for them), they must be placed in a position which enables them to actualize the new view. [...] The text must therefore *bring*

about a standpoint from which the reader will be able to view things that would never have come into focus as long as his own habitual dispositions were determining his orientation, and what is more, this standpoint must be able to accommodate all kinds of different readers. (*The Act of Reading* 35; his emphasis)

The text constructs the role of the implied reader, and the actual reader in the actual world has the option of taking on part or all of that offered role. Moreover, the actual reader's acceptance or rejection of the role creates a tension in the actual reader's response to the narrative: "The concept of the implied reader as an expression of the role offered by the text is in no way an abstraction derived from a real reader, but is rather the conditioning force behind a particular kind of tension produced by the real reader when he accepts the role. This tension results, in the first place, from difference" (Iser, *The Act of Reading* 36). The implied reader is never fully the actual reader – the implied reader is a stable construct of the narrative, and the actual reader varies in time, location, and culture. The actual reader who is willing to take on the role of the implied reader must contort themselves to fit the mold created by the narrative.

Phelan and Rabinowitz's concept of the "actual reader" (or "narrative audience") focuses on the ways in which the text is received, rather than the way in which the text constructs the reader. For Phelan and Rabinowitz, "an actual reader needs to recognize that it is an invented artifact [...] and, at the same time, to *pretend* to be a member of the narrative audience who takes what he or she reads as history and treats the characters as real. Having this double consciousness is another aspect of reading in the authorial audience of fiction" ("Reception" 140, their emphasis). The narrative audience is the actual reader/receiver of the narration; "the narrative audience considers the represented characters and events to be real and believes that the fiction narrated is a history. As opposed to the narratee, it is not so much a figure 'out there' in the text as a role that the text asks (or requires) the real reader to play" (Prince, "Reader" par. 13). The authorial audience is the

receiving group the author imagines when composing the text, which may or may not be aligned with the narrative audience. “Much of the flavor of a work stems from the relationship between the authorial and narrative audiences,” including the ways in which the two audiences do not overlap (Phelan and Rabinowitz, “Reception” 142).

This tension between the authorial audience and the narrative audience (or the implied reader and the actual reader) and between the storyworld and the actual world is outlined by Prince in “Narratology, Narrative, and Meaning”; he notes that classical narratology “practically never ponders the alethic potential of narrative, the relations of the narrative text with truth or falsehood, the nature of the fictional as opposed to the real, the being of narratively represented worlds” (543). As Marie-Laure Ryan explains in *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, “the alethic system is shown to be responsible for the division of the population of fictional worlds into groups of different abilities (gods versus humans, the seeing among the blind, etc.), as well as for the categorization of fictional worlds as a whole as realist, fantastic, or nonsensical” (“Possible Worlds” par. 9). Prince notes that the real world is the inescapable measuring stick for the “reality” of fictional worlds; verisimilitude in fiction is always based on what is held to be true and factual in the real world. Prince is, in effect, discussing what Ryan would later term “the principle of minimal departure” – that the reader assumes the storyworld is governed by the same rules as the actual world until provided with contradictory information by the text. Yet Prince cannot escape from the universalizing tendencies of classical narratology. Prince thinks “of formal differences, of textual elements or configurations whose presence or absence would indicate the fictitious or truthful nature of a narrative: introductory formulas [...] or even paratexts specifying that the text is a work of fiction or history, a biography or a novel” (“Narratology” 546). But in examining these formal elements, Prince is looking for a universal law to govern them:

But, however interesting they [these formal elements] may be, these differences are local rather than universal. In the first place, the statements and configurations through which fiction can be signaled vary considerably, and one may find – or invent! – fictional works in which they do not appear. Because, they are quite conclusive even if their presence constitutes or contributes to a “fiction effect.” (“Narratology” 546)

However, these local differences and elements inside a larger trend of asserting truth are fundamental to understanding a text. It is the myriad narrative means of asserting the truth of a fiction that warrant further investigation. A feminist/queer narratological approach relieves the need to find universal laws or truths about such structures and instead revels in their differences, in their queerness and nonconformity.

Whereas traditional paratexts are thresholds between the actual world and the storyworld that are usually spatially consigned to the fringes of the narrative (and, as is especially the case with illustrations, can be removed from later editions when the form falls out of public favor), narrative interventions are embedded in the text itself. Narrative interventions are ruptures between the storyworld and the actual world. Warhol classifies two forms of narrative intervention strategies: the engaging narrator and the distancing narrator. A distancing narrator “who intervenes to address a narratee does so to set the actual reader [or narrative audience] apart from the ‘you’ in the text,” whereas an engaging narrator “strives to close the gaps between the narratee” and narrative audience (Warhol, *Gendered* 29). Rather than seeing narrative interventions as disruptions, intrusions, or signs of bad writing, Warhol explores how interventions in Victorian novels, especially interventions by engaging narrators, affect the narrative audience and connect the author to the audience. A possible effect of engaging narrative interventions is cross-world identification: as noted earlier in this project, Lubomír Doležal posits that “fictional worlds are accessible from the actual world only through *semiotic channels* by means of information processing. [...] [A]n actual reader can ‘observe’

fictional worlds and make them a source of his experience, just as he observes and experientially appropriates the actual world” (“Mimesis” 485, his emphasis). Engaging narrators attempt to align the actual reader and the “you” or “reader” addressed in the storyworld; if the alignment is successful and the reader does take up a position close to that of the textual “you,” then cross-world identification between the actual world and the storyworld becomes possible.

Warhol argues, “Narrative interventions help to position the reader in relation to the text, [while] at the same time expressing the novelists’ own goals, either ironically or explicitly” (*Gendered* xii). “When the engaging narrator speaks to a ‘you’ that stands for the actual reader [...], the text produces a real event, an exchange of ideas that the novelist hopes will result in real consequences” via cross-world identification (Warhol, *Gendered* 203). While Warhol’s primary focus is on distancing and engaging narrative strategies in nineteenth-century realist novels, her work can also be applied to other narrative forms, including novels that stretch the boundaries of verisimilitude, such as gothic, sensation, and erotic novels as well as nonfiction narratives about gender, sex, and sexuality; in these illicit texts, the stakes of distancing versus engaging or blurring the actual world and the storyworld are especially high. To accept the allegedly deviant values of illicit texts is to potentially contaminate the actual world with such values. Warhol points to “earnest” narrative interventions as a hallmark of Victorian realism (*Gendered* xiii). The combination of an engaging narrator and earnest narrative interventions allow “the text [to produce] a real event, an exchange of ideas that the novelist hopes will result in real consequences” (Warhol, *Gendered* 203). These interventions are a bridge between the story and the discourse: “What engaging direct address attempts to do that neither distancing address nor apostrophe can do is to insist that it is ‘only a (true) story’ by alluding to the presence of the actual reader in the engaging ‘you,’ a presence that is literally real as long as someone is perusing the passage of address and receiving the message” (Warhol, *Gendered* 204). The narrative interventions conflate the narratees and the narrative audience. That conflation of narratees and

narrative audience allows the actual readers to situate themselves in the possible worlds created by the text.

Stewart shifts the focus from the kinds of narrative interventions available in texts to the way in which these narrative interventions “conscript” the reader: “In the encounter with classic fiction, you, reader, are therefore part of the script, though the stage directions are not always forthcoming”

(6). For Stewart, the reader has little choice in their role as imagined by the author or narrator:

[Y]our private reading – along with that of every other reader – is actually convoked and restaged, put in service to the text. [...] Implicated by apostrophe or by proxy, by address or by dramatized scenes of reading, you are deliberately drafted by the text, written *with*. In the closed circuit of conscripted response, your input is a predigested function of the text’s output – digested in advance by rhetorical mention or by narrative episode. As independent reading agent outside the story, your relegation by the text to a delegate of attention within it converts you to either a second or a third person, either an addressee or a character, even if, in the latter case, only “the reader.” (8, his emphasis)

Given that Stewart relegates Warhol’s work on narrative intervention to two footnotes and refuses to engage with her theories in his central text, Stewart would likely be loath to have his conscripted reader theory used in conjunction with Warhol’s engaging narrative intervention theory; however, the two are much more complementary than Stewart believes.⁷⁰ The reader in Warhol’s engaging narrative interventions is open to the ways in which the text conscripts their reading and scripts their reactions to the narrative; by contrast, the reader in the distancing narrative interventions is resistant

⁷⁰ In his first note, he expresses his shock that Charlotte Brontë, “the period’s most relentless and varied manipulator of reader apostrophe,” was not included in *Gendered Interventions* (Stewart 421). In his second note, he cites “Warhol’s virtual conspiracy theory,” and he argues that Warhol erroneously links narrative interventions to gender and that Warhol and her readers are in need of “the reminder that there is oratorical rhetoric that is not necessarily sentimental, and women writers capable of it (like Eliot) whose model other women writers may still choose to refuse” (Stewart 421).

to such conscripting and scripting – the first kind of reader dutifully (and perhaps even gleefully) accepts the draft notice, whereas the second kind becomes a sort of conscientious objector.

Like Warhol, Stewart envisions narrative interventions as potentially subversive. He views reading as an intimate or even flirtatious event; for him, “fictional reading is inductive. In every sense it leads you on” (7). One of the ways in which the text takes in the reader is narrative interventions: “Reading novels that absorb you, you are in every sense taken in, even as you yourself begin to ‘internalize’” the contents of the narrative and its storyworld (Stewart 7). However, the relationship between the reader and the narrative is a slippery one to trace due to the complex interplay of the real and the imagined and of changes in location, time, and culture. The text’s meaning can shift with each reading – the ever-changing reader can potentially create new interpretations and possible worlds at each encounter with the narrative.⁷¹ Moreover, the individual instances of addressing a “you” or a “reader” are not only the only moments in which the text engages the reader: “‘Dear reader’ is only the proverbial tip of an iceberg; its occasional appearance marks the structure of participation, mostly submerged and invisible but now and then replayed by parable, which floats an entire fictional institution” (Stewart 19). Once directly addressed, the reader can reorient themselves to the storyworld as an engaged reader; the number of times the reader is directly addressed has little bearing on this reorientation – once named, the reader is absorbed, is conscripted, even if the reader is not named again.

The text as a static set of written words cannot adapt to the reader’s reactions. Instead it sets its expectations for the reader’s reaction before the reader engages with the narrative:

⁷¹ This is, of course, a core concept in reader-response theory. As the reader grows and changes, so too does the reader’s understanding of a text. My teenaged self may have seen *Romeo and Juliet* as a passionate love story and wished for a Romeo to complement my Juliet, but as a mother of a teenager, my focus has shifted to the insanity of these two characters’ whirlwind “romance” and their repeated poor choices. My teen self wanted to be Juliet; my mom self just wants to sit Juliet down for a good talking to.

The fictional text can only strive – only contrive – to model and so mandate, without ever being able to monitor, your response. Thus it is that interpolation (the text inscribing you by third-person reference or vocative tag) and extrapolation (you choosing to read yourself in parable) attest to deeply complementary motives of Victorian narrative, motives tacitly in play even when the text has not worked to manifest them together. (Stewart 19-20)

The reader as evoked by the narrative is a dual being: it is the living, breathing, ever-changing reader of the words, and it is the imagined, static reader of the words. Rather than being “the bloodless and passive scapegoat of the machinery of meaning,” this reader is best envisioned as an “adroit double agent of narrativity and reception” (Stewart 60). While the narrative may work towards a “relentless micromanagement of reaction” (Stewart 21) via narrative interventions in the nineteenth century, Stewart’s conscripted reader can resist being drafted by the text. The text can hail the reader, can even bully the reader, via interventions, but the reader does not have to submit; to build on Stewart’s metaphor of conscription, the reader can consciously (or conscientiously) object to the place carved out for them in the narrative. While the objecting reader can resist being written by or into the narrative, this reader must still acknowledge the attempts. Stewart, unfortunately, does not engage at length with the possibility of resisting narrative interventions – with the ways in which such interventions can be distancing. For him, there is no escape for the reader: “Whereas the eighteenth-century novels tends to read you your rights as member of an interpretative audience, the novel of the next century conspires, by narrating with and through you, to write you more directly, though often less explicitly, into plot” (Stewart 398).

Transport and minimal departure are at the core of discussions of narrative interventions. And transport is an apt metaphor for the reader’s interaction with the narrative: transport can be a one-way event, or it can be a round-trip event. The reader who resists the attempts to orient them with the storyworld have a one-way ticket: this reader reads the narrative but does not overlay the

values of the text onto the actual world – for this reader, the text is just a story. The reader who accepts the attempts to reorient them with the storyworld has a round-trip ticket: this reader reads the narrative and overlays at least some of the values of the text onto the actual world. While the individual reader's reaction to the narrative – their decision of whether or not to overlay textual values into the actual world – is personal and impossible to reconstruct, the rhetorical moves in the narrative are not. What follows in this chapter is an analysis similar to the previous chapters on prefaces and footnotes: the rhetorical and stylistic choices presented in the narrative are the focus of analysis, not how individual readers may have responded to those choices. Illicit narratives that use narrative interventions allow the readers the means to create cross-world identifications. Whether the individual reader makes such identifications is not important – what is important is that the narrative opens such a door (or to borrow from Genette's language on paratexts, creates such a threshold) for the reader. As seen in previous chapters, the act of reading (especially of reading illicit narratives) was widely considered a potentially dangerous action not just because of the ideas presented in the text but also because the reader might confuse the storyworld with the actual world. In queering the boundary between the world of the narrative and the world of the reader, narrative interventions suggest that the events and values of the storyworld have a place in the actual world.

Narrative Interventions & Illicit Texts

Engaging narrative interventions were a common feature of nineteenth-century narratives, and as with footnotes and prefaces, illicit narratives coopted the form for their own purposes. Some illicit texts used the form to mimic or parody more aboveboard literature; others used the form to help normalize their fringe or sub rosa contents. But regardless of the purpose behind the narrative interventions, illicit narratives employed such interventions in their world making, including in the formation of possible worlds for the reader that are queerly at once different from and similar to the contemporary real world of readers and hence cooperate with the ways other more overt paratexts

like footnotes and prefaces function in illicit narratives to heighten the real world stakes of their illicitness. Moreover, given the illicit content of the narratives, the direct address of the reader – the hailing of the reader as a witness to the action – reinforces the voyeuristic nature of reading. This chapter will focus on five illicit narratives and their uses of engaging narrative interventions, and as with the previous chapters, these selected texts are representative of a larger body of illicit works using the form. The anonymously published *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, Richard Burton’s “Terminal Essay” in volume ten of *Arabian Nights*, Walter’s *My Secret Life*, Charles Devereaux in *Venus in India*, and Alan Dale in *A Marriage Below Zero* all employ engaging narrative interventions in their texts. *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* is a fictionalized account of Jack Saul’s sexual encounters with gay men and “hermaphrodites” in London. Burton’s “Terminal Essay” explains the culture that produced *Arabian Nights* and justifies his unbawdlerized translation of the text. *My Secret Life* is an erotic memoir. Frequently labeled as the first (non-pornographic) novel about gay men, *A Marriage Below Zero* is Elsie Ravener’s story of her marriage to Arthur Ravener and how her marriage was torn apart by Arthur’s romance with Captain Jack Dillington. *Venus in India* is, like *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, a pornographic novel disguised as a nonfiction memoir. In each of these narratives, the author or narrator addresses the reader in order to shape their understanding of and reaction to the text and in order to create cross-world identifications; they conscript the reader, and they engage with the reader. These uses of narrative interventions in illicit texts mirror such uses found in more aboveboard narratives such as Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* and Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. These two aboveboard narratives illustrate the degree and significance of narrative interventions in more mainstream publications.

Northanger Abbey’s central theme is the supposed dangers of reading illicit narratives like gothic novels, especially for young women. With the act of reading as a key plot point, the direct address of Austen’s reader adds another layer of reading and readership to the plot. The reader reads

about Catherine Morland as Catherine reads about the heroines of her novels. Moreover, Catherine continually imagines herself as one of these gothic heroines, and she attempts to bring the fictional women and events in her novels into her own world. Reading and readers multiply in the narrative. The extradiegetic narrator of *Northanger Abbey* refers to the “reader” six times. Given the novel’s classification as an aboveboard parody of the gothic genre, the narrator’s engagement of the reader via direct address draws additional attention to the novel’s critique of reading habits (as well as its critique of those who are critical of readers like Catherine and of illicit narratives like gothic novels). The first address of the “reader” appears at the start of chapter two and is an attempt to correct any misreading of Catherine’s character:

[I]t may be stated, for the reader’s more certain information, lest the following pages should otherwise fail of giving any idea of what her character is meant to be; that her heart was affectionate, her disposition cheerful and open, without conceit or affectation of any kind – her manners just as removed from the awkwardness and shyness of a girl; her person pleasing, and, when in good looks, pretty – and her mind about as ignorant and uninformed as the female mind at seventeen usually is. (Austen 8)

The novel is both a product of the eighteenth and nineteenth century (written in one and then published in the other), and therefore, this didactic use of “reader” is in line with the instructive impulses of readerly address found in other eighteenth-century narratives. Moreover, as novels as a whole become increasingly aboveboard texts, leaving only certain genres like the gothic, the sensational, and the erotic as fringe genres, Austen’s uses of the “reader” highlight the absurdity of blaming poor behavior on a person’s (or character’s) reading habits.

While the narrator works through the early addresses of the reader to correct misreading of the novel, the later addresses to the reader point to gaps in the narrative and encourage the reader to fill in missing information – the narrator’s impulse to control the reader’s reaction to the narrative

seems to wane in the final pages. In the penultimate address to the “reader,” the narrator writes that it is “up to my reader’s sagacity to determine how much of this was possible” (Austen 208). The narrator in this address gives the reader freedom to imagine a host of possible ways Henry Tilney communicated past events regarding his father to Catherine: what Henry told Catherine “at this time” (that is, during the moment being narrated), “how much of it he could have learnt from his father, in what points his own conjectures might assist him, and portion must yet remain to be told in a letter from James [Morland]” (Austen 208). The narrator tells the reader that these various events have been “united for their [the reader’s] ease” (Austen 208). In essence, the narrator has warped the sequence of events in the storyworld in order to make the narrative more coherent and cohesive – the narrator has simplified the sequence of events in order to make their effects more easily understood by the reader, and the narrator has, in essence, attempted to make a long story short. Yet in the opening chapter, the narrator tells the reader that there is only one right way to imagine certain other events. These bookending instances of readerly address encompass eighteenth- and nineteenth-century uses of narrative intervention: one instructs the reader how to engage with the narrative, and the other writes the reader into the plot by asking the reader to reimagine how various events occurred.

While Austen’s uses of “reader” illustrate the transition from eighteenth-century functions of the address to nineteenth-century functions, the quintessential readerly address of the nineteenth-century is found in the conclusion to Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*: “Reader, I married him” (457). This use of “reader” by the narrator is certainly not the first in the novel – there are thirty-nine addresses to the reader prior to this one, including one address to the reader in a preface, and there is one more address to the reader after the (in)famous “Reader, I married him” statement. Yet of all those uses, it is “Reader, I married him” that is best remembered. Perhaps its lasting impact (or notoriety) is because of its position at the start of the final chapter. Perhaps it is because the sentence

encapsulates, both for fan and critic, the romantic sentimentality of the novel. Perhaps it is because of the simplicity and the matter-of-factness presented in the statement, because of the deceptive ease with which the statement of marriage is presented, which stands in opposition to all of the struggles and barriers faced by Jane on her path to marriage. The engaging narrative interventions in *Jane Eyre* work to align the reader with Jane and her (frequently unconventional) choices. The interventions suggest a level of intimacy between Jane and the reader – the sharing of personal (and even secret) knowledge as well as of morals, values, and beliefs.

Illicit narratives of the nineteenth century borrow both the didactic impulses of readerly address from eighteenth-century novels and the intimate connections between narrator and reader in the nineteenth century. These narratives write the reader and their reaction into the narrative, forcing the reader to agree with the roles carved out by the text for them or to set themselves in opposition to those roles. Frequently, readerly addresses in these narratives seek to normalize the events of the illicit texts – to frame impossible or deviant actions as possible or aboveboard. These interventions attempt to coopt the reader into sharing the values presented in the storyworld, and some texts, namely pornographic narratives, push for cross-world identification with these values – for the reader to apply the textual values to their actual world. In highlighting the role of the reader as voyeuristic witness to the narrative, the narrative interventions attempt to make the reader an accomplice in the illicit actions and values presented in the narrative. Warhol argues that the denigration of narrative interventions, be they in realist novels or in other narratives, stems from “the traditional preference among critics of fiction for ‘showing’ over ‘telling’” (*Gendered* xiv).

However, it is precisely that function of telling rather than showing becomes a means of cross-world identification in these illicit narratives – the reader, the author or narrator feels, must be told how to react to various illicit events in the narratives, and in telling the reader what the proper response is to seemingly improper ideas and actions, the reader reorients themselves to the world view espoused

by the narrative and is given the opportunity to also apply those norms to the actual world. The deviant actions of the storyworld are both safely contained by the pages of the text, but narrative interventions allow the reader to draw connections between the storyworld and the actual world. Interventions are a means of insinuating the values of the storyworld into the reader's reading experience and, perhaps, into the reader's actual world.

Fiction & Narrative Interventions: *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, *Venus in India*, and *A Marriage Below Zero*

The two narrators of *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, Cambon and Saul, do not specify the gender of their readers nor do they maintain constant contact with the reader via narrative interventions. In Cambon's introduction to Saul's narrative, there is a single direct address of the "reader," and all uses of "you" (and its variations) are only in dialogue between Cambon and Saul. In Saul's central narrative, there is only one direct address of the "reader," and all of his uses of "you" (and its variations) are either addresses to Cambon⁷² or between characters in dialogue. However, while there are only two narrative interventions in the text, their placement and frequency are key to the reader's interaction with the text. The reader is assumed to be in the know about (or at least curious about) some parts of London's sex underground and to be aligned with Cambon's and Saul's sexual desires. However, given the gender bending events presented in the text, the use of the gender neutral "reader" highlights the idea that any reader – regardless of gender identity, biological sex, or sexual orientation – can engage with the text. The characters in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plains* don't object to men who dress as women, to men who have sex with other men, to men who have sex with boys, or to women who initiate sex with men or boys. And likewise, the narrative

⁷² Saul's narrative initially takes the form of a letter to Cambon; it opens with "Dear Sir" (*The Sins* 10) and contains several direct addresses to Cambon. These addresses to Cambon do not seem to be the same, however, as his single address of the "reader." During the course of the narrative, the epistolary style gives way to a more straightforward narrative, and it appears that Saul's sole use of the "reader" is meant to indicate some reader other than Cambon.

interventions imply that all readers are welcome in the text – just as all sex acts are welcomed by the characters in the text. However, despite the lack of gendered references to the reader, it is implied that the reader is like Cambon and Saul; that is, that the reader is male and prefers same-sex relationships. Whereas Devereaux in *Venus in India* constantly engages with his readers, Cambon and Saul do not – their narrative interventions are limited, almost winking at the reader who is semi-hidden on the other side of the page.

The first instance of narrative intervention comes at the end of Cambon's introduction: "Of course at each visit we had a delicious turn at bottom-fucking, but as the recital of the same kind of thing over and over again is likely to pall upon my readers, I shall omit a repetition of our numerous orgies of lust, all very similar to the foregoing, and content myself by a simple recital of his [Saul's] adventures" (*The Sins* 10). While it is not a gendered use of "readers," it is a possessive use; Cambon claims his audience as his own in much the same way he and other characters claim their lovers during sex. It is also a plural use; Cambon claims readership of more than one at a time. The relationship is an intimate one. In a text that is largely interested in anonymous or semi-anonymous short-term sexual relationships, the readers being claimed by Cambon are always shifting: who Cambon claims as his readers depends entirely on who is reading the novel. In using "my readers," Cambon implies a personal relationship, but the reality is that the novel is promiscuous and that there is no stable group of readers – the readers are always changing and always multiple. Moreover, in using "my readers," Cambon aligns the reader's preferences with his own preferences – both about sex and about storytelling. This alignment with Cambon perhaps subtly genders the readers as male – yet such a gendering is only implied by the text; Cambon's readers are not explicitly gendered as male. Moreover, in a narrative that plays with gender with its inclusion of cross-dressing men, the gendering of Cambon's readers may also be a playful act. As the narrative progresses, characters assumed to be female are revealed as male; perhaps the lack of gendered references to the readers is

a rhetorical nod to the problems of assuming another person's gender – the readers of a homoerotic novel might be male, but given the slippery nature of gender identity and expression in the novel, the readers cannot be assumed to be only male.

By the end of his preface, Cambon is exhausted by recounting all of the sex acts he and Saul engaged in, and he extends that exhaustion to his readers. If Cambon is tired about writing about sex with Saul, then surely his readers are tired of reading about sex with Saul. This is an awkward stance for a pornographic novel to take given that the central focus of erotica is describing sex acts. Perhaps this sense of being tired of writing about or reading about Cambon's sex with Saul is a class position. Cambon is clearly marked as being of a higher social class than Saul; Saul is a prostitute working in Leicester Square, and Cambon is – if not an actual gentleman – a gentlemanly man living in Cornwall Mansions near Marylebone and the Baker Street tube station. Cambon is more interested in the sex others have, and he assumes that his readers are also more interested in the sex others have – namely in the sex that men like Saul have. The readers might (or might not) be male, but the readers are most assuredly voyeurs.

As Stewart notes in *Dear Reader*, it is not the frequency of the narrative interventions but the fact that the narrative does address the reader that is important – once invoked, the reader reorients themselves to the material after being hailed by the narrative. While Cambon's address of the readers occurs at the end of his preface, once the reader has been called, the reader reorients themselves to the materials. At the start of his introduction, Cambon ponders the connection between sex and life:

That lump in his [Saul's] trousers had quite a fascinating effect upon me. Was it natural or made up by some artificial means? If real, what a size when excited; how I should like to handle such a manly jewel, etc. All this ran through my mind, and determined me to make his acquaintance, in order to unravel the real and naked truth; also, if possible, to glean what

I could of his antecedents and mode of life, which I felt sure must be extraordinarily interesting. (The Sins 3-4)

First excited by Saul's "lump in his trousers," Cambon becomes excited about the whole person, including his "mode of life" (that is, how he became a prostitute and details about the sex he has had with other men). At the end of his introduction, he assumes his readers are likewise curious about these men and their activities. Moreover, Cambon positions himself as an apprentice of sorts – while he knows somethings about London's sexual underground, he needs a master like Saul to teach him more. Likewise, the reader is positioned as a novice who must first be introduced to the master through the apprentice. The reader via Cambon is introduced to Saul and his increasingly wild sexcapdes. Erotica is often built on climaxing events – sex acts become more complex and even outlandish⁷³ as the narrative progresses; the reader is asked in these texts, either explicitly or implicitly, to join in on these wilder and wilder sex acts. In his readerly address, Cambon passes the narrative baton to Saul: he introduces the reader to Saul and then positions himself with his own readers as the audience for Saul's narrative.

Saul, however, seems to have a slightly different reader in mind when he addresses "our readers" (*The Sins* 84) in his narrative – his use of the plural possessive implies that the readers of his narrative are also the readers of Cambon's introduction, that he and Cambon share this reader. His sole use of "readers" appears after a lengthy embedded narrative about a pederastic schoolmaster and doctor. Saul writes, "The prevalence of sodomy amongst schoolboys is little suspected of being so general as it really is. Only lately a medical man of large practice was called in to consult with the

⁷³ An excellent example of the outlandish sex acts, many of which defy human physiology, is found in *Letters from Laura and Eveline*, the companion volume to *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*. In his review of *Letters from Laura and Eveline* in the 1885 *Bibliography of Prohibited Books*, Henry Ashbee notes the narrative includes an "impossible" orgy (qtd. in *Letters* vii). Ashbee's "impossible" orgy refers to a scene in which forty participants "formed one complete Chapley de Sodome [Rosary of Sodom] of forty enraptured links, moving in one wave of lust to the stroke of Mr. Inslip's baton (his prick) by which he marked time" (*Letters* 67). How such a chain could be formed and sustained defied Ashbee's imagination – not to mention defying laws of physics.

master of a large academy, where it appears the scholars had learnt something much more interesting than Latin or Greek. His tale is given just as he related it to the doctor” (*The Sins* 82). In the embedded narrative, the schoolmaster tells the doctor about his suspicion that the schoolboys are having sex with each other. The schoolmaster decided to “make some peepholes” and hide in the room beside the boys’ bedroom to see what they are doing at night (*The Sins* 82). According to the schoolmaster, “Four boys had thrown Smith [another pupil] on a bed, and were trying to unbutton his trousers, and at last got out his cock – it was a good size, and stiff as possible. I then saw Charley Johnson, a boy of fifteen, take it in his mouth and suck it, whilst another boy did the same with his peg, and so on till every one [sic] but the usher had a prick in his mouth” (*The Sins* 83). The schoolmaster claims that he “was too spellbound by the sight to make a noise or interfere. The fact is, doctor, I couldn't help frigging myself; and we all seemed to come at the same time” (*The Sins* 83). The schoolmaster tells the doctor that he fears being “draw[n] into their practices” because he “can’t resist the temptation [his] peepholes afford” (*The Sins* 83). The doctor’s solution to the schoolmaster’s conundrum is “to have every one, ushers as well as pupils, medically examined one by one, and then he (the doctor), would pretend to find out from appearances all they had been doing, and try to frighten them out of doing it again by describing all the awful effects of pederasty” (*The Sins* 83). The doctor’s solution ends the embedded narrative.

The narrative then switches back to Saul, who asks “Wouldn’t many of our readers have liked the doctor’s job?” (*The Sins* 84). In the embedded narrative, the doctor plays a role similar to that of the reader of *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* – both are the eager voyeurs seeking pleasure in the stories of others. Moreover, much of Saul’s role in his own narrative is similar to that of the schoolmaster’s; while Saul is a participant in some of the sex acts contained in his narrative, several parts of his narrative tell the stories of sex acts Saul witnessed but did not participate in, much like the schoolmaster’s use of the peepholes in the embedded narrative. Saul’s sole narrative intervention

is self-reflexive. Saul, like the schoolmaster, tells of his own sexual pleasure in witnessing but not participating in sex acts, and the reader, like the doctor, enjoys hearing such tales. The layers of voyeurism multiply with this intervention – the secret world of the schoolboys is exposed via peephole to the schoolmaster, who in turn tells the story to the doctor; the doctor either tells the story to Saul or to another (unknown) character who eventually tells Saul; and Saul shares the story with Cambon and the readers. Sexual encounters in this narrative are anything but secret and private.

Unlike Cambon's certainty that his readers agree with him, Saul sees his multiple readers as having diverse options, hence the use of the modifying "many." Not all of his readers will agree, but the majority will. Saul does not conscript all of his readers, only "many." However, what is confusing about Saul's reference to his readers is exactly what is so appealing about the doctor's job. Is the appeal the doctor's ability to hear about such sex acts under the guise of professional (dis)interest? Is it his ability to look at and touch the boys' bodies under the guise of professional distance? Is it his ability to speak frankly with both the schoolmaster and the boys about sex? Is it his ability to disguise his own sexual desires as professional actions? Regardless of how exactly the doctor is to frighten the boys and of why exactly the reader might find that appealing, what lies under Saul's question is the power imbalance between the doctor and the boys – and perhaps between the readers and the subjects of their desires. What the doctor does with these boys is not consensual – he pretends to give them a medical exam, but it is implied that he (and perhaps the boys – that part is left to the reader's imagination) is sexually aroused by his mock exam. While the details of his mock exam are omitted, Saul encourages his readers to imagine what might have happened between the doctor and the schoolboys. This omission is notable given the novel's explicit account of other sex acts. In other parts of the narrative, Saul is not coy about providing details. No sex act is too naughty to escape Saul's pen, including sex acts involving boys. The doctor's embedded narrative is presented in volume two of *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* and is located in a

chapter⁷⁴ entitled “The Same Old Story: Arses Preferred to Cunts.” The chapter’s title and first several paragraphs echo some of the weariness presented by Cambon’s statement about recounting sex with Saul becoming repetitive and tiresome. And in many respects, pornography is “the same old story” – there are only so many ways in which bodies can intertwine with each other.

Interestingly, both mentions of the “readers” appear at a transition point: the first as the reader moves from Cambon’s introduction into Saul’s narrative; the second as the reader moves from a section entitled “The Same Old Story: Arses Preferred to Cunts” and into a section entitled “A Short Essay on Sodomy, Etc.” “The Same Old Story: Arses Preferred to Cunts” is only about three pages long and contains several vignettes. This chapter marks a turn in Saul’s storytelling – rather than recounting activities he was involved in or directly witnessed, it provides short accounts of sex acts Saul has heard about but not seen or participated in. The focus of the short chapter is support for Saul’s belief that “incest, sodomy, and bestiality have been fashionable vices” ever “since Nero had his mother, and Caligula fucked his horse” (*The Sins* 81). The vignettes (some as short as a single sentence) are about a man who prefers his goat to any human sexual partner; a “nobleman” who “is passionately in love with, and fucks his own mother” (*The Sins* 81); a landlady who interrupts her male lodger having sex with a soldier; and a recent report “in the London *Daily Telegraph* of July 9, 1881,” on the trial of a Scots Guard corporal who was “caught in the act of committing an unnatural offense” with the Secretary to the German Embassy⁷⁵ (*The Sins* 82). The

⁷⁴ Volume one of the novel does not have any intertitles other than Cambon’s “Introduction” and the start of Saul’s narrative, which is labeled as “Jack Saul’s Recollections: Early Development of the Pederastic Ideas in His Youthful Mind.” Volume two, however, contains several chapter titles: “Some Frolics with Boulton and Park,” “Further Recollections and Incidents,” “The Same Old Story: Arses Preferred to Cunts,” “A Short Essay on Sodomy, Etc.,” and “Tribadism.” It is unclear why the intertitles are largely omitted from the first volume but are present in the second volume.

⁷⁵ This appears to be a historically accurate reference to the trial of John Cameron, a corporal in the Scots Guards, for an “unnatural crime” committed with Count Guido zu Lynar, a secretary to the German ambassador. While I could not find the report referenced in London’s *Daily Telegraph*; the case is referenced in Sean Brady’s *Masculinity and the Male Homosexual in Britain, 1861 to 1913*. Brady refers to an article about the trial in *The Times*, not *The Daily Telegraph*, and he notes that the case was the only “unnatural crime reported [in *The Times*] between 1872 and 1885” (53).

chapter concludes with the lengthy story of the schoolmaster and the doctor. The subsequent chapter, “A Short Essay on Sodomy, Etc.” marks another shift in Saul’s storytelling – his narrative takes a historical and sociological turn. He opens with thoughts about sodomy between two men and between a man and a woman, and he explores sodomy practices in ancient Rome and in contemporary Europe.

The tone of “A Short Essay on Sodomy, Etc.” is a significant departure from the tone of his previous chapters – gone are the tongue-in-cheek references, the puns, and the forthrightly erotic descriptions, and in their place is an essay with a serious and scholarly tone about how these allegedly deviant acts are common practices. This chapter is the lengthiest and most explicit connection between the storyworld and the actual world. All of the previous chapters by Saul have blended actual events and people into the fiction, but this chapter focuses exclusively on actual events and people. Saul’s address at the end of “The Same Old Story” opens the threshold of cross-world identification, and the content of “A Short Essay” ushers the reader across that threshold – the novel gives way to nonfiction and to the potential realization for the reader that their allegedly deviant sexual desires may be more common than the reader thought. “A Short Essay” is a masked intervention that allows the reader, explicitly invoked at the end of the previous chapter, to analyze the storyworld for use in their actual world. Voyeurism for sexual pleasure gives way to voyeurism as a validation of sexual desires: according to *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, these acts are pleasurable, but perhaps more importantly, they are normal. Given the infrequency of narrative intervention in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plains*, the two interventions stand out from the rest of the narrative – their rarity calls attention when they do appear. When Saul addresses Cambon, it is as “you” or “Sir.” But when he uses “readers,” he points out of the storyworld to the actual reader of the narrative, not to Cambon. Much as the typically private acts of sexual intercourse are made public via pornographic texts, the private letter from Saul to Cambon is written with an understanding that it is not a private

exchange but a public one. As with *Venus in India*, voyeurism abounds in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* – not only do characters and the reader watch these intimate acts, but private writings about these intimate acts also becomes a public affair.

In *Venus in India*, Devereaux's narrative interventions – most of which directly address female readers – create an intimacy between the author and the reader, an intimacy which is reinforced by the reader's awareness of their position as a voyeur throughout the novel. Moreover, in creating that sense of intimacy, Devereaux attempts to align his reader with his sexual mores. Devereaux's narrative interventions are present throughout the two volumes, although the frequency and form vary. While Devereaux does use "you" to address his reading audience, the most common narrative intervention is his address of the "reader" and "readers." Devereaux addresses a singular "reader" twenty-six times, plural "readers" forty-one times, and "you" as reader thirty-nine times. Devereaux explicitly addresses a male and female audience. In volume I, after eleven addresses to the reader that either were gender neutral (no adjectives modifying the noun) or could connote a female audience or femininity (adjectives such as "gentle" and "fair" attached to the noun), Devereaux addresses "my readers, male and female" (49). In fact, of the sixty-seven addresses to the reader(s), most either explicitly address female readers (10.5%) or use adjectives to imply the presence of female readers (59.7%); the remainder of the readerly addresses are gender neutral (25.4%), connote male readers (3%), or address both men and women (1.4%).

Devereaux only directly refers to male readers only twice – "my male readers" (195) and "my soldier readers" (273); he refers to female readers seven times – "my girl readers" (143; 196), "my tender girl readers" (73; 123), "dear girl readers" (139; 196), and "my sweet girl readers" (56). More frequently, he uses adjectives that connote femininity: "dear" or "dearest" (nineteen times), "gentle" (twelve times), "fair" (four times), "patient" (three times), "sympathizing" (once), and "anxious and generous minded" (once). While men can certainly be dear, gentle, patient, sympathizing, anxious, or

generous, the terms themselves conjure images of expected feminine behavior during the nineteenth century. Of the fifty-seven addresses to the reader(s) that do not carry explicit gender markers (such as “male,” “female,” “solider,” or “girl”), only seventeen do not have adjectives and none have adjectives that connote masculinity. Devereaux’s frequent address to women – to “girls,” specifically – is echoed in the content of the narrative: much of the story centers on the “deflowering” of various young women. While a character’s first sexual encounter is frequently the subject of pornographic narratives, Devereaux’s narrative lingers on and repeats such scenes several times. In volume one, Lizzie Wilson tells him the story of her first sexual when she was only thirteen, and volume two, which spans a year, focuses on Devereaux’s “conquest” of the Selwyn sisters, first Fanny (age sixteen), then Amy (age fifteen), and finally Mabel (age thirteen).⁷⁶ His addresses to young girls coupled with his narrative focus on sex with teenaged girls raises the stakes of the recruiting didactic slant of the narrative by explicitly linking the sex acts of the storyworld to those of the actual world.

Some of the genre-centered ways in which Devereaux plays with mainstream novel forms are readily apparent: the memoir is only concerned with sexual conquests, the travel narrative is only concerned with way in which travel allows him to meet new sexual partners, and the not-quite three-volume⁷⁷ quasi-realist novel is only concerned with the realities of the narrator’s bedroom. Devereaux’s use of the autobiographic style and his position as an engaging narrator create the illusion of a truthful narrative that recounts real events. Moreover, it creates another layer of voyeurism: while some characters watch others having sex in the novel, the readers are watching –

⁷⁶ For the twenty-first-century reader, Lizzie, Fanny, Amy, and Mabel are shockingly – and even criminally – young at the time of their first sexual encounters. However, in England the age of consent was only set at sixteen in 1885 after the publication of William Stead’s “The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon,” a multi-part exposé of sex trafficking and prostitution. Prior to the passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, the age of consent was thirteen. *Venus in India* was published only four years after the passage of the bill, and the narrative was set during the Second Anglo-Afghan War, which lasted from 1878 to 1880, at which time the age of consent was still thirteen.

⁷⁷ *Venus in India* is a two-volume novel. The end of the second volume promised a third volume; however, such a volume was never published, and no record of it having been written has yet been found.

and indeed are seeking out the chance to watch – all of the sex acts presented. The reader becomes a participant in the narrative by reading the narrative, but the extent to which the reader sees themselves as part of the story depends on the reader's willingness to align themselves with the narrative. By addressing female readers, Devereaux attempts to close the gap between some of his readers (namely women, who in the late nineteenth century would not be assumed to be readers of erotica) and his text. Moreover, because “dear reader” as a well-worn convention of sentimental and didactic fiction by the late nineteenth century, Devereaux's erotica can be read as a parody of the didactic realist novel: through these interventions, he attempts to align the audience, especially female readers, with the values presented in the narrative, to convince the readers of the narrative's truthfulness, and to have the readers act on lessons learned from the text. If “every engaging address to ‘you’ simultaneously reminds the narratee (and the actual reader) that the story is only a fiction and encourages the reader to apply to nonfictional, real life the feelings that the fiction may have inspired” (Warhol, *Gendered* 43-44), then Devereaux writes with the hope of his reader applying the fantasies presented in the text to their actual lives. It is in large part the didactic style, which itself is constructed by the narrative interventions, that leads to the creation of various possible worlds for the reader. Through the didactic narrative interventions, the reader can create possible worlds of sexual desire that could spill over into their actual lives.

While each individual actual reader's reaction to the text is potentially radically different from every other individual actual reader's, some plausible, finite, and somewhat predicable readers and possible worlds can be traced. There are at least three rhetorical stances created by the engaging narrative interventions: (1) an approving stance which affirms female heterosexual desires, (2) a policing stance that defines and delineates women's sexuality, and (3) a doubly voyeuristic stance designed for heterosexual male pleasure. The contemporary reader can choose among these rhetorical stances created by the possible worlds presented in *Venus in India* and can apply those to

their own actual world. The text defines the terms of readerly possible-world constructions, and both the text and its reader are situated in a culture that also defines the conditions for world creation. Shifts among these three rhetorical stances (and the possible worlds linked to them) are connected to the reader's identification with the narratees. Devereaux's engaging narrator and narrative interventions transport the reader into the storyworld and align the reader with the narratees in the text. While the reader can resist the transportation and alignment, the structure of the text constantly attempts to reinforce the link between the narratee and reader through the use of "reader(s)" and "you." These tensions between acceptance and resistance help to create the possible worlds in the narrative. Moreover, the tensions in the Dolemanian deontic system surrounding sex and sexuality (what is "permitted, prohibited, and obligatory" [Ryan, "Possible Worlds" para. 9]) – tensions created by the narrator's and the reader's deontic systems – also affects creation of possible worlds for the reader.

Devereaux's interventions fall into three categories: approving, policing, and doubly voyeuristic. Approving interventions give the reader, especially the female reader, permission to enjoy and seek out sex, to have premarital or extramarital sex, to watch other people having sex, and to use birth control. Unlike the moral system publically espoused in the actual world, women and girls do have sexual desires and appetites (as long as those appetites are heterosexual and do not conflict with the narrative's ban on specific sex acts). Devereaux's reader is apparently not shocked by the condoned sex acts presented in the text; there are no instances in which the narrator has to convince his reader, male or female, that the actions presented in the text are acceptable. The approving interventions subvert the real world taboos of the late nineteenth century about sex and specifically female sexual desire without explicitly mentioning the taboos. The didactic impulses in the text foster cross-world identification: if I (the actual female or male reader) enjoy the sex acts presented in the text, then my desires are normal. The policing interventions complement the

approving interventions by telling the reader, and again especially the female reader, which sex acts are deviant, either by explicitly labeling the act as such (for example, some forms of rape⁷⁸) or by completely ignoring those acts (homosexuality, men in “subordinate” sexual positions, group sex, and many others are not discussed in the narrative). By showing the reader acceptable and unacceptable sex acts and desires and by ignoring other sex acts and desires, the text via this rhetorical stance polices the reader’s sexuality: if the characters in the novel enjoy these sex acts, then I (the female or male reader) should – or even must – enjoy them, too. Condoning and condemning creates explicit boundaries for desires.

The doubly voyeuristic interventions fall into two subcategories: (1) explicitly linking a character’s sexual pleasure to the reader’s and (2) conjuring a female readership solely for the pleasure of the male reader. The same intervention can be read according to both of these two subcategories based on the reader’s gender. For example, a female reader encountering Devereaux’s assertion that “everyone [sic] of my dear girl readers will allow that it is an awfully pleasant thing to have their own sweet bubbies and delightful mound felt and caressed by the man whom they admire” (196) can connect the pleasures of the storyworld to their own experiences or desires. But a male reader encountering the same passage can not only enjoy the action of the storyworld but also derive a secondary layer of pleasure – that of imagining actual women in the actual world who could be reading the text and deriving pleasure from the reading. This second reading of the passage is one that reinforces the taboo of female sexual desire (women are not – and should not – be reading the novel), while simultaneously subverting the real world taboo by creating a textual world that is

⁷⁸ An important exception to his condemnation of rape is Devereaux’s admission that he raped his cousin Emily: “I would like to see whether, as when I raped my cousin Emily, my second love, I could actually get into this sleeping girl [Lizzie], before she woke to find me in her glowing orifice” (45). The difference for Devereaux appears to be (1) whether the woman being raped “enjoys” the act and/or (2) whether the rapist and his victim “love” each other. When Colonel Searles assaults his wife, Mrs. Searles tells him to stop and later moves out of the house (and becomes a prostitute) in order to punish Searles for the rape. When Searles attempts to rape Lizzie, she struggles against him and tells Devereaux she does not like or love Searles. When the Afghan men rape Amy and Fanny, they do so as retribution for the British soldiers hiring women from their village as prostitutes.

centered on sexually active, and even sexually aggressive, women. Just as I (the actual male reader) can enjoy reading an erotic novel, I (the actual male reader) can also derive sexual pleasure from imagining women reading the text. The novel reinforces this voyeuristic pleasure of imagining a female audience reading a pornographic work by stressing the relationship between the male author and the female readers. The sexual pleasure is double: the male reader can “see” the sex acts in the text, and he can also “see” the (imagined) female reader enjoying reading about those same textual sex acts. However, in this possible world, the female reader of the text is no more real than the women Devereaux encounters in the text; both are imaginary, conjured by the narrative in order to heighten the male reader’s enjoyment.

In addition to creating these three possible worlds via his narrative interventions, Devereaux also uses interventions to comment on the dangers of sex, especially for women, throughout the text. In his first direct address of female readers, Devereaux warns, “Every rose has its thorn, my sweet girl readers, and alas! most pleasures have their drawbacks. Happy are those who make the most of the rose and the least of the thorn” (56). This warning is explicitly for his female readers – and as Devereaux later reveals in the narrative, the two most dangerous thorns for a woman are pregnancy and public sanction. However, Devereaux offers solutions for both of these potential problems in volume two. He instructs his readers about birth control, and he explicitly links birth control to freedom from public sanction:

The girl whose belly fills out, the effect of her too ardent love for the handsome youth, repents and repents bitterly for her “sin” because, for her, it is the most evil consequence which could follow upon the heels of the delicious poke, but not she, who protected from such unlucky results by her lover, careful and tender, enjoys her voluptuous meetings with him. Repentance, in fact, is all twaddle, and certainly will never come up, unless they have the realistic fancy opening a picture of approaching sorrow and misery.

Obey the commandment, “Thou shalt not be found out,” and leave repentance and reproach in the background, my dear girl readers. (Deveraux 139)

Note, however, that both in this passage and in two later passages in which Deveraux uses birth control, preventing pregnancy is the man’s duty – the woman must be “protected from such unlucky results” by the man. Deveraux details how he protects Fanny, using language that is at once instructive and sexually charged. In his first explanation of birth control, Deveraux only explains to the reader (without directly addressing the reader) his actions but does not explain his actions to Fanny:

Her filled grotto was overflowing and that reminded me that I must take care of Fanny.

Kneeling down and telling her to let me do what I liked, I passed my hand up her thighs, and introduced two fingers, as far as they would go into her hot, soft little place. I used them like glove stretchers and succeeded in bringing another flow of imprisoned spend down my hand and wrist, and so relieved Fanny of what might otherwise have proved a dangerous burden. She asked me why I did that.

“I will tell you another time, darling. But come, let me wipe you once more, and then we will take a turn of the avenue and see whether anyone is coming out.”

Fanny submitted to the further wiping with a voluptuous surrender of herself, which was exquisitely delicious to me. (249-250)

Later in the narrative, he explains another birth control method to Fanny. As with the previous explanation, while he does not directly invoke the reader, the reader, having already been hailed multiple times in the narrative, receives the same instruction that Fanny does. And that instruction has real-world applications:

I was glad to explain [why I had put the sponge into Fanny]. I gently drew it out by the thin silken thread I had fastened to it, to the outer end of which I had also fastened a little cross-

bar of silver, to prevent its being entirely sucked up into her, by the backwards and forward strokes of my passion, and I showed her the great quantities of spend which I had poured into her, and I explained to her the formation of her womb, and how necessary it was for her safety to prevent a possible baby, that the mouth of the womb should be prevented from being watered by the prolific produce of my ardor, and that, to still further deaden the vitality of that spend, I had used phrenyle.⁷⁹ She quite understood me as I proceeded, and kissed me again and again, thanking me for the great care I took of her and saying that she had never thought of any danger. I told her I had written to Cawnpore for a powerful douche, and sent a receipt to be made up which would be more effective and pleasant than the phrenyle, as it would have rose water as one of its ingredients, and would have a more pleasant aroma; and then I proposed that she should get up, and let me wash her grotto, so that I might pay it again the homage of my kisses. To this she joyfully assented. I got a basin of water and a towel and bathed her hot little spot. She enjoyed the freshness of the water, and when I had dried her bush and thighs she insisted on washing my shaft in her turn, laughing and happy. (Devereaux 262-263)

While neither of these passages include a readerly address, Devereaux has framed these passages with his earlier warning to his female audience about the dangers of pregnancy and his position that proper birth control methods will allow women to bypass the thorns and enjoy only the rose.

For female readers, these passages can be read as instructive (here is how to avoid pregnancy) or as affirming (how these characters have avoided pregnancy reflects how I as an actual woman have avoided pregnancy) – these passages assert that women want to enjoy sex without

⁷⁹ It is likely that Devereaux meant “phenyle” rather than “phrenyle.” Phenyle was available in the late nineteenth century and was sold as Little’s Soluble Phenyle throughout the British Empire. In an December 1887 advertisement for the product in *The Canadian Practitioner*, phenyl is proclaimed as “possess[ing] all the good qualities of carbolic acid, but is immensely superior in being *Non-Poisonous*,” and Little’s product “was pronounced to be *three times more powerful* than any other Disinfectant and Germicide on the market” by various doctors and medical associations (“Advertisements” 13, their emphasis).

worrying about pregnancy. The same passages also serve a policing function: in instructing the reader in how to avoid pregnancy, the text enforces that notion that pregnancy is an unwanted side effect of sex. Moreover, the emphasis is put on the man's role in birth control, namely that he is in charge of when and how birth control is used; the woman's role is then to passively accept the protection offered by her partner. The passages can be read in this possible world as policing acceptable knowledge about women's bodies. Fanny, like the female reader, should not know about her own physiology unless instructed by her male partner. Lastly, birth control becomes sexy – Devereaux eroticizes the passages in which he uses birth control, blending the practical and the pornographic. Furthermore, these male readers via the doubly voyeuristic stance can enjoy the idea of women who willingly use birth control and who employ birth control in order to have more sex.

In volume two, Devereaux writes, “With some girls it [sex acts, desire, passion] seems natural, others can be taught, but most require to be trained” (261). His uses of engaging narrative interventions and of a primarily female narrative audience encompasses all three possibilities outlined in the previous statement: the statement approves, polices, and doubles the levels of voyeurism all at once. Some women are “naturals” when it comes to sex; they enjoy sex and are willing to seek out their own sexual pleasures (including reading *Venus in India*). Other women must be trained, and *Venus in India* becomes an eroticized training manual. The imagined women in the doubly voyeuristic stance for male readers are both natural and in need of teaching, and the male reader can fantasize about further instructing the “naturals” and beginning the educations of those who are eager to learn. Moreover, Devereaux constructs nearly every woman he encounters in the text as sexually active and willing, and he constructs all of his female readers as sexually active and willing – nearly no woman is out of bounds according to the narrative. He extends that construction to his readers, especially his female readers – like the women in the narrative, his readers need little coaxing before they conform or submit to the norms of the text.

Much like *Venus in India*, *A Marriage Below Zero* contains multiple addresses to the reader. Elsie tells the story of her unhappy marriage to a closeted gay man, Arthur, and of Arthur's relationship with his lover, Dillington. As narrator, Elsie employs a tone of confidentiality and secretiveness – of information shared among intimate friends. While loosely structured as a memoir, Elsie frequently references novel conventions and is a very self-aware author. She addresses reader(s) eleven times⁸⁰ and also includes several addresses to the reader as “you.” She addresses a singular “reader” only twice; the remaining nine addresses are to “readers.” Her uses of a singular reader nearly form bookends in the novel: her first address to her audience is to a singular reader in her “Introduction,” and her final use of the singular reader appears in chapter 19, with only two addresses to plural readers appearing afterwards. Of her eleven references to reader(s), only two appear without modifiers – she refers simply to “readers” (Dale 110, 169) without attaching adjectives or possessive pronouns to the term. In the remaining nine readerly addresses, she claims her readers with a personal pronoun and/or genders her readers as female via adjectives or contextual clues: she calls them “dear reader” once (Dale 57), “dear readers” twice (Dale 64, 158), “my readers” four times (Dale 80, 90, 92, 113), “my fair young readers” once (Dale 119), and “the unsuspecting reader” once (Dale 152). She also refers to her reader as “you” no less than twenty-five times, with many of these references in the same sentences or paragraphs as addresses to the reader(s).

Her first narrative interventions appear in her “Introduction”; her fictive actorial preface precedes her numbered chapters and outlines for the reader her current situation as a married-but-not-married young woman:

⁸⁰ There is a twelfth reference to “readers,” but it is not a narrative intervention. Instead, Elsie is discussing readers of newspapers, not her own readers: “I had nothing to say to Arthur Ravener or any other young man that might not have been published in the daily papers if the editors had seen fit to inflict it upon their readers” (Dale 75).

I must wear mine [her wedding ring] until I die, I suppose. You see everybody knows that I am Mrs. Ravener; all my friends seem to take an ill-natured delight in emphatically using my married name. [...] I hope I am making you wonder what all this means, dear reader, because I intend on tearing myself away from mamma for a little a devoting some time to you. You say you would not like to inconvenience mamma. Oh, you need not hesitate. I shall tell her that I need a little rest [...]. (Dale 57)⁸¹

These chatty addresses to the reader(s) and you appear at regular intervals throughout the text – and as in the passage above, Elsie moves between uses of “you” in colloquial sense (“you see”) and “you” as a reference to her reader (“you would not like”). Even though Elsie makes it clear that she is writing her narrative, the addresses to her audience sound more conversational than writerly, as though the reader is in the same room as her while she writes or as though she is writing to a specific recipient. Elsie, however, does not clarify her narrative position or her relationship to the reader – she knows that her reader is not familiar with her story and will be baffled by her relationship with Arthur and by Arthur’s relationship with Dillington, and she frequently teases the reader about how confusing her narrative must be to read. Elsie has a secret from the start of her narrative, and she slowly unfolds that secret for the reader. As Elsie writes about the three years of her marriage – one with Arthur and two separated from him after his disappearance from New York City – she strings her reader along, keeping her reader in the same state of suspense about her marriage and unhappiness as she was at the time of those events. She frames her narrative as a warning to her reader about the dangers of marriage. She sees no benefit in marriage for women: they are matched with men who can only flatter them, with men who ignore them or hide them

⁸¹ Confusingly, the reader learns in the final chapter that Arthur is dead, but in the preface, Elsie states that, while she is not living with her husband, she is still married to him. The narrative is told analeptically – the preface sets up the subsequent chapters as events that all happened in the past. Yet, Elsie does not state that she is a widow (and therefore, technically, not still married to Arthur), and by stating that she is still married to her husband, she implies that he is still living. Perhaps Dale did not want to spoil the plot by having Elsie reveal Arthur’s death in the opening pages.

from the rest of society, or with men like Arthur who can value their wives as intellectual partners and will allow their wives freedom of movement in society but will not love their wives as the wives wish to be loved.

Elsie constructs herself as an odd woman – one who does not quite fit into the social norms expected of a young debutante. At the end of chapter one, she writes:

You will probably have arrive at the conclusion by this time, dear readers, that I was a fool. If, however, I possessed no peculiarities, I should not venture to be sitting here. Indeed, I suppose I should be a respectable British matron, with half-a-dozen children, and – let me see, it is ten o'clock – I might now be ordering a boiled leg of mutton with caper sauce for my little olive-branches' dinner. (Dale 64)

This address to the reader appears after Elsie complains about her debutante ball. At this ball her illusions about women and men have been shattered. Her friends from school are more interested in attracting dance partners and potential husbands than in talking with her, and the men she meets are likewise only interested in the opposite sex and treat her like “a silly toy” (Dale 64). These are bitter revelations: “From what I had seen, I judged that in the social world, women must be the sworn enemies of women, and men the everlasting foes of men. Girls I had heard declare themselves to be eternal friends, never spoke to each other during the evening, and I failed to notice a man address a word to one of his own sex, which would indicate any friendly interest in it” (Dale 63). In opening her eyes to the realities of the marriage market and in her decision not to marry a man who only talks “nonsense” to her (Dale 75), Elsie steps out of the prescribed role for a woman of her class – and she acknowledges that in doing so she runs the risk of being labeled as a “fool” by her reader. Yet, even with the benefit of hindsight about her marriage and the choices she made that led to her marriage, she still prefers her strange life to that of the British matron whose children are “olive

branches,” sign of peace in an ongoing war between husband and wife. Her address to the reader implies that those matrons are the fools, not her.

Elsie values honesty over all other virtues, and she consistently comments on how she will not hide any part of her married life from her reader: “No one who has followed me thus far can accuse me of having tried to make myself attractive to my readers” (Dale 80); “I do not intend to conceal anything from my readers” (Dale 90). Yet for all of her honest revelations, Elsie – and perhaps her reader – lacks the vocabulary to fully describe what happens in her marriage. Her marriage is not consummated, and she seems to have little awareness about sex. When Arthur leaves her after dinner on the wedding night, she understands that *something* was supposed to happen after dinner, but she does not know what that something is: “It seemed to me that Arthur ought to have stayed with me, no matter what sacrifice he made. I knew very little about brides and bridegrooms beyond what I had read in novels, nine-tenths of which either ended with a couples’ engagement, or began, in early married life” (Dale 95). Yet while lamenting her ignorance and blaming novelists for providing an incomplete picture of marriage, Elsie herself skates around direct discussions of sex. Despite her claims to be an honest, if unconventional, narrator, Elsie lacks the ability to fully tell the story. She narrates the story analeptically, and yet she does not provide additional information to help a naïve reader pick up on the hints provided by other characters about Arthur and Dillington’s relationship. She does not name the relationship between Arthur and Dillington, and she does not describe intimate acts other than hands being held or kisses on the lips.

As with many of the adjectives in *Venus in India* applied to Devereaux’s readers, Elsie’s adjectives connote a female readership:⁸² “dear” and “fair” connote feminine characteristics, and

⁸² In addition to her narrative interventions, Elsie also makes statements that imply a female readership. For example, she states, “I am quite sure I shall find plenty of sisters to agree with me” (Dale 114). Given her alignment with women readers via her narrative interventions, statements such as this one further construct the audience as predominately – or even exclusively – female.

“the unsuspecting reader” is aligned with the female characters in the narrative, none of whom suspect Arthur and Dillington are lovers – unlike the male characters who suspect the true nature of the men’s relationship but who do not discuss their suspicions with the female characters. She invokes the reader directly eleven times, but she also invokes the reader via “you” at least twice as frequently, with the heaviest concentrations of “you” appearing in her introduction. *A Marriage Below Zero* contains an introductory chapter and twenty-five numbered chapters, and Elsie engages with the reader via narrative intervention in all but nine of her chapters. Notably, the worse her situation becomes, the less she engages with the audience. The final two chapters narrate her attempts to track Arthur in New York City, her return to London after his disappearance, her discovery of Dillington’s involvement in a scandal, and her trip to Paris to find her husband – and in these two chapters, she does not engage with the audience at all. There are no references to “you” or the “reader,” nor are there references to Elsie’s act of writing or her tongue-in-cheek comments about novel writing. Elsie attempts a breezy and flippant style as she writes her story; her opening statements in the narrative set the tone for the rest of her work: “I suppose I am rather frivolous. I believe in the voice of the majority, to a certain extent; and it has announced my giddiness and superficiality so frequently, that there is nothing left for me to do but succumb to this view as pleasantly as possible” (Dale 55). Her conversational addresses to the reader often reinforce that view of her giddiness and superficiality. She chats with her reader about the faults of attendees at the ball, about the lack of maternal love and influence in her life (which she claims not to miss or need), about the benefits of having a French maid, but in the sections detailing the source of her unhappiness in her marriage, the breezy tone fades and the addresses to the reader stop.

When narrating the disappointments of her wedding night, her discovery of Arthur’s home with Dillington in London, Arthur’s disappearance with Dillington, the newspaper reports about Dillington’s involvement in an unnamed scandal, and her discovery of Arthur’s body in Paris, Elsie

does not address her reader. Having so frequently and directly engaged with her reader elsewhere in the narrative, the omission of such interventions in these sections is notable. When she addresses her reader, her interventions typically fall into one of two categories: she appeals to her reader on the basis of common ground and shared experiences, or she notes how different her experiences are from most women's. Yet in narrating the core events that shatter her marriage – an experience that Elsie implies is like no other woman's – she does not comment on how different her experiences are from her reader's, nor does she appeal to the reader for sympathy and understanding. Her narrative interventions attempt to connect her world to the reader's world. But some connections cannot be directly made.

Elsie is a woman scorned and a woman duped – and she situates her narrative as a form of healing: “A little taste of bitter recollection can but enhance the value of the sweet vapidness of my present life” (Dale 58). She ends her introduction with an assurance for her reader that, no matter how dire the events of the subsequent chapters, “when you close the book, [you will be able to] say with a sigh of relief: ‘Well, in spite of all, she is living happily ever afterwards’” (Dale 58). Her final address to her reader also references the traditional happy ending of novels: “I flattered myself that my most sanguine hopes would be realized, and that we should return to England as warmly devoted a couple as readers could ever hope to consign to ‘living happily’ ever after” (Dale 169). In a reverse of novel (and fairy tale) conventions of a woman's happy ending occurring with her marriage, Elsie's story begins with her marriage and ends with her husband's suicide. Her hopes for a happy ending – one she explicitly states was shaped by her own reading experiences – are dashed, and she must reconfigure her expectations of personal happiness to reflect her own experiences, not her reading experiences. In coupling her reading experiences with that of her readers, Elsie creates two categories of reading: those false novels she has read, which in no way prepared her for the

realities of her marriage, and the true narrative she is writing, one that peels back the mystery of marriage and shows how unhappy a marriage can be.

Moreover, Elsie chides novelists for misshaping her own ideas about marriage; she has no idea what a marriage entails because all novels in her reading experience end at the altar or at the door of the newlyweds' home. Arthur and Elsie never consummate their marriage – Arthur because he has no desire to do so, and Elsie because she has no idea about sexual intercourse (from her mother, from her female friends, or most especially from her readings). Whereas *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* and *Venus in India* both frankly depict sexual intercourse and engage with the reader in order to align the reader with the narrative's deontic views of sex, *A Marriage Below Zero* dances around the sexual deviance at the core of the story – the true nature of Arthur's and Dillington's relationship is only implied, leaving a naïve reader to wonder at what Elsie was so angry about, why Dillington was arrested, and why Arthur was dead. Instead, the novel focuses on the issue that such sham marriages to cover for same-sex romances do exist, both in the storyworld and in the actual world. Moreover, in critiquing novel conventions, Elsie continually insists that her narrative is no novel – it is real life. Her narrative interventions are warnings for her female readers about the problems of marriage. Interestingly, while Elsie is shocked to learn her husband is in a committed relationship with another man, she does not blame Arthur for his actions, nor does the novel condemn Arthur for loving a man; rather Arthur is presented as an object of sympathy, and much of Elsie's anger stems from being lied to, not from any moral outrage over a same-sex relationship. Instead, via the narrative intervention, Elsie warns the reader about marriage being a trap for women (regardless of whom they marry) and attempts to open the reader's eyes to the existence of gay men without explicitly mentioning same-sex love. She draw direct parallels between her story and the lives of her readers, inviting readers to ponder the possibility of marriages such as Arthur and Elsie's and of relationships such as Arthur and Dillington's in the actual world.

Nonfiction & Narrative Interventions: “Terminal Essay” and *My Secret Life*

In his “Terminal Essay” to *Arabian Nights*, Burton opens with a pat on the back for the steadfast reader: “The reader who has reached this terminal stage will hardly require my assurance that he has seen the mediæval Arab at his best and, perhaps, at his worst” (63). In addition to addresses to the reader and you, Burton also frequently uses first-person plural in the “Terminal Essay”: “we” have similar values, and those values distinguish “us” from the characters in *Arabian Nights* as well as from the cultures that originally produced *Arabian Nights*. Burton buries his more controversial sections, “Woman,” “Pornography,” and “Pederasty,” between sections on religion and poetics. Their physical placement in Burton’s lengthy essay means that the reader only encounters these topics after having moved through more aboveboard topics. Moreover, Burton arranges these topics in order of increasing illicitness – gender, then sex, then deviant sex.

Burton opens the first of these sections, “Woman,” with a discussion of critiques of *Arabian Nights* and with connections between the storyworld and the actual world:

The next point I propose to consider is the position of womanhood in The Nights,⁸³ so curiously at variance with the stock ideas concerning the Moslem [sic] home and domestic policy still prevalent, not only in England, but throughout Europe. Many readers of these volumes have remarked to me with much astonishment that they find the female characters more remarkable for decision, action and manliness than the male; and are wonderstruck by their masterful attitude and by the supreme influence they exercise upon public and private life. (“Terminal Essay” 167)

While this use of the “readers” is not a narrative intervention exactly, it does engage with the concept of his reading audience – and it frames his other addresses of his readers. Whether Burton

⁸³ In “Terminal Essay,” Burton refers to *Arabian Nights* as simple The Nights, without special formatting other than the capitalization.

was actually contacted by these readers to discuss the roles of women is not as important as the fact that Burton needs to claim such feedback as the launching point for his section on gender. The reader of “Terminal Essay” may or may not be one of these readers who allegedly made remarks to Burton and may or may not agree with these readers’ remarks about female characters. But by invoking these readers, Burton implies a connection between these earlier readers and the current reader. Moreover, Burton turns from a discussion of these earlier readers in “Woman” to using narrative interventions in the subsequent sections to address the current reader of *Arabian Nights* and “Terminal Essay.”

In the “Pornography” section, Burton writes that “readers who have perused the ten volumes will probably agree with me that the naïve indecencies of the text are rather *gaudiserie* than prurience; and, when delivered with mirth and humour, they are rather the ‘excrements of wit’ than designed for debauching the mind” (“Terminal Essay” 176, his emphasis). While implying that not all readers will agree with him about the sexual content of *Arabian Nights*, Burton states that most of his readers agree with his own views. He also implies that those who believe *Arabian Nights* is pornographic are incorrect. He further marks the separation between those who agree with him and those who disagree with him by naming his dissenting audience not as “readers” but as “critics.” His readers are his allies; his critics are not. His readers are capable of understanding *Arabian Nights* as a meaningful literary text; his critics only complain about illicit topics in the tales, topics which Burton claims the critics have either invented or blown out of proportion: “To those critics who complain of these raw vulgarisms and puerile indecencies in The Nights I can reply only by quoting the words said to have been said by Dr. Johnson to the lady who complained of the naughty words in his dictionary – ‘You must have been looking for them, Madam!’” (“Terminal Essay” 177). For Burton, only a reader looking to be insulted or offended by the content of *Arabian Nights* would be able to find objectionable material in its pages. In creating this distinction between the reader and the critic,

Burton subtly pushes his readers to align themselves with the reader, not the critic, and in attempting to reframe his readers as these allies, Burton shifts the critique of the alleged pornographic content in *Arabian Nights* from a problem with the text to being a problem with the individual reader. These realignments create an exotic illicit possible world which can serve as an alternative to the actual world which the reader shares with these Victorian critics.

His defense of *Arabian Nights* as an aboveboard text suitable for general consumption continues in the “Pederasty” section. At the close of this section, Burton again addresses his “many readers” (“Terminal Essay” 218); however, the many readers referenced in “Pederasty” seem to be different from those readers in “Pornography.” While the multiple readers in “Pornography,” according to Burton, did not view *Arabian Nights* as pornographic, these new “many readers” in “Pederasty” “will regret the absence from The Nights of that modesty which distinguishes” other European narratives (Burton, “Terminal Essay” 218). Burton cites European texts which are content to leave sexual matters behind closed bedroom doors, and he claims that such prudence is not part of Arabian culture. To bowdlerize *Arabian Nights* is to remove its cultural and historical contexts and to remove any scholarly value from the narrative.⁸⁴ However, no sooner has Burton mentioned the many readers who disapprove of the uncensored translation than he returns to his multiple agreeing readers from the “Pornography” section: “Those who have read through these ten volumes will agree with me that the proportion of offensive matter bears a very small ratio to the mass of the work” (“Terminal Essay” 218). After reasserting that many of his readers (especially those readers who have carefully read all ten volumes of his translation) have found little objectionable material in

⁸⁴ Antoine Galland was the first European translator of the text; his volumes in French, published as *Les Mille et une nuits* between 1704 and 1717, not only expunged aspects of the original bawdy tales but also “freely embellished or altered the tales as he wrote them, in some cases interpolating material taken from other sources” (Arata par. 6). Edward William Lane produced the first English translation of the text in the early nineteenth century: “The scholarly sobriety of Lane’s edition, its unapologetic dryasdustiness, served to mute much of the exoticism that had always been one of the collection’s primary attractions for English readers. (As for its eroticism, Lane expurgated every trace.)” (Arata par. 11). Burton’s work is the first European translation to restore the narrative’s original eroticism.

the central narrative, Burton again turns his attention to his critics, who are different from his readers.

Burton constructs his critics as incautious readers who have not fully grasped the meaning or importance of his translation work. And these critics, while vocal, are in the minority: “In an age saturated with cant and hypocrisy, here and there a venal pen will mourn over the ‘Pornography’ of *The Nights*, dwell upon the ‘Ethics of Dirt’ and the ‘Garbage of the Brothel’; and will lament the ‘wanton dissemination (!) of ancient and filthy fiction’” (Burton, “Terminal” 218). Burton’s critique of these critics is loaded with double *entendre* and harkens back to his earlier reference to Johnson’s view that only people looking for obscene materials will ever find such obscenities. His critic’s “venal pen” is a corrupt pen – one that is biased by prudish social norms and that also biases other potential readers. But Burton is also perhaps playing with the secondary meaning of “venal”: that which can be bought or sold, with connotations of prostitution and of the buying and selling of sexual favors. Moreover, the parenthetical exclamation mark is Burton’s insertion. Burton’s “wanton dissemination,” as used by his critics, refers to the spread of prurient ideas via publication. But Burton also appears to be cheekily referring to an unintended pun by his critics and to the secondary meaning of “dissemination,” which refers to the release of semen. Burton allows at least two choices for his reader when encountering the “venal pen” and his exclamation mark: the reader can read it as Burton’s surprise at being (wrongfully) charged with spreading filth, or the reader can read it as Burton’s tongue-in-cheek critique of his critics and as an illustration of how easily a statement can be misconstrued as obscene.

The contrast between the reader and the critic in Burton’s “Pornography” section attempts to divide the narrative audience into a binary classification: either you are with Burton or you are against him – no middle ground is offered by Burton when constructing his audience. Burton’s interventions with the reader and the critic also imply that the critic has missed the point of *Arabian*

Nights by focusing on the alleged obscenity of the work – the point of the narrative, indeed the point of all stories, is to be entertaining. Shahrazad would not have survived if her stories were not engaging. Yet, this implied defense of the fun of storytelling is at odds with Burton’s scholarly tone in “Terminal Essay.” Burton is careful to note the accuracy of his translation and his faithfulness to actual historical and cultural values as presented in the narrative. Perhaps Burton’s use of wit in his interventions in this section are an attempt to ease the reader into the morals and values presented in the possible worlds of *Arabian Nights*. By cheekily dismissing accusations of pornography, Burton is perhaps creating another entryway for the reader; he allows the reader to engage with this exotic and erotic storyworld by at once dismissing the narrative as “just a story” and then following up that dismissal with essays on the connections between the storyworld and the actual world.

Burton, not content to address his critics in general, concludes “Pederasty” with an address to a specific, although unnamed, critic:

To the interested critic of the *Edinburgh Review* [sic] (No. 335 of July, 1885),⁸⁵ I return my warmest thanks for his direct and deliberate falsehoods: – lies are one-legged and short-lived, and venom evaporates. It appears to me that when I show to such men, so “respectable” and so impure, a landscape of magnificent prospects whose vistas are adorned with every charm of nature and art, they point their unclean noses at a little heap of muck here and there lying in a field-corner. (Burton, “Terminal Essay” 218-219)

His address to this specific critic is, clearly, not a narrative intervention – it is an attack against one person couched in his larger defense of *Arabian Nights*. However, given Burton’s tendency in “Terminal Essay” to divide those who have read the volumes in two camps – readers, who are

⁸⁵ Burton’s citation of the July 1885 edition of *The Edinburgh Review* is an error. That edition does not contain any reference to Burton and only one passing reference to *Arabian Nights* in connection with Samuel Coleridge; however, the July 1886 edition does contain an unsigned review of recent translations of *Arabian Nights* and refers to Burton and his work.

friendly to Burton and understand his purpose in translating and publishing *Arabian Nights*, and critics, who unjustly attack Burton and his work – this address to a specific critic is best understood in conjunction with his addresses to his readers. Having hailed his friendly readers throughout these three sections of “Terminal Essay” and having set those “readers” in opposition to the “critics,” this final address of the critic from *The Edinburgh Review* is also an oblique reference to the “reader”: where this critic has found fault, the “reader” will not.

Moreover, it is in this reference to the *Review* critic that the line between the storyworld and actual world disappears. The previous references to both Burton’s readers and critics did not have any actual, verifiable connection to the actual world – these critics and readers could have been invented by Burton, could have been fictionalized versions of actual people, or could have been actual people who contacted Burton about his work. But the *Review* critic was a living person who wrote about Burton’s *Arabian Nights*. Any actual, individual reader of “Terminal Essay” could track down and read the article cited by Burton – and this reference to an actual review opens up the possibility that the previous references to readers and critics are rooted in the actual world rather than the storyworld, that they are not literary devices employed by Burton in order to bolster his view that his translation of *Arabian Nights* is needed and useful and not the trash some have alleged it to be. In *The Edinburgh Review*, the critic concludes “The different versions, however, have each its proper destination – Galland for the nursery, Lane for the library, Payne for the study, and Burton for the sewers” (“Article VI-1” 184). While this critic dislikes many things about Burton’s translation – its refusal to edit out certain tales, its lack of poetic forms, its use of modern slang (especially “Americanisms” [“Article VI-1” 181]) – it is Burton’s footnotes and supplementary essays (that is, his paratextual elements) to *Arabian Nights* that most galls the critic:

Probably no European, even if he have lived half a century “in Orient lands,” has ever gathered together such an appalling collection of degrading customs and statistics of vice as

is contained in the notes to Captain Burton's translation of the "Arabian Night." It is bad enough in the text of the tales to find that Captain Burton is not content with plainly calling a spade a spade, but will have styled a dirty shovel; but in his notes he goes far beyond this, and the varied collection of abominations which he brings forward with such gusto is a disgrace and a shame to printed literature. ("Article VI-1" 183)

The critic is particularly aggrieved by the lack of useful knowledge provided by Burton via his paratextual interventions. The purpose of any translation, at least according to the *Review* critic, is to enlighten British readers about the history and culture of "Mohammedans": "We are sorry to be obliged to say this; for it is a great misfortune that Captain Burton's wide and undisputed knowledge of Oriental manners and customs should have been turned to so little account. When he might have really added to our information on the general life and ideas of Mohammedans, he has preferred to constitute himself the chronicler only of their most degraded vices" ("Article VI-1" 185). The *Review* critic has made, Burton implies, the same mistake as the critics discussed in the "Pornography" section – he has misunderstood the purpose of the narrative as being informative (and in line with contemporary British values) rather than as entertaining (and perhaps an escape from contemporary norms). As with his interventions in "Pornography," this address to the *Review* critic recruits readers to identify with the possible worlds in *Arabian Nights* as an alternative or supplement to the moralizing world of Victorian critics. Setting the reader in opposition to the critic allows Burton to showcase not only how the reader should engage with the text but also how the reader should not engage with the text.

One can only imagine the *Review* critic's thoughts should he have been handed *My Secret Life*, a work that rivals Burton's *Arabian Nights* in its length. *My Secret Life* is an eleven-volume memoir,

and given its obscene length,⁸⁶ only the first three volumes of the narrative will be discussed in this chapter. Unlike *Venus in India* and *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, which scholars classify as novels attempting to masquerade as memoirs, *My Secret Life* is allegedly the journal of a man identified only as Walter; while some scholars suggest that parts of Walter's narrative are exaggerated or partly fictionalized, I have yet to encounter a scholar who has suggested that the narrative is a work of fiction. The volumes obsessively recount, *ad nauseum*, every sexual thought Walter has had and every sexual encounter Walter has participated in or witnessed. Uses of "you" are more frequent than uses of "the reader" or "readers." Using "you" in narrative can be a direct reference to the reader, but it can also be a colloquialism referring to people in general. However, Walter first engages his reader as "the reader" before switching to "you," marking most, if not all, of his uses of "you" (excluding dialogue or one character referring to another character) as references to that reader.

As discussed in the previous chapter on prefaces, Walter opens his narrative with two prefaces, the first of which includes a direct address of the reader: "I have mystified family affairs, but if I say I had ten cousins, when I had but six, or that one aunt's house was in Surrey instead of Kent, or in Lancashire; it breaks the clue and cannot matter to the reader" (Walter, "Preface," par. 11). In writing and publishing the secrets of his sex life, Walter is making public his private self – and in order to keep at least some parts of his life private, Walter and his editor omit his name from the narrative, change the names of various characters, and shifts some factual evidence; in short, he does not want the actual reader of his narrative to be able to name him or others in the text. This world of sexual encounters is firmly rooted in the actual world – there is a danger that an actual individual reader in the late nineteenth century (or later) might recognize and unmask Walter as a

⁸⁶ The *Wikipedia* entry for *My Secret Life* estimates that the full text of the memoir contains over a million words. However, one should not cite sources such as *Wikipedia* in dissertations. Fortunately, there is a more reliable source on the narrative's length: "Over a million words in length, *My Secret Life* is a prime resource for the lexicons and practices of Victorian sex" (Sutherland 515).

real person. However, while disclosing the factual changes and omissions of the subsequent narrative, Walter also hints that such facts are not what the reader has come to the narrative for. The reader will not care how many cousins Walter has because the reader, Walter implies, has picked up the narrative for the sexual thrills it offers, not for a truthful account of the author's family tree.

While his text opens with a genderless reader, it quickly becomes apparent that Walter's intended audience is male. His addresses to the reader via "you" are frequently marked – by adjectives, by contexts, and/or by heteronormative assumptions about gender and sexuality – as addresses to fellow men. At times, Walter slips into a didactic mode when addressing these reading men. Perhaps like Devereaux, he is attempting to help out less experienced readers by providing advice. However, unlike the female characters in *Venus in India* and the female readers invoked by Devereaux, Walter frequently does not imagine women as equal (or even willing/consenting) partners in the bedroom. Here he offers advice to the male reader on how to coerce a "modest" woman: "A modest woman will let you take liberties much more readily if you kiss her whilst taking them. Sit at the foot of a girl on a sofa, and try to force your hand up her clothes, she may resist you; sit close by her side, bend over her, kiss her, and at the same time your hand may find its way to her cunt, almost without hindrance" (Walter, II.7). And later Walter excuses the sexual assault of two women by a man by appealing to the male reader: "If you can't afford to pay for cunt, or don't know a cunt which will take you up it for love, your prick is a restless article, which will insist on the buttocks pushing it somewhere or somehow, till the stiffness is taken out of it" (Walter, III.5). As with other uses of "you" outside of dialogue in Walter's text, these uses of "you" could be misread as colloquialisms referring to "everyone," "anyone," or even Walter himself. However, because Walter frames his narrative with addresses to the reader, these uses of "you" are best understood as narrative interventions, and as such, they are also a means of attempting to persuade the reader of the rightness of Walter's actions and choices – he behaves the same way as you would in these

situations. The reader of *My Secret Life*, much like the reader of the other narratives discussed in this chapter, is written into the narrative, and the narrative attempts to conscript, coopt, or persuade the reader via these interventions that the ethical compass of the text is true.

While “you” is Walter’s preferred form of narrative intervention, he is aware of the fact that his audience is a reading audience, even though he is not certain that his narrative will ever be read by anyone other than himself. The “Introduction” to the narrative is allegedly written by an unnamed man to whom Walter left his narrative after his death. As discussed in the chapter on prefaces, the “Introduction” to *My Secret Life* is allegedly written after Walter’s death and focuses on how the unnamed man – whom I refer to as the Editor – acquired the manuscript and his qualms about publishing his friend’s work. The Editor was Walter’s friend as well as the executor of his estate; Walter gave this man the text at the start of his two-year illness that preceded his death, and the publication is, allegedly, posthumous. However, even though the Editor’s “Introduction” and Walter’s “Preface” and “Second Preface” frame the narrative as a personal document – something more akin to a diary than anything else, especially in the first years Walter was writing – Walter seems to have written his narrative with an external reader in mind. In the second chapter of volume three, Walter has re-read his work from volumes one and two after the interval of some years, and he has decided to edit those volumes down from their original (and apparently lengthier) manuscript form into the narrative that was received by the Editor and was ultimately published. In his editing, Walter destroyed the original manuscript, and he ask his readers to accept the narrative as it has been presented and without additional evidence from the now-lost manuscript:

These details also gave studies of character, and specially of my own character, and as I now read the narratives in print after the lapse of so many years they seem to me to be needed to explain myself, even to myself. It is too late. The manuscript is burnt, that printed in its stead

must be taken as truth or not, as scepticism [sic] or faith prevails in the reader, if ever there be one but myself. (III.2)

While his uses of “you” in the narrative operate on the assumption that the “you” is aligned with Walter’s values, his uses of “the reader” open avenues of doubt. The reader in the passage above is explicitly invited to doubt the accuracy of Walter’s records; Walter seems to care little whether he is believed or not – perhaps because he cannot be assured there will ever be a reader for his narrative. Hopeful that his work will be published and well received, Walter openly acknowledges that such hopes may be in vain. He imagines his real, actual reader in the real, actual world, but he cannot be certain the narrative and reader will ever be connected. Yet that does not prevent him from invoking his reader or from sharing his secret life with that reader.

He makes the reader conditional on the publication of the manuscript. Without publication, there is no reader. Walter seems to want his work to be published, even though he dithers about publication repeatedly in the narrative – he edits and revises his work, he considers what information might be helpful to a reader, and he thinks about how to protect the identities of those in his narrative from being uncovered. Accessing a pornographic text in the late nineteenth century was no mean feat for a reader. Like many works of erotica, *My Secret Life* was originally privately published for subscribers only. And given the sheer weight of the complete volumes of *My Secret Life* coupled with the expenses associated with making a private subscription purchase, the reader of Walter’s narrative was deeply invested – at least financially – in the narrative before even opening its pages. In emphasizing publication as a conditional in the Editor’s and Walter’s prefatory materials and throughout the first three volumes of the narrative, these narrative interventions work with the private subscription access to reinforce for the reader just how secret and exclusive access to Walter’s life is. The narrative interventions work to recruit the readers as lucky voyeurs – these reading Peeping Toms were fortunate to have the curtains to the bedroom drawn back; had the

Editor not published the work, the curtains would have remained firmly closed for the voyeuristic reader. This emphasis on the reader having access to information denied to others reinforces the exclusivity of the narrative – the secret of Walter’s sex life is only to be shared with intimate partners, be they sexual partners or readers. Early in the narrative, Walter writes, “I was evidently always secret, even then, about anything amorous, excepting with Fred [Walter’s cousin] (as will be seen) and have continued so all my life. I rarely bragged, or told anyone of my doings; perhaps this little affair with the governess, was a lesson to me, and confirmed me in a habit natural to me from my infancy. I have kept to myself everything I did with the opposite sex” (I.2). He does not address the reader in this passage about sex and secrecy, but having hailed the reader multiple times before this passage, Walter’s statement about secrecy automatically inserts the reader into Walter’s intimate circle. By addressing his reader and conflating his experiences with the reader’s experiences, he opens up possible worlds of shared desires.

Conclusions

Losing one’s self in a story – being transported so completely into the storyworld – is a decadent activity, one with a seductive appeal. The actual world falls away; the fantasy of the narrative becomes a temporary reality for the reader. The narrative calls out to the reader and invites the reader deeper inside. It is little wonder that moralists have warned about the dangers of reading for centuries; books offer escapes to the reader, ways out of the tedium of daily life. When a narrative hails the reader as “you” and/or “the reader(s),” the connection between the actual reader and the storyworld has the potential to deepen further and to link the storyworld to the reader’s actual world. Warhol hints at the variety of possible narrative worlds that can be spawned by an engaging narrator: “The task of the engaging narrator [...] is to evoke sympathy and identification from an actual reader who is unknown to the author and therefore infinitely variable and unpredictable” (*Gendered* 32). A possible effect of engaging narrative interventions is cross-world

identification. Engaging narrators attempt to align the actual reader and the “you” or “reader” addressed in the storyworld; if the alignment is successful and the reader does take up a position close to that of the textual “you,” then cross-world identification between the actual world and the storyworld becomes possible. While Stewart sees this alignment as forced upon the readers (hence his use of terms like “conscription” to describe these narrative interventions), for some readers this alignment may have been a welcomed intervention. Readers of illicit narratives have signaled their openness to the illicit content by the simple act of picking up the text. While gothic and sensation fiction was readily available via periodicals and booksellers, even if it was not considered appropriate reading material, erotica certainly was not; these books were expensive and often only available via subscription through private printing presses. Even scholarly works containing discussions of sex like Burton’s *Arabian Nights* were costly privately printed affairs. Reading can change the reader, even when the text does not hail the reader specifically. Reading, like all other acts of communication, can shift the way the reader sees their actual world, even when the text is not about the actual world. But that connection between the reader and the narrative becomes personal – intimate, even – via narrative interventions. A secret is shared between the text and the reader, and the border between the reader’s world and the narrative’s world becomes harder to define.

In her exploration of narrative interventions, Warhol examines the lofty goals of realist novels like Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. She argues that the narrative interventions work to reinforce the abolitionist message of the novel and to spur the actual reader to take abolitionist action in the actual world. The causes championed by the illicit narratives discussed in this chapter are no less lofty than those in Stowe’s novel – but they are perhaps ones with less moral high ground at the times of their publications. *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, *Venus in India*, *A Marriage Below Zero*, “Terminal Essay,” and *My Secret Life* all tackle issues about sex and gender – specifically issues regarding deviant sex and non-normative gender representations. Same-sex relationships and/or

sexual activities are explicitly discussed in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, *A Marriage Below Zero*, “Terminal Essay,” and *My Secret Life*. Non-normative gender representations appear in all of these narratives: effeminate men and/or lustful, sexually adventurous women abound, and their actions are rarely, if at all, condemned. These narratives at once safely ensconce these deviances in storyworlds while allowing willing readers the ability to imagine – or enact – those deviances in the actual world. Each narrative in hailing the reader attempts to align the reader with the values presented – either explicitly or implicitly – in the text. While readers can resist the alignment, the narratives suggest that the values of its possible worlds are not actually deviant and have real-world applications.

Reading is, at its heart, a voyeuristic activity. The reader peeps in on the storyworld, watching the actions unfold before their eyes but remaining separated from the action. While the primary definition of “voyeurism” focuses on sexual pleasure, the secondary meaning of the term focuses on the pleasures – sexual or otherwise – of watching others. More so than other intervention forms discussed in this dissertation, narrative interventions queer the deontic and axiological differences between possible and actual worlds by involving and recruiting the reader as a voyeur of illicit storyworld events. Prefaces and footnotes frequently operate within an epistemic system, denoting what is known/believed, what is unknown/doubted, what is knowable. As seen in the previous two chapters, these paratextual intervention attempt to create possible worlds of certainty and authority as a means of aligning the reader with the storyworld and of queering the boundaries between possible worlds and actual worlds. Narrative interventions, on the other hand, work within deontic and axiological systems to create possible worlds regarding morality. Via these interventions, the narrative assures the reader that the allegedly deviant values presented are at a minimum plausible and realistic (as in *A Marriage Below Zero*’s representation of a same-sex couple) and at a maximum values to be mimicked and enacted (as in *Venus in India*’s representation of heterosexual sex acts).

Deontic systems (that which is “permitted, prohibited, and obligatory” [Ryan, “Possible Worlds” par. 9]) in illicit narratives are frequently systems set in opposition to the deontic systems of the actual world. Homosexuality (as seen in *the Sins of the Cities of the Plain* and *A Marriage Below Zero*), pre- and extra-marital affairs (*Venus in India*), gender representations outside the boundaries of contemporary British gendered values (“Terminal Essay”), and a brutally honest account of one’s own sexual activities (*My Secret Life*): all of these actions and themes open new possible deontic worlds to the reader. In opening new deontic possibilities, the narratives also open new axiological (that which is “good, bad, indifferent” [Ryan, “Possible Worlds, par. 9]) possibilities. The evils of “sodomites” proclaimed in the contemporary actual world of the nineteenth-century reader are replaced by sexual encounters – and even long-standing, healthy romantic relationships – between men as presented in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*. While *A Marriage Below Zero* does not explicitly advocate for the normalcy of same-sex love, Arthur is portrayed as a sympathetic character, one who, like Elsie, deserves the reader’s pity and understanding but not their scorn. *Venus in India* repeatedly overthrows the notion that those who act on their passions outside of marriage will be outcasts – instead of fearing heterosexual activities, the narrative proclaims that such activities can be enjoyed so long as the participants are cautious in choosing their partners. “Terminal Essay” provides a wider historical and cultural lens and insists that the foreign acts presented in the narrative are more common than critics would like to believe. *My Secret Life* in revealing – and sanctioning – Walter’s various sexual appetites draws explicit links between Walter’s appetites and those of the reader; Walter is certain he is not the only person who feels and acts the way he does, and he appeals to the reader to see how common such feelings and actions are.

By “watching” the actions of the narratives and by being “called out” for such watching by the author or narrator, the reader becomes a participant of sorts in the storyworld. The voyeur has been spied by at least one of the inhabitants of the storyworld. By engaging with the reader via

narrative interventions, the author or narrator calls explicit attention to the reader – the Peeping Tom has been outed but also encouraged to stay and watch. The reader becomes a confidante or even an accomplice, sharing the illicit secrets of the storyworld and being directly encouraged by the author or narrator to apply the lessons of the storyworld to the actual world. The lessons to be learned and applied vary across the narratives discussed in this chapter: *The Sins of the Cities of the Plains* works to normalize same-sex relationships, *Venus in India* argues for the existence of women's libidos and for the need for birth control, *A Marriage Below Zero* discusses the problems of the marriage market as well as the existence of same-sex relationships, "Terminal Essay" presents a historical view of sexuality, and *My Secret Life* notes that the narrator's aberrant desires are actually relatively common desires. In hailing the reader and attempting to align the reader with the values presented in the storyworlds, the narrative interventions deconstruct the boundary between the possible and the actual. The reader is not allowed to hide in the shadows outside of the narrative. Instead, the reader is rhetorically inscribed as a witness to the events and encouraged to enact the storyworld values in the actual world.

Narrative interventions in both licit and illicit narratives are paratextual interventions; they are thresholds between the storyworld and the actual world. The reader is invited to cross the threshold in both directions – to enter into the narrative and explore its possible worlds and to exit the narrative carrying lessons and ideas engendered by those possible worlds. As Janice Carlisle notes in *The Sense of an Audience: Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot at Mid-Century*, nineteenth-century authors were aware of that threshold and of the connection to the reader via the narrative: "The Victorian novelist desired a more modest consummation of the marriage between the artist and his public [...]. The reading of a novel would be an 'ennobling interchange of action' that would elicit the best qualities of both the reader and the narrative persona of the novelist" (11). Carlisle's metaphors of "consummation" and "marriage" reinforce the intimate nature of reading, especially in

illicit narratives often read in secret and hidden from public view. She argues that while some authors, Henry James specifically, “might speak of the ‘dead wall’ between life and the ‘house of fiction,’” other writers “strove to bring their readers into that house without causing them to lose sight of the ‘spreading field, the human scene’ beyond it. For the novelist at mid-century [indeed, for novelists of the entire nineteenth century], narrative forms were, at least potentially, ‘hinged doors opening straight upon life’” (Carlisle 11). Carlisle argues that, starting in the 1860s, novels began to be separated into two categories: high literature and entertainment for the masses. And with this split came the anxieties about direct address to the reader; the charming intimacies of “dear reader” from mid-century realist novelist morphed into hackneyed attempts to claim the reader’s attention, according to contemporary critics. Like prefaces and footnotes, narrative interventions were seen by critics and writers alike as at once unavoidable in a narrative and detrimental to it. While they have a lower degree of paratextuality than prefaces and footnotes, narrative interventions operate in ways similar to prefaces and footnotes in illicit texts to create possible worlds and to foster cross-world identifications.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Prefaces, footnotes, and narrative interventions have frequently been seen by critics, scholars, readers, and authors as waste products, signs of bad writing or dreary didacticism, and bloated appendages. In writing about narrative interventions, Robyn Warhol locates the critical disgust with them in the “traditional preference among critics of fiction for ‘showing’ over ‘telling’” (*Gendered* xiv). Her statement on narrative interventions can also be applied to other paratextual forms like prefaces and footnotes – direct address, prefatory materials, and notes all tell the reader, rather than show the reader, how to interact with the narrative; all three attempt to wrest control over the narrative from the reader and return control to the author and/or narrator. These forms when used in illicit narratives become all the more interesting in their attempts to influence the reader’s connection of the storyworld to their actual worlds. Paratexts – both those defined by Gérard Genette and with the new inclusion of narrative interventions as a paratextual form based on the argument presented in the previous chapter – are part of the storyworld, and as such they are ripe fields for understanding meaning making in narratives.

This final chapter pulls together the threads of paratexts and the queering of possible worlds with an analysis of a single illicit text: H. Rider Haggard’s *She: A History of Adventure*. This narrative utilizes all three of the paratexts addressed in this dissertation. Rather than examining the queering effects of these forms in isolation, these forms will be studied here for the ways in which they interplay. In *She*, women – and specifically Queen Ayesha, She-who-must-be-obeyed – are constructed as dangerous and mysterious figures who harness their sexual desirability for nefarious purposes. *She* presents a homosocial storyworld of male comradery centered on the containment of and fantasies about women’s power and sexuality. Ayesha is alluring and dangerous, like an Eve – or perhaps a Lilith – set free from the constraints of the Garden of Eden; so threatening is this woman

to the rest of the world that the story can only end with her destruction. The storyworld focuses on containment of this woman and her associated dangers, but the paratextual interventions into the storyworld frequently disrupt those attempts at control and containment.

Paratexts in *She: A History of Adventure*

Haggard's *She* opens with a fictive actorial preface. It is not Haggard's voice that the reader encounters in the preface. Instead it is the unnamed Editor, the man to whom Horace Holly entrusts the account of his adventures in Africa with Ayesha. This section is labeled as "Introduction," but at the close of the introduction, the Editor also calls it "this slight preface" (Haggard 39). The Editor is a fictional character, but his title and position in the narrative make him a liminal character: he is neither fully inside nor outside of the narrative. Much like an actual editor, he is a collector and reviser but not a creator; however, unlike the typically invisible hand of an editor, this Editor repeatedly inserts himself into the preface and later into the narrative via footnotes. He claims to "have made up [his] mind to refrain from comments" (Haggard 38-39), but he also "cannot resist calling the attention of the reader" to various elements of the narrative he wants to highlight (Haggard 39). The Editor's preface appears in the novel's original serial format, further blurring the distinction between the storyworld and the actual world given the narrative's serialization in *The Graphic*. *The Graphic*, which ran from 1869 until 1932, published both fiction and nonfiction pieces, and illustrations accompanied both genres. Originally envisioned as a rival to the *Illustrated London News*, although more expensive than the five-pence *Illustrated London News* by a penny, *The Graphic* became a highly successful periodical among middle class readers (Bills). As with other nineteenth-century periodicals, it can be difficult in *The Graphic* to tell the difference between a fictional work and a news or opinion report.

The preface materials have the sound and feel of an actual account of an adventure in the wilds of the Empire. Moreover, in the preface, the Editor states that Holly's "story seems to bear the

stamp of truth upon its face” (Haggard 39). The preface itself offers another means of stamping the truth of the narrative on the face of the story. Drawing on the more common uses of authentic authorial prefaces (see Wilkie Collins’s prefaces to *The Woman in White* and *The Law and the Lady*, as discussed in chapter three), Haggard plays with notions of the fiction of the preface. Like Collins, the Editor tells the reader how to read the text. Like Collins, the Editor comments on the writing processes that lead to the publication of the story. However, whereas Collins was discussing his own real acts as author in creating fictional texts, this Editor recounts the fictional writing processes of a fictional text. The Editor also reproduces a letter from Holly, and Holly’s letter serves as an inset preface to his account of his journey. In that letter, Holly writes, “I have recently read with much interest a book of yours [the Editor’s] describing a Central African adventure. I take it that this book is partly true, and partly an effort of imagination” (Haggard 37). This reference in Holly’s preface-within-a-preface further blurs the boundary between the world of the story and the world of the reader. Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines*, published the year before *She*, seems to be the unnamed book Holly references, thereby marking the Editor as a fictionalized version of Haggard. The Editor’s unnamed book gives Holly the idea to write down his own adventures: “my adopted son, Leo Vincey and myself have recently passed through a *real* African adventure, of a nature *so much more marvelous than the one which you described*, that to tell the truth I am almost ashamed to submit it to you for fear least you should disbelieve me” (Haggard 37, my emphasis). Unlike *King Solomon’s Mines*, Holly’s narrative is, allegedly, no fiction, and in drawing a parallel between the two texts, Holly’s letter immediately queers the boundaries between the storyworld and the actual world: *King Solomon’s Mines* exists as a fictional narrative in both worlds, but the narrative Holly submits is not, his preface pointedly insists, fiction, in spite of similarities to Haggard’s novel. Holly asserts (and the Editor agrees with the assertion) that his story is so wild yet so real that readers may wrongly assume it is fiction. Holly will allow his manuscript to be published only if the Editor will “disguise our real names,

and as much concerning our identity as is consistent with the maintenance of the *bona fides* of the narrative” (Haggard 37-38, his emphasis). Names have been changed to protect the innocent, but the facts remain – and the reader, who is gendered as explicitly and exclusively male, is left “to form his own judgment on the materials before him” (Haggard 39) as something that in context of Haggard’s career both is and is not fictional.

In spite of promises by the Editor and Holly to let the narrative stand on its own merits and without comment, both intervene in the central text via notations. *She* contains an astounding number of fictive actorial footnotes. The footnotes are both competing and supplementing, and both the Editor and Holly insert notations. There are five footnotes marked as being by the Editor, and there are fourteen signed with Holly’s initials. Moreover, there is a single unsigned footnote, which given its placement and content seems to be by Holly, as well as an unsigned notation at the end of a serial installment, which is likely an authentic authorial note or an authentic allographic note.⁸⁷ With a total of twenty-one notations, *She* presents triple the number of notes of any other fictional work discussed in this project; only Gutch’s and Burton’s nonfiction works rival Haggard’s use of notations. The Editor’s footnotes dominate the first part of the narrative, and Holly’s dominate the second; see Figure 1 and Figure 2 below for the distribution of footnotes according to author in the serial and volume editions of the narrative. Across the publication methods, the Editor’s final signed footnote appears after Holly’s first five, and then after that notation in part

⁸⁷ This unsigned embedded notation reads, “NOTE. – Our illustration on page [84] will be described next week” (Haggard 103). The note is likely by Haggard or one of the editors at *The Graphic*. The illustration referenced by this note shows Holly shooting a woman dressed in white and surrounded by male “savages” holding spears. Below the picture there is a quotation from the narrative: “I drew my revolver, and fired it by a sort of instinct straight at the diabolical woman who had been caressing Mahomed” (Haggard 84). While Ayesha has yet to appear at this point in the narrative, the visual opens the possibility that the illustration represents this mysterious woman, and the notation at the end of the chapter about this illustration teases the possibility that the woman will appear in the next installment. This is also the sole notation that directly refers to the act of reading the narrative as a serial. This notation stands in contrast to the footnotes; the footnotes work to construct a sense of accuracy in the storyworld, but the end notation teases a cliffhanger for the reader. Who has Holly shot? Why has he shot her? Is that woman the fearsome Queen whose name her subjects dare not speak? Has Holly killed or wounded this woman? Only by reading the next installment will these questions be answered.

eight of the serial and in chapter sixteen of the volume, the Editor's signed notations disappear from the narrative. The stranger the narrative becomes, the more heavily annotated the text is, as if the Editor and Holly are struggling to keep control of its meaning.

Figure 1: Notation Author & Placement in She's Serial Format.

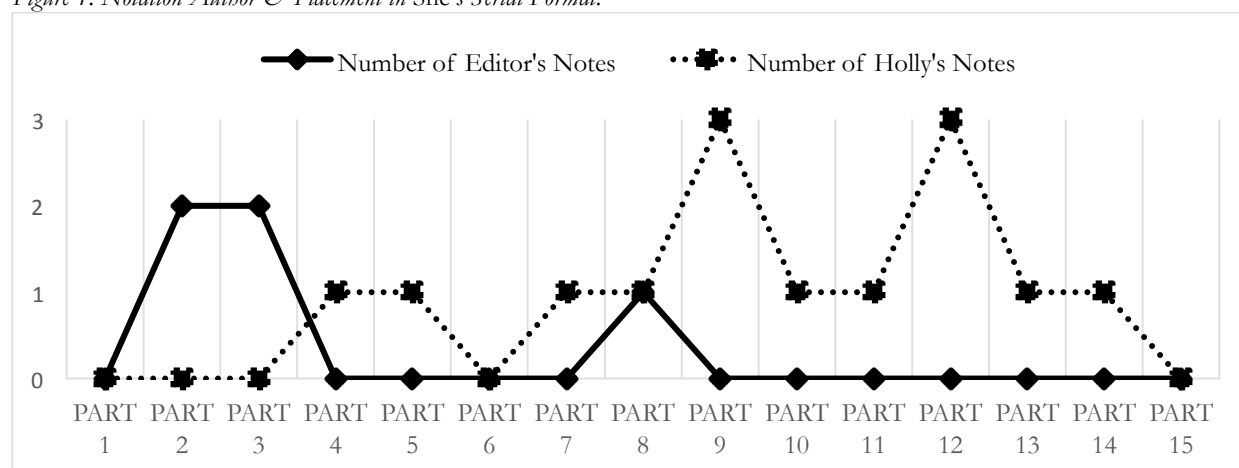
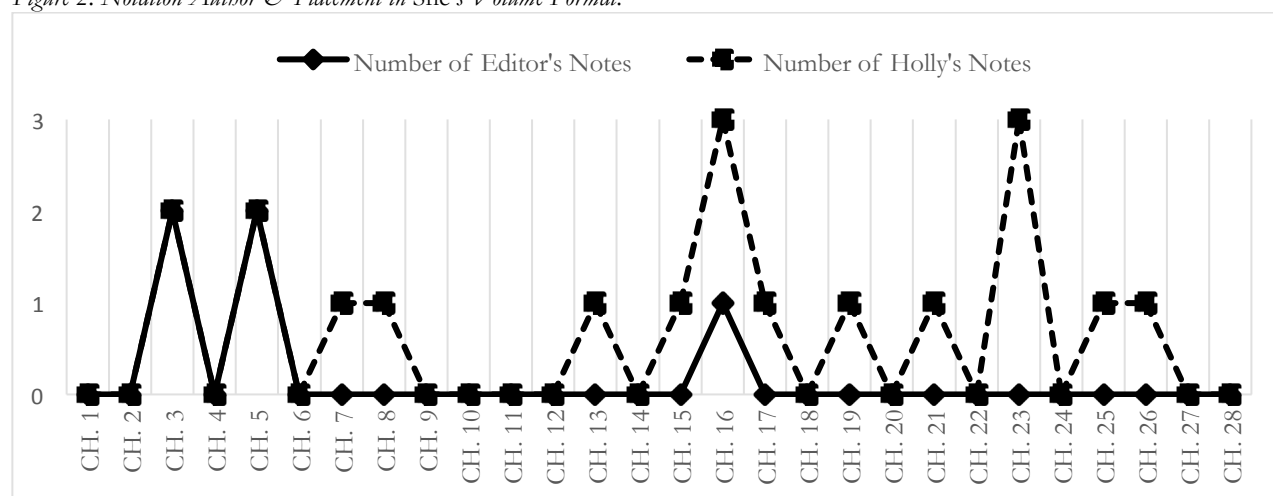


Figure 2: Notation Author & Placement in She's Volume Format.



Neither the “Introduction” nor the first chapter, both of which comprise the first serial installment of the novel, contain footnotes. The first footnote appears in chapter two, which begins

the second installment – and this note is short and direct, providing only accurate historical information on an Egyptian pharaoh: “Nectanebes or Nectanebo II. The last native Pharaoh of Egypt fled from Ochus to Ethiopia, B.C. 399 – EDITOR” (Haggard 59n). While a seemingly unimportant notation, this first footnote works to align the storyworld and the actual world; the pharaoh mentioned by Holly and the Editor is identical to the actual pharaoh who existed in the world of the reader. Coupled with the placement of the original serial in *The Graphic* and with the alignment in the introduction of the Editor with Haggard, this footnote reinforces the appearance that there is no difference between the storyworld and the actual world. As with other gothic narratives, *She* begins with the realistic and even the mundane and works further and further into the strange and seemingly impossible as the narrative progresses. This first footnote provides a rather offhanded reference to an actual historical person, but the footnote’s contents have little bearing on the story Holly tells. However, the footnote is attached to the story of Leo’s ancestry – and his ancestry is the starting point for Leo and Holly’s adventure, and this family tree ultimately links Leo to Ayesha as her reincarnated lover. Rather the footnote serves to further root Holly’s storyworld – one that becomes increasingly fantastic – in the actual world.

If the first footnote by the Editor helps to root the narrative in the actual, the final footnote of the narrative turns to the mundane. *She* closes with the re-righting of the world – a common element in gothic tales, especially gothic tales with the explained supernatural.⁸⁸ Ayesha has been destroyed, and Holly and Leo are freed from their imprisonment. In the final notation, Holly⁸⁹ comments on Leo’s hair, which due to the shock of their time with Ayesha “turned from yellow to

⁸⁸ See Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* and Ann Radcliffe’s *The Italian* for other earlier examples of the re-righting of the world in a work of the explained supernatural gothic. In *The Castle of Otranto*, the usurper is dethroned and punished, and the rightful heir regains the throne and takes an appropriate bride. In *The Italian*, the villains are killed, the innocent are freed, and the good are married.

⁸⁹ This is the only footnote that is not signed. However, given the content of the footnote, it is likely the note was written by Holly rather than the Editor, since Holly has the close, personal relationship with Leo and the Editor had only met Leo once several years before the action of the central narrative occurs.

white” (Haggard 275): “Curiously enough, Leo’s hair has lately been to some small extent regaining its colour; that is to say, it is now a yellowish grey, and I am not without hopes that it will in time come quite right” (Haggard 275n). The damage done – at least the physical mark of the damage done – by Ayesha is slowly fading, and the note implies a hopefulness that neither man will be permanently marked by their time in Africa. Much as Mina’s brand on her forehead fades after Dracula’s death and she is reintegrated into society by becoming a dutiful wife and mother, Leo’s hair – and his life – is returning to its previous state. Moreover, this notation echoes the tone of the Editor’s first note, but rather than pointing to an objective historical fact, Holly’s closing note is personal and fatherly – the sort of sentiment many parents might utter when seeing a child recovering after a terrible experience.

In *She*, the constant footnoting becomes a formal representation of the Editor’s and Holly’s insistence on making logical sense out of nonsensical events. In writing footnotes about history, plants, geography, and archaeology, both men attempt to explain away the supernatural events of the narrative, even before such events occur. In representing the storyworld as based in the actual world and in using footnotes (with their connotations of scholarship and accuracy) to further describe the storyworld, the Editor and Holly attempt to create an ontologically whole world; they attempt to make the strange events of the narrative much less strange, but at the same time they ultimately make the strange part of the reader’s actual world. In one note, Holly attempts to provide an explanation for the unnaturally long life of Ayesha as well as for her magical powers: “Ayesha was a great chemist, indeed chemistry appears to have been her only amusement and occupation. She had one of the caves fitted up as a laboratory, and although her appliances were necessarily rude, the results that she attained were, as will become clear in the course of this narrative, sufficiently surprising. – L.H.H.” (Haggard 184n). Ayesha is not just supernatural queen; she is a scientist – and while her powers are formidable and to be feared, the source of her powers may have a more

rational explanation than being magic, according to this notation. Moreover, this ancient woman is a better scientist than the British – for all their scientific and technological advances, the British have yet to discover a longevity potion as Ayesha has, and it is this gap between what British scientists have done and what Ayesha has done that makes her science seem magical. This epistemic tension in Holly’s narrative between what is scientific/possible and what is magical/impossible frequently plays out in his notations and echoes the tension between his central narrative and his explanatory notes. While much of Holly’s narrative refers to her powers as magical, her magic is contained by being recast as science in the footnotes.

While most of the notations present statements of certainty and of decidedly un-supernatural events and explanations, some of Holly’s notes undercut his authority and point to gaps in his knowledge of the storyworld. In a footnote discussing the differences in how Killikrates’s death was described by Ayesha (who killed him) and Amenartas (the mother of his child), Holly writes, “We never ascertained which was the correct version [...]” (Haggard 252n). Not only did Holly and Leo never learn the truth about Killikrates’s death, they also had, according to the same footnote, no idea how the two women transported his body to its final resting place: “Another thing that we never ascertained was *how* the two women – *She* and the Egyptian Amenartas – managed to bear the corpse of the man they both loved across the dread gulf and along the shaking spur” (Haggard 252n, his emphasis). Holly does not include these two statements of doubt in the narrative – they only appear in the footnote. But these two statements point to how little Holly and Leo learned of Ayesha’s history. Moreover, Holly cannot resist a gendered undercutting of these women’s ability to make this journey, a path Holly and Leo also traversed but with great difficulty: “What a spectacle the two distracted creatures must have presented in their grief and loveliness as they toiled along that awful place with the dead man between them! Probably however the passage was easier then” (Haggard 252n). Holly, who admits he knows little about Killikrates’s death or the journey the

women took to his resting place, freely speculates that the passage, which nearly killed him and his companions, surely must have been much easier two thousand years ago since two women (whom Holly for the moment conveniently forgets were a powerful – and even magical – queen and priestess, respectively) managed the crossing with a dead body. As an attempt to normalize Ayesha and her world, this note attempts to assert Holly's masculine control over both the narrative and his own actions: that which such manly men struggled with must have surely been too great a feat for women. But in the attempt to assert his control, Holly undermines his own authority by ignoring the powers that these two extraordinary women have in the storyworld: the men struggled because they are mere mortals whereas Ayesha is akin to a goddess.

In conflict with his many attempts at ontological certainty in the narrative and the notations, Holly has several moments of doubt, many of which are confined only to the footnotes. In addition to his admission of the incompleteness of his history of Ayesha in a note, he provides a lengthy footnote in which he makes excuses for her violent behavior:

After some months of consideration of this statement [about her being an evil woman and a murderer] I am bound to confess that I am not quite satisfied of its truth. It is perfectly true that Ayesha committed a murder, but I shrewdly suspect that were we endowed with the same absolute power, and if we had the same tremendous interest at stake, we should be very apt to do likewise under parallel circumstances. Also, it must be remembered that she looked on it as an execution for disobedience under a system which made the slightest disobedience punishable by death. Putting aside this question of the murder, her evil-doing resolves itself into the expression of views and the acknowledgement of motives which are contrary to our preaching if not to our practice. Now at first sight this might be fairly taken as proof of an evil nature, but when we come to consider the great antiquity of the individual it becomes doubtful if it was anything more than the natural cynicism which arises from age

and bitter experience, and the possession of extraordinary powers of observation. It is a well-known fact that very often, putting the period of boyhood out of the question, the older we grow the more cynical and hardened we get, indeed many of us are only saved by timely death from utter moral petrification if not moral corruption. No one will deny that a young man is on the average better than an old one, for he is without that experience of the order of things that in certain thoughtful dispositions can hardly fail to produce cynicism, and that disregard of acknowledged method and established customs which we call evil. Now the oldest man on earth was but a babe compared to Ayesha, and the wisest man upon the earth was not but one-third as wise. And the fruit of her wisdom was this, that there was but one thing worth living for, and that was Love in its highest sense, and to gain that good thing she was not prepared to stop at trifles. This is really the sum of her evil doings, and it must be remembered on the other hand that whatever may be thought of them she had some virtues developed to a degree uncommon in either sex – constancy, for instance. – L.H.H. (Haggard 221n)

Not only does he justify her murder of Killikrates as an execution (and therefore sanctioned by her position as head of state), he also questions the view of her as an evil person; because she has lived for over two thousand years, she has simply become a cynical woman in her advanced age.

Moreover, any unsavory acts she committed were in the name of or for the sake of love, and that motive excuses, in Holly's view, her actions. Holly's footnote also reinforces the stereotype of women acting rashly based on their emotions rather than carefully based on logical decisions, and he implies that his male audience will agree with his position. This notation is the only instance of philosophical musing in a notation, but in taking a philosophical turn, Holly invokes a "we" who agrees with him. The "we" might be himself and Leo, since Leo was present as Holly wrote the narrative. Holly might be appealing to the Editor as an ally via the "we." Or, as will be discussed

later in this section, since Holly has already invoked the male reader in the narrative prior to this notation, the “we” could include the male reader of the narrative. Holly’s use of the “we” as well as his use of anecdotal evidence for her behavior becomes another cross-world identification, blurring the supernatural world of the narrative with the reader’s actual world. In speaking to a “we” that extends to the reader, Holly subtly naturalizes Ayesha’s aged cynicism in the storyworld as part of the reader’s actual world; he invokes the assumption that cynicism in old age is a natural human trait that links the two worlds. This appeal to common knowledge adds to the queering of borders. According to Holly, the only reason other people have not grown as cynical (and potentially evil) as Ayesha is that other people have a shorter life span; were all of us to live to such an age as Ayesha does, the world would be populated by similarly dispositioned humans.

The Kingdom of Kôr and Ayesha are fictional creations, but the majority of the information in the footnotes is historically accurate. The fiction of the central narrative and the accuracy of references to some people, events, flora, and fauna works with the preface (as well as the publication method) to queer the boundary between the storyworld and the actual world, perhaps in troubling ways for the contemporary reader given the narrative’s emphasis on the problems associated with a female monarch who has mourned for too long over her dead husband. Moreover, as with fictional footnotes explored in chapter three of this project, the Editor’s and Holly’s footnoting can be read as an attempt at narrative control; the powerful presence of Ayesha in the narrative seems to require additional measures of male control over her story. The Editor’s words lead to Holly’s words, which in turn tell the story of Ayesha. At various points in the narrative as well as in his footnotes, Holly attempts to find non-supernatural explanations for her powers and long life. Much of the narrative centers on acts of containment, specifically of the dark powers of this unnatural woman. Wrapping the narrative in a preface and using footnotes are two additional means of containment; addressing only male readers is another means of containment. Yet, as seen with other paratexts in other illicit

narratives, the containing or explanatory nature of the annotations in *She* frequently deconstruct themselves.

Neither the Editor nor Holly can resist intervening in the narrative – as soon as both men pick up their pens, they begin steering the narrative via paratextual interventions. The Editor in his introduction provides the first of many narrative interventions. He claims that the introduction “is all [he has] to say” and claims that “of the history itself the reader must judge” (Haggard 38). However, the introduction is not all that the Editor has to say about the narrative – he appends a postscript to the introduction and inserts several notations into Holly’s writing. In claiming that the narrative is a “history,” the Editor employs a term that in the nineteenth century had connotations of fact and fiction. While by the end of the century, the term was more frequently used to describe factual accounts, it still carried the older sense of a history as “a narration of incidents, esp. (in later use) professedly true ones; a narrative; a story” (“history, n.”). The Editor implores the male reader to judge the narrative as it has been presented because he himself is unable to accurately judge the merits of the story. In the postscript, the Editor again intervenes to note that he “cannot resist calling the attention of the reader” to his own problems with the character of Leo. Leo as described by the Editor in the introduction as a beautiful but largely silent (and perhaps slightly dim) young man, and the Editor cannot believe that such a young man would have so enraptured Ayesha.⁹⁰ However, having inserted his own doubts – both about the truthfulness of the narrative and about Leo being so sought by Ayesha – the Editor again appeals to “the reader to form his own judgement on the materials before him” (Haggard 39). In implying his own critical judgment, the Editor again undermines Holly’s authority as narrator.

⁹⁰ Is the Editor jealous of or threatened by Leo’s beauty? In his introduction, the Editor pays particular attention to Leo’s and Holly’s appearance in the opening paragraphs. Leo is described as a “Greek god” and “the handsomest man in the University” (Haggard 35). Holly, on the other hand, is “as ugly as his companion [Leo] was handsome” and looks like a “gorilla” (Haggard 35; 36). The Editor also states in his postscript that he thinks Holly, in spite of his ugliness, would have been a better match for Ayesha given his keen intellect. It is notable that Leo, the pretty boy, is not allowed to narrate – only intellectuals like the Editor and Holly can have narrative control.

Holly concludes the narrative with a similar invocation that the male reader decide the merits of the story for himself. But unlike the Editor, who remains unsure about whether Holly's story is to be believed, Holly is certain about the truth of his story. He also acknowledges the strangeness of his narrative. While he hopes the reader will understand and trust his account, Holly knows that his story must defy belief: "Is Leo really a reincarnation of the ancient Killikrates of whom the writer speaks? Or was Ayesha deceived by some extraordinary resemblance? The reader must form his own opinion on this as on many other matters. I have mine, which is that she made no such mistake" (Haggard 280). Experience is, for Holly at least, the only path to knowledge; the Editor may be likely to believe the narrative, as might the reader, but neither can be certain of the facts of the narrative because neither was present for the events in the storyworld. Always ontologically incomplete, the storyworld can only be conveyed through the act of narration, and there are always gaps in such narration. Holly attempts to construct himself as an authority on the story of Ayesha, but as he mentions in his own notations to the narrative, he does not have all of the information about her. Ayesha remains elusive. In the preface, the Editor calls into question the plausibility of Holly's narration and judgment via his postscript, subtly blurring this "history" back toward the border with fiction. But it is not just Ayesha that eludes the men of the story; women in general are represented as foreign and unknowable creatures, both alluring and dangerous. And paratexts consistently try to contain them and expose the failure of narrating men to do so. Having constructed their reader as male via gendered pronouns, both the Editor and Holly make appeals to the male reader's common knowledge of and assumptions about women. Neither the Editor nor Holly address women as readers, but Holly does make some gendered assumptions about how a woman might react to Ayesha. Holly writes in chapter twenty-one, "Of course, I am speaking of any *man*. We never had the advantage of a lady's opinion of Ayesha, but I think it quite possible that she would have regarded the Queen with dislike, would have expressed her disapproval in some more or less

pointed manner, and ultimately have got herself blasted” (Haggard 222, his emphasis). The Editor in the introduction remarks that the male reader must form his own opinion about Ayesha and her powers – that is, it is up to the male reader to decide whether he believes such a woman could exist. Denying her existence – writing the story off as a mere fiction – becomes a form of containment; this strange, dangerous, powerful, foreign queen can be dismissed as a fantasy.

However, the timing of the narrative’s publication in *The Graphic* coincided with Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee – *She* was serialized from October 1886 through January 1887, and Victoria’s Golden Jubilee, the much-anticipated celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of her accession, was celebrated in 1887. Victoria, herself a female authority figure ruling in a patriarchal society, had by the time of her Golden Jubilee been transformed into a grandmotherly sort of woman, and her two and a half decades of mourning had, at least in terms of public representation, turned her into a chaste widow. Victoria, while ostensibly the head of the Church of England, the Queen of the United Kingdom, the Empress of India, and ruler of the British Empire, was not an absolute monarch, unlike Ayesha, whose kingdom may have been smaller but whose rule was absolute. Interestingly, Victoria is also a part of the storyworld, even though she is not named. Ayesha tells Holly and Leo of her ambitions to rule an empire with Leo by her side: “And now tell me of thy country – ‘tis a great people, is it not? With an empire like that of Rome! [...] We shall cross to this England of thine, and live as it becometh us to live. [...] For thou shalt rule this England” (Haggard 231). When Leo notes that “we have got a queen already,” Ayesha responds, “It is nought, it is nought. She can be overthrown” (Haggard 231). Leo and Holly are horrified by her plans for a coup and explain the democratic core of the British Empire, and Ayesha marvels at their claim that a queen can be loved by her people. Without naming Victoria, the text sets Ayesha in opposition to her: Victoria is old, plain, not all-powerful, and beloved; Ayesha young, beautiful, all-powerful, and tyrannical. Victoria’s powers are kept in check by the male members of her

government, but Ayesha operates under no such restraints. In the storyworld, Ayesha is emblematic of how woman can be corrupted by power. Victoria in the actual world may not be the perfect monarch, but in contrast to Ayesha, Victoria is presented as the better choice.

Not the ever-young Ayesha, Victoria was not an object of desire by the late nineteenth century, and Holly's narrative consistently links sexual desire to both magic and socio-political power. In one of his final footnotes, Holly explores how the power and allure of women is constructed by men and is created by men's desires: "What a terrifying reflection it is, by the way, that nearly all our deep love for women who are not our kindred depends – at any rate, in the first instance – upon their personal appearance. If we lost them, and found them again dreadful to look on though otherwise they were the very same, should we still love them? – L.H.H." (Haggard 267n). Men love women for their appearances, and women's power is rooted, according to Holly, in their physical desirability. Women who lose their beauty lose their power. Moreover, any power these women might have had, according to Holly, was not of their own creation but only due to the fact that men found them attractive. Yet Holly's statement stands in direct contrast to the actual powers of Ayesha – she is beautiful, but her authority comes from her magic and from her ability to rule over (or subjugate) others, and Holly's footnotes ironically foreground her as a superior scientist and a cynical old woman. So terrifying is her control that her name is not to be spoken by her subjects. Moreover, Ayesha may not have been defeated; her death may not be the end of the story.⁹¹ And Holly and Leo so fear her power over them that they eventually abandon England for safety in a remote region southeastern Asia. All of Holly's attempts to control the narrative do not make him feel secure, and he seems to realize by the end of his story that he cannot control Ayesha or even his

⁹¹ This uncertainty about the antagonist's death is a common feature of gothic novels in the late nineteenth century. Dracula's death does not happen in the same manner as those of other vampires in the novel, leaving open the possibility that he survived. The Beetle might have survived the train crash. The conclusion to *Strange Case of Jekyll and Hyde* hints that both men will soon die, but their deaths are not part of the narrative. Haggard uses these doubts about Ayesha's death in *She* as the starting point for three sequels to the novel, the first of which, *Ayesha: The Return of She*, was published in 1905.

own life. His pushes for narrative certainty via paratextual interventions slowly unravel as his fear of Ayesha returning from the grave grows. His narrative certainties – about her life and her death – are ultimately hollow. Holly's narrative closes with the fear that Ayesha has not died but will return to torment him and his adopted son and possibly overthrow the British monarchy. Holly is so fearful of her return that he and Leo flee England for the remote mountains of Tibet.⁹² Even though Ayesha has been contained or neutralized by her death, her power and control extend beyond her life.

These three paratextual forms – preface, notations, narrative interventions – in *She* are threaded together, and they form an alternate reading of the central narrative. The central narrative constructs a dangerous world of female rule over men and of nations allegedly under colonial control freeing themselves from imperial rule, but the prefatory materials, the notations, and the direct address of the reader attempt to reassert masculine control. Ayesha must be contained – and part of her containment is via intervention forms. She becomes bound by male authorship and readership, and her powers are explained away in notations, and her authority is diminished by being linked only to her beauty. And yet she continually disrupts the narrative and explodes out of containment – not only in the narrative itself via her supernatural and regal powers but also in the paratexts, especially the annotations. Her knowledge and powers – her very existence – defuse the attempts to explain her away. Many of the paratexts in the narrative serve to undermine masculine control of the narrative and to blur the distinction between the colonizers and the colonized. Ayesha, described as a white woman of ancient Greek origin, rules the Amahaggers, described as the native Africans – her colonial rule over these people predates the existence of England. Moreover,

⁹² Their choice of Tibet is an interesting one. Tibet was not a part of the British Empire in the nineteenth century; it was under Chinese control. In escaping to Tibet, Holly and Leo appear to be escaping from the British Empire and its colonial reach. However, Britain was deeply interested in controlling Tibet and would eventually invade the nation shortly after the turn of the twentieth century.

British colonial control required a massive amount of regulation and enforcement by various governmental and military entities, whereas Ayesha is powerful enough to rule singlehandedly. The power she wields – over life and death, over her subjugated people, over scientific and magical forces, over men – terrifies and fascinates Holly and Leo. Ayesha and her kingdom are queered analogs to Queen Victoria and her empire, and Ayesha’s powers attract and repulse her English visitors/captives. More so than the central narrative, the paratexts undercut Holly’s and the Editor’s narrative control and showcase Ayesha’s full feminine and colonizing powers. The paratexts create a possible world of non-European and non-masculine power and control and draw on the contemporary anxieties about female rulers and imperial boundaries.

“Why go grubbing in muck-heaps?”⁹³

The Victorians, all too often misconstrued as a society of Mrs. Grundys, were deeply interested in taboo topics, and this interest is reflected in the literature of the century – in the aboveboard, in the sub rosa, and at all points between those poles. Illicit literatures offer another avenue of exploring taboo issues of gender, sex, and sexuality. While the category of the illicit is, as seen throughout this project, wide-ranging and diverse, these texts share common themes and structures and work to foster cross-world identifications, allowing the reader to create possible worlds of queered gender and sexuality norms. The women and men contained in these narratives – written by men, actual or fictional – frequently breach the borders of their prescribed roles. The narratives offer attempts at containment via prefaces, notations, and narrative interventions, but in most cases studied here, these attempts at paratextual containment of illicit material inevitably deconstruct themselves, mainly by at once insisting on and queering the nexus between faith in

⁹³ Isobel Murray opens her introduction to Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with this quotation from a review of the novel (vii). Wilde’s preface to the novel is yet another fascinating example of paratextual interventions in an illicit novel. Unfortunately, since the narrative does not have footnotes or narrative interventions, it did not meet my selection criteria (as outlined in the first chapter). However, I could not resist including something about his work somewhere in this project.

Victorian Britain as the actual world and suspicion that other worlds – whether colonial or underworld – are not only possible but actual worlds.

These interventions are, perhaps, a form of shibboleth – a formalized passcode marking a text as a certain kind of writing. While certainly not universal elements of narratives, prefaces, notations, and narrative interventions are common in nineteenth-century narratives. Each of these elements is a boundary crossing from the storyworld into the actual world. The author may reach out from the narrative to tell the reader something important about the creation of the text in a preface. A character might use an introduction to provide background information on the story and the other characters. Still another character might take advantage of a footnote to critique another character's actions or to appeal to the reader. The translator might insert notations on the similarities or differences between the culture that produced the original text and the culture consuming the translation. A writer might appeal directly to the reader via addresses of "you" in order to align the reader with the values presented in the narrative. The narrator might implore "you" to be critical of a character's actions. In each case, a core function of the paratext is to move between the world of the narrative and the world of the reader – sometimes they blur the distinction between the two worlds, and sometimes they set the two worlds in sharp contrast to each other. Given the ubiquity of these three elements in aboveboard nineteenth-century narratives, it is not surprising to see them used in sub rosa narratives, which by their nature need to contain and/or justify their illicit content. Illicit narratives frequently operate from a basis of parody or mimicry of aboveboard texts, but as I have argued, in doing so they queer the borders between the actual and the narrated, between the domestic and the colonial, between male and female, and the normative and the non-normative. In short, the ubiquity of paratexts in illicit narratives at once functions to cloak the texts in familiarity even as they present the unfamiliar and even the taboo to their readers.

In the works examined in this dissertation, paratexts offer alternative readings of the central narratives, especially in regards to gender, sexuality, control, and power. The majority of these narratives – *The Woman in White*, *The Law and the Lady*, *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, *My Secret Life*, *A Marriage Below Zero*, and *Venus in India* – examine these issues within the boundaries of the British homeland, but some – *Caraboo*, *Kama Sutra*, “Terminal Essay,” *She*, and *Dracula* – examine these issues via the intersection between the colonizer and the colonized. In each of the narratives discussed here, the paratexts create possible worlds that queer the central narrative. The paratexts become an alternative means of storyworld creation, and they also explicitly point to the distance or closeness between the storyworld and the reader’s actual world. Attempts to contain illicit expressions of gender and/or sexuality in texts such as *Caraboo*, *The Woman in White*, *The Law and the Lady*, *A Marriage Below Zero*, *She*, and *Dracula* are frequently negated by paratextual forms, and in narratives that attempt to remove the taboo nature of their illicit topics – *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, *My Secret Life*, *Venus in India*, *Kama Sutra*, and “Terminal Essay” – the paratexts draw a straight line from the values of the storyworld to the reader’s actual world. Interesting, the narratives labeled as pornographic during the nineteenth century (and even to this day) explicitly use paratexts to connect the reader to the storyworld by creating possible narrative worlds in which gendered and sexual deviances are normalized: same-sex desire in *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain* and “Terminal Essay”; premarital heterosexual sex, heterosexual sex for pleasure rather than procreation, multiple sex partners, and many others in *My Secret Life*, *Venus in India*, and *Kama Sutra*. By creating alternative readings of gender and sexuality norms, these narratives offer new possibilities for the readers in the actual world. Inherently queer forms, paratexts, especially in illicit narratives, offer subversive readings of what deviance means and whether such deviances can or should be controlled. While these paratexts do not queer the central narratives in the same ways across these selected texts, in

each illicit narrative the paratexts serve to undercut assumptions and norms about gender and sexuality – even when the central narrative attempts to reinforce such ideologies.

Prefaces abound in illicit fiction and nonfiction in the nineteenth century. At once a necessity for a published work and an object of scorn – or even shame – in aboveboard fiction, a preface was frequently a standard textual appendage, one often containing an apology for its very existence. Many nonfiction illicit narratives had prefaces which warned – or tantalized – the readers about the taboo contents of the text. Gothic and sensation narratives seem to have favored fictive actorial prefaces written by characters attesting to the truth of the strange narrative, and fictive actorial prefaces can also be found in erotica and usually present the same claims about the factual nature of the subsequent sexcapades. The contents of the illicit narratives, regardless of genre, may defy belief, but the prefaces frequently work to construct the narrative, regardless of its actual basis in truth, as real and possible.

Gothic narratives, with the exception of Haggard's *She*, are less likely than other forms of illicit fiction to use footnotes, perhaps because footnotes might break the tension and suspense of the narrative by drawing the reader's attention to the bottom of the page. Gothic literature is, however, highly likely to use prefaces as a form of world building, and these prefaces frequently address the reader, appealing to the reader to believe the impossible things presented in the text. Pornographic novels, like gothic novels, frequently do not employ footnotes, perhaps for the same reason as gothic novels; a footnote might break the tension of an erotic scene by turning the reader to the bottom of the page. Sensation novels use footnotes at a higher rate than gothic or erotic narratives; the connotations of legalistic writing associated with notations might make the form appealing to writers of sensation fiction, given the focus in these novels on legal systems (albeit, typically broken legal systems). Illicit nonfiction narratives also frequently use footnotes, and the footnotes are generally used to verify information presented in the narrative or to tease out points

implied in the central narrative. Moreover, because these are nonfiction narratives, the footnotes, with their associations of scholarly or legal writings, contribute to the air of factuality presented by the writers.

Narrative interventions, which can be found inside other paratextual elements as well as inside the central narrative, are the most direct and obvious forms of boundary crossing: the engagement of the “reader” and especially of “you” becomes a direct connection between the world of the narrative and the world of the reader. The reading-you might deny such a connection by refusing the ways in which the narrative constructs the “reader” and “you.” Such a disconnect is always possible given the static nature of the written word and the variable nature of the specific reader (as well as the reader’s cultural contexts). But the reading-you can also connect to the constructed “reader” and “you” – either because the reading-you is actually similar to the text’s construction or because the reading-you chooses to play along with the text’s construction and to adopt the stances offered by the narrative.

These paratexts offer another avenue of interpretation, of exploring possible worlds in narratives. Plot, action, and character have been dominant modes of interpretation and are the foundations of narratives and of storyworld creation. However, prefaces, notations, and direct address of readers are also key components of narrative structure and of world building – yet these small moments in the narrative are all too frequently overlooked. When a critical eye does fall on one of the elements, it is often to mock or denigrate the form: prefaces are unnecessary and can ruin a reader’s enjoyment of the narrative, footnotes are unwelcomed (and even trivial or unimportant) interruptions to the narrative flow, and narrative interventions are signs of bad and/or lazy writing and are hack attempts at forcing a reader to experience the narrative in a specific way.

Interpretations of narratives through a paratextual lens can provide another view of the storyworld – a view that can queer the central narrative. To view a narrative without engaging with these elements

is to view the narrative “through a glass darkly,” to only see part of the construction of possible worlds. To ignore these boundary crossings between the textual and the actual is to deny one of the core functions of reading: to learn, to experience, and to feel via the written word. The world is a strange and wonderful and confusing place, and the ways in which these illicit narrative use paratexts can signal just how queer life – whether in storyworlds or in actual worlds – can be.

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