

**Obscenity and the Publication of
Sexual Science
in Britain, 1810-1914**

by

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the fringe publication of medical and scientific works about sex in the long nineteenth century. It argues that these works fell into a moral, legal, and commercial 'grey zone' in this period between the categories of the legitimate and the obscene, and that battles over these works' publication fostered a concomitant development of sexual science and pornography. Medical and scientific publishing were unruly fields in nineteenth-century Britain, open to many different players, including fringe publishers interested in exploiting medical and scientific eroticism. This dissertation establishes for the first time how the obscenity trade, a precursor to the modern pornography industry, comprised an important route of sexual-scientific dissemination in the period. Nineteenth-century publishers of obscenity exploited the 'grey zone' into which medical and scientific works about sex fell to market them as erotica, bringing them into circulation alongside explicit fiction in both the popular and elite literary spheres. Such fringe publishing activity motivated rising cultural movements to situate the legitimacy of explicit representations in relation to their contexts of publication and circulation, a paradigm that this dissertation argues had a far greater impact on both literary and scientific production than previously recognized. Examining a range of social-scientific studies, translations of Eastern works, and anonymous obscene literature, it shows how new discourses and reading practices, evolving around culturally imagined links between publication context and obscenity, encouraged cross influences between emerging social-scientific disciplines and the developing genre of pornography. The first sustained study of overlaps between scientific and obscene print cultures, this thesis provides a compelling new material and discursive history which contextualizes surprising historical intersections of science and pornography that challenge current understandings of the culture of scientific knowledge during a period associated with the medicalization of sex, and makes the case for bringing publishing history and historical methods of interpretation to bear on the historiography of nineteenth-century sexual culture.

Keywords: print culture; nineteenth-century; sexuality; publishers; medical; pornography

For Ralph

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Introduction

The Publication of Sexual Science in Britain, 1810-1914

Although it was first published in 1684, *Aristotle's Masterpiece* remained one of the most widely read popular works on reproductive health in nineteenth-century Britain. Versions of the anonymously compiled manual—still carrying its spurious attribution to Aristotle—provided Victorian readers with a crash course in reproductive anatomy and the progress of pregnancy, educated them in methods for preventing conception, and even disseminated advice about how to maximize sexual pleasure. But while *Aristotle* was published, advertised and sold openly to millions of people, it was also widely viewed as a dangerous book to read, to own, and to sell. Countless readers consumed the work in private, and concealed it under mattresses, in bedroom cupboards, or behind chamber pots when it was not in use (Rose 207). The editors of many of the manual's nineteenth-century editions censored its bawdy references and frank discussions of the physical aspects of sexual activity, replacing them with new passages that emphasised the personal and political import of sexual restraint and marital fidelity (Porter & Hall 128). At the same time, fringe publisher-booksellers sold uncensored versions of the work alongside what we would now call pornography, explicit works that were often themselves replete with references to the manual's open secrets. Moralists frequently cited the work as evidence against such dealers in obscenity trials, and judges and magistrates sometimes ordered it to be destroyed as obscene material. *Aristotle* thus fell between boundaries in Victorian culture. Acting simultaneously as a vehicle for disseminating official views of sexuality's proper application and as a key to sexual discovery and pleasure, the work continuously vacillated between the categories of science and entertainment, the instructive and the erotic, the licit and the illicit.

Aristotle's liminal position within the Victorian cultural field was typical of medical and scientific works that addressed sexual topics in the long nineteenth century.

Whether they were out-dated sex-education manuals or new, pioneering studies of sexual desire, theoretical works on natural selection or handbooks on reproductive anatomy, moralists and legislators conceived such works as both a social necessity and a social danger. The potential eroticism of medical and scientific books and images had certainly provoked anxiety in earlier periods.¹ It was only in the nineteenth century, however, that medical and scientific works about sex became strongly associated with obscenity within the British national imagination and the commercial sphere. How such works should be produced and who should read them thus formed a topic of ongoing debate. This dissertation investigates the publication of sexual science in a time of tremendous social, technological, and legal transformation, between 1810 and 1914, and focuses on the role that fringe publishers played in bringing such works into print and disseminating them to British readers. By examining these little-studied publishers' businesses and the debates about obscenity, radicalism, and medical and scientific professionalism that emerged around them, I show how and why this diverse body of work occupied an indeterminate "grey zone" between the legitimate and the obscene in the long nineteenth century, a zone that often encompassed, and sometimes stood in for, a number of equally fuzzy social, political, and economic borderlines. By tracing how these works' fringe publication fostered a concomitant development of sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment amid the emergence of new audiences, discourses, and associative reading methods around that "grey zone," this dissertation reveals the fundamental incoherence of distinctions between discourses of sexual knowledge and discourses of sexual pleasure in this period, an incoherence that was forced by changing ideas about the relation between text and reader. I argue that this incoherence necessitates a historical understanding of sexual discourse which recognizes that the problematics of reading and interpretation underwrote how sexual science functioned in the long nineteenth century.

The obscenity trade's traffic in medical and scientific works illustrates the liminal boundary between sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment in the long nineteenth century. Emerging out of the radical publishing culture of the early nineteenth century, this precursor to the modern pornography industry is best known for its dissemination of graphically sexual novels, poems, short stories and images—consumer products that had previously been a rarity in Britain. Early obscenity dealers such as John Joseph Stockdale (c. 1776-1847) and William Dugdale (1800-1868) largely abandoned their

political publishing efforts in the 1820s and 1830s to capitalize on a growing market for sexual entertainment, expanding their production of explicit works far beyond critical satires of the nation's elite (McCalman 205). As they made a niche for themselves in the business of sexual entertainment, these publishers traded in a surprisingly wide range of works: as well as publishing obscene fiction, they repackaged a variety of other print materials that also contained sexual representations, including accessible medical works like *Aristotle's Masterpiece*. Trading in sexually explicit works, medical and otherwise, these publishers risked falling afoul of laws against the publication of obscene libels, and were frequently targeted in crackdowns headed by the police, the government, and anti-vice societies. They made extensive use of aliases in their business dealings, attached false imprints, publication dates, and places of publication to the works that they produced, and sold many of their wares through word of mouth, behind the counters of their bookshops, or through the post to evade the authorities—all factors that make tracing their activities challenging.² However, obscenity's illegality did not mean that these publishers operated exclusively in the shadows. Without any official affiliation to medicine, science, or the academy, they instrumentalized the expanding periodical press to sell medical works on sexual topics alongside other explicit materials to middle-class audiences.

In the early and mid-nineteenth century, a great deal of this publishing activity occurred in London. Certain areas of the capital, from the general neighbourhood of Soho to specific thoroughfares such as Holywell and Wynch Streets, were well known as centres of the obscenity trade's operations (Nead, *Victorian Babylon* 164). As moralist watchdogs noted, however, London obscenity dealers' wares did not remain in the city, but spread through the nation and overseas through the action of publisher's agents, the post, and piracy (Dennis 143; Heath 54). By the late nineteenth century, these dealers' trade in medical and scientific eroticism changed as their publishing activities became more internationalized. Publisher-booksellers such as Harry Sidney Nichols (d. 1939), Leonard Smithers (1861-1907) and Charles Carrington (1867-1921) increasingly moved the production of English-language obscenity to continental cities such as Paris, Brussels, and Amsterdam, where obscenity laws were not as stringent (Mendes 16-20). Some of these dealers even based themselves in foreign cities, using hired agents, the postal service, and periodical advertisements to serve British readers from afar. This rising internationalization marked the emergence of new publishing and marketing

strategies that expanded the kinds of medical and scientific works that reached British readers. While publishers like Dugdale had juggled different classes of readers in the early and mid-Victorian period, publicly advertising cheaper works to middle-class readers even as they maintained a clandestine trade in more expensive, and often more explicit, volumes for richer consumers, businessmen such as Smithers and Carrington sought to primarily cater to well-heeled clients, styling themselves “gentleman publishers.” Although they continued to publish a wide range of works to serve these clients, the sexual-scientific works they dealt in were more expensive and sophisticated than those publishers like Dugdale had sold. Smithers, well known today for his publication of works by Decadent artists and writers such as Aubrey Beardsley and Oscar Wilde, also sold anthropological and sexological studies alongside rare and luxuriously produced obscenity. Carrington published and dealt in such works to an even greater extent, becoming an important figure in the translation and dissemination of Continental sexual-scientific thought into Britain (Crozier, “Havelock” 134). Meanwhile, contemporaneous obscenity dealers who catered mainly to middle and working class consumers continued to sell more accessible medical works on sexuality to British readers alongside a varied range of inexpensive and lubric reading material.

Recent studies of late-Victorian sexual culture have noted the diversity that marked the catalogues of obscenity dealers like John Camden Hotten (1832-1873), Smithers, and Carrington, with Carrington’s trade in sexual-scientific works leading scholars like Matthew Cook and Lisa Sigel to speculate on a possible “cross-fertilization” of science and pornography, in which these forms of writing about sex circulated alongside one another and developed at the edge of each ‘discipline’ amid the obscenity trade’s international expansion (Cook 93; Sigel, “Overly Affectionate” 117-118). Within the larger body of scholarship on the British obscenity trade, however, the diversity that marked these publisher’s catalogues tends to be characterized as either unique to their individual businesses—arising as a result of personal interest, economic necessity, or efforts to evade the attention of the authorities—or, alternatively, as specific to the period between 1890 and 1960, suggesting that if such a “cross-fertilization” of science and pornography did occur at all, it occurred only sporadically, and very late, in the Victorian period.³ This dissertation’s examination of surviving publications, catalogues, advertisements and government reports on the obscenity trade’s activity throughout the long nineteenth century reveals that, in fact, almost all obscenity dealers trading in the

British market dealt in a diverse body of works throughout the entire period. As this dissertation highlights, the commercial opportunities that cultural anxieties about a wide range of genres' potential eroticism opened up in the long nineteenth century made dealing in such works appealing for independent publishers specializing in sexual entertainment. Although the exact makeup of these fringe publishers' catalogues did differ, after about 1845 the works they dealt in almost always included sexual-scientific material, as they sought to capitalize on, and intensify, the potentially lucrative "grey zone" between the legitimate and the obscene into which such works subsequently fell. This dissertation thus establishes for the first time that the obscenity trade comprised an important route through which sexual-scientific works—new and old, popular and professional, domestic and foreign—were disseminated to British readers throughout the long nineteenth century.

By trading sexual-scientific works, these publishers entered into the period's competitive and unconsolidated field of medical and scientific publishing, a field that like obscenity dealers' trade in sexual-scientific materials has, until recently, received very little scholarly attention.⁴ In an era when publishing was only just transforming into a business in its own right, distinct from the activities of printing and selling books, few publishers specialized in producing medical and scientific works. Medical and scientific works on sexual topics were often put into print by large generalist publishing firms such as J.W. Parker & Son, J&A Churchill and Baillière, Tindall & Cox, who allied themselves with elite medical and scientific practitioners and organizations to establish reputations for producing high-quality publications for professionals and lay readers alike.⁵ A range of smaller generalist publishers tended to issue less elite works, such as popular health manuals written by less advantaged practitioners who sought to supplement their income, attract clients, and establish their professional reputations through authorship (Fyfe, "Conscientious" 194; White 410-413). Other prolific publishers producing sexual science in the nineteenth century worked at the fringes of the burgeoning publishing industry, without the approval of official medical and scientific bodies. "Quack" or unorthodox medical firms, such as the mid-Victorian Jordan family firm, published huge numbers of popular books and pamphlets on sexual disease and dysfunction, aiming to increase sales of dubious medicines and other "cures" through their publishing activities. Such publishers often engaged in business practices that paralleled those that many obscenity dealers adopted, using aliases and false imprints to conceal the infrastructure

of their businesses from their critics and advertising their wares extensively in popular newspapers and periodicals (Burmeister 183-187). Progressive political publishers also comprised an important route of sexual-scientific dissemination, particularly toward the end of the period. Viewing sexual knowledge as a vehicle for social change, presses like Annie Besant (1847-1933) and Charles Bradlaugh's (1833-1891) Freethought Press and Roland de Villiers' (d. 1902) University Press of Watford introduced a wide range of works on sexual topics to British readers, from popular birth control manuals to pioneering social-scientific studies, and even gave books away for free in the interest of advancing their political aims (Miller loc. 5239). Medical and scientific publishing was thus, at this nascent stage in its development, an unruly and ill-defined field open to many different players with a variety of investments in the production of sexual-scientific writing, including publishers interested in exploiting medical and scientific eroticism. The subsequently fuzzy borderline for legitimate scientific publication in this period was, importantly, one of the key economic indeterminacies that became interpolated into the "grey zone" into which sexual-scientific works fell themselves.

The fringe publishers that this dissertation examines are not usually taken seriously as major players in the development of sexual-scientific knowledge. Most are best known for their commercialization of the sexual, their unscrupulous business dealings, their clashes with authorities of many stripes, and their penchant for creatively revising their personal, business, and cultural histories when it suited them. If scholars connect their work at all to medical and social-scientific knowledge production in the long nineteenth century, they often focus on how fringe publishers' often-opportunistic business practices misrepresented sexual-scientific enquiry or compromised its already precarious reputation in the period.⁶ By closely examining these publishers' complex negotiations with the competing demands of economy, the law, the consolidating medical and scientific professions, and the public to structure new markets for their varied publications, and by resituating those activities within the larger field of overlapping Victorian discourses about obscenity and medical and scientific legitimacy, I seek neither to valorize them as subversive social and political heroes nor to condemn their opportunism. Rather, while using these publishers' activities as a lens to bring into focus the incoherencies between sexual science and sexual entertainment in the nineteenth century, I wish to demonstrate their more complicated and more interesting role as a key force in shaping how Victorians negotiated sexual discourse. Crucially,

these publishers' businesses went beyond reacting to battles over medical and scientific legitimacy, responding to new developments in sexual and obscene entertainment, and reflecting the character of developing sexual knowledge in the period. Their publishing activity also shaped these changing aspects of sexual culture in several ways, including the influential development of methods of interpretation through which Victorians variously negotiated sexual science's coordinate production of sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure.

The fringe publishers that this dissertation examines published on medicine and science at a time when these fields themselves were far from consolidated entities, a factor that both directly and indirectly conditioned the diverse routes through which sexual-scientific writing was published. Medicine was, for much of the nineteenth century, an embattled field that encompassed a wide variety of practitioners with various levels of training. Some medical men practiced with university degrees; some practiced under the authority of various forms of institutional medical licenses; some practiced with a combination of these qualifications; and some practiced with none at all (Peterson 5). This state of affairs made for a fraught hierarchical field in which practitioners incessantly attacked each other's professional authority and moral character as they competed for a limited number of clients (Porter 188). Physicians entering the market following formal schooling at English universities sneered at physicians trained in Scottish universities, which had less stringent formal requirements and more progressive outlooks than Oxford and Cambridge, and refused them full entry to the nation's most elite medical organizations (McGrath 42). Both types of physicians scoffed at surgeons and apothecaries, whose skills had long been viewed as lesser, and all of these practitioners looked down on medical men who practiced with no formal medical training at all, denouncing the overtly commercial approach to medical service that many of them employed (Peterson 5). Unqualified and otherwise unorthodox practitioners, meanwhile, often represented such physicians as snobbish and narrow-minded practitioners whose privilege and training blinded them to the needs of their patients (Brown 240-251). Medical practice finally came under legislative regulation at mid century with the passage of the 1858 Medical Act, following a long period in which the country's most privileged medical men lobbied the government for reforms that would legally limit medical practice to a narrower range of practitioners, and anxiously worked to shore up the profession's public image as a trusted and unified social authority (Bates, "Indecent"

5-7; Mort 14). However, this legislation did not immediately stabilize the medical economy, and battles over the legitimacy of different kinds of medical knowledge and medical practice continued to be waged for decades afterward both within and outside medicine's hazy disciplinary boundaries. As I highlight, the "grey zone" into which medical and scientific works fell importantly encompassed, and often stood in for, the blurry boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate medical practice itself, with efforts to harden those professional boundaries motivating many Victorian attempts to regulate explicit medical and scientific publications and manage their eroticism.

At the same time, the social-scientific disciplines that would produce many of the period's most influential studies of sexuality were still in a state of development. Anthropology and sexology were nascent fields that overlapped with a number of other emergent and established areas of enquiry, including natural history, philology, psychology, sociology, and forensic medicine, and went largely unrecognized as discrete disciplines for the majority of the period that this dissertation examines (Bauer, *English* 2-8; Lyons & Lyons 16). Furthermore, both fields emerged at the ideological and, to a certain degree, geographical fringes of British scientific culture. Sexology had its roots on the continent, with German and French medical practitioners publishing the first extensive studies of sexual desire in the 1870s and 1880s (Crozier, "Introduction" 14-20). The field's British iteration was strongly shaped by the progressive politics and cosmopolitan leanings of its early practitioners, who often began their studies without privileged standing in medical or scientific circles, or without qualifications as medical or scientific practitioners at all (Bauer, *English* 52-81). Anthropology, another discipline whose early practitioners were often formally untrained as scientists or scholars, developed along more dispersed geographic lines, and its early British adherents did not tend to favour radical social change (Lyons & Lyons 51-56). However, the socio-political questions about race, sex, and imperialism that many early self-identified anthropologists took on made their work extremely controversial.⁷ In a climate in which the orthodox medical and scientific communities were wary of approaching certain questions about sexual behaviour and desire, British scholars studying sex often worked at a distance from key international players in the development of these new frameworks and enjoyed little local professional support (Crozier, "British Psychiatric" 98). Scholars working within the emerging disciplines of sexology and anthropology thus inhabited, like many medical practitioners, an uncertain disciplinary "grey zone" that the "grey zone"

between legitimate science and obscenity partially encompassed, and that was reflected in the unruly routes through which many social-scientific works about sex were published and disseminated over the course of the nineteenth century.

The historical study of the developing medical and scientific fields and their relation to nineteenth-century sexual culture is generally characterized by two different scholarly approaches, each of which inform my own work on the publication of sexual science. One, most famously deployed by Michel Foucault in his influential *History of Sexuality* (1976), regards the nineteenth century's diverse and overlapping medical and scientific disciplines as a loosely unified body, privileging the similar ways in which they conceived sexuality as a phenomenon that could be uncovered, observed, and disciplined. This view of sexuality, Foucault argued, constituted the full-blown development of a larger Western discourse that had long conceived the sexual as an underlying universal truth (58). *Scientia sexualis*, as he terms this discourse, stood in stark opposition to *ars erotica*, a divergent Eastern discourse that understood sexuality not as an empirically observable phenomenon but as an initiatory art whose 'truth' arose out of pleasure itself (58). As Joseph Bristow has observed, Foucault's argument that sex has undergone "a whole network of varying, specific, and coercive transpositions into discourse" throughout modern Western history, often through the operations of the developing medical and scientific disciplines, marked a sea change in scholarly approaches to the historical study of sexual cultures (Foucault 34; Bristow 116-118). The new notion that sexuality was and remains constructed through discourse shaped the development of a variety of theoretical frameworks that newly interpreted the findings of detailed historical studies such as Jeffrey Weeks's contemporaneous *Coming Out* (1977), which closely tracked Foucault's intervention in its then-trailblazing claim that sexuality—specifically, homosexuality—had a history (Bristow 116-118).

To a certain degree, Weeks' groundbreaking history of the British sexual reform movements from the 1870s to the 1970s exemplifies a second approach to studying the nineteenth century's developing medical and scientific fields, which puts much greater emphasis on historical detail and specificity than does Foucault's sweeping method of interrogating the past. Since the *History of Sexuality's* publication, a great deal of research conducted through this approach has sought to test Foucault's narrative of Western sexual discourse against more detailed examinations of sexual discourse in its

specific historical contexts. Some of this research has re-examined nineteenth-century physicians' and scientists' self-consciously empirical view of sexuality in relation to other discourses and historical factors, scrutinizing, for example, *scientia sexualis*'s relationship to the political upheavals of the preceding eighteenth 'century of revolution,' and the links that the political economists of that era made between disciplining sexuality and fostering an orderly, secular state (Porter and Hall 125-126; Mort 36). Other research has focused on nuancing understandings of the period's developing medical and scientific fields themselves: regarding these fields as overlapping yet distinct intellectual formations, a number of scholars have parsed important differences between how these developing fields approached the problem of sexuality in the nineteenth century, and how their work related to the state, its attempts to discipline sexuality, and ordinary people's experiences of the sexual, making visible deviations both within and between these fields that have problematized Foucault's view of what *scientia sexualis* constituted and how it was deployed.⁸

These different approaches to studying the medical and scientific fields are thus complementary, with research arising out of one approach pushing scholarly thinking in another (Bristow 116-118). Perhaps in part because of concern about overdetermining the uniformities of the nineteenth century's developing medical and scientific fields, however, generalized approaches to studying the history of medicine and science have become increasingly unfashionable. Recent examinations of the material contexts through which nineteenth-century medical and scientific knowledge about sex was produced, disseminated, and consumed have tended to focus especially narrowly on individual works or groups of works that were produced within a single developing discipline. This methodological choice admirably allows for close investigation of the special contexts of a work's or emergent field's systems of production, dissemination, reception, and cultural impact, bringing specificity to the history of sexual discourse. At the same time, however, the narrow focus of such studies has obscured a number of common contexts in which medical and scientific works about sex were discussed, produced, and consumed in the long nineteenth century, contexts which my dissertation addresses and reveals as crucial to our understanding of sexual discourse in that historical period, by examining the history of sexual-scientific publication, broadly defined, by fringe publishers. If Foucault's sweeping narrative of *scientia sexualis*'s deployment through the medical and scientific fields is problematic because it overlooks

crucial differences in how different kinds of medical and scientific knowledge about sex were formulated, its breadth also offers a productive model for talking about the cultural predicament in which a wide range of medical and scientific writings about sex were caught up in the nineteenth century—that is, the common ways in which these writings inhabited a circumforaneous “grey zone” between the legitimate and the obscene, as is reflected in their publishing histories. While remaining attentive to the fact that these varied works were written in different contexts and for different audiences, I loosely borrow Foucault’s technique of arranging them under a broader category of texts deploying *scientia sexualis* to examine their intertwined legal, cultural and commercial predicaments within a culture that conceived them as a problematic category of texts, a category which I label “sexual science”.

By attending to the material details of textual production, dissemination, and reception as a way of tracing the multiple forms of relation between sexual science and sexual entertainment and pleasure in the long nineteenth century, I draw on the analytical strategies of the history of the book. Emerging out of the sociological turn of the 1970s at the intersection of the disciplines of bibliography, history, and literary studies, this interdisciplinary field takes as its subject the historically specific processes of textual production, distribution, and reception that mediate culture—what Meredith McGill has called the “material grounds of discourse” itself (5). My examination of the role of the publisher in conditioning how sexual science functioned in this period is indebted to book history’s cross-pollination of the methodologies of bibliography, social history, and cultural history, and its understanding of the complexity of the social processes through which ideas are formed. Building on the work of scholars such as McGill, Peter D. McDonald, and James A. Secord, who are similarly interested in how the conditions of textual production, distribution, and reception affect the relationship between texts and the larger cultural discourses in which they are located, this dissertation makes the case for attending to the complicated material details of sexual discourse. My study of the little-explored publishing history of sexual science in the nineteenth century uncovers the new audiences, key discourses, and associative reading methods that emerged around the “grey zone” in which these books circulated, a expansive zone into which a variety of unstable and anxiety-producing political, social, and economic borderlines were interpolated. The intractable existence of this “grey zone” between the legitimate and the obscene throughout the period compels a far more

complicated understanding of the knowledge/pleasure nexus of nineteenth-century sexual culture than Foucault's theory of divergent discursive regimes allows. In its incitement of a century-long struggle by different parties to construct the right label, the right publisher, the right format, and the right audience for works of sexual science, this "grey zone" reveals the stubborn incoherence of distinctions between sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment and pleasure in this period, forced by the existence of the interpreting *reader* of sexual science. This definitional incoherence between science and obscenity, and the way in which that incoherence hinged on variant methods of interpretation, demonstrates the false symmetry of Foucault's model of sexual discourse along the binary of *scientia sexualis* and *ars erotica*. As I show, this history calls for a more nuanced view of *scientia sexualis* that takes complex historical methods of reading and interpretation into account in assessing sexual discourse's socio-political effects.

§

The shifting figure of the nineteenth-century reader lay at the heart of the new discourses, audiences, and modes of reading that emerged within the "grey zone" of sexual-scientific publication, where sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment intersected and remained unevenly regulated throughout the century. The troubling "grey zone" between the legitimate and the obscene into which sexual-scientific works fell began to emerge early in the period, at the same time that publication started to become one of the primary means through which the developing medical and scientific fields undertook the labour of defining themselves and the parameters of sexual study, and anxieties about the influential powers of reading increasingly conditioned how print, including medical and scientific publications, circulated within a widening literary marketplace. Just as the threat of political unrest had triggered heightened concerns about the destructive potential of untrammelled sexual desire in the late eighteenth century, the threat of revolution magnified longstanding anxieties about the influential powers of print, anxieties that only mounted over the course of the nineteenth century as the production of print surged and literacy flourished.⁹ Nineteenth-century concerns about the influential powers of reading focused on the expanding audience for printed works and tended to disavow readers' individual agency, representing readers' interpretive abilities as defined by age, gender, and social station through the terms of surface and depth. Moralists and legislators increasingly labelled various classes of

readers—primarily the young, the female, and the working class—as vulnerable to the hysterical, somatic, or radicalizing potential of ‘risky’ literature, ranging from popular ladies’ novels to radical political tracts to medical works that contained sexual references, because they conceived such readers as incapable of distancing themselves from the text’s transportive functions (Flint 13). In opposition to the “vulnerable” reader’s place in the nineteenth-century imagination stood the “capable reader”—the educated male who had traditionally formed the reading public (13). Moralists and legislators viewed such readers as uniquely equipped to approach ‘risky’ literature with appropriate levels of distance, possessing the moral and intellectual mastery necessary to engage critically with ‘dangerous’ representations and translate them into socially beneficial experience (13). The readers of sexual-scientific works—the main battleground for moralists, legislators, publishers, and organizations concerned with such works’ consumption—were thus in a sense born at the cusp of the nineteenth century, to be variously constructed and instructed, and let loose as key agents and key concerns in the shaping of new discourses, audiences, and modes of reading that emerged to surround the publication of sexual science.

Cultural anxieties about the influential powers of reading initiated the emergence of the expansive “grey zone” into which sexual-scientific works fell. By highlighting the divergently endangering and enlightening effects that certain representations posed in the hands of different readers, emergent discourses about reading emphasised how these works did not function stably and purely as conduits of useful, objective knowledge. This zone would expand, intensify, and become a legal problem over the course of the nineteenth century as number of overlapping discourses and competing agents, including the fringe publishers of sexual science themselves, vied to characterise, regulate, and control readers (Flint 13). New restrictions around reading, arising in response to anxieties about the democratization of print, were some of the most powerful factors that led to this “grey zone’s” intensification, and were continuously cited by these publishers in their own efforts to shape the shifting audiences who interacted with it. Some of these restrictions were legal, comprising stronger legislation against the dissemination of ‘dangerous’ print materials or governing what works could circulate within publicly controlled spaces such as the workhouse or the prison.¹⁰ Other restrictions operated extra-legally, with discourses about vulnerable readers shaping the print marketplace by delimiting the very possibilities of open representation, sexual-

scientific and otherwise (Flint 13). Discourses about obscenity comprised one of the most significant of those that underpinned these mechanisms of control, with the term obscenity overtaking blasphemy and sedition as a discursive tool of choice over the course of the nineteenth century to regulate print materials both legally and extra-legally (Marsh 209). Landmark pieces of legislation such as the Obscene Publications Act of 1857 significantly expanded the government's ability to manage the dissemination of such materials, including explicit sexual-scientific works, while multiple institutions and organizations deployed the term vigorously in their attempts to exert greater control over the print marketplace and the unruly field of medical and scientific publication. The "obscene" was and remains, as H. G. Cocks has argued, itself a "grey" or "empty category" of restricted representation defined through commonly agreed upon cultural margins of legitimacy ("Saucy Stories" 466). Over the past two hundred years, the obscene has thus encompassed a wide variety of texts, including "pulp magazines, medical dictionaries, treatises on nudism or the body beautiful, literary fiction, thrillers, sex education tracts, histories and pseudo-science, as well as sexual imagery" ("Reading Obscene" 275-6). Obscenity's indeterminate meaning made it a far more powerful weapon than the terms blasphemy and sedition, whose definitions were far more specific, in battles to regulate print and readership: the term could act as a catch-all for works that fell outside culturally agreed upon margins of legitimacy but did not fit into more established categories of restricted representation.

Although obscenity's indeterminate meaning could make it a powerful weapon to regulate print materials and those that produced them, its very indeterminacy also proved problematic because it was increasingly applied to materials that fell uncertainly within culturally agreed upon margins of legitimacy. Over the course of the long nineteenth century, a huge variety of works were consigned to this moral borderland, ranging from artworks, legal texts, radical tracts, and popular periodicals to religious works, Greek and Roman classics, classic works of English literature, French novels, the Bible, and sexual-scientific works. All these works referred in some way to the sexual, and in doing so, were seen to threaten the moral integrity and social function of the 'vulnerable' reader. At the same time, however, these works were conceived as important contributors to modern culture, transmitting socially necessary knowledge and uplifting cultural experience in the hands of 'capable' readers. Nineteenth-century discussions of obscenity and its regulation incessantly debated the relative social danger

that these diverse materials posed, and continuously attempted to formulate concrete criteria through which the legal and social 'line' between permissible and forbidden sexual representations should be drawn. Discourses about obscenity thus began to define an expansive body of texts that had an indeterminate status, neither entirely licit nor entirely illicit, inciting the emergence of a fuzzy legal borderline that mutually interpolated the "grey zone" between legitimate discourse and obscenity. Those iterations of this legal debate that centred on the status of potentially dangerous aesthetic works have been examined at great length in previous scholarship, which I draw from in this study.¹¹ Those iterations of the legal debate that centred on the "grey zone" into which explicit medical and scientific works fell have not, however, received the same level of scholarly attention, despite the fact that the obvious necessity of explicit sexual description within these texts made them a particularly problematic category of 'borderline' works for legislators.¹²

Over the first half of the century, fringe publishers' expanding trade in popular sexual-scientific works forced the public discussions of medical eroticism that gradually situated questions of scientific legitimacy within larger cultural debates about how to manage 'borderline' sexual representations, shifting these publications ever deeper into the "grey zone". These fringe publishers distributed such works primarily to middle-class audiences, which they, too, classed, characterized and instructed. Often making use of the vulnerable/capable reading dichotomy that had initiated the "grey zone's" emergence, they hailed the reader of sexual-scientific works as a capably distanced agent, even as they represented the "grey zone" into which such publications fell as a dangerous and alluring cultural space in which sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure merged, a space that the reader could also inhabit. These acts seemed to heighten the social dangers that explicit scientific works posed to 'vulnerable' readers as well as bring medicine and science into disrepute, which made controlling the unruly field of medical and scientific publication an urgent concern for medico-judicial authorities. However, medico-judicial attempts to use the term obscenity as a weapon to control these publishers' activities and regulate their middle-class audiences repeatedly failed amid uncertainty over how to determine sexual-scientific works' legitimacy, when works considered socially dangerous when they were put into print by such publishers were so similar to—or even the same as—works considered necessary to scientific progress. In this context, therefore, Victorian sexual culture was certainly disciplined by medico-

juridical discourses about sexuality as Foucault argues, but those discourses were embattled. Discourses about obscenity, which disciplined sexuality in different ways, constantly called the very right of medical and scientific discourses about sexuality to circulate into question because of their erotic potential, a potential which was magnified through the action of fringe publisher's business practices and joint medico-juridical attempts to manage them.

As discourses about obscenity evolved to regulate the "grey zone" and the vulnerable readers who might inhabit it by attempting to separate sexual science from sexual entertainment, they had the unintended consequence of bringing these forms closer together. Medico-juridical assessments of 'borderline' works' legitimacy gradually came to rely on evaluations of their publication contexts: their bibliographic forms, the reputations of their publishers, the ways in which they were advertised, and how they were disseminated, culminating in the Lord Chief Justice Sir Alexander Cockburn's landmark 1868 ruling of *R. v. Hicklin*. Drawing from contemporaneous notions about 'vulnerable' readers and observations of fringe publishing activities, Cockburn and other authorities theorized that texts could be transformed into virtually new works in the hands of different agents, even if those agents didn't actually interfere with the text itself. According to these authorities, publishers could 'activate' an explicit medical work's obscene potential through the act of distributing it to readers who would only perceive its damaging aspects. They could also reinforce this 'activating' effect through their deployment of what Gérard Genette has called paratexts—material or textual frames such as titles, prefaces, bindings, or advertisements that, while ancillary to a text, enable "a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers," and guide how it is interpreted—to opportunistically repackage explicit medical and scientific books and highlight for readers how they might trigger sexual arousal (1-2). The *Hicklin* ruling's formalization of this method of determining a 'borderline' work's legitimacy, by deeming obscene publications those works which had the "tendency ... to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences, *and into whose hands a publication of this sort may fall,*" and by making immunity from prosecution dependent on the "circumstances of publication" of the work in question, made it much easier for medico-juridical authorities to exert control over the unruly field of medical and scientific publication (*Law Reports* 371 and 373. Emphasis added). At the same time, however, outside the courtroom, links between a 'borderline' work's publication context and its

function underwrote a variety of interrelated new discourses and reading practices that governed how Victorian readers approached sexual-scientific works and assessed their legitimacy, and underpinned the development of elite forms of crossover sexual writing that were deliberately produced to simultaneously function as instructive and erotic works.

Evidenced in mid- and late-nineteenth century fringe publisher's publishing and advertising practices, contemporaneous responses to these activities, and the works they published, these interrelated new discourses and reading practices were founded in a popular understanding of publication context, which drew from, but significantly altered, medico-judicial ideas about the links between publication context and obscenity. In this context, publication context was conceived not simply as the *cause* of a work's function through the action of putting it in the hands of a particular kind of reader, but also as an indication or interpretation of its function *apart* from the reader.¹³ Even the broadest, most indefinite, and least deliberate elements of publication context acted as paratexts that transformed sexual-scientific works' meanings: like title pages, prefaces, and author's names, the very routes through which a sexual-scientific work, or even works like it, was or had been produced, distributed, and regulated impacted how readers understood its function. A close theoretical analogue to this practice is Pierre Bourdieu's formulation of the action of the literary field, in which the "position" of a work within that field invests its cultural capital and, subsequently, its reception (29-73). As I show, late-Victorian fringe publishers made use of this popular mode of reading to protect their businesses from prosecution, protest the regulation of sexual-scientific works under obscenity law, and market their publications, including an increasing number of social-scientific works from the continent, to a wide variety of readers, ranging from medical professionals to progressive activists to readers primarily seeking sexual entertainment. They did so by strategically representing the circumstances under which the works they dealt in had been composed, how they had been published, and how they had circulated, engendering multiple, overlapping points of signification and communication between readers and texts about sex, and between those texts themselves. Although I show how they put this technique into practice in a number of ways, perhaps the most vital and productive way in which late-Victorian fringe publishers capitalized on this mode of reading is in their adoption of an emergent discourse that I term the "secret museum". In its reinterpretation of larger Victorian discourses about

obscenity and particularly the links they made between a work's publication context and its function, this discourse surrounded the "capable reader" and characterized him as an agent whose powers of scientific insight did not lie in his ability to separate sexual knowledge from sexual entertainment and pleasure, but in his ability to disavow the separation between those categories and negotiate their coexistence.

Borrowing terminology from Walter Kendrick's investigation of contemporaneous institutional spaces in which a wide range of 'risky' works was sequestered from the eyes of the public, I show how this new discourse about sexually explicit texts and their function arose through the activities of elite, often self-published, writers and readers who coalesced around the obscenity trade between the mid 1860s and the mid 1890s. This discourse translated medico-juridical discourses about obscenity anew, viewing the 'grey zone' into which sexual-scientific works fell not as a moral and legal problem, but as an interpretive aspect of print regulation, and obscenity not as a legal category, but as a *textual* category whose component parts represented, as a whole, the forbidden and exclusive keys to both sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure. I argue that this discourse of the "secret museum" encouraged the expansion of what Jerome McGann has termed "radial reading" practices, in which readers learned to read across an imagined archive or 'museum' of works that had been continuously associated with one another as potential obscenity in the public, legal, and commercial spheres as a whole, interpreting scientific and literary texts on sexuality not simply as comparable sources of sexual pleasure, but also as compatible sources of sexual knowledge (122). As I show, these reading practices led to cross-over publishing activity among this network of self-published writers as they attempted to recreate the "secret museum" they dreamed of, revealing an erotic play underpinning sexual science's production and circulation in the latter half of the nineteenth century that challenges the distanced model of unveiling and disciplining sexuality, as Foucault suggests. Indeed, this erotic play extended much further than this narrow network, underwriting broader cross influences of sexual scholarship and obscene fiction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To modern readers, the unsophisticated ways in which the scholars I examine viewed fictional representations of sexual bodies, acts, and desires through the lens of the "secret museum" discourse as evidence of real human experience, and translated those views into their writing and publishing activities, borders on the absurd. However, these readers were drawing on contemporaneous beliefs that fiction could be understood

sociologically and serve as evidence for scientific theories, beliefs that, as John Holmes, Sally Shuttleworth and Anna Schaffner have each recently shown, also marked scientific writing outside of sexual enquiry and sexual scholarship outside of Britain.

“High-class” fringe publishers played a significant role in advancing the “secret museum” discourse in the latter half of the nineteenth century, using its ideas about sexual science, other forms of writing about sex, and their dual functions through their publishing and advertising practices to cultivate new audiences. One of the central fetishes that drove the “secret museum” discourse, the conservative notion that obscene works comprised a kind of forbidden knowledge that only privileged readers were equipped to dig up, take pleasure in, and understand, helped them attract wealthy male readers as they expanded their businesses in new directions, extending the fringe publication of sexual science beyond the popular. Adopting the model of ostensibly “private publication” to sell the tantalizing fantasy of a dispersed “secret museum” of historically forbidden texts, these publishers encouraged radial readings of sexual science—especially anthropology and sexology—obscene fiction, and other risky forms of writing in which they dealt. These clever marketing practices made money for the publishers who developed them, and continued to prove lucrative to early twentieth-century publishers both within and beyond Britain’s borders. But these marketing practices also importantly challenged the logic of separating obscene and legitimate writing about sex, and opened up new opportunities for sexual-scientific research and for community building and activism for sexual minorities, both by making new social-scientific research about sex more accessible in Britain and by encouraging the practice of radial reading. Fringe publishing activity thus conditioned the ways in which sexual knowledge, sexual entertainment, and sexual politics developed, in multiple ways, over the course of the long nineteenth century. Drawing on as well as contributing to wider discourses about obscenity, radicalism, and medical and scientific professionalism, the publishing practices that this dissertation takes as its subject constructed and instructed the reader, but they also encouraged ways of thinking about sexual writing that were malleable for its readers’ own purposes.

In bringing publishing history and historical methods of reading and interpretation to bear on the historiography of Victorian sexual culture, this dissertation expands critiques of Foucault’s geo-historical separation of two procedures for producing the truth

of sex, *ars erotica* and *scientia sexualis*. Foucault's contention that the West "had no *ars erotica*" has been re-examined from a number of perspectives, with many scholars questioning whether this theorist's formulation of *ars erotica* was not idealized and orientalist;¹⁴ whether the West had a prehistory of *ars erotica* that either anticipated or paralleled *scientia sexualis*'s rise;¹⁵ and whether one discourse did not underwrite or advance another,¹⁶ bringing the very model of divergent sexual regimes that Foucault proposed into question. But these critiques (including Foucault's own critical interrogations of his claims [70-72]), have largely centred on looking *within* texts to complicate this theory of two parallel sexual discourses.¹⁷ In uncovering the key discourses, the new audiences, and the methods of reading that emerged around the expansive "grey zone" of nineteenth-century sexual-scientific publication, this dissertation shows how sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment and pleasure operated dynamically, producing one another through acts of interpretation. While encompassing, and attempting to negotiate, a variety of other fuzzy social, political, and economic borderlines, the cultural focus on publication context that emerged through period's debates about what constituted legitimate sexual science and subsequently governed how readers approached these works reveals that what made sexual science alternately dangerous and exciting for many people is that, while these work did seek to unveil and discipline sexuality in various ways, they also risked initiating the reader in the techniques of sexual pleasure: their initiatory art lay within them, waiting to be activated by the right—or wrong—publisher, distributor, or audience. If, in Foucault's terms, *ars erotica* did not circulate within Victorian culture at the explicit level that he argues it did in Eastern culture, the possibility of *ars erotica* thus lay at the very heart of its discourses on obscenity and fringe publishers' trade in medical and scientific eroticism. As with the "internal incoherence and mutual contradiction of the 'common sense'" homo/heterosexual distinction that is, for Eve Sedgwick, "central to the important knowledges and understandings of twentieth-century culture as a whole," this dissertation shows how the clear incoherencies of what seem at first like "common sense" divisions between sexual entertainment and sexual science in the nineteenth century were thus central to the ground of Victorian sexual discourse, underwriting its production, its circulation, and its effects (1-2). The ongoing issues of reading and interpretation that underpinned these incoherencies necessitate new readings of Victorian sexual discourse that take this historical context into account.

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This dissertation traces the publishing “grey zone” of Victorian sexual science and the interplay of sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment in three parts. Part One lays the historical groundwork for Parts Two and Three, charting a one-hundred year history in which debates about how to manage the erotic potential of medical and scientific representations of sexuality developed amid the emergence of the medical publishing industry and the obscene book trade. By investigating the publishing careers of five different fringe publishers whose careers collectively spanned the period of 1807 to 1902, I show how fringe publishing activity aroused anxieties about medical eroticism and highlighted the difficulty of drawing legal, social, and professional boundaries between necessary medical knowledge and sexual entertainment. Demonstrating how these anxieties intersected with larger debates about how to define obscenity, suppress political radicalism, and order the embattled medical profession, I show how efforts to control unruly medical publication intensified cultural movements toward defining obscenity not in terms of a work’s content, but in terms of its publication context. I argue that while the fate of ‘vulnerable readers’ was articulated as central to concerns about obscenity, medico-juridical movements toward defining obscenity in terms of publication context were also driven by more expansive anxieties about controlling the publisher’s influence in an era when publishers were becoming a strong commercial and cultural force, and were deployed to suppress the radical publishers, unorthodox medical publishers, and sex activists who became some of the government and medical profession’s strongest critics. Culminating in Alexander Cockburn’s famous ‘test’ of obscenity in the case of *R. v. Hicklin*, repeated medico-juridical emphasis on the links between publication context and obscenity led to further restrictions on the publication and dissemination of sexual knowledge. At the same time, however, it contributed to the development of new discourses about the links between obscenity and publication context that would foster increased inter-development of sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment in the late nineteenth century.

Parts Two and Three take up the more complicated interplay of sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment that emerged in the late nineteenth century, shaped by developing popular ideas about the links between publication context and obscenity and the fringe publishers that capitalized on them. Each of the chapters that

these parts encompass narrows in focus to examine moments between 1860 and 1914 when, just as the borders between scientific publication and obscene publication would seem to begin to harden, with the greater professionalization of medical and scientific practice, the gradual emergence of anthropology and sexology as discrete social-scientific disciplines, and the establishment of an increasingly internationalizing obscenity trade, the interpretive values that evolving obscenity laws placed on a work's material contexts encouraged new ways of publishing and reading sexual science and obscene fiction. The publishing practices that I examine in each of these two parts and the new discourses and methods of reading that they engaged with demonstrate in multiple ways sexual science's ongoing function as a form of sexual knowledge, as a form of sexual entertainment, and as something in between these categories in the latter half of the nineteenth century, compelling a far more complicated understanding of the the knowledge/pleasure nexus of nineteenth-century sexual culture that takes historical methods of reading and interpretation into account when assessing sexual-scientific discourse.

Part Two examines the emergence of the discourse of the "secret museum," conditioned by new medico-judicial policies that were being formulated to manage explicit representations and their potentially anti-social effects. This discourse translated elitist views of reading competence and emerging cultural links between an explicit work's function and the contexts of its material life into a fetishization of the 'forbidden' book as a simultaneously informative and pleasurable object, and the field of works that had been variously characterized as obscene in the nineteenth century as a hidden 'museum' or archive of sexual knowledge. I trace this discourse's expression through the publishing activities of a network of publishers which emerged out of the loose circle of scholars, explorers, bibliophiles, aristocrats, and writers who coalesced around the notorious mid-Victorian Cannibal Club. The private publication practices of the original Cannibal network importantly demonstrate the ways in which the production of sexual science did not simply involve the distanced unveiling and disciplining of sexuality, as Foucault suggests, but also involved the production of multiple modes of closeted knowledge, knowledge whose eroticism was seen as a key component of and a testament to its accuracy and use-value. Fringe publisher-booksellers such as John Camden Hotten, Harry Sidney Nichols, and Leonard Smithers, subsequently drew on the fantasy of the "secret museum" as they structured markets for their works that would

allow their businesses to straddle the hazy borders between the respectable and the clandestine. By encouraging the radial reading of a wide variety of works about sex and by bringing new forms of sexual science into the British market from the continent, these publishing and marketing experiments helped propel the cross readings and cross influences of sexual science and obscene fiction that had defined the Cannibal network's earlier publishing activities. I highlight how through these publisher's businesses, the "secret museum" could be a productive and even liberating resource, one that could not only help sexual scientists gather sexual information but also help sexual minorities define their positions within Western history and society. However, the secret museum's productive value had its limits: as late-Victorian sexual scientists sought to make sexual information more accessible and respectable, they were compelled to disavow their use of the "secret museum's" varied works and routes of circulation in developing their theories, and, with it, sexual science's erotic potential.

Part Three closely examines the publishing practice of a fringe publisher-bookseller who further expanded access to social-scientific works about sex in Britain by capitalizing on the new modes of reading that cultural links between obscenity and publication context fostered at the *fin de siècle*. Based in Paris for most of his career, Charles Carrington set himself apart from other fringe publishers through the scale and sophistication with which he manipulated science and obscenity's overlapping terrain in the Victorian imagination to shape publishing and marketing strategies for his books. In drawing on two characteristic forms of fringe publishing and marketing of sexual science that Parts One and Two examine, Carrington's business acts as an exemplar and culmination of these practices, and demonstrates how they continued to condition the publication of sexual-scientific works in both the public and private spheres. I show how Carrington strategically fashioned advertisements and editorial apparatuses that instrumentalized the history and language of debates surrounding sexual-scientific books to situate them within the broader field of literary production and circulation, utilizing, but also moving beyond, the discourse of the 'secret museum' to sell a wider range of sexual-scientific works than ever before to British readers. By shrewdly reproducing contextual methods of interpretation that Victorian readers were impelled to deploy when they approached new writings about sex, Carrington demonstrated the desirability of his publications to several roughly differentiated types of readers, extending sexual science's circulation by situating it in different publishing genealogies.

Importantly, however, these documents also made visible the intractable incoherence of distinctions between sexual science and sexual entertainment, challenging the logic of efforts to differentiate 'legitimate' science from obscenity. In doing so, Carrington's publications and marketing materials emphasize how fringe publisher's businesses functioned as a powerful form of critique and undertook important cultural labour, even if they were also opportunistic and profit-motivated. Their audacious commercialism and hitherto unrecognized exploitation of medical and scientific eroticism made the internal incoherencies of sexual discourse a fact that nineteenth-century Britons could not ignore. These publishers indelibly altered the grounds through which sexual discourse was produced and consumed, providing a logic that structured efforts to manage and even eradicate sexual science's erotic potential even as they underscored the impossibility of realizing that goal.

Endnotes

¹ The translation of works on sexual anatomy from Latin to English in the seventeenth century, for instance, aroused the opposition of physicians who expressed fears that the more widely accessible vernacular versions of these works would corrupt public morals, particularly when they contained explicit illustrations (Heyam 1). See Chamberlain, McGrath, Porter, and Thompson for more details concerning cultural anxieties about medical and scientific eroticism before the nineteenth century.

² Numerous scholars have commented on the difficulties of performing research on the obscenity trade due to these factors, including nineteenth-century scholars who had strong ties to the trade. See, for example, Ashbee, *Index* xxvii-xxix and Sigel, *Governing* 7-8.

³ See, for example, Boroughs; Cocks, "Saucy" 465; Douglas; Eliot, "Hotten: Rotten: Forgotten?"; Nelson, *Publisher* 43-45; Potter, *Obscene* 63-64 and "Obscene" 97-99.

⁴ The publication of scientific works, especially popular science, is a topic of increasing interest, with scholars such as Jonathan Topham, Gowan Dawson, Aileen Fyfe, James Secord, Bernard Lightman, and Melinda Baldwin producing excellent research on nineteenth-century scientific publishers and publishing activity over the past ten years. However, the publishing history of sexual-scientific works, and especially explicit medical works, has received very little attention. Jennifer Connor, Ivan Crozier, Leslie Hall, Roy Porter, and Ruth Richardson have examined the publication of medical and scientific works on sexual topics in the nineteenth century to a certain extent. However, with the exception of Connor (who examines the publication of medical books in the North American context), these historians do not engage in detailed or comprehensive analyses of the publisher's role in producing such works, focusing more strongly on the details of their composition and circulation, and typically examine a narrow range of works.

⁵ Currently, no study of major nineteenth-century medical publishers exists. However, bibliographies such as Leslie Morton's *Morton's Medical Bibliography: An annotated checklist illustrating the history of medicine* (1991 ed.) and books on the publication of individual medical works, such as Ruth Richardson's *The Making of Mr. Grey's Anatomy: Bodies, Books, Fortune, Fame* (2008), show that medical and scientific publication was not specialized in the nineteenth century the way it is today. I have attempted to find out more about the operations of major nineteenth-century medical publishers who dealt in significant numbers of explicit medical works by examining catalogue lists for publishers such as J.W. Parker & Son, J&A Churchill and Baillière, Tindall & Cox, and describe my own conclusions drawn from these sources, as well as a variety of secondary sources that mention medical publishers, in this introduction.

⁶ See Boroughs, Dawson 128-129, and Royle.

⁷ See, for example, Barton and Stocking's separate investigations of clashes between the Anthropological Society of London and the Ethnological Society of London due to controversies surrounding the Anthropological Society's stances on race and sex.

⁸ For example, see Bauer, *English*; Beccalossi; Bland & Doan; Brady; Cocks, *Nameless*; Cook; Dawson, Faderman; Haeberle; Henderson; Mort; Ordovery; Porter & Teich; Rosario; Schaffner; Sigel, *Making*; and Stanton.

⁹ See Raven "Promotion" 268-285 and St. Clair 256-257.

¹⁰ See Janet Fyfe 9, 38, and 120, and Chapter One for further details about the new restrictions around reading that arose in the nineteenth century.

¹¹ See Cummins; Gamer; Kendrick; Leckie; Nead; Potter, *Prudes*; Walkowitz; Wee

¹² A recent exception is Gowan Dawson's excellent *Darwin, Literature, and Victorian Respectability* (2007), which examines the ways in which debates about 'borderline' obscenity conditioned the work of scientific naturalists in the Victorian period.

¹³ The difficulty of assessing how readers approached sexually explicit works in the past is well known. As Sigel has noted, nineteenth-century readers rarely recorded accounts of reading such material in letters, journals, and personal diaries, and the few records of such reading that do survive were subject to self-censorship and literary stylization (*Governing* 7-8).

¹⁴ See, for example, Doniger and Kakar; Grant; Johnson; Pflugfelder; Rocha; Stone.

¹⁵ See, for example, Boer; Cryle; Lingiardi

¹⁶ See, for example, Doherty; Pryce; Roman; Turner

¹⁷ A possible exception is Gregory Pflugfelder's 1999 study of Japanese homosexuality, *Cartographies of Desire*, which takes global networks of knowledge into account, arguing that "geographical markers do not do justice to the global dimensions and local complexities of the knowledge system[s] in question" (13).

Part 1.

Obscenity, Medical Books, and the Circumstances of Publication

On a routine government inspection of London's Newgate Gaol in 1836, Whitworth Russell and William Crawford seized a book "of a most disgusting nature" from an unlocked cupboard (qtd. in McGrath 38). They were astonished that the prisoner who owned the volume had not concealed it more carefully, for its plates were "obscene and indecent in the extreme," depicting sexual organs in explicit detail (qtd. in McGrath 38). Troubled that such a book had made its way into the gaol, the pair urged the City Committee of the Court of Aldermen¹ to stem its circulation at its source by prosecuting its publisher, John Joseph Stockdale, for publishing an obscene libel.² But the Committee did not agree with the inspectors' assessment of the book, noting that the "disgusting" volume was a copy of *The Generative System of John Roberton* (1824), the fifth edition of a Scottish medical practitioner's handbook on sexual anatomy and venereal disease. It therefore declined to prosecute Stockdale, and even suggested that the inspectors themselves "appeared in a dubious light for declaring 'a physiological and anatomical book, written by a learned physician, and illustrated by anatomical plates to be of a disgusting nature, with plates of an indecent and obscene description'" (57). As Russell and Crawford would protest, however, this edition of *The Generative System* was not a typical medical handbook. Seven of its eighteen "illustrative" plates were not original to Roberton's book, but had been borrowed from a sex manual called *Kalogynomia, or the Laws of Female Beauty* (1821) —and Stockdale, who had edited the volume and inserted these plates, was a well known purveyor of indecent materials. Incensed, the inspectors submitted their report, along with a statement refuting the Committee's judgment of the book, to the Secretary of State so the matter could be discussed in Parliament. But the government also refused to prosecute Stockdale for publishing the edition. It was only when Stockdale unexpectedly sued Messrs. Hansard for publishing the inspectors' "libelous" report alongside other Parliamentary proceedings in 1837 that discussions of the book's alleged obscenity reached a courtroom. Although courtroom debates about the book's status as medical science would be overshadowed by anxieties about Stockdale's right to sue Hansard, which had acted on behalf of Parliament, the "Stockdale Affair's" impact on the publication of sexually explicit medical and scientific books through the rest of the century was considerable.

The Stockdale Affair instigated public discussions about medical eroticism that would profoundly influence the ways in which medical and scientific works about sex were written, edited, published, disseminated and interpreted well into the twentieth

century. These discussions grappled with the fact that alongside a wide range of works that represented sexual bodies, acts, and desires, many medical works fell within what was increasingly seen in the nineteenth century as a problematic moral “grey zone,” somewhere between the licit and the illicit. Although such works were widely acknowledged to have social and scientific value, they also had the potential to arouse sexual excitement—which many moralists and legislators feared might lead to physical, psychological, and moral degeneracy, and even radical anti-social action. Two key questions emerged from debates about *The Generative System*’s scientific legitimacy that resisted easy resolution and would remain relevant throughout the century: 1) which qualities, if any at all, differentiated explicit medical and scientific depictions of sexual bodies, acts and desires from those that appeared in works produced expressly for the purposes of erotic entertainment, commercial exploitation, or political dissent?; and 2) if both scientific and deliberately erotic sexual descriptions could “deprave and corrupt” readers, what systems of management should be put in place to protect British morals from the debilitating effects of sexual information that was also necessary to ensuring citizens’ physical and moral health?

The following three chapters trace how these questions about medical and scientific eroticism arose, and how approaches to answering them evolved, amid the emerging, but far from consolidated, field of medical publishing in the nineteenth century. They not only uncover the fringe publishing history of medical books on sex, but also reveal the competing discourses surrounding it and shaping Victorian sexual culture in the years before medical books on sex were clearly situated under the umbrella of science. By examining the careers of five fringe publishers whose publishing activity collectively spanned the period between 1807 and 1902, I show how overlapping discourses about obscenity, the professionalization of medicine, and radicalism shaped the publication of sexual science. In the context of rising anxieties about the social influence of print materials, these discourses conditioned which works these publishers chose to issue, the ways in which they represented them, and how they disseminated them to readers, processes which defined ideas about sexual-scientific writing and its functions for an increasingly literate public. At the same time, the publishing practices of Stockdale, William Dugdale, the Jordan family, Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh, and Roland de Villiers influenced these changing discourses themselves by forcing medico-judicial authorities to address the vexing problem of how to manage the

potential eroticism of explicit medical writing. I show how, as wide-ranging public debates about where legislators and moralists should draw the boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate forms of sexual representation heightened, efforts to control the messy field of medical publication increasingly focused on the audiences for explicit medical works and how the ways in which such works were published might intensify their detrimental moral and social effects. This recognition of the publisher's role in shaping how readers interacted with explicit material incited cultural movements toward defining obscenity not in terms of a work's content, but in terms of the contexts in which it was published. The formalization of the practice of defining obscenity in relation to publication context in 1868, through the case of *R. v. Hicklin*, seemed to resolve the legal problems posed by moral "grey zone" into which sexual-scientific works had fallen by giving moralists and legislators more concrete criteria with which to determine an explicit work's legitimacy and legality, offering a more effective means of exerting control over the unruly field of medical publication. But it also initiated the gradual development of new processes for interpreting sexual-scientific works that depended more than ever on how they were published, processes that would importantly intensify the interplay of sexual knowledge production and the production of sexual entertainment and pleasure within Victorian sexual culture.

Endnotes

¹ The Court of Aldermen was one of the City of London's governing bodies. Its members oversaw City affairs alongside the Lord Mayor of London, the Court of Common Hall, and the Court of Common Council (Owen & MacLeod 227-228). Newgate, which served as the City's general felon's prison, fall under the Court of Aldermen's jurisdiction (Owen & MacLeod 228; Babington 18 and 53-54). The City Committee was a Court subcommittee charged with overseeing Newgate's administration at the time.

² As Roberta McGrath has observed, Russell and Crawford substituted the book's title, author, and the name of its owner with a series of dashes in their report, even as they highlighted the name of the book's publisher in bold type (38). Their curious inclusion of Stockdale's name among these blanks highlights their conviction that action against the circulation of obscene works should target publishers.

Chapter 1.

Medical Obscenity: Radical Publishers, Market Change, and John Joseph Stockdale's Trade in Medical Works, 1811-1841

John Joseph Stockdale was one of the first publishers in Britain who deliberately marketed medical books as erotic material. His practice, however, was part of a broader trend among London's radical political publishers, who, Iain McCalman has shown, were adapting to a declining market for radical literature in the 1820s and 1830s. These publishers did not specialize exclusively in erotic materials: instead, they published and marketed as erotica a wide range of existing works that to varying degrees skirted culturally imagined boundaries between the licit and the illicit. These shifting business practices among London's publishers incited rising debates on the part of anti-vice organizations and the judiciary about the differences between legitimate and illegitimate sexual representations, debates which drew on interlocking contemporary discourses about obscenity, reading practices and radicalism. Stockdale's decision to market medical works as erotica offers an important focal point for these debates, particularly as they expanded into questions of scientific legitimacy. Arising at a time when medical elites were becoming increasingly anxious about the impact of unruly medical publishing on their authority, the debates that surrounded Stockdale's innovative publishing practice and the scientific integrity of John Roberton's *Generative System* laid the discursive groundwork for medico-judicial attempts to manage medical publication through obscenity law, and for enterprising publishers to continue exploiting the erotic potential of medical and scientific publication, over the course of the century.

A clear understanding of the circumstances in which the *Generative System* was written, published, and disseminated is essential to grasping why its social and scientific legitimacy became a point of debate in the late 1830s, and why considerations

of publication context were eventually recognized as potential means of resolving such uncertainties. Its author, John Roberton's, role within the medical community is an important aspect of that story. Through most of the twentieth century, medical historians hailed John Roberton as a respected and influential Scottish surgeon and specialist in venereal disease (White 407). But as Brenda White has pointed out, this representation was based almost entirely on selective readings of his 700-page book, *A Treatise on Medical Police* (1809), which, along with Andrew Duncan Sr.'s *Heads of Lectures on Medical Jurisprudence and Medical Police* (1801), had the distinction of being one of the earliest works on medical policing published in English (407). White's more careful examination of Roberton's career has shown that the medical practitioner and his books occupied a far more complicated—and more typical—position within the period's expanding field of medical publishing. Roberton had received little formal medical training, and, like thousands of British medical practitioners in the early nineteenth century, depended solely "upon [his] own industry" for income (Roberton, *Letters* 10). He and other practitioners in his economic situation, whether formally qualified to practice medicine or not, often turned to authorship to supplement their income and attract clients within the period's highly competitive medical economy, in which 'client poaching' and other unsavoury business practices were far from unusual (Porter, *Health* 188; White 413). The majority of Roberton's works—including his first book, *A Practical Treatise on the Use of Cantharides When Used Internally* (1806)—were carefully calculated to appeal to a mass audience and functioned as advertisements for his surgical practice. As White notes, they contained "copious case histories giving the interested reader at least one set of circumstances... with which he, or she, could identify" in order to attract potential clients (413).

Such works' popular appeal did not necessarily signal a dearth of professional ambition on the part of their authors. In fact, while an increasingly clear division was developing "between writings that contributed to a scientific reputation...and those that paid the bills" in the early nineteenth century, entrepreneurial medical authors still saw their publications as vehicles to gaining admission into the period's complex medical hierarchy, as well as filling their examination rooms (Fyfe, "Conscientious" 193). An advocate of the use of cantharides (blistering extracts from the beetle *Lytta vesicatoria*) in the treatment of venereal disease, and of formal systems of public health management, Roberton wrote with both of these goals in mind; and if his works added

virtually nothing “to the known stock of medical thought” at the time, they did contribute to the profession by disseminating continental thought on medical regulation in Britain and, perhaps more importantly for the medical practitioner himself, provided him entry into Edinburgh’s more elite medical circles (White 410).¹ To say that Roberton was influential within those circles would, however, be an overstatement. In fact, the surgeon’s significance lies in the relative *ordinariness* of his works and the professional and economic conditions that made publishing them necessary for their author and his peers. Enterprising publishers’ exploitation of medical eroticism would not have survived long, or perhaps emerged at all, without the early existence of popular medical handbooks on sexual health like Roberton’s own. Neither the works of shameless “quack” doctors nor the works of physicians of the highest repute, these accessible volumes and their authors fell into a “grey zone” between the professional and the popular at a time when the medical community was beginning to agitate for stronger restrictions regarding who could legitimately call himself “doctor” in print and in practice. Their “in-between” status would offer the nation’s growing number of obscenity dealers a unique opportunity to sell—usually without their authors’ permission—accessible and potentially erotic sexual descriptions that were protected to some degree by their status as “science,” precisely because no clear-cut separation existed between professional and popular and authoritative and unorthodox medical writings about sex.

There was nothing particularly special about Roberton’s writings themselves that caused *The Generative System of John Roberton* to end up in Newgate Gaol in 1836. Rather, the work’s fate was the result of a confluence of events instigated by the 1809 publication of *Medical Police*. Roberton’s most famous book failed to cite Duncan Sr.’s ideas on medical policing (from which he borrowed substantially) and attacked the professional and personal character of James Sanders, a popular member of the prestigious Edinburgh Royal Medical Society, which Roberton had managed to join in 1798 (White 414-415). His book therefore had deeply offended several influential members of the Edinburgh medical community. When Roberton decided to stand against Sanders for election to the Society’s board of directors in 1810, his resulting unpopularity (combined with his apparently combative behaviour during the election period) not only lost him the election, but also initiated his expulsion from the Society (416). Disgraced, he moved his practice to London, and resumed writing *On the Diseases of the Generative System* (1811), as the work was originally titled, which he

had begun to write in 1809. Like *Cantharides*, this book was a practical instructional manual on identifying and treating venereal disease. Similarly formulated for a general readership, it was designed both to draw clients to Robertson's new London practice and ingratiate him with London's "medical men" as an influential physician, succeeding where he had failed in Edinburgh (McGrath 42).²

Robertson planned to have the book published by Richard Phillips, a London publisher-bookseller who was known for issuing cheap educational literature (McGrath 43). But the author's disagreements with Phillips over when and how *The Generative System* should be published resulted in the job being taken over by John Joseph Stockdale, a publisher who knew how to exploit its erotic potential (43).³ Born in London in 1776 or 1777, Stockdale had deep roots in the capital's print trade. His father, John Stockdale, had enjoyed a prolific career as a publisher-bookseller in the 1780s and 1790s after apprenticing with the radical publisher John Almon, a passionate republican whose fearlessness in publishing works that supported the French and American revolutions, and sharp criticism of the British government's resistance to extending the electoral franchise, would influence both father and son (Leitner, N. Pag.).⁴ Stockdale's uncle, James Ridgeway, was also a well-known London publisher, and his younger brother, William, and sister, Mary, each ran bookshops in Piccadilly in the 1810s and 1820s (Barker, N. Pag.). After working for his father's business and acting as a Freeman of the Stationer's Company for a few years, in 1807 Stockdale had acquired his own bookshop in Pall Mall, out of which he published a wide variety of books and prints (Barker, N. Pag.). Many of his publications were, like *The Generative System*, intended for a popular readership: they included gothic novels, poetry, political, economic and historical treatises, often with a radical bent, and pamphlets, which he issued for a number of political and social interest groups.⁵ That one of these pamphlets, *The Constable's Assistant* (1808), was printed for the Society for the Suppression of Vice (SSV) is ironic, for Stockdale also traded in sensational, sexually explicit literature that often took the sexual vices of the aristocracy and clergy as its subject ("This Day is Published" 1).⁶ This was just the sort of material that the SSV, a newly formed middle-class organization that opposed the "publication of blasphemous, licentious and obscene books and prints" of all kinds, sought to suppress (Roberts, "Society" 159).⁷

There is some evidence that Stockdale perceived *The Generative System* as marketable for the lubric appeal of its sexual descriptions when he first published the book in 1811. The publisher listed titillating titles such as Ben Block's satirical poem *Flagellum Flagellated* (1807) in a catalogue appended to the book's first edition, and advertised it alongside another medical volume, Sir John Pringle's *Observations on the Diseases of the Army in Camp and Garrison* (1752), as a work which "Laid Open" the "Secrets of Nature" via its twelve detailed illustrations of male and female genital organs ("J.J. Stockdale, *Bookseller*" N. pag. ; "Secrets of Nature Laid Open," N. pag.). This advertisement's emphasis on *The Generative System's* sexual content prompted Robertson to publish a notice in the *Morning Post*, which reassured readers that his new medical work afforded "no foundation whatever for the very indecorous Advertisement which, contrary to agreement with the Publisher, has, even subsequent to my remonstrances, been repeated by him" ("I think it necessary" 1). It is difficult to say whether Robertson's objection to Stockdale's representation of his work was genuine, but this episode emphasises the fluid and contested purposes driving the publication of this kind of work, and the ways in which the prospect of commercial success might change those purposes for the various agents involved. When Stockdale's emphasis on the work's sexual content did not dissuade readers from purchasing it—indeed, his 'indecorous' advertisement arguably made the book "a runaway success"—Robertson permitted the publisher to issue a second edition (White 417). Furthermore, Stockdale and Robertson built on the *Generative System's* popular success in the following years by issuing at least two of the author's other works in quick succession: a new edition of *Medical Police* appeared in 1812, and in 1813 Stockdale issued *Complaints Peculiar to the Female*, a small volume of extracts on female reproductive health lifted from *Cantharides* and the *Generative System* (417). *Complaints* appears to have repeated the *Generative System's* success, in part, perhaps, because Stockdale similarly emphasized its sexual content to potential readers. In 1817, for instance, the publisher advertised the work's fifth edition for sale in the *Morning Chronicle* to "Females Only" for 5s ("For Females Only," N. pag.). This indication that the work conveyed exclusive, and therefore alluring, sexual knowledge likely attracted readers of both sexes in search of erotic entertainment as well as sexual information.

The edition of *The Generative System* that incited the Newgate inspectors' ire, and the debates about its alleged obscenity that arose in the 1830s and shaped the

publication of sexual science in the years to come, were the result of Stockdale's sharply increased exploitation of the sexual content in Robertson's works in the 1820s, around the time of Robertson's death.⁸ Occurring after fire and financial trouble resulted in bankruptcy and the loss of Stockdale's Pall Mall shop, this increased exploitation was, on one level, part of the publisher's effort to salvage his floundering business (Stockdale, Letter; "From the London Gazette: Bankrupts," N. pag.). As well as instigating a series of legal battles over his copyrights and other business agreements and turning to extortion and blackmail schemes,⁹ Stockdale expanded his production of erotic works to pay the bills. Most infamously, in 1825, he published *The Memoirs of Harriet Wilson*, a salacious courtesan's memoir that he and Wilson used to blackmail anyone connected with its anecdotes before it was issued, and which was reported to attract crowds of buyers "ten deep" to his shop afterward (Barker, N. Pag.; Saunders 433). Newspapers and periodicals across Britain reported on the libel suits that inevitably followed, highlighting the book's erotic content and cementing Stockdale's reputation as a purveyor of obscenity. Importantly, though, the publisher's increased exploitation of Robertson's works' erotic potential also followed a more generalized trend among London's small publisher-booksellers, particularly those of a Radical bent. These publishers' coordinate expansion of their catalogues from political to erotic works, and, in particular, the methods of publication and distribution that they employed in order to expedite that expansion, broadened discourses on obscenity in the early nineteenth century to encompass the problem of political radicalism. It was these overlapping discourses in turn that shaped debates about *The Generative System's* scientific legitimacy in the late 1830s, which further expanded discourses on obscenity to encompass the problem of medical and scientific eroticism.

"Bawdy songsheets, chapbooks, squibs and prints had been a feature of urban plebian culture" for centuries, but they had rarely represented a primary source of income to their publishers (McCalman 205). Like Stockdale in his early publishing days, many British book dealers had traded in erotic works as a sideline (205). Around the turn of the nineteenth century, this practice was particularly associated with radical publisher-booksellers, who used bawdiness and obscenity to inform their politically charged "songs, toasts, speeches, writings and drawings" (205). These publishers were especially fond of issuing sensational "confessions" or "exposés" which, like *Harriet Wilson*, ridiculed the aristocracy and clergy, describing their sexual proclivities in highly

explicit terms (221-231). But after reaching its zenith in the 1810s, this intermingling of obscene populism and radicalism declined amid sweeping legal, political, and social change. The passage of prohibitive legislation such as the Six Acts in 1819, which targeted seditious and blasphemous libel, made bawdy political works far more dangerous to issue. Around the same time, the election of a reformist Tory government led to the introduction of political and social reforms, such as the 1832 Reform Bill, which prompted the gradual absorption of radical thought into progressive liberal democracy (Marsh 78-90). Together with the resurgence of cultural enthusiasm for the values of respectability and self-restraint in the 1820s and 1830s, these changes led to a declining market for incendiary political literature (McCalman 205; 181). But even as they faced a contracting market for radical materials, radical press men like William Dugdale, George Cannon, John Fairburn, James Griffin, Edward Duncombe, William Benbow, Joseph Glover, Robert Wedderburn and John Jones recognized an emerging market for works whose primary object was provoking sexual arousal, a kind of book that had previously been a rarity in Britain. They subsequently began, like Stockdale, to produce and sell sexually explicit materials to a greater extent than ever before (205). "It must have been tempting," McCalman speculates, for these publishers to "expand a style of publication which had appealed to circles far beyond those of the usual radical public" in order to keep their businesses afloat, especially after the Panic of 1825, the stock market crash that led to a ruinous economic recession in the late 1820s (205; 214).¹⁰

McCalman conceptualizes this shift in these publishers' business practices as the birth of a pornography trade that lost all traces of its radical roots by the early 1840s (235). But although it is true that their publications became less overtly political, and that these publishers produced and advertised greater numbers of sexually explicit texts more commercially, McCalman significantly overestimates the speed of the development of a pornography "industry" in Britain. Publishers were slow to specialize solely in erotic works, and even when they did put most of their energies into hawking sexual entertainment, they never dealt solely in one genre and rarely served one kind of customer. Like the majority of more "respectable" publishers throughout most of the nineteenth century, their catalogues were diverse, in part because diversification was a way for small publishing firms to remain economically viable (Fyfe, *Steam* 144). Practically, there were only three ways in which a publisher like Stockdale could expand the number of erotic works in his catalogue: he could acquire new materials, by forming

relationships with writers, commissioning books, or writing them himself; he could reprint previously successful works; or he could refashion old works to create new publications. Sexual entertainment's increasingly lucrative nature made the first option attractive, leading many of the publisher-booksellers McCalman describes to produce new, straightforwardly erotic works with specific, and usually wealthy, niche audiences in mind (235).¹¹ However, entirely new works took considerable time and money to produce—and since obscenity was not protected under copyright, a publisher's competitors could (and did) reprint them at will, significantly reducing their novel value (Saunders 432-434). As a result, these publishers more frequently recycled existing works on sexual topics to expand their erotic catalogues, establishing a business model that would drive the fringe publication of a wide range of sexual-scientific works in the nineteenth century. These works were varied, ranging from classic English and French libertine literature, racy poems such as Byron's *Don Juan*, salacious memoirs, and titillating "exposés" of clerical vice and crime to translations of Continental and classical literature, and these publishers sometimes augmented their erotic appeal by rearranging text, inserting excerpts and illustrations from other works, or rewriting portions of the text (McCalman 204-231). In mixing new and classic works of erotic fiction and poetry, such as John Cleland's *Fanny Hill* (1748), with repurposed older works in their catalogues, Stockdale and his circle of radical London publishers established an economical product makeup that allowed them to tap in to the growing market for erotic materials while also serving readers who might read such works for alternate, or additional, reasons.

Stockdale's investment in reworked versions of Robertson's medical works as he expanded his obscenity business from its radical roots demonstrates the crucial role that this new publishing model played in the rise of the traffic in medical eroticism in the nineteenth century amidst the collapse of radical print culture, a process never detailed before. Probably inspired by the earlier successes of *The Generative System* and *Complaints*, his turn to such works to expand his erotic catalogue began with the publication of an experimental new sex manual, *Kalogynomia; or, the Laws of Female Beauty*, which Robertson authored for Stockdale under the pseudonym "Dr. T. Bell" in 1821 (McGrath 47). Robertson's part in *Kalogynomia*'s production suggests that if his anxiety about Stockdale's emphasis on his writings' eroticism had been genuine, it had long been discarded. Having failed to ingratiate himself with medical elites in London and fallen deeply in debt, the surgeon sold Stockdale the copyright for his entire body of

works in the same year that he wrote the volume, and appears to have died shortly thereafter (47, 53). Robertson's fluid motives for authorship are reflected in *Kalogynomia's* composition, which also foregrounds the increased subordination of his medical writings to Stockdale's erotic catalogue over the course of the 1820s. Purporting to be a "Complete system of that Science" of "Female Beauty," the work is a hybrid of medical instruction and erotic narrative, containing both technical anatomical description and sexual advice addressed to an implied male reader (iv). Chapter III, "On Sexual Intercourse," for instance, instructs readers that "the [prostate] gland ceases to surround the urethra, and where the caput gallinaginus or verumontanum is found, the urethra assumes the name of THE MEMBEROUS PORTION OF THE URETHRA" (155). Its tone shifts only pages later, when describing the signs of female arousal and the experience of orgasm for both sexes:

The voluptuous woman, who surrenders herself to the passion, is at first warm, blushing, yielding, and free from constraint; — successive and gradually increasing chills soon take the place of the flush... At the crisis of passion in both sexes, the motions of the body are vivid and violent; — the whole frame trembles convulsively; — the heart beats against the breast; — in a moment the muscles yield under the weight of pleasure; even intelligence seems extinct... (191-92)

Mirroring its composite textual makeup, the book's twenty-four plates mix scientific and erotic depictions of sexual bodies, including sketches of the interior and exterior details of male and female sex organs in various states of arousal, interior depictions of intercourse, and etchings of nude female statuary. None of these plates depicts sexual acts with the type of ribald, graphic eroticism that characterizes many of Thomas Rowlandson's illustrations, for example, which Stockdale also published. However, *Kalogynomia's* paratexts leave little doubt that in a culture that was beginning to consider detailed depictions of sexual anatomy as representations that skirted the bounds of decency, these images were meant to be enjoyed as erotic entertainment. The book's preceding *nota bene*, which Stockdale wrote under the alias "Thomas Little" while acting as editor, emphasizes the eroticism of these illustrations even as it represents them as scientific images. It suggests, as Roberta McGrath has observed, that the reader "was a discriminating viewer ...[engaging] in scientific observation rather than sexual voyeurism" even as it underscores their potentially shocking—and stimulating—nature (McGrath 48):

Plates 10, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 should not be carelessly exposed either to Ladies or to Young Persons. These Plates are therefore stitched up separately. As the work is a scientific one, and calculated both by its mode of construction and its price for the higher and more reflecting class of readers, and as the Plates above enumerated are also entirely scientific and anatomical, the Publisher might have dispensed with this precaution; but he is anxious that these readers should have it in their power to obviate the possibility of the careless exposure of such anatomical Plates: they are therefore detached from the Work and may be locked up separately (*Kalogynomia* v).

As Lynda Nead has argued, “the erotic is not a fixed or innate property of any given image, but is historically specific and open to competing definitions. Since the erotic describes the space of permissible sexual representation, there is a great deal at stake in where the boundaries of this category are placed” (*Female Nude* 104). By addressing the reader and making him or her aware of growing anxiety about young and female readers and their susceptibility to erotic images, Stockdale constructed a certain kind of readership for sexual-scientific works, a readership that would be flattered by his appeal to its moral and intellectual prowess even as it was titillated by the erotic ‘danger’ that these works represented, and pay to inhabit the liminal space of the expansive “grey zone” into which these works had subsequently begun to fall, between the legitimate and the obscene, the instructive and the erotic.

Kalogynomia seems to have met its mark. The work was likely profitable, since after it was published Stockdale began to revise and reissue Robertson’s earlier works under various titles with unprecedented speed, even as he continued to issue new editions of *Kalogynomia* itself.¹² By reassembling the Scottish physician’s original material and incorporating new plates and extracts from other sources into it, the publisher fashioned a kind of erotic book series that he proceeded to market as based on, or related to, *Kalogynomia*.¹³ Among these works was the edition of *The Generative System* that would offend the Newgate inspectors. To augment this book’s erotic appeal, Stockdale appended Robertson’s handbook with seven extra plates (most of which he borrowed from *Kalogynomia*), building on the technique of combining material from several works that he had begun with *Complaints* in 1813. McGrath has argued that, like *Kalogynomia*’s preface, these plates enacted a shift in the nature of the reader’s interaction with Robertson’s book. Encouraging sexual voyeurism rather than scientific observation, these plates continued the preface’s project of constructing a readership

within the “grey zone” of sexual-scientific publication. She singles out Plate 18 (which was not taken from *Kalogynomia*, but another, as yet unidentified, erotic volume) as particularly powerful in this regard (52). This image is not more explicit than the book’s other illustrations, but McGrath contends that it was perceived as “more erotic,” citing its suggestive omission from the book’s table of contents and the fact that it represents female genitalia with the intimacy of erotic illustration rather than the objective distance of medical representation (52). Depicting a woman’s parted thighs and genitals at eye level, the image is “less a medical view of the vulva than a pornographic view of a cunt. The plate [is surrounded by] a carefully engraved representation of an ornate frame, the presence of which alters the status of the image from simple to special object” (52). This frame “shifts the image from the unadorned medical and directs the gaze towards the centre, focusing tightly on the slit. It is not at a safe distance, but eye level, literally in the observer’s face,” discouraging a distanced interaction characteristic of scientific reading (52).¹⁴ Stockdale complemented the work that such plates did to enact a shift in readers’ interpretive practices in his advertising for the book, which he represented as “a new work, rather than a new edition” (i). Through newspaper advertising, he also compared it to other titillating volumes, hailing *The Generative System* as a successor to *Kalogynomia* and an equal to such works as *Harriet Wilson*, encouraging a kind of cross-reading of scientific and gallant literature.¹⁵ It was this possibility of vulgarising the nature of *The Generative System*’s interaction with the reading public which would become a fulcrum for debates about its publication in the following decade, uniting discourses on obscenity, radicalism, and medical professionalization against medical eroticism.

Stockdale was the first of the period’s emerging obscenity dealers to incorporate medical or scientific works into an erotic catalogue, making him a pioneering—and disruptive—figure within the publishing trade. His inventive medical series seems to have prompted little imitation or policing, however, until the Newgate inspectors discovered *The Generative System* and publicized their findings in 1836.¹⁶ But importantly, the prosecutions that the Society for the Suppression of Vice brought against Stockdale’s rival publishers in the preceding years set the stage for public debates about *The Generative System*’s social effects on certain classes of readers and, more broadly, the problem of medical eroticism, by publicizing (and inadvertently promoting) how certain publication practices could magnify the social danger posed by “borderline” literary works. The relationship that the SSV articulated between a “borderline” work’s social

danger and the methods through which it was produced and distributed was formulated amid anxieties about radical working-class rebellion, expanding literacy, and the increasing ease of issuing cheap print materials. Defining vice in terms of “social indiscipline,” the organization conflated moral degeneracy with social rebellion, and sought to stem both by prosecuting radical publishers for issuing obscene and blasphemous publications (Roberts 165-167). While many of these publications were political,¹⁷ the organization also prosecuted publishers such as Benbow, Carlile, Duncombe and Dugdale for issuing racy literary works, which it thought equally “conducive to leading astray the rising generation” (“The King v John and Edward Duncombe” 746). As with *The Generative System*, however, these works did not neatly fall outside culturally agreed upon margins of legitimacy. Unlike radical political tracts, it was difficult to argue that these literary publications had been issued expressly to disturb the peace or corrupt the morals of the public, a requirement for finding a publisher guilty of publishing an obscene libel until the late 1850s (Kendrick 99).¹⁸ The prosecutions that the SSV brought forward—and the public debates that they incited—made the case for the criminality of publishing such ‘borderline’ literary works by linking the methods through which they were produced with the social danger they posed (Colligan, *Traffic* 28). As an 1822 article in the *Quarterly Review* about the SSV’s prosecution of William Dugdale for reprinting *Don Juan* argued, cheap, accessible publication could transform a relatively “innocent” text into a criminally “obscene” one (28). If *Don Juan* had been subject to copyright, it

would have been confined by its price to a class of readers with whom its faults might have been somewhat compensated by its merits... to readers... who would have turned with disgust from its indecencies, and remembered only its poetry and wit. But no sooner was it whispered that there was ‘no property’ in ‘Don Juan’ than ten presses were at work, some publishing it with obscene engravings, others in weekly numbers, and all in a shape that brought it within reach of purchasers on whom its poison would operate without mitigation—who would search its pages for images to pamper a depraved imagination, and for a sanction for the insensibility to the sufferings of others... and would treasure up all its evil, without comprehending what it contains of good. *‘Don Juan’ in quarto and on hot-pressed paper would have been almost innocent — in a whitey-brown duodecimo it was one of the worst of the mischievous publications that have made the press a snare* (“Art. VI — Cases of Walcot v. Walker” 127-128, my emphasis).

The notion that unruly circulation could activate or magnify an explicit work's social danger was not new. *Dominus Rex v. Curl* (1727), the first court case in British history to declare the act of publishing obscenity a crime, had determined that Edmund Curl's publication of *Venus in the Cloister; or, a Nun in her Smock* (1724) constituted a public offense because it was "a printed work, and as such it was capable of widespread public distribution" (Saunders 437). Because it could potentially circulate "all over the kingdom," the work threatened "morality in general" (qtd in Saunders 437). Largely through the action of vice watchdogs like the SSV, early nineteenth-century discourses about obscenity advanced this logic to accommodate concerns about cheap print's power to radicalize working-class men, rising ideologies that deemed young and female readers particularly vulnerable to moral corruption through reading, and radical publisher's increasing exploitation of relatively "innocent" works' obscene populism through strategic editing and advertising (McCalman 204). The radical publishers of Stockdale's circle sharply critiqued this view of cheap publication as elitist,¹⁹ but the notion that cheap editions, circulated promiscuously, could transform a relatively "innocent" text into social threat, and that unruly publishers demonstrated intent for this transformation to take place by choosing to publish them cheaply and prolifically, gained traction, influencing new legislation such as the Vagrancy Acts of 1824 and 1834, which made it an offense to display obscene prints and pictures in public places (Kendrick 99-100).

The prison inspectors who discovered *The Generative System* in Newgate Gaol drew the questions of medical eroticism and scientific legitimacy into contemporaneous debates about the links between publishing practice, obscenity, and radicalism when, in July 1836, they urged the crown to prosecute Stockdale for publishing an obscene libel. Russell and Crawford recognized that like explicit literary texts, sexually detailed science was simultaneously conceived to play a valuable social role and to endanger its readers' morals. They could not deny that *The Generative System* was a medical work that many readers considered perfectly legitimate,²⁰ just as the SSV could not deny that literary works like *Don Juan* were similar to titles held up as paragons of English literary genius (Gamer 1048). But emerging arguments that the way in which a literary work was published and circulated could "activate" its social danger by arousing political and libidinous energy among the working classes, and a growing juridical emphasis on an explicit work's price and routes of circulation as evidence of malicious publishing

motives, presented possible ways of overcoming the challenges that the “grey zone” of sexual-scientific publication posed to prosecuting Stockdale for publishing *The Generative System*. By drawing on contemporaneous debates about medical reform and the role of reading in the criminal rehabilitation process, the inspectors’ refutation of the City Committee’s judgment cleverly adapted arguments that had been used to prosecute the publishers of ‘risky’ literary works such as *Don Juan* to encompass the questions of medical eroticism and scientific legitimacy. At the same time, the refutation also advanced earlier discussions of the links between the processes through which a work was published and disseminated and the social danger that it posed by suggesting that it was the effects of those practices, and not the intent that underpinned them, that should be the law’s focus.

Russell and Crawford’s 1836 report to the Secretary of State did not discuss *The Generative System*’s textual or visual content in specific terms, but focused instead on the circumstances of the work’s publication and circulation. Drawing on earlier discussions of the social disorder that cheap editions of ‘risky’ literary works might effect, the inspectors exploited *The Generative System*’s popular publication and unruly circulation to call into question both its scientific legitimacy and Stockdale’s publishing motives. The pair advanced their argument that in issuing the work, Stockdale had intended to subjugate young men to his commercial—and, perhaps, political—enterprise by appealing to their libidinous desires. They largely did so through the authoritative voices of the medical and business communities, quoting booksellers and “several of the most distinguished persons of the medical and surgical profession” to demonstrate that Stockdale intended the work to reach a popular, largely uneducated, and morally vulnerable audience (“State of Newgate” N. pag.). The booksellers each confirmed that *The Generative System* was “never written for, or bought, by members of the medical profession as such”. The medical professionals went much further, linking the work’s production for a popular audience with their low opinion of the book’s scientific value and Stockdale’s intent, even when they had not actually seen the work themselves. One physician not only affirmed that *The Generative System* “was never used by the profession, nor ever intended for them,” but also opined that “there could be no doubt it was a disgusting and indecent work, and that the plates were obscene... and that a respectable medical man would be ashamed of having it”. Another declared *The Generative System* “a book reprobated by the profession; for, under the guise of being a

scientific work, it was published with the intention of entrapping young men". Their bias in assessing the work was likely influenced by Robertson's reputation as an opportunist among London's influential physicians as well as Stockdale's recent infamy over the *Harriet Wilson* memoirs as an unsavoury publisher (McGrath 44-45). However, these physicians' focus on distancing Robertson, Stockdale, and their book from 'the profession' also importantly reflected rising efforts within the elite medical community in this period to forge a collective professional identity that excluded a range of practitioners who, like Robertson, were "deemed 'unorthodox' in knowledge, practice or education (Brown 240).²¹

In linking anxieties about the influence of unorthodox medical publications that were emerging within discourses on medical professionalism with contemporaneous debates about obscenity and radicalism, the inspectors suggested—and indeed, anticipated—how the medical profession could utilize discourses about obscenity to exert greater control over medical practice. However, their aim was not to further the interests of elite physicians, but to convince various levels of government to act more strongly against the entry of 'improper' works of all kinds into institutions like Newgate. Like many of the SSV's members, Russell and Crawford believed that explicit materials could incite social unrest. The regulation of prisoners' reading materials deeply concerned prison inspectors in this period,²² but since many layers of authority surrounded the penal system, it proved surprisingly difficult to control what prisoners read (Fyfe, *Books* 189). In seeking to convince the state to prosecute Stockdale, they sought to set a precedent for prosecuting the distributors of other explicit books that found their way into Britain's prisons. This motive explains why Russell and Crawford undercut their own argument against *The Generative System's* scientific legitimacy and Stockdale's motives when they declared in the same refutation that

there are scientific and anatomical publications, of the highest reputation, which, however useful and indispensable, as forming a part of the subjects of study, to the professed anatomist, would, if subject to general inspection, be justly described as "disgusting, obscene, and indecent in the extreme;" ...even if the book were of the character ascribed to by the committee, the ward of a prison is not the place in which the studies, for which alone they regard the volume as calculated to serve, might be properly pursued; ...we are satisfied that such a book ought not to remain in an open cupboard, accessible to the various prisoners, young and old,

who in turn occupy the ward in which we found it. ("State of Newgate" N. pag.)

In other words, the inspectors argued, any explicit medical or scientific work, regardless of the intent under which it had been issued or even its value as science, posed a social danger when it fell into the hands of vulnerable readers. Since one of their goals was Stockdale's prosecution, they had pragmatically instrumentalized the opinions of the medical and bookselling communities to argue that *The Generative System* was intellectually bankrupt and that the publisher's intent was criminal. Their larger aim, however, was to effect greater control over the circulation of explicit books, even those that might be considered professionally indispensable.

The competing impulses evidenced in Russell and Crawford's argument—to disprove an explicit medical work's status as science, and to argue that its scientific status was irrelevant to the question of its social danger—would continue to weave in and out of debates surrounding medical eroticism and the publication of sexual science throughout the nineteenth century. If their plea had resulted in Stockdale's prosecution, perhaps one of the arguments it advanced would have prompted the formulation of an official mode for distinguishing between licit and illicit medical publications relatively early in the period. But while the inspectors' appeal reportedly moved some members of Parliament,²³ the government did not prosecute Stockdale for obscene libel, nor did anyone else. Their report to the Secretary of State also elicited little newspaper coverage, beyond its reproduction in *The Morning Chronicle*, until the following year, when Stockdale brought the book to the courtroom himself. Audaciously, the publisher sought £500 in damages for libel from Messrs. Hansard, who had first published Russell and Crawford's report—and after he lost his first case in 1837, he prosecuted Hansard twice more. It is likely that Stockdale's decision to litigate arose from his recollection of the remunerative benefits that the publicity of the *Harriet Wilson* trials had garnered him some years earlier.²⁴ He was amply rewarded: for more than three years, the "Stockdale Affair" was the subject of hundreds of articles in newspapers all over the country, and triggered a wave of similarly marketed popular medical publications that would further expand the publication of medical books on sexual topics as well as debates about their obscenity.²⁵ Most of these articles provided British readers with daily updates on the

trials, where *The Generative System's* publication, circulation, and readership again became a central point of debate.

Attempting to prove that they had not committed an act of libel, Messrs. Hansard echoed the Newgate inspectors' argument that Stockdale intended for the book to be consumed as obscenity because it circulated outside professional medical circles. They denied that *The Generative System* "is a scientific work (using that term in its ordinary acceptance), or that the plates are purely anatomical, calculated only to attract the attention of persons connected with surgical science" ("Law Intelligence" N. Pag.). Like the inspectors, they did not support these claims by using the book's text or plates themselves as evidence, but instead cited medical booksellers who "describe it as one of Stockdale's obscene books, and say that it was never considered as a scientific work; that it was never written for or bought by the members of the profession as such; and that it was intended to take young men in by inducing them to give an exorbitant price for this indecent book". Messrs. Hansard also emphasized Stockdale's unsavoury reputation, even calling on the publisher's son to testify that his father had issued *The Memoirs of Harriet Wilson* and other indecent books ("House of Commons' Publications" 4). Legally, this evidence functioned only to prove that Hansard had not damaged Stockdale's reputation by publishing the report, but proof that a known obscenity dealer had published the *Generative System* also served to imply that the report's characterization of the work was correct—a point that the press picked up on. The *Manchester Times and Gazette* cited Stockdale's notoriety "for the publication of certain books which have not the best fame," for instance, when it opined that *The Generative System* must indeed be "a very improper book," and that Hansard had been perfectly correct in publishing the "libellous" report ("Libel – *Stockdale v Hansard*" N. Pag.). Stockdale vehemently denied that *The Generative System* was not a "scientific book... calculated to attract the attention of persons connected with the science," citing its authorship by a surgeon, its dedication to Matthew Baillie, the late King's physician, and the Court of Aldermen's statement as evidence that the book was an ordinary scientific work. For the most part, however, his arguments were unsuccessful. In two of the three trials, Stockdale's reputation for publishing obscene works, and the book's unruly circuits of dissemination, led *The Generative System* to be declared a "disgusting, obscene and indecent" book by the jury, and Messrs. Hansard not guilty of libel ("Important Case of Libel" 174).²⁶

Although the “Stockdale Affair” dragged on for years, public debates about the relationship between the circumstances under which *The Generative System* had been published and disseminated and the social danger that it posed were quickly aborted due to the onset of acute concerns about how Stockdale’s libel claim might impact Parliamentary privilege—concerns that Stockdale eventually leveraged to win his third and final suit against Hansard in 1840, a few years before his death.²⁷ In framing anxieties about explicit science’s socially disruptive potential within the context of intersecting discourses about obscenity and radicalism, however, in which the “vulnerable” reader was beginning to be constructed and framed as a key social concern, the Stockdale affair importantly situated questions about scientific legitimacy within larger cultural debates about how to manage sexual representations and their radicalizing or otherwise antisocial effects on vulnerable readers. Subsequently, explicit medical writing was increasingly articulated within discussions of obscenity as one of a wide range of genres whose legitimacy depended on the contexts of their publication and dissemination.²⁸ Stockdale’s career thus not only represents the initial phase of the development of an important publishing practice that shaped the British public’s experience of sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment in the nineteenth century by bringing sexual science directly into circulation with various forms of erotic material. At the same time, in transferring the emerging sense that the contexts of a work’s publication activated its social danger outside the literary, the controversy that the publisher’s edition of *The Generative System* incited laid the discursive groundwork for future medico-juridical attempts to manage the unruly field of medical and scientific publishing and separate sexual science’s transmission of knowledge from its function as a source of sexual entertainment and pleasure, a process which gradually hardened culturally imagined links between sexual-scientific works’ material lives and their legitimacy.

Endnotes

¹ One of Robertson's articles on cantharides, for instance, published in the *Edinburgh Medical Journal* in 1806, received modest international attention (White 413).

² Both the prospect of drawing clients and the goal of ingratiating himself to London's elite medical community probably underpinned Robertson's decision to dedicate *The Generative System* to Matthew Baillie, King George III's Scottish-born physician. For further details regarding Robertson's hopes for the book's impact on London medical circles, see McGrath 42.

³ I have been unable to trace the exact nature of Robertson's disagreements with Phillips about the planned publication of *On the Diseases of the Generative System*.

⁴ John Stockdale produced a number of political publications over the course of his career, and was himself influential in shaping laws against libels. In 1778, Stockdale Sr. was indicted for a libel on the House of Commons after publishing John Logan's *Review of the Charges Against Warren Hastings*. The prosecution claimed that Stockdale published the work with the intent to vilify the Commons as corrupt and unjust in its treatment of Hastings. Stockdale's counter-argument, that his work should not be judged by isolated passages, but by the entire context of the publication and its general character and objects, was instrumental in the passing of Fox's Libel Act of 1792, which governed the legal treatment of libels thereafter, including cases concerning obscene libel (Barker, N. pag.).

⁵ Examples of these publications include Sarah Green's *The royal exile; or, Victims of human passions* (1810), Percy Shelley's *St. Irvyne; or, The Rosicrucian* (1811), and Stockdale's own *Plain Facts: or a Review of the Conduct of the Late Ministers* (1807). Stockdale's prints included illustrations by such artists as George Cruikshank and Thomas Rowlandson.

⁶ Examples of these publications include *The History of the Inquisitions, including the secret transactions of those horrific tribunals* (1810), *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* (1811), *Gynecocracy; with an essay on fornication, adultery and incest* (1821), and *The Confessions of an Oxonian* (1826). Like many of his explicit publications, Stockdale wrote the latter book himself under the pseudonym "Thomas Little".

⁷ The Society for the Suppression of Vice had been founded in March 1802, succeeding the Society for the Reformation of Manners, which had been founded in 1787 by William Wilberforce. For more information about Society for the Suppression of Vice's establishment and early activity, see Roberts, "The Society for the Suppression of Vice and its Early Critics, 1802-1812".

⁸ While Stockdale published four editions of *The Generative System* between 1811 and 1817, all included only the eleven illustrative plates that Robertson had commissioned for the book, pointing to the inclusion of new illustrations as a major shift in his treatment of the work that coincided with his increased exploitation of Robertson's works and medical eroticism more generally (McGrath 45-47).

⁹ Stockdale attempted to extort money from wealthy, aristocratic men at least twice after the publication of *Harriet Wilson*. In 1829, he commissioned "a pro-Caroline hack" named Thomas Ashe to write *Osipha; or The Victim of Unlawful Oppression*, which accused the Duke of Cumberland of murdering his valet (McCalman 226). Ashe appears to have beaten Stockdale to the punch when he attempted to extort Cumberland himself later that year (226). In 1834, Stockdale was tried and found guilty of conspiring to extort money from the Earl Cornwallis by threatening to "publish statements prejudicial to the honour and virtue of the Countess" Cornwallis in the form of a book entitled *Memoirs of Laura Countess Cornwallis* ("Court of the King's Bench – Monday" N. Pag.; "Miscellania" N. Pag.)

¹⁰ James A. Secord has argued that although the “1825-1826 crash is often seen as a watershed moment, ...few [publishing] firms went under and the number of titles published soon recovered” (47). Since radical publisher-booksellers did not enjoy the considerable resources of the larger firms, however, they may well have found recovery more difficult, especially when the books that they specialized in were becoming less popular.

¹¹ Flagellation novels, one of the most popular genres of obscene fiction in the Victorian era, emerged in this period (Sigel, *Governing* 23). So, too, did obscene “harem novels” which fetishized Eastern sexual culture (Colligan, *Traffic* 45-46; Sigel, *Governing* 41-45).

¹² It would appear that Stockdale’s reworked editions of Roberton’s works were not, however, as successful as Stockdale hoped—or, at least, they did not improve his financial situation, which was further compromised by the libel suits that embroiled him in throughout the mid 1820s as a result of *Harriet Wilson’s* publication. Between 1827 and 1833, Stockdale wrote to the Royal Literary Fund repeatedly to request financial assistance. The literary fund alternately rejected his requests and ignored them. See BL ADD MS 589.18 for this correspondence.

¹³ The works in Stockdale’s medical/erotic ‘series’ based on Roberton’s works included *The Beauty, Marriage Ceremonies and Intercourse of the Sexes in all nations; to which is added The New Art of Love (Grounded on Kalogynomia)* (1824) and *An introduction to the natural system of anatomy, physiology, pathology and medicine; to which is added a general view of natural history* (1825). The title pages, prefaces, and even the titles of these books themselves emphasized that they were “by the Author of *Kalogynomia*,” while Stockdale’s newspaper advertisements suggested their eroticism by listing them for sale alongside *Kalogynomia* as well as such erotic works as the infamous *Harriet Wilson*, “Thomas Little’s” *The New Art of Love* (c.1824) and *The Confessions of an Oxonian*. For examples of Stockdale’s advertisements for these works, see “Secrets of Nature” N. Pag.; “Suppressed Memoirs” 1; “Greek Loan” 1; “Questionable Gems” N. Pag; and “Dr. Roberton’s Celebrated Book” 1.

¹⁴ Plate 8, which was borrowed from *Kalogynomia*, may have acted in much the same way: while it bears numbered markers that suggest an educational function, this illustration similarly depicts an erect penis and a vulva at eye level, far more explicitly and closely than any of the images original to the book. There is other evidence to suggest that readers enjoyed the book read the work for erotic entertainment, but it is problematic. Noting that the “British Library copy [of the book] bears traces of much use” and falls open at both illustrations mentioned, McGrath claims this as evidence that these images were often looked at by readers independently of the text itself, probably for sexual entertainment (52). While this may well be the case, one has to wonder whether this occurred years after the book’s publication. I have also not been able to locate the “sections of the text (including a description of large clitori)” that McGrath claims “have been clearly marked by readers...for their affective powers” in the British Library copy (52).

¹⁵ See, for instance, “Secrets of Nature.” N. Pag.; “Stockdale’s Budget” 113; “New Part of Harriette Wilson’s Memoirs” 113; “Suppressed Memoirs” 1; “Greek Loan” 1; “Duchess of Roxburgh.” N. Pag.; “Important to Fashionables!” 199; “Unrivalled in Popularity!” 363.

¹⁶ Stockdale’s competitors clearly admired his ingenuity. While satirizing Thomas Wakely’s new medical periodical *The Lancet*, an 1823 article in Benbow’s *Rambler’s Magazine* slyly cited *Kalogynomia* among the medical “indecentcies” allowed to members of the medical profession that “would subject others to [legal] action” (505). But instead of copying Stockdale’s creative medical series, such publishers focused on producing inexpensive editions of incendiary literary works like Byron’s *Don Juan* (which they often bound with explicit plates and sold alongside spurious “new” cantos), whose famous authors lent them more immediate and lucrative notoriety (Colligan, *Traffic*, 27-30). Meanwhile, while medical men like Wakely were, in the 1820s and 1830s, increasingly critical of the popular influence that unlicensed medical practitioners’ publications effected, the medical community seems to have ignored Stockdale’s provocative medical series. It was far more concerned about the circulation of popular medical publications

that deliberately undermined the authority of orthodox medical knowledge and marketed dubious proprietary medicines (Brown 238-240). Perhaps more surprisingly, the medical series incited no apparent interest from the Society for the Suppression of Vice, which was responsible for the majority of obscenity prosecutions in the period. The organization was perhaps too busy attempting to suppress the publishing activities of Stockdale's rival publishers—especially Benbow, Carlile, Duncombe and Dugdale, whose continued involvement in radical politics the organization considered as much of a social threat as their obscene fiction and poetry's sexually explicit content—to pay much attention to Stockdale, whose publication of tell-all works like *Harriet Wilson* and disagreements with various business associates had already embroiled him in multiple lawsuits.

¹⁷ In 1819, for instance, the Society for the Suppression of Vice prosecuted Carlile for publishing a “blasphemous libel, intitled [sic] “Paine's Age of Reason,” which was strongly associated, like Carlile himself, with radical politics (Carlile 151; see also Roberts 161, 164, 167). This action prompted Carlile to publish and distribute his own *Letter to the Society of the Suppression of Vice, On Their Malignant Efforts to Prevent a Free Enquiry After Truth and Reason* (1819), which accused the Society for the Suppression of Vice of prosecution publishers for disseminating publications that its members had not actually read. In 1822, the Society prosecuted Carlile again for reprinting *Palmer's Principles of Nature* (1819), an American work that had become a virtual “Bible” for Deists (“Blasphemy” N. Pag.).

¹⁸ For example, when, in 1829, Edward and John Duncombe were prosecuted for purveying obscene works that, problematically, contained “articles... which had been taken from other books... long in circulation without being challenged,” the presiding justice John Bayley suggested that the Duncombes' wide advertisement of the works in question indicated their ‘mischievous’ intent, since it exposed writings of an indecent character to vulnerable youths throughout the country (“Libellous and Obscene Publications” N. Pag.).

¹⁹ Although they would soon follow Stockdale in exploiting anxieties about the impressionability of young and female readers to market these “risky” works as erotica, radical-minded publishers like William Dugdale protested that applying this perceived link between cheap print and the magnification of a work's social danger in law was elitist: the more expensive “works of Beaumont and Fletcher, and even Shakespeare, were [in many ways] liable to the same imputations” of indecency as his own publications, he argued. There should not be “one law for the rich and one for the poor” governing reading material (“Obscene Publications” N. Pag.).

²⁰ The Libel Act of 1792, which outlawed the extraction of material out of context for establishing any libel, meant that to a certain degree *The Generative System's* medical content and professional authorship offered Stockdale protection from prosecution (McGrath 56).

²¹ Anxious to shore up their collective control of the medical marketplace, such physicians frequently denounced popular publications authored by unlicensed medical practitioners like Robertson in the 1830s, considering them to undermine orthodox medical knowledge and exercise a dangerous “influence over the minds and bodies of the people” for no greater objective than lining their author's and publisher's pocket-books (Brown 238-240).

²² While enthusiasm for reading as an instrument for rehabilitation swept in the first half of the nineteenth century, leading to the rapid expansion of prison libraries throughout the nation, prison governors worried that some print materials would incite, rather than quell, anti-social action (Fyfe, *Books* 64). The circulation of radical political works within prisons was of particular concern to both prison authorities and the various levels of government, leading to the prohibition of political publications in jails after 1819 (197).

²³ Russell and Crawford's plea to the government prompted Sir Robert Peel, for instance, to declare that it “was of the very highest importance that those who were sent to the gaol should not come out worse than they went in; and, for this purpose it was important” that such a book “should not be put in to the hands of prisoners” (“Parliamentary Proceedings” 2).

²⁴ As McGrath notes, Stockdale's determination to win his case against Hansard may also have been inspired by his father's earlier success in challenging the law of libel (56).

²⁵ A word search on Gale/Cengage's *19th Century British Library Newspapers: Parts I and II* for "Stockdale v. Hansard" alone brings up 537 articles stretching from February 1837 to November 4, 1898 in 56 of the database's 60 major national, regional and local newspapers. Most of these articles were published between 1837 and 1840, during and in the aftermath of Stockdale's three libel suits against Hansard.

²⁶ Notably, the issue of readership also served the Stockdale's arguments against Messrs. Hansard. When Crawford was forced to admit that he was not a medical expert, but a clergyman never looked at medical and surgical works, Stockdale argued that it was absurd that "this was the individual on whose authority the work in question was condemned" ("Sherrif's Court" N. Pag).

²⁷ Whether Stockdale won or lost his claim, its stakes were high, for when he sued Hansard for libel he had effectively sued Parliament, since Hansard acted under its direction. Many MPs feared that if Stockdale won his case, it would set a dangerous precedent that would encourage private citizens to sue Parliament in droves. They argued that Parliamentary records should be exempt from prosecution to avoid this threat. So too did many newspaper publishers. "Should the publishers of a newspaper," *The Manchester Times and Gazette* asked its readers, "be punishable for *copying* that which the House of Commons has seen fit to print?" ("Lord Denman and the Commons." N. Pag.). But a significant proportion of the public, as well as several MPs themselves, worried that a privileged Parliament would endanger the very liberty of the English people by making it possible for the government to defame British citizens—a notion that Stockdale eagerly latched on to in 1839. His eventual success in court was procured by appealing to citizen's rights. As a result, the "Stockdale Affair" changed British legal history. Parliament rapidly responded to the trial's final verdict by passing the Parliamentary Papers Act of 1840, which established privilege for papers published under the House's authority in 1840 (McGrath 58-59). Under this Act, the decision in Stockdale's favor was reversed, and he was thus finally defeated. He died at Bushey on 16 Feb. 1847, aged 70 (Barker, N. Pag.).

²⁸ Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd's celebrated defense of an unexpurgated edition of Percy Shelley's poems, which was formulated less than two years after the Stockdale's final trial concluded, illustrates this point well. Talfourd argued that passages in Shelley's poems "Queen Mab" and "Alastor," "like details and pictures of works in anatomy and surgery are either innocent or criminal, according to the accompaniments which surround them, and the class to whom they are addressed. If really intended for the eye of the scientific student, they are most innocent; but if so published as to manifest another intention, they will not be protected from legal censure by the flimsy guise of science" (18-19).

Chapter 2.

Commercial Enterprises: “Obscene Quackery,” Legal Change, and William Dugdale’s Trade in Medical Works, 1839-1868

William Dugdale (1800-1868) was one of the first and most notorious publishers who enthusiastically adopted Stockdale’s technique of marketing medical works as erotic products at mid-century. The “slim, robust”¹ son of a Quaker bookseller-tailor, the radical-minded Dugdale had relocated from Stockport to London at the age of eighteen to work for William Benbow (McCalman 156). Four years later, amid declining demand for radical print, Dugdale formed his own printing, publishing, and bookselling business at 19 Tower Street, Seven Dials, the first of several premises that he would occupy over the course of his long career. His early publications were mainly radical political pamphlets and literary works, but by 1827, like Benbow, Dugdale began to shift the focus of his publishing activities from radical literature to erotic materials. Primarily issuing reprints of sexually explicit English works and translations of previously published French titles, Dugdale’s business—which he operated with the help of his brothers Thomas (1802-c.1880) and John (1803-1856)—quickly became the primary source of obscene fiction in England and the United States (Mendes 3).² His book catalogues and advertisements reveal, however, that by the late 1830s he was also selling significant numbers of medical works on sexual topics, as well as “night guides” to London’s bawdy houses, albums of erotic images, and popular novels. Some of his earliest works on the topic of sexual health, such as *On the Possibility of Limiting Populousness* (c.1838), a sensational anti-Malthusian rant, reflected his ties to radical politics (Sigel, *Governing* 20). However, the medical works that Dugdale traded in quickly became less overtly political, more sexually detailed, and deliberately marketed as erotica. The publicity that the Stockdale Affair elicited in the late 1830s, Dugdale’s business ties to Benbow, who

admired Stockdale's provocative medical series, and the fact that his catalogues list several of Stockdale's revised versions of Robertson's works for sale, suggest that Dugdale's business in explicit medical works was at least partly inspired by Stockdale's earlier exploitation of medical eroticism.³ Dugdale's own trade in medical eroticism not merely imitative, however, but a pioneering cultural force, which was subject to imitation and further development, and intersected on the public stage with the expanding publishing activities of "quack" or unorthodox medical firms such as the notorious Jordan family firm. This chapter examines these intersecting routes of fringe medical publication and the debates about medical 'obscenity' that arose around them. This history reveals sexual science's dual function as a form of knowledge and a form of entertainment in the period, and makes visible the embattled contexts in which medico-juridical discourses about sexuality were deployed at mid century.

The intersecting businesses of obscenity dealers like Dugdale and unorthodox medical publishers such as the Jordan family firm at mid-century reveal how changing discourses about obscenity and medical professionalism continued to condition the publication of medical works after the Stockdale Affair. It was not simply Stockdale's influence, but these discourses themselves that shaped these competitors' businesses, motivating the ways in which they developed their catalogues, represented their wares to potential clients, and discussed their businesses in the public sphere. These publishers exploited these discourses to emphasise to the public how explicit medical works were situated within a "grey zone" between science and entertainment. In translating the "grey zone" of explicit medical publication into a dynamic cultural space in which sexual entertainment and sexual knowledge merged, a space that the reader could also inhabit, these publishers attempted to cultivate a growing middle-class readership that used medical books for both purposes. At the same time, these publishers protected their businesses from legal censure by invoking the "grey zone's" existence, challenging medico-juridical authorities to articulate a hard 'line' between licit and illicit medical publications. The cultural influence that these publishers exerted is often underestimated, in part because the works they published were largely apolitical. McCalman has argued, for instance, that the "masturbatory fantasies" that obscenity dealers produced in this period were "too hollow and fantastic ...too commercially expedient, to be a subversive cultural force," an accusation that has also been levelled against medical profiteers (McCalman 235; Peterson 246). But while it is true that these

works were not overtly radical, their apolitical nature does not preclude the disruptive cultural force that their publishers represented.

By publishing and selling large numbers of accessible sexual-scientific works to middle-class readers, and by situating them amid the “grey zone” between knowledge and entertainment through the public spaces of the periodical press, the courtroom, and the public museum, these publishers were seen to corrupt medical practice and scientific enquiry and subvert the efforts of the government, the police, the judiciary, and the medical elite to manage the circulation of medical information and sexually explicit writing. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that concerns about the increasing visibility of “quack” publishers’ and obscenity dealers’ production and advertisement of explicit medical writing informed rising debates about how to regulate ‘borderline’ works within the government, the courtroom, the orthodox medical community, and public forums such as the periodical press, in which these publishers advertised. In the absence of being able to separate these functions of sexual science textually, concerns about unruly medical publication propelled an increasing emphasis on the relationship between publication context and an explicit work’s detrimental social effects within these debates that eventually led to the formulation of a legal test for obscenity in 1868, through the case of *R. v. Hicklin*. While acknowledging sexual science’s dual production of sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure, this influential test attempted to resolve the moral and legal ‘grey zone’ into which explicit medical writing fell by separating legitimate and illegitimate works through assessments of the relationship between publisher and reader.

Like most mid-Victorian publishers who adopted popular medical books into erotic catalogues, Dugdale did not follow Stockdale’s model of extensively rearranging, reassembling, and editing sexually explicit medical texts and images to augment their erotic appeal. Some of the obscene fiction he sold, such as *Flora Fielding: or, The Amours of a Young Lady*, which features a surgeon who makes “a more minute investigation [of Flora’s body] than was necessary... instigated by a more powerful motive than a medical one,” blur the boundaries between the medical case study and the erotic narrative, suggesting how medical case studies themselves might be enhanced by a clever editor for the consumption of readers in search of erotic entertainment (*Gems* 1: 4). But Dugdale seems to have preferred the cheaper and more expedient method of

simply reprinting existing medical works on sexual topics, generally charging his readers between two and six shillings per volume.⁴ Some of these materials, such as *Aristotle's Masterpiece* (1648) and Charles Knowlton's *The Fruits of Philosophy* (1832), were popular instructive manuals on sexual practice, contraception, and pregnancy. Others, like R. & L. Perry & Co's *The Silent Friend* (1847), were piracies of new "quack" handbooks designed by unorthodox medical firms to sell middle- and working-class readers treatments for sexual disease and dysfunction. Still others, such as translations of Samuel-August Tissot's *L'Onanisme* (1760), were new versions of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century tracts that railed against the dangers of masturbation and other forms of sexual 'self-abuse'.

These medical works were not technically sophisticated, and they often contained dubious sexual information. Their chief merits for both the publisher and his readers were their cheapness, their accessibility, and the fact that their descriptions of sexual bodies, acts and desires tended to be fairly explicit. That many of these works were out-dated does not seem to have dissuaded people from purchasing them. In part this was because, as Leah Price has explained, "the books most *used* by Victorians were not," by and large, "books *written* by Victorians" (36). Mid-Victorian readers routinely read works written fifty or sixty years previous, since the expense of new copyrights could push a book's price beyond the means of most consumers (Fyfe, *Steam* loc. 527-528). Taking advantage of the conflation of age with timelessness that nineteenth-century publishers' expedient investment in public domain works fostered, Dugdale often advertised his older publications as "the most valuable works ever offered to the public," suggesting that they were previously unavailable to readers because they had remained untranslated from the original Latin or French or, in the case of *On the Possibilities of Limiting Populousness*, because they had been suppressed (Smith, "Works Published by H. Smith" 4; Smith, "Works Sold by H. Smith" 8). Through this publisher's heroic efforts to dig up information from the past, his copy often implied, ordinary readers were at last given access to the arcane "Secrets of Nature," an alluring prospect that late-Victorian publishers would more fulsomely emphasise in their advertisement of social-scientific works about sex (Smith, "Works Published by H. Smith" 2).⁵

It was the power of advertising that made inexpensive medical works valuable additions to Dugdale's erotic catalogue. While not denying these works' scientific content or pretending that they were obscene fiction or sex manuals, he played on the precarious "grey zone" between the medical and the erotic to market these wares to an audience whose motives in reading such materials were often "grey" themselves, seeking both sexual education and relatively inexpensive sexual entertainment. His catalogues of books for sale, which he routinely appended to the end papers of his published works, emphasised his medical works' erotic effects by alluding to the explicit nature of the information that they contained, exploiting the works' status as "science" to emphasize the detail and accuracy of their sexual representations even as they cite their risky "notoriety" or the fact that other versions may be expurgated. For example, one of the publisher's most comprehensive catalogues, published c. 1855, incessantly underscores the "Curious and Valuable" nature of such "unexpurgated" works as *On Impotence and Sterility; or, Private Advice to Married Ladies* by "Dr. Graham, of celestial bed notoriety," and *Geneseology; or, the Physiology of Woman*, which was "requested [to]... be kept from youth and unmarried females," a phrase that Dugdale often used, drawing on the vulnerable/capable reading dichotomy that moralists and legislators increasingly promoted, to flatter his reader even as he emphasised his medical works' 'dangerous' allure (Smith, "Works Sold by H. Smith" 8).

These documents also emphasised the eroticism of the medical works advertised by paralleling them with other explicit materials, exploiting the suggestive powers of context in ways that later fringe publishers of sexual science would, again, develop further.⁶ The publisher's routine visual placement of medical works among lists of his often pricier obscene novels, sex manuals, albums of erotic images, and guides to London's bawdy houses in his catalogues, as in the following example, from a catalogue that Dugdale published under the alias "H. Smith" c.1840, suggested their common obscenity:

Secrets of Nature Revealed; or, The Mysteries of Human Procreation and Copulation Considered and Explained (2s 6d)

A Safe Conduct Through the Territories of Venus; or Guide to the Unwary (2s 6d)

Seduction Unveiled: or, a Complete Exposure of the various Artful Methods of Seducing Young Ladies (2s 6d)

On Impotence and Sterility: or, Private Advice to Married Ladies (6d)
The Connubial Guide: or, Married People's Best Friend (6d)
Fruits of Philosophy: or, Private Advice to Young Married People (2s 6d)
Every Woman's Book; or, What is Love? (1s 6d)
The Utility of Flagellation (5s 6d)
Julia; or, I Have Saved my Rose! (10s 6d)
The Swell's Night Guide Through the Metropolis (3s 6d)
A Physical View of Man and Woman in the State of Marriage (10s 6d)
Nymphomania; or, a Dissertation concerning the Furor Uterinus in Females (2s 6d)
Conjugal Love; or, the Mysteries of the Hymen Unveiled (2s 6d)
On the Possibility of Limiting Populousness (1s)
Philosophy of Pleasure: Or, the History of a Young Lady of Luxurious Temperament and Prurient Imagination (10s 6d)
Venus's Album, or, Rosebuds of Love, Parts I, II, III and IV (4s 2d each)
Private Life of Lord Byron (3s 6d)
Tales of Twilight; or, Entre Chien et Loup (10s 6d)
Life of the Famous Fanny Hill (5s 6d)
Adventures of a Bedstead (5s 6d)
Memoirs of Harriette Wilson (5s 6d)
Mysteries of Venus: or, Life of Kitty Pry (4s 6d)
Woman Disrobed (3s 6d)
Woman of Pleasure (4s 6d)

(Smith, "Works Published by H. Smith" 2-6)⁷

Dugdale did not confine his advertising to his own published catalogues of works for sale. He also advertised extensively in political journals like the Chartist *Northern Star and National Trades' Journal* and in a number of popular theatrical, sporting and sensationalist periodicals, including *The Era*, *Bell's Life in London* and *The Satirist*. Like his books, these advertisements were published under a variety of aliases, including "Henry Smith," "Charles Brown" and "John Wilson," as well as Dugdale's own name. Those advertisements published under Dugdale's name that offered explicit medical handbooks for sale tended to list them alongside less risky, though usually titillating or slightly disreputable, fiction such as translations of Eugène Sue's enormously popular

Les Mystères de Paris [*The Mysteries of Paris*] (1842-1843) and George Sand's *Indiana* (1832).⁸ The advertisements he placed under aliases, however, usually listed medical works on sexual topics for sale alongside more explicit literature and images, such as *Adventures of a Bedstead*, *Venus's Album*, *The Frisky Songster*, and *The Exquisite*.⁹ Since advertising in periodicals was quite expensive, the fact that Dugdale advertised widely and frequently in them—often placing multiple advertisements on the same classified page under different aliases—emphasizes how important advertising was to his business's success as well as the fact that his business was successful enough to support considerable advertising costs.¹⁰ The publisher needed to advertise prodigiously because his copy vied for readers' attention with the advertisements of his competitors. Many of these competing publishers, including a number of formerly radical publishers such as Edward Duncombe and Edward Dyer, also sold medical works alongside obscene fiction and images, and listed both kinds of works in their newspaper advertisements. In the mid 1850s, for instance, Dyer competed with Dugdale in the *Era's* classified pages, advertising *Hints and Advice to Young Married Couples* and "Stereoscopic Slides from Nature" alongside spicier offerings.¹¹ The rapidly increasing number of such periodical advertisements in the late 1840s and early 1850s signals the emergence of a recognizable, and increasingly vital, trade in medical eroticism in the wake of the Stockdale Affair that extended beyond a few fringe publishers. The practice of trading on cheap, explicit medical works' eroticism was becoming at mid century a staple of the expanding obscenity trade.

But dealers like Dyer were not Dugdale's only competition in selling cheap, explicit medical works. A few remaining radical publishers, such as James Watson, advertised sexual advice manuals like Knowlton's *Fruits of Philosophy* in the same periodicals. Much more numerous, however, were the advertisements of unorthodox medical publishing firms, which listed in the same periodicals popular medical handbooks on sexual disease and dysfunction for sale, including several works that Dugdale pirated. The print materials and displays about sexuality that these organizations produced functioned as important forums through which middle- and working-class audiences of the period received information about subjects "which regular biomedical science was sometimes unwilling to speak," as well as acting as a popular form of entertainment (Porter & Hall 121). As with obscenity dealers' businesses, these publisher's activities demonstrate some of the discursive complexity of *scientia sexualis*

over time, across classes, and in different publishing circumstances. Works on sexuality like these publishers' wares, which frequently express the necessity of disciplining sexual behaviour and excising sexual desire, not only functioned in ways that negated their aims, real or purported, but were distributed and even written for alternate purposes — in this case, in the service of profit from sexual ignorance, curiosity, or desire. Often dubiously qualified as health experts, unorthodox medical publishing firms worked hard to cultivate readers for these works, aiming for those publications and displays to act as advertisements themselves for a wide variety of products and services, ranging from ointments and pills that could be obtained through the post to expensive in-person consultations (Burmeister 186). Like Dugdale, these publishers targeted a national audience of largely middle-class male readers, and spent enormous sums to reach them (186). One mid-Victorian estimate placed unorthodox publishing firms' collective annual spending on newspaper advertisements at between fifty and sixty thousand pounds (Detector 27; 31).¹²

Unorthodox medical publishing firms had in common with Dugdale two other practices that help show how their businesses were similarly conditioned by rising cultural anxieties about explicit publications, how they were each motivated by profit, and how each constructed middle-class readerships for medical material that skirted the boundary between the instructive and the erotic through carefully calculated presentations of themselves and their publications. Like Dugdale, these publishing firms adopted pseudonyms to conceal the infrastructure of their businesses, often publishing several advertisements, each under a different name, next to one another in the same classified pages (Burmeister 183-186). By making it look as if their works were produced by a number of independent medical practitioners and smaller medical firms, this technique helped these publishers represent themselves to middle-class as respectable vendors, even as their advertisements clearly highlighted the detailed information they provided about "secret diseases" and "female problems," information that some readers might consider erotic. The Jordan family firm, one of the "most notorious and time-honoured... quack firms" of the period, published and advertised its works under dozens of pseudonyms, including Bright, Brody, Cooper, Curtis, Harvey, Hunter, Lloyd, Lucas, Mallan, and Perry, most of which derived from the names of eminent medical practitioners (Detector 79).¹³ The practice of reusing existing publications for their own purposes was also, as with Dugdale, a hallmark of these publisher's businesses: they

pirated each other's works, sold their own old works under new titles, and recycled parts of older texts to create "new" works. Whole passages from *Manhood: the Causes of its Premature Decline with Directions for Perfect Restoration*, for example, a pamphlet originally published by the unorthodox practitioners Joseph Lambert and Samuel La'Mert under the name "John Lewis Curtis," were reproduced in the Jordan's (alias "R. and L. Perry and Co.") *Silent Friend*—a work that, through another act of piracy, also became one of Dugdale's staple medical offerings (185).¹⁴

The multiple ways in which these fringe publishers' businesses overlapped suggest how they jointly constructed and competed for audiences in search of practical information on sexual health and erotic entertainment. That obscenity dealers and unorthodox medical publishing firms advertised in the same venues, sold similar or even the same works at comparable prices, and used several of the same methods to represent their books and businesses to potential clients does not necessarily mean, however, that readers could not distinguish between them. Dealers like Dugdale often employed titillating headlines such as "Love's Doings in Paris" or "Real and Curious French Prints" in their periodical advertisements to suggest their varied wares' sexual content, emphasising their medical works' entertainment value over their value as medical knowledge in the process. In contrast, unorthodox medical publishing firms like that of the Jordans typically favoured more subdued euphemisms in their advertisements' leaders, such as "Manly Health" and "Self-Preservation," and devoted much greater advertising space to promoting single books.¹⁵ While these advertisements emphasised the erotic appeal of pamphlets such as *The Silent Friend*, they did so more covertly, prioritizing their publisher's representation of themselves as reputable medical practitioners in order to protect their lucrative consultation businesses. And although publishers like Dugdale sold French letters and other sexual paraphernalia on the side, they pointedly broadcast that they did not sell print materials primarily to advertise medical products and services. As Dugdale's c. 1855 catalogue entry for "Tissot's Celebrated Work, Onanism Unveiled" advises readers,

All the books so regularly, systematically, and perseveringly thrust upon the public by advertisements are extracted from this work, with the exception of the remedies, which they cunningly conceal, and for which they charge enormous prices. There is no medical practice connected with the sale of this work, and therefore there is no interest in concealment [of remedies] (Smith, "Works Sold by H. Smith" 5).

These differences among fringe publishers' businesses were the reason why it was the publishing and advertising practices of unorthodox medical firms that first initiated discussions of medical obscenity in the late 1840s and early 1850s, discussions which drew attention away from obscenity dealers' own opportunistic publishing activities. Importantly, these discussions drew the medical community's mounting concern with regulating the unruly field of medical publication into larger cultural discourses about obscenity. In attempting, and failing, to discipline medical publication, remove sexual science from the public sphere, and separate it from sexual entertainment at mid century, they helped propel the development of emerging cultural links between publication context and obscenity that would culminate in the 1868 *Hicklin* ruling.

Radiating out from medical schools, the pages of medical journals, and the meetings of medical societies, the discussions of medical obscenity that unorthodox medical firms' publishing activities initiated at mid-century articulated the same concerns about protecting vulnerable readers that had become a focal point in debates surrounding *The Generative System's* obscenity in the earlier Stockdale Affair. In this case, however, charges of obscenity were routinely levelled against many different medical books and their publishers over a period of many years. Furthermore, these charges were now made primarily by the orthodox medical community itself, and were firmly rooted in this community's escalating concern with defining for itself and for the public "what did and did not count as legitimate medicine" (Weatherall 175). Faced with both a highly competitive medical economy and a public image that they feared had been compromised by the "taint of trade," medical elites agitated for reforms at mid century that would legally limit the practice of medicine to formally qualified professionals (Burmeister 224). It was hoped that if medical practice were limited to licensed practitioners, local and national medical organizations would be empowered to regulate medical practice as they saw fit, and accomplish the goals of improving public health, stabilizing the medical economy, and establishing the profession's public image as a trusted social authority. But in the absence of such reforms, elite medical practitioners attempted to discipline medical practice by launching virulent campaigns against "quackery". The term "quackery" is, as Roy Porter has pointed out, an "accusation used to brand someone supposedly practising medicine in bad faith" (vi). As such, the term does not correspond to any specific practice, but, rather, constitutes a discursive method of controlling professional behaviour (vi). The expanding production and dissemination of

sexual information by unorthodox medical practitioners and publishing firms in the form of popular books, pamphlets, and public displays or “museums” became a focal point for the medical community’s most virulent anti-quackery campaigns at mid century. It was within these campaigns that the term “obscenity” was increasingly deployed alongside “quackery” as an additional discursive tool to regulate medical publication, medical practice, and medical consumers, showing how more complicated discourses about obscenity and scientific legitimacy evolved as fringe publishers became a larger and more powerful force in the unruly field of medical publication, with competing commercial interests playing an important role in mobilizing the use of these terms.

Medical elites viewed unorthodox medical publishing firms, which appealed to the middle and working classes by bridging sexual education and sexual entertainment, as a menace to the trustworthy and respectable image of medicine that they were trying to foster, and as a drain on clients who would otherwise seek out qualified professionals (Burmeister 194). At a time of rising public anxiety about the moral and social effects of explicit representations, the term “obscenity” offered them a rare opportunity to discipline such activity. By characterizing the medical works on sexual topics that unorthodox medical publishing firms produced as “offensive,” “indelicate,” “immoral,” “indecent,” “vile,” and “filthy” and “obscene,” and these publishers themselves not merely as charlatans, as medical elites had represented them in the past, but also as obscenity dealers—or vendors “of obscene trash under the guise of medical writing,” as one *Lancet* correspondent put it in 1847—the orthodox medical community situated unorthodox medical firms outside the bounds of the medical field and public propriety (Bates, “Dr. Kahn’s” 618; “Quack Medical Books” 521). As a satirical lithograph published by the British College of Health in 1852, entitled “The Obscene M.D.,” neatly illustrates, this anti-quackery discourse was, practically speaking, the only means that the orthodox medical community had at its disposal to discipline such publisher’s activities. The lithograph depicts a publisher, “Mr. Quarto,” sitting in a busy bookshop surrounded with such popular unorthodox works as *Mysteries of Matrimony*, *The Silent Friend* and *Manly Vigour*. “Your book goes off famously, Doctor,” Quarto informs an author,

Nothing like a highly-seasoned work, [sic] to sell... We can push the thing, because it is written by an M.D.; the police can’t touch us, we are *beyond all law*; because we are privileged by the *law* to write obscene books and

call it *science*. This trade of ours enables us to ride about in our carriages with a lot of servants, all of which is owing to the mystery and confusion in which the whole question is kept by the *Royal Colleges*, as they are called.

Quarto's author is enthusiastic. "[C]apital, by Jove!" he exclaims, "[W]e may defy the police and all the anti-Vice societies: let them touch an M.D. if they can; our diplomas protect us. ...[M.D.s] are licensed to write, publish and sell all the obscenities we can collect!" Both judicial and medical authorities, as this lithograph points out, were largely powerless to control the activities of unorthodox medical authors and their publishers through official channels. Popular publications on sexual health circulated freely, for the questions of what did and did not count as legitimate medical science not only remained far from resolved within medical circles, but were also not subject to legal regulation. Medical authorities could speak out against practices of which they did not approve, but until the passage of the Medical Act in 1858 they had little control over how medical practitioners went about their work. Indeed, neither these authorities nor the government itself possessed any legal right to control who represented themselves as physicians, a state of affairs that unorthodox medical practitioners were well aware of, and capitalized on as they expanded their publishing businesses and consultation practices at mid century (Bates, "Indecent" 13-14).

It was the "quack's" freedom to enter into medical discourse that propelled this anti-quackery discourse's emphasis on the importance of instructing readers about the links between a work's legitimacy and the contexts through which it was published and advertised, bringing concerns about audience and access that had been central to the earlier Stockdale Affair into fresh debates about obscenity. What concerned the medical community most about unorthodox medical publication was that unorthodox medical publishers represented themselves as respectable practitioners, even participating in campaigns against quackery in order to bolster their own images at the expense of formally qualified physicians and surgeons. Ironically, for example, the British College of Health, which published "The Obscene M.D.," was an organization founded by one of the early nineteenth-century's most notorious "quack" doctors, James Morison (Arnold 46). The lithograph is the third illustration in a four-part series entitled *Morality of Medicine Mongers* (c. 1852), which attempted to distance the College from accusations of quackery and promote its dubious treatments and "cures" by characterizing orthodox

physicians as lascivious, money-grubbing thugs. The series (which is, notably, dedicated to the Society for the Suppression of Vice) also depicts “high-class” doctors taking liberties with female patients, a practice apparently condemned by “Mr. Morison’s System of Medicine” (“The Obstetric M.D.”). As with the Jordan family firm, such organizations also masqueraded under the names of reputable medical organizations and famous medical practitioners, called the practitioners associated with them “doctor,” “surgeon,” or “consulting surgeon” even when they lacked formal medical training, advertised themselves in connection to well-known hospitals, and listed themselves in spurious directories of formally qualified medical professionals (“Detector” 28; 33-34; “A Warning” 632). Given that their publications were also, in content, often uncomfortably similar to those produced by qualified practitioners and could even be pirated or creatively reworked versions of such works, it was, many medical elites claimed, difficult for the public to differentiate between formally qualified medical practitioners, reputable medical institutions, and legitimate medical books, and informally trained, profit-motivated practitioners and organizations and illegitimate medical works. This state of affairs, these medical elites feared, put patient’s views of the medical profession, their pocketbooks, and, potentially, their lives, at risk in the hands of incompetent and even malicious “doctors”.

The medical community’s mobilisation of discourses on obscenity and quackery to discipline unorthodox medical publishers also, therefore, simultaneously constructed and attempted to regulate different readers of medical material, framing medical indecency not as an inevitable effect of writing about sexuality, but as a deliberate effect of illegitimate medical practice. Anti-quackery campaigners urged both potentially “vulnerable” clients and medical practitioners themselves to scrutinize medical publications for subtle signs of legitimacy, from the bibliographic appearance of a work itself to the minutia of the phrasing of its title to the advertising copy that was employed to sell it. In 1853, for instance, the *Lancet* issued “A Warning” which advised readers that “orders given by Subscribers to Booksellers and Newsvendors for ‘The British Medical Directory,’” a directory of qualified medical professionals in Britain compiled by the journal’s publisher, “should particularly and fully specify the EXACT TITLE, otherwise the “Quack’s Guide” may be imposed upon them, instead of the orthodox Directory of the Profession” (“A Warning” 632.). Medical elites justified further attacks on unorthodox medical publisher’s periodical advertisements, which were crucial to their businesses’

success, as acts undertaken on behalf of a vulnerable public, representing these documents as “dangerous to faith and morals” not simply because their extensive circulation “afford[ed] quacks of selling their vile trash,” but also because these publisher’s notices often exposed young and female readers to endangering allusions to sexuality (“Quack Advertisements” 46; Hall 133).¹⁶ In 1853, the *Association Medical Journal* even proposed to crush “obscene quackery” through the formation of a “Society for the Suppression of Fraudulent and Obscene Advertisements,” which would endeavour to “redeem the better part of the periodical press from its present position of hireling servitude to medical swindlers and obscene advertisers” (631). By negatively linking “obscene quackery” with the moral health of a purportedly vulnerable reading public, the orthodox medical community thus instrumentalized the problem of unorthodox medical practice to bolster its public image, representing itself as a staunch protector of public morals even as it sought to discipline popular medical culture (Burmeister 229). At the same time, in necessarily focusing less on the illegitimacy of what lay *within* unorthodox medical firms’ publications than on the indecency of these publisher’s *representations* of themselves and their works through the activities of publishing and advertising, campaigns against ‘obscene quackery’ importantly expanded the circulation of emerging cultural links between a work’s obscenity and its publication context, anticipating the legal formalization of publication context as a test of obscenity in the coming decade.

By the mid 1850s, it was clear that campaigns against obscene quackery were ineffective. Efforts to “purify” the press received a great deal of positive publicity, but they failed to discipline unorthodox medical publication and advertisement: since “quack” advertisements for explicit medical works represented “large and regular amounts of revenue” that many periodicals could scarcely afford to lose, they continued to circulate in large volumes (“Is It Possible” 697). These campaigns also failed to discipline the reading public: as Maritha Burmeister has noted, unorthodox publications and displays about sexuality actually appear to have increased in popularity among the middle classes and some sections of the working class in the 1850s (127). It was at this moment, however, that the activities of fringe publishers like Dugdale, largely ignored by the medical community because they did not represent themselves as medical professionals, inadvertently opened up a novel new way for medical elites to discipline medical publication, marking the beginning of another stage in the evolution of

discourses about obscenity and scientific legitimacy. In July 1856, *Reynolds's Newspaper* issued the first of several newspaper reports that gradually documented the ubiquity of explicit medical books and images among the “disgusting” wares seized during police raids in Holywell Street and its environs, presenting obscenity dealers’ trade in medical works to the public as for the first time as a potential social problem. This first report noted that the “quack” “Dr. Culverwell’s works” and other “medical” volumes were among the “divers books, plates, prints and engravings” that had been seized from Dugdale’s residence in a recent raid (“Court of the Exchequer” 16).¹⁷ Over the next two years, the popular press noted that several other publishers, including Henry Blackwell, Charles Paul, William Wynn, James Thornhill, and Sidney Powell, had also been trading in explicit medical books and images among other explicit materials.¹⁸ Published amid years awash with debate about the management of sexually explicit materials, surrounding several influential pieces of legislation, including the Matrimonial Causes Act (1857), the Obscene Publications Act, and the Medical Act (1858), these reports marked a peak of Victorian anxiety about obscenity, its social impact, and its definition that became filtered through attempts to suppress Dugdale’s publishing activities. The trials of Dugdale and his competitors under the controversial new Obscene Publications Act exposed the real threat to juridical authority that ‘borderline’ publications posed, even as they highlighted legislation against obscenity as a novel method of regulating the broader field of medical publication. These trials subsequently united moralists, legislators, and the medical community in attempting to regulate ‘borderline’ publications through obscenity law, and further propelled cultural movements toward defining obscenity in terms of publication context.

Conceived in the Lord Chief Justice John Campbell’s anxiety about Dugdale’s publishing practices, following a trial over which he presided in the spring of 1857, the Obscene Publications Act was proposed as a measure to strike a blow at the Holywell-street trade in cheap, salacious print, which Campbell considered a threat to “vulnerable” middle and working-class readers (Leckie 36).¹⁹ Campbell’s anxiety surrounded a wide variety of works, from *Paul Pry*, an ostensibly moralist periodical that related gossip about London’s night houses and reports of scandalous court cases in order ‘to show vice in its own features,’ to Dugdale’s c. 1855 translated edition of Alexandre Dumas’s *The Lady of the Camellias* [sic]. This book contained an extensive catalogue of works for sale—including inexpensive editions of medical works, such as John Moodie’s anti-

masturbation treatise *On Chastity and Morality* (1848), a translated edition of Tissot's *Onanisme*, and Knowlton's *Fruits of Philosophy*, and literary works such as English translations of Ovid's *Art of Love* and the works of Boccaccio, as well as highly explicit obscene fiction and images—which Campbell used to demonstrate the kinds of dangerous materials that were flowing through London's streets.²⁰ Campbell proposed to combat the scourge of cheap obscenity by amalgamating previous haphazard legislation against the common law offense of obscene libel, which had a limited impact on the obscenity trade's activities (Manchester 223). His bill did not seek to alter existing law, but to extend the power of the police and judiciary to act against unruly publishers by enabling them to seize and destroy obscene materials (223; 227).

While the Obscene Publications Act was successfully passed in 1857, its passage was highly contested because, as Campbell's illustrative use of Dugdale's catalogue in Parliament foregrounded, the Act did not account for the existence of 'borderline' publications, which had become a topic of heightened public interest earlier that year as Gustave Flaubert's polarizing obscenity trial in France for publishing *Madame Bovary* (1856) made English headlines (Leckie 21-22).²¹ Campbell held obscenity to be self-evident, and insisted that legitimate works of art would never be condemned under the Act (Manchester 227). Many legal experts, Members of Parliament, and members of the public considered Campbell's proposed Act dangerous, however, because it would confer "under-educated and over-zealous police officers" "a very wide discretion as to [their] right of capture... and thus, on [their] own opinion[s], to inflict irremediable injury" on authors, artists, publishers, and booksellers (qtd. in Manchester 230).²² That Campbell's bill was eventually altered, so that more 'capably' reading magistrates and judges had the final say in whether seized works were destroyed, did not comfort his critics. It was inevitable, *The Law Times* opined, that a few "fanatical" justices would consider works "which lovers of art look upon as art, ...injurious to morals and offensive to decency" (qtd. in Manchester 231). The problem of 'borderline' aesthetic works was, therefore, a key social and legal concern that the Obscene Publications Act did not resolve. Obscenity dealers' trials confirmed shortly after the Act's passage, however, that this state of affairs posed problems beyond the potential threat it represented to aesthetic works, encompassing sexual-scientific works and impacting a wider range of stakeholders than previously thought.

It became clear just weeks after the Act's passage that the problematic legal "grey zone" between licit and illicit works posed a serious problem—but not because great works of art and literature were being prosecuted under the Act.²³ Rather, Dugdale and his competitors recognized that explicit medical works fell into that zone, and capitalized on the fact in court to evade censure even as they capitalized on it in the marketplace through their trade in medical eroticism. It was widely reported that William Wynn, one of the publishers whose seized works included both medical and fictional titles, contended that "the *Aristotle*, of which 14 copies had been seized, was a medical work, and not obscene" ("Police" 11). According to *Bell's Life in London*, Wynn argued that the court was as unsure as he and his fellow publisher-booksellers were about

what we may sell and what we may not. For instance, a book called *The Silent Friend*, which was seized last time, and had been returned as unobjectionable, was now seized again. Then *Aristotle* was condemned, but now they had brought out a new edition, which they thought unobjectionable. In fact, *Curtis on Manhood*, which had been returned, had been transmogrified into *Aristotle*, which had been condemned. [laughter]. The magistrate would, therefore, see all they wanted to do was to "keep within the law". [laughter] ("Keeping Within the Law," 8).

Unfortunately for Wynn, the presiding magistrate did not take his critique kindly, and the "book in question, with others... [was] condemned" ("Police" 11). Henry Blackwell, whose seized goods included "'Physiology of the Passions,' 'Institutes of Marriage,'... 'Life and Adventures of a Courtezan,' [and] 'Swell's Night Guide to the Bower of Venus,'" made a similar argument before the court, declaring that many of "the works [that the police had] seized were medical works, and that he believed they were perfectly correct," but also failed to save his property from destruction ("Seizure of Indecent Publications" N. pag.).²⁴

In many cases, however, as Wynn's speech suggests, such arguments were successful. The boundaries between legitimate scientific representation and obscenity remained sufficiently vague that, in 1858, Sidney Powell was able to convince the court that he saw nothing objectionable in the allegedly obscene stereoscopic slides that he had been selling, and was aware that he had done nothing illegal. The "pictures produced, taken as a whole, were not obscene within the meaning" of the Obscene Publications Act, since they were "mostly intended for medical men... and in no respect more indecent than the exposure of living models in our schools of art," he contended

("Police Intelligence" 8). If selling such publications was, in fact, illegal despite Campbell's claims to the contrary, the court needed to advise him "*of the point at which the line could be drawn*" between obscenity and science if it expected him to observe the law (8, my emphasis). Dugdale also succeeded in saving his property from destruction by appealing to the indistinct 'line' between obscenity and science that he had already instrumentalized in order to sell explicit medical works to middle-class readers looking for sexual entertainment as well as sexual information. While, in a November 1856 trial, he admitted that he "certainly [did] sell what 'you' [the prosecutor] call obscene books," he mocked the court for suggesting that the medical books he sold were obscene, and challenged the prosecution to prove that they were ("Court of the Exchequer" 16). His medical wares were returned to him after his trial, though his salacious fiction was destroyed without apology.

Dugdale and his competitors thus made use of the indistinct 'line' between science and entertainment in two different but equally advantageous ways that contributed to developing cultural discourses about 'borderline' publications and shaped Victorian sexual culture. They exploited the indistinct 'line' between the medical and the erotic to market their wares to readers, reframing the "grey zone" of explicit medical publication through their advertisements as a cultural space that permitted the free interplay of sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment. At the same time, these publishers highlighted the troubling legal problem that the "grey zone" posed to those concerned with regulating it by appealing to the 'line's' very indistinctness within the public space of the courtroom to evade censure from the authorities. That the popular press carefully documented the seizure of these publisher's medical works and the arguments for and against their obscenity that were made in court—but rarely described in such detail trials concerned with obscene fiction—demonstrates significant public interest in the juridical response to the 'problem' represented by such publications and the publishers who traded in them. Notably, this interest was displayed most expansively in populist and sporting periodicals such as *Bell's Life in London* and *Reynolds's Newspaper*, which carried these publishers' advertisements. That such periodicals published particularly detailed records of the trials of Dugdale and his competitors for purveying explicit medical works emphasises how it was not only moralists, legislators, and fringe publishers who had stakes in these trials and their outcomes. Different kinds of readers and other players within the expanding publishing industry were equally

invested, if in different ways, in the “grey zone” of explicit medical publication and the attempts that were being made to regulate it. To regulate the “grey zone” of medical publication was to regulate an important cultural space that represented a rarely (if precariously and antipodally) permitted source of sexual pleasure as well as sexual knowledge for many readers. For many periodicals, to regulate the “grey zone” into which ‘borderline’ publications fell was to threaten their advertising revenue and, often, their own methods of publication.²⁵

These reports highlighted that judges and juries were working without the benefit of clear criteria for differentiating licit from illicit representations of sexuality, and that the result was uneven legal treatment of their publishers. Attempting to apply earlier conventions in assessing ‘borderline’ literary works, conventions that Russell and Crawford had drawn from some years before in appealing to the government to prosecute Stockdale for publishing the *Generative System*, magistrates and judges often turned to the contexts of explicit medical works’ publication and dissemination to justify their destruction. But these authorities remained uncertain about the extent to which they should apply perceived links between a work’s publication context and its social danger in their judgments, and whether they should privilege that context over an explicit medical work’s scientific value. The magistrate Robert Phillip Tyrwhitt’s rambling assessment of Blackwell’s case illustrates this unease. Tyrwhitt surmised that many of the books Blackwell sold “*might* be medical works, with other things interpolated into them” (“Seizure of Indecent Publications” N. pag. Emphasis added). “[T]here were certainly *some* very indecent things” in such works, and they “were certainly very dangerous to youth,” but being at least “*half-medical*,” the works must have some scientific value (Emphasis added). Yet “perhaps,” Tyrwhitt reasoned, “the medical was only used for the purpose of selling the books”. After all, the “book before him was never read by young surgeons”. Ultimately, his ruling against Blackwell resulted not from his pained assessment of the book’s scientific value but from his assessment of its audience and circulation. He eventually condemned Blackwell’s books because they would surely get “into the hands of raw, inexperienced youths” and, in doing so, “might do them an immense injury,” while providing little benefit to the medical community. As with broader mid-century discourses about obscenity, which situated the vulnerable reader at the heart of the moral and legal problems that cheap and ‘borderline’ explicit works posed, concern for the vulnerable reader (such as the reader of *Bell’s Life in London*, a reader

who might the 'grey zone's' knowledgeable and pleasurable potential) and his or her relation to the publisher was thus situated at the heart of many juridical decisions in cases involving explicit medical works.

Given that the courts and the medical profession each articulated concerns about the circulation of explicit medical publications among so-called vulnerable readers, it is surprising that allusions to quackery rarely appeared in these trials and in newspaper reports about them. An article in *Punch* had anticipated that the Obscene Publications Act would be used as a means to suppress quackery before it was even passed, suggesting that "if Lord Campbell's Bill for the Holywell-street nuisance passes, perhaps it will effect a similar, but worse, because more public, nuisance. The nuisance of quack doctors equals, if it does not exceed, the Holywell-street nuisance in turpitude, and far surpasses it in magnitude" ("The Chief Case for Lord Campbell's Act" 73). However, the medical community does not seem to have noted the Obscene Publications Act's potential application to suppressing "quack" publications as soon, although suggestively, several medical journals did highlight several trials in which obscenity dealers like Dugdale and Thornhill were prosecuted for selling medical volumes. Rather, the community lamented on the Obscene Publications Act's passage that quack "advertisements were not included in Lord Campbell's Bill against obscene publications... being much more dangerous to the cause of public morals from their greater publicity" ("The Spermatorrhoea Imposture" 537). Its outrage was briefly relieved by the passage of the Medical Act of 1858, which, in finally regulating medical practice by forming and making publicly available a register of all qualified medical professionals, seemed to promise that provisions for 'quackery' in Campbell's bill would not be necessary. Many physicians thought that the Medical Act would suppress unorthodox medical publisher's activities by making it possible to prosecute practitioners who falsely claimed to have formal medical qualifications (Bates 621). But the Medical Act soon proved a disappointment. Paradoxically, as Alan Bates has noted, this legislation only regulated qualified practitioners, "and so discouraged unorthodox practitioners from registering while leaving them free to trade" in explicit materials (621). At the same time, unlicensed practitioners continued to represent themselves as eminent doctors with impunity: they could easily escape prosecution for falsely claiming to be a licensed practitioner by purchasing medical licenses overseas if they were caught out, and if they failed to produce such a license, the fine for committing this crime was only five pounds,

a sum that was not difficult for the country's most notorious "quacks" to raise (621). Practically speaking, the Medical Act was virtually powerless as a weapon against "quackery," obscene and otherwise.

In this context, campaigns against "obscene quackery" reached a fever pitch as medical elites searched for different ways to suppress unorthodox medical publishers. The rising hyperbole with which the topic was discussed in the 1860s in both the popular and medical press is reflected in F.B. Courtenay's popular 1865 exposé *Revelations of Quacks and Quackery*, first published as a series of letters in the *Medical Circular* under the pseudonym "Detector". At one particularly melodramatic point, Courtenay asked his readers what parents

would not tremble and blush to see their daughters reading the foul allusions to 'secret diseases,' 'self-pollution,' and 'sexual excesses' which abound [in quack advertisements]... What, Sir, if seeking to satisfy the curiosity thus excited, they should send by post for the *sealed book*? Oh! What irreparable moral contamination would then ensue from the perusal of all the sensual details which such books for the most part contain? (26)

Courtenay's exposé mainly targeted unorthodox medical publishers, but a great deal of the hysteria surrounding obscene quackery in this decade centred more specifically on the moral threat posed by medical displays such as Dr. Kahn's Anatomical and Pathological Museum, with which publishers such as the Jordans were often involved as silent partners, using such entertainments as a vehicle through which to sell their publications (Bates, "Indecent" 12).²⁶ Anxieties about such anatomical museums drove the medical community's progression beyond lamenting that Campbell's Act did not have a provision for prosecuting quackery, to recognize, by 1860, that while problematically uneven, early judgments against obscenity dealers like Dugdale for purveying explicit medical works provided a useful precedent for prosecuting "quack" practitioners and medical firms who published and distributed sexually explicit materials under the Obscene Publications Act. When "obscene quacks" like the Jordans managed to elude censure for committing fraud, anti-quackery organs such as the *Lancet* soon counselled prosecuting them under the Obscene Publications Act for purveying obscenity (14).²⁷

In the following years, the proprietors of Kahn's museum as well as a wide range of other "advertising quacks" were charged not with fraud, but with purveying obscenity

(Bates, "Dr. Kahn" 621).²⁸ And as obscenity dealers like Dugdale and "quack" publishers like the Jordans were increasingly dealt with the same way in court, so too were these publishers increasingly linked in the popular imagination: *Punch*, for instance, referred to "quack" doctors as "Holywell Doctors" ("Downing-Street and Holywell-Street" 188). By the mid 1860s, explicit medical works' function as a source of sexual entertainment and pleasure was thus not only widely recognized in the public sphere, partly through the action of fringe publishers' activities—a state of affairs that notably threatened the production of new medical and scientific knowledge about sex by calling its respectability, even when it was produced by qualified professionals, into question.²⁹ Obscenity law had also become a key tool with which medical authorities attempted to exert greater control over medical practice, medical publications, and, to a certain degree, the readers of popular medical material about sex for knowledge and entertainment. That the Obscene Publications Act was not simply used in this period to suppress the activities of Holywell Street obscenity dealers, as Campbell had suggested it would be, but was also deployed to regulate the lucrative fields of medical publication and medical practice further emphasises that the regulation of obscenity was an issue in which many different players were variously invested and clamouring publically. Alongside moralists and legislators, the authors, publishers and distributors of creative works, various readers, and periodical publishers, the embattled medical profession was one of a number of other stakeholders who had significant economic, political, professional, and personal interests in how obscenity was defined.

Through the mid 1860s, many of these stakeholders were convinced that the Obscene Publications Act would lead to the eradication of opportunist publishers of explicit medical works and resolve the threat to medical and juridical authority that they posed. Their optimism is crystallized in the *Daily Telegraph's* jovial decree that soon "young medical students anxious to pick up cheap copies of QUAIN'S Anatomy or the 'London Pharmacopia'" would be able to look for them in used bookstores in Holywell Street without inciting a "volley of ribald jokes" from the "dissolute and the brutal, who intentionally misconstrue the purpose of their visit" (3). This legislation proved almost as disappointing as the Medical Act, however, in its failure to manage the flow of sexual information in Britain. By 1868, the *Saturday Review* was only one of a number of periodicals to declare the OPA a "dead letter," complaining that "Holywell Street literature is... a very visible... fact of the day. At the present moment the dung-hill is in full heat,

seething and steaming with all its old pestilential fume” (“Streets of London” 646). Campbell’s act failed to control the distribution of sexually explicit representations for three main reasons. First, fringe publishers were not deterred by the legislation. They adapted their businesses to suit the new legal environment, “re-modell[ing] their advertisements, so as to place them beyond the provisions of Lord Campbell’s Act” and making greater use of the post as a medium to sell their wares (Manchester 232; “Quacks of Advertising Columns” 144).³⁰ Second, imprisonments did not interfere with many of these publisher’s businesses, which typically involved a number of partners, often from the same family and often unknown to the police, who would continue to publish and sell explicit works if one or more of them was sent to gaol (226). Most spectacularly, however, Campbell’s act failed because it refused to define obscenity in clear terms, which led to uncertain trial outcomes, particularly in cases concerning the distribution of ‘borderline’ works like explicit medical texts, which were increasingly numerous due to the medical community’s recognition of the Obscene Publications Act’s applicability to ‘obscene quackery’. Faced with what seemed a futile task, the police “soon began to lose interest in setting the law in motion, even in the more obvious cases of open sale and display” (233).³¹

The appearance of *The Confessional Unmask’d* in the widely publicized 1868 trial *R. v Hicklin* resulted in a ruling that made it far easier for medico-juridical authorities to police opportunist medical publishers, because it resolved that publication context was a determining factor in the outcome of obscenity trials surrounding ‘borderline’ works. Dugdale’s demise in prison in November 1868 meant that he narrowly escaped having to negotiate a legal precedent that made it far more difficult to get away with trading in cheap, explicit medical books (Sigel 22). The obscenity of the pamphlet, an anti-Catholic diatribe which purported to expose the immorality of hearing confessions, had already been debated twice in court: magistrates in Wolverhampton had ruled that it was obscene, but the Recorder of Wolverhampton, John Joseph Powell, had overturned the ruling, arguing that since the pamphlet’s publication was motivated by religious zeal, its publishers were not guilty of any offense. Powell’s judgement inspired widespread disgust, leading the *Pall Mall Gazette* to opine that “surely the question... [is] whether... the “Confessional Unmasked” [is] a publication generally injurious to the public, not whether the motives of the publisher were amiable or legitimate” (“Legality” 10). To the *PMG*, it was clear that some “obscene publications are obviously not injurious to the

public. For instance, many medical books ...contain matter which is grossly obscene ... but such publications are not criminal, because the interests of medicine... require it" (10). However, if "a man were to pick out every foul passage" contained in such works, "and... sell them in a penny pamphlet to boys in the streets," his act would injure public morals. "Mr. Powell's view" that the publisher's motive must be considered was, therefore, astoundingly shortsighted (10). By Powell's doctrine, the *PMG* argued, "tyrannicide, treason, [or] theft committed by a conscientious communist ...might be justified" (10). That nearly identical arguments appeared in the pages of a number of other periodicals³² underscores how much the view that certain publication practices magnified the social harm that such 'risky' works posed had become naturalized since the Stockdale Affair, and how anxious some sections of the public were—particularly those who were privileged—for that view to be reflected in obscenity law. Nearly three decades of public debate surrounding the problem of regulating explicit medical materials, to say nothing of debates surrounding 'risky' literary works such as *Madame Bovary*, had driven home that the social and legal problem of 'borderline' publications urgently required better methods of resolution, and that legal methods of resolution needed to involve some focus on the relationship between the reader and the publisher.

The Lord Chief Justice Sir Alexander Cockburn's final ruling on the matter of the *Confessional's* obscenity reflected the *PMG's* popular view of obscenity. Making an analogy between obscenity and contagious disease, the judge declared that it was not simply a book's content, but its potential to spread and expose readers "to the dangers of contamination and pollution from the impurity it contains" that made it obscene (*Law Reports* 372). Since the *Confessional* was a cheap English-language pamphlet sold "on street-corners and disseminated in 'all directions,'" it failed what he famously considered the "test of obscenity," which was "whether the tendency of the matter charged... is to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences and *into whose hands a publication of this sort might fall*" (qtd in McDonald 297, my emphasis). This formulation of obscenity, which privileged a work's potential effects on readers over its content or the motives for its creation, hinged on the construction of a vulnerable category of readers which Campbell had appealed to when he proposed the Obscene Publications Act, a construction of readership that had become central to debates about the publication of explicit medical science as well as central to fringe publishers' appeals to the reader. Cockburn's test importantly formalized this construction of readership as

foundational to the definition of obscenity itself.³³ Crucially, however, the judge resolved one of the most persuasive aspects of the defense's argument—that if intent was *not* considered in obscenity trials, publishers of worthy works that necessarily contained explicit words or phrases would be prosecuted—by deeming that an explicit work's "circumstances of publication" would determine whether its publisher was exempt from prosecution (qtd in McDonald 298). Importantly, this immunity clause shifted the meaning of the test, situating the legitimacy of sexual description further away from its measurable effects on vulnerable readers and into the wider and less specific contexts of its publisher's reputation, its bibliographic form, and the processes of its advertisement and dissemination (298). In doing so, the ruling's "extreme vagueness" dramatically expanded the precedent's power as a tool to regulate unruly publication (Potter, *Obscene* 17).

Hicklin's carefully worded formulation was the culmination of a long historical effort on the part of medico-judicial authorities to negotiate the fact that sexual-scientific publications produced sexual pleasure as well as sexual knowledge. Dugdale's career trajectory maps the mid-century expansion and increasing visibility of obscenity dealers' and unorthodox medical publisher's overlapping publishing activities. These activities shaped increasing medico-judicial attempts to regulate sexually explicit publications and their readers through overlapping discourses about obscenity and medical professionalism. This history reveals how these opportunistic publishers, their critics, their readers, and their advertisers each exploited the 'grey zone' between the licit and the illicit: each used the vagueness of cultural divisions between legitimate and illegitimate medical publications to further their disparate goals, but the diffuseness of those boundaries could also represent an impediment those goals. The *Hicklin* ruling posed a solution to the legal and professional problems that medical eroticism and unruly publishing represented to medico-judicial authorities by drawing on the figure of the vulnerable reader to harden and extend the use of publication context as a consideration in the legal judgment of explicit works' legitimacy, implicitly disavowing elite sexual-scientific works' function in the production of sexual entertainment and pleasure. But, in making use of criteria that had been used in various ways to determine 'borderline' obscenity cases since the case of *Rex Dominus v Curl*, Cockburn's ruling neither purified sexual science of its potential function as sexual entertainment, nor did it resolve the moral and legal "grey zone" that explicit medical and scientific publications fell within.

The 'grey zone' remained, for the ruling did not quite specify what constituted the proper "circumstances of publication" for an explicit work.

The *Hicklin* ruling's very lack of specificity made it a powerful tool for medico-judicial authorities to discipline publishing and reading in the late nineteenth century, but it also endangered elite medical works as various parties continued to vie for control over the activities of publishing and reading. The precedent provided some assurances of immunity from prosecution if publishers produced explicit works through proper "circumstances of publication," ostensibly protecting "Great" medical, scientific, legal, literary, and artistic works from destruction (Wee 77-78 and 147; MacDonald 298). However, it neither defined these circumstances nor did it contain a "loophole for questions of either aesthetic quality or authorial intent" (Wee 147). Its test of obscenity, whether a work "had the tendency to deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such influences and into whose hands such a publication is likely to fall," meant that in legal terms, "even a very finely written book... could be found obscene" if its circumstances of publication could be considered dubious in any way, expanding the ability of medico-judicial authorities to discipline the activities of publishing and reading by making it possible to prosecute almost any 'risky' work as obscene (147). Both by providing a more certain legal means of prosecuting unruly publishers of all stripes and, more insidiously, by exerting pressure on authors and publishers to censor print themselves, *Hicklin* powerfully conditioned the publication of sexually explicit writing in Britain after 1868. Publishers' awareness that they *could* be prosecuted for issuing literary, medical and scientific works that communicated sexual information convinced many of them to self-censor, editing explicit passages out of the works they issued, pricing explicit works beyond the reach of middle- and working-class readers, circulating them clandestinely, or not publishing them at all rather than risk running afoul of the law. A more established medical community bolstered this pressure, by adopting *Hicklin*'s language and logic into its procedures for censoring its members and using it to dictate how 'legitimate' medical men wrote and published, as well as supporting legal action against unruly medical publishers. At the same time, however, this period witnessed the rise of discourses about free press and free speech, surrounding the publication of sexual science, by fringe publishers who protested the precedent as a mechanism of control that endangered social and scientific progress.

Endnotes

¹ The author, translator, and bibliophile James Campbell Reddie (c.1808-1878) described Dugdale as “a slim, robust man who walked and talked at a rare pace difficult to match, all the while smoking a Dutch cheroot. He was clean-shaven and I never saw him with a hat, but he favoured bright floral waistcoats that I thought vulgar and for somebody in his profession questionably ostentatious. Toward the end of his life, he became overweight and slow, and the wit for which he was well known deserted him. I suspected that he was taking mercury for syphilis” (Letter, 15 January 1877).

² Until the 1870s, much of the obscene fiction that circulated in America comprised piracies of books produced by London publishers, of which reprints of Dugdale’s works were particularly ubiquitous (Dennis 133).

³ See, for example, Dugdale’s catalogue listing for “Thomas Little’s” *The Beauty, Marriage Ceremonies, and Intercourse of the Sexes* in “Works Sold by H. Smith” 22.

⁴ According to Carol O’Sullivan, this price would have put such works within reach of some lower middle-class readers (107).

⁵ See Part Two for more details about later obscenity dealers’ characterizations of the works they sold as forbidden and scattered works recovered from past times, particularly Chapter Five.

⁶ See Chapters Five and Seven for accounts of later obscenity dealers’ advertising techniques, which, to a certain degree, built on Dugdale’s methods.

⁷ Dugdale appended similar, albeit shorter, advertising lists, to the back pages of periodicals such as his c. 1850 erotic periodical *Gems for Gentlemen*.

⁸ See, for instance, “Works Publishing by W. Dugdale” 2 and “Popular Works Now Publishing by W. Dugdale” 2. Dugdale also published advertisements under his own name that advertised political, philosophical, and literary standards for radical publishers, such as the works of Byron and Shelley, Voltaire, and accounts of William Hone’s trials in the earlier nineteenth century. See, for example, “Just published, a New and splendid Edition of Voltaire’s Philosophical Dictionary” 1.

⁹ See, for instance, “Swell’s New Guide” 2; “Spree of London” 1; “Books, Songs, Tales, Prints” 2; “Just Published by H. Smith” 58; “To Men About Town” 26; and “Just Published” 248.

¹⁰ Between 1836 and 1853, taxes pushed the price of the cheapest advertisement available in newspaper like *The Era* to five shillings, more than Dugdale’s readers would have paid for many of his books (Fyfe, *Steam* loc. 468; “To Advertisers” 8). This price, according to the *Era*’s advertising pages, covered the cost of an advertisement running five lines or less. Dugdale’s advertisements tended to run more lines—typically ten or so—and his competitors’ advertisements, particularly those placed by unorthodox medical publishers, ran many more. Advertisements could have been purchased at a lower rate, if the advertiser published pieces in a newspaper or periodical on a regular basis or if he or she had connections with the publication’s editors. At present, however, I have been unable to locate records of special arrangements for advertising rates between Dugdale or his competitors and the newspapers in which they advertised.

¹¹ See, for instance, “*Gems for Gentlemen* for One Pound” 2.

¹² Although F.B. Courtenay’s (writing under the name “Detector”) estimate of the unorthodox medical publishers’ collective annual spending on advertisements in this sensational anti-quackery exposé should be taken with a grain of salt, its accuracy is not unlikely given the cost of advertising space in periodicals and the extent to which these publishers advertised. See endnote 10 for further information concerning the cost of advertising in periodicals in this period.

¹³ “Cooper” and “Brody,” for instance, played on the reputations of Sir Astley Cooper, Surgeon to St. Bartholomew’s Hospital and Sir Benjamin Brodie, Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons (Burmeister 183). The Jordans also used their own surname when it served their interests. When firm member Robert Jacob Jordan earned a medical degree in 1853, for example, he published under his own name and credentials (183).

¹⁴ *Manhood* itself seems to have be a reworked version of Leopold Deslandes’ *De l’onanisme et des autres abus vénériens considérés dans leur rapports avec la santé* (1835). See Atwater 257.

¹⁵ I take the examples of obscenity dealers’ and unorthodox medical firms’ advertisement leaders, cited in this sentence and the one above, from the *Era*, 2 June 1844: 2. Print.

¹⁶ Letters to the editors of medical journals such as the *Lancet* and the *Association Medical Journal* expressed particularly acute anxiety about putting “an ordinary newspaper into the hands of a female... lest they should be shocked by the disgusting advertisements which are emblazoned on its pages,” again highlighting the discourse about ‘vulnerable readers’ that lent credibility to campaigns against ‘obscene quackery’ (“Disgusting Pages” 622).

¹⁷ Edward Duncombe had been tried three months earlier for trading in a similar mixture of questionable materials, which included “Aristotle’s Works, Physiology of Man, [and] Physiology of Woman”. See LMA MJ/SP/1856/04/006. However, press reports had described his property merely as “indecent and obscene prints” and “works of an amorous character” (“Middlesex Sessions” 7).

¹⁸ See, for instance, “Seizure of Indecent Publications” N. Pag.; “Bow-Street” 6; “Holywell-Street Seizures” 7. “The Holywell-Street Nuisance” 670.

¹⁹ Seizing his opportunity during a debate about the regulation of the sale of poisons, Campbell famously declared that “from a trial which had taken place before him on Saturday, he had learned with horror and alarm that a sale of poison more deadly than prussic acid, strychnine, or arsenic —the same of obscene publications and indecent books— was openly going on. *It was not alone indecent books of a high price, which was a sort of check*, that were sold, but periodical papers of the most licentious and disgusting description were coming out week by week, *and sold to any person who asked for them*, and in any numbers...” (“Sale of Poisons and Poisonous Publications.” Emphasis added).

²⁰ See “Works Sold by H. Smith”. Campbell paraphrased from this catalogue’s first entry, a description of *Memoirs of Fanny Hill: or, Life of a Woman of Pleasure*, to support his claim that cheap obscenity was flowing freely through Holywell street, pointing out that “[i]n the advertisement of one of these [cheap] works it was stated to be ‘illustrated with numerous coloured engravings’ and added, ‘This work has had many imitators, but no rivals. It may be said that for beauty of description it stands without a rival.’ Formerly this work was sold at the price of one guinea, but it was now published at 3s. 6d” (“Sale of Obscene Books”).

²¹ Flaubert’s defense emphasized the importance of considering authorial intent and aesthetic value in determining a work’s obscenity, situating “Flaubert in the context of a respected family, and ...the novel in the context of respected works. Flaubert had a similar idea just before the trial: ‘I am cramming the margins next to the incriminated passages,’ he writes to his brother, “with embarrassing quotations drawn *from the classics*, to show by means of that simple parallel that for the past three hundred years there hasn’t been a line of French literature that couldn’t be indicted as undermining morality and religion’ (qtd in Leckie 22). The prosecution, by contrast, did not consider the question of aesthetic value key to the question of *Madame Bovary*’s obscenity. It urged the court to take the reader into consideration, asking whether it was possible to protect a text – whatever its aesthetic value – if it corrupted the reader” particularly women like Madame Bovary, who might easily have their imaginations seduced (22-23).

²² See Leckie, Manchester, Mullin, and Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, for more information about mid-Victorian debates surrounding the circulation of 'borderline' aesthetic materials and the relation of these debates to conception and passage of the Obscene Publications Act.

²³ As Katherine Mullin has noted, few 'borderline' aesthetic works were prosecuted under the Obscene Publications Act until the 1880s (15-25).

²⁴ James Thornhill and Charles Paul, whose copies of *Aristotle's Masterpiece* had also been seized by the police in 1857, deployed similar arguments: these book dealers each separately claimed that *Aristotle* was "not of a sufficiently immoral character to render the sale an indictable offense" and that it had been "on sale for a long time without any intimation that [it was]... 'illegal'" only to see it ordered destroyed by the presiding judge, David Jardine, in both cases ("The Holywell-Street Nuisance" 670).

²⁵ See Leckie 62-111 for a detailed account of various periodicals' stakes in debates about 'borderline' obscenity, which often implicated their articles as well as their advertisements as obscene.

²⁶ Founded in 1851, Kahn's enormously popular attraction had at first been well received as an educational tool even by anti-quackery organs like the *Lancet* (Bates, "Dr. Kahn" 620). But when its proprietor progressively sought to resolve his financial problems by relaxing restrictions on who could enter the museum's display room of sexual organs and illustration venereal diseases, partnered with the Jordan family firm to sell questionable handbooks on venereal disease to visitors, and eventually, handed the firm and its attached practice over to the Jordans around 1863, the medical community, the Society for the Suppression of Vice, and popular organs such as the *Times* united in holding the Museum up as a symbol of the scourge that obscene quackery posed to the 'vulnerable' middle- and working-class public ("Indecent" 12-15; "Dr. Kahn" 620-621).

²⁷ See Bates, "Dr. Kahn's" and "'Indecent,'" for further information about how the Obscene Publications Act was used to prosecute the owners of medical museums and displays.

²⁸ See, for example, "Clerkenwell – Selling Indecent Publications" 7.

²⁹ See Chapters Three and Four for more information about the ways in which the association of cheap medical material with obscenity endangered medical and scientific works designed for consumption by more elite or professional audiences.

³⁰ For examples of the many and varied obscenity dealer's periodical advertisements for both medical works and other explicit sexual writing and images published in this era, see classified pages in *Era* 15 April 1860; *Era* 27 January 1861; *Reynolds's Newspaper* 7 February 1864; *Reynolds's Newspaper* 11 February 1866; *Illustrated Police News* 1 June 1867; and *Reynolds's Newspaper* 14 June 1868.

³¹ One 1868 letter to the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* complained that police interest in suppressing obscenity had declined so much that its author had failed after attempting three times to induce the police to apprehend a man selling a "filthy pamphlet" "upon the subject of the Confessional," even after he offered "to give my own evidence in support of the charge of hawking, point[ed] out the offender, and plac[ed] in their hands (together with my name and address) the disgusting publications which I had at that instant bought of him" ("The Police and Obscene Pamphlets" N. Pag.).

³² See, for example, the *Saturday Review's* "The Protestant Electoral Union," which argued that, "[I]t is obvious...that many subjects have to be handled in minute detail, in medical, legal and scientific treatises, which it would be simply disgusting to touch upon without some special reason. ...[But] the originals being in Latin, they are at once placed beyond the reach of the immense majority of readers, and particularly of those classes of the community most liable to be contaminated by them. But it is quite another matter when all the obscenest passages that a depraved ingenuity can collect, after careful inspection, from several bulky Latin volumes, are

translated into the grossest English, and strung together in a shilling pamphlet [ie *The Confessional*] with a highly sensational cover, which is publically exposed for sale at the office of a Religious Society, and by their order hawked about the streets for the delectation of every maidservant or potboy who can be induced to buy it" (179).

³³ Notably, this construction of readership was also constituent of Cockburn's view of the process through which a publisher or distributor's own guilt or innocence in disseminating obscene matter should be assessed (Leckie 47). Barbara Leckie argues that Cockburn's ruling did implicitly formulate a conception of inferred intention, in which a publisher or distributor may be said to have good intentions but should have known that his act would do harm—the very act signals, in some way, bad intent (47).

Chapter 3.

Circumstances of Publication: Progressive Politics and the Obscene Science of Annie Besant, Charles Bradlaugh, and Roland de Villiers, 1877-1902

Late nineteenth-century progressive activists took up the rights of the reader to contest *Hicklin's* elitist effects, which removed sexual science from larger public access into the hands of medical professionals and obscenity dealers. The history of their resistance shows how risky medical books and their readers continued to be debated in the press and in the courts, and how discourses about obscenity and its relation to scientific legitimacy continued to change and evolve. This resistance, which came to the fore when the publishers and distributors of two important sexual-scientific works were put on trial, characterized *Hicklin* as a legal precedent that set “one law for the rich and one for the poor”¹ to govern reading material, impeded social and scientific progress, and marginalized political minorities instead of advancing genuine efforts to protect the public from obscenity (“Obscene Publications” N. Pag). In making these allegations, late-Victorian radicals distanced sexual science from the charge of obscenity and the taint of obscene publication, disavowing sexual science’s function as a form of sexual entertainment and a source of sexual pleasure in the name of information freedom. The historical existence of the “grey zone” that these radical publishers and activists sought to vanquish precluded, however, the firm separation of the trade in sexual entertainment with the circulation of sexual knowledge as much as it precluded the existence of a fully sanitized reader of sexual science. The ambivalent relations that emerge on closer scrutiny between these individuals, their publications, and the obscenity trade emphasise the impossibility of completely separating those print circuits, making visible new ways in which the expansive “grey zone” that surrounded sexual science complicated *scientia sexualis's* development and deployment in the period. Sanctions on

public access to sexual-scientific works, attempting to regulate the expansive “grey zone” into which they fell and the blurry economic and political lines that it encompassed, not only meant that even the most elite and self-consciously sanitized works on sexuality risked charges of obscenity when they circulated openly, but also meant that the routes through which scholastic works about sex and those interested in them travelled were often messy, intersecting with opportunist publishers interested in exploiting their eroticism. If unruly contexts of publication and circulation indicated a sexual-scientific work’s obscenity, then, as Havelock Ellis would suggest in 1898, no sexual-scientific work was innocent of the charge (“Note” 5-6). At a time when readers were increasingly hailed to read the contexts of a work’s publication and circulation as a way of assessing its social and scholarly legitimacy, the messy ground of sexual-scientific publication was thus an expansive problem that shaped the character of radical resistance to sanctions on sexual discussion.

I follow Elizabeth Miller in using the term ‘radical’ as a descriptor for the publishers and activists I examine in this chapter, even though their goals were very different from the limited-government circles that shaped the early businesses of Stockdale, Benbow, and Dugdale. In many ways, the term does not sit easily with late-Victorian social protest, which was not tightly focused around the causes of republicanism and free print, as had been early nineteenth-century radicalism. Rather, it was dispersed through many overlapping social interest groups, which included “free thought and personal rights advocates, socialists, anarchists, suffragettes, reformers, vegetarians, anti-vivisectionists, and sex reformers” (Humphreys 1). These groups addressed a wide range of issues concerned with personal rights, and there were significant disagreements across them about the means by which social change should occur (Miller loc. 217).² That such groups commonly defined themselves against mainstream culture despite their ideological differences, and that they worked together, speaking “to one another’s platforms, ...reprint[ing] material from one another’s pages, and ...develop[ing] a shared literary cannon and a mutual print community,” allows me to speak of them, however, as a loose social formation, a “complex interlocking of political, social, and cultural forces” (Miller loc. 249; Williams, “Hegemony” 56). The term ‘radical’ does not always describe that formation well, but it usefully emphasizes the generally counter-culture position that brought these groups together, as well as the way in which they had to work, for better or for worse, through many of early nineteenth-century

radicalism's legacies (Miller loc. 228). These legacies ranged from the culturally imagined links between fringe publication and obscenity that they resisted, to the rhetoric of free print that they adopted to combat it, to the very existence of the obscenity trade from which they attempted to distance themselves.

Radical publishers protested the currency of a legal precedent that had resulted, like the Obscene Publications Act before it, in abject failure to prevent the fringe publishers it primarily targeted—obscenity dealers and unorthodox medical publishers—from publishing, advertising and disseminating medical works on sexual topics. These publishers were convicted for purveying such materials more frequently than they had been before 1868, but they continued to expand their businesses and served an increasingly literate middle- and working-class audience into the twentieth century.³ The passage of several new laws in the 1880s that aimed to make it even more difficult for these publishers to disseminate explicit works also proved largely ineffective. The Indecent Advertisements Act of 1889 banned terms that “quack” publishers commonly employed to describe their works in advertisements. However, as George Bedborough recalled in 1930, “the ‘Indecent Advertisements Act’... [simply] stimulated the invention of “decent” substitutes for phrases now made illegal...: ‘Social Diseases’ ‘Secret Diseases’ ‘Skin Complaints of all Kinds’ began to be common expressions (in urinals and elsewhere)” (2). Similarly, the Post Office Protections Act of 1884 was designed to suppress such publishers’ activities by giving postal authorities license to destroy indecent matter sent through the post. Discovering such materials in transit, however, posed considerable legal challenges (Heath 87-88). So too did turning postal discoveries into successful prosecutions, in part because obscenity dealers were increasingly basing their businesses on the continent, where obscenity laws were not as stringent and British laws had no jurisdiction (88). Attempts to charge the publisher Harry Sidney Nichols with obscene libel for issuing a new edition of Stockdale and Robertson’s *Kalogynomia* failed in 1900, for instance, because he had absconded to Paris. French authorities refused the British government’s request that they arrest Nichols and prevent his Walpole Press from publishing copies of *Kalogynomia* because, as one Foreign ambassador wrote to the Home Office, “[t]he book being apparently in the opinion of the French Police of a medical description, the French Government are, in the absence of some more explicit charge, unable to take any proceedings against Mr. Nichols for the sale of an obscene publication” (Great Britain. Foreign Office. Letter to the Marquess of Lansdowne).

Amid this failure, radical publishers became all too familiar with the multiple ways in which the combined powers of *Hicklin* and the Obscene Publications Act exercised great influence over other areas of the late-Victorian print marketplace, where they were not largely instantiated through their formal application, but rather, through the extra-legal pressures that they exerted.⁴ Progressive medical organizations that considered public sexual health education essential to social improvement advised their members against publishing accessible works on sexual topics lest they risk prosecution for purveying obscenity, and distanced themselves from those members who did. Even the Malthusian League officially did not condone the publication of practical advice on contraception, preferring to leave “the manner of imparting such information to the discretion and responsibility of the individual member” (qtd in D’Arcy 433). *Hicklin*’s logic also exerted further control over the publication of medical works by shaping the action that governing medical organizations like the General Medical Council took against such works’ authors. Although medical authors generally escaped legal prosecution for writing medical works on sexual topics, they still risked forfeiting their careers for publishing work on sexuality (D’Arcy 436). The example of Dr. Henry Arthur Allbutt, a founding member of the Malthusian League’s medical branch, is illustrative. In 1887, after a travelling musician was sentenced to a fortnight’s imprisonment for selling Allbutt’s 52-page birth control manual, *The Wife’s Handbook* (1886), the physician was called before the General Medical Council and Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh. Adopting the precedent’s language and logic into their formal processes of censure, these bodies charged Allbutt with “infamous conduct in a professional respect” for having published *The Wife’s Handbook* “at so low a price as to bring such work within reach of the youth of both sexes to the detriment of public morals” (qtd. in D’Arcy 434). The physician lost both his medical license and his membership to the College as a result, a fate that served as a strong deterrent to other social activists interested in publishing accessible medical writing about sexual health (434).

In 1877, the Secularist leaders Annie Besant and Charles Bradlaugh staged a protest against the power that the *Hicklin* precedent exerted over the print marketplace and so-called ‘vulnerable’ readers’ right to read about sexual bodies, acts, and desires. Moved to action after the printer Charles Watts was charged with publishing an obscene libel for issuing a copy of Charles Knowlton’s 1832 birth-control manual *The Fruits of Philosophy*, Besant and Bradlaugh republished a sixpenny edition of the 47-page

pamphlet through their newly formed Freethought Publishing Company. Their edition's preface openly declared that their decision to republish *The Fruits of Philosophy* was a political act calculated to overturn a legal precedent that they considered to infringe on the right of free speech and free press:

The pamphlet which we now present to the public has lately been prosecuted under Lord Campbell's Act, and which we republish, in order to test the right of publication. ...The pamphlet has been withdrawn from circulation in consequence of the prosecution instituted against Mr. Charles Watts, but the question of its legality or illegality has not been tried;⁵ ...We republish the pamphlet, honestly believing that on all questions affecting the happiness of the people... fullest right of free discussion ought to be maintained at all hazards. We do not personally indorse [sic] all that Dr. Knowlton says... but since progress can only be made through discussion, and no discussion is possible where differing opinions are suppressed, we claim the right to publish all opinions, so that the public... may have the materials for forming a sound judgment. ...[We are] confident that if we fail the first time, we shall succeed at last, and that the English public will not permit the authorities to stifle a discussion of the most important social question which can influence a nation's welfare. (iii-vi)

Besant and Bradlaugh sent their edition of *The Fruits of Philosophy* to the local police, along with a memorandum that not only advised the officers in charge when and where the pair would be selling the pamphlet the following day, but also urged them to "officially report [the memorandum] to the superior person from whom you received instructions to prosecute the [Watts] case" (Bradlaugh 6). Combined with the pamphlet's low price and its recent history of prosecution, this act assured that Bradlaugh and Besant were charged with publishing the allegedly "indecent, lewd, filthy, bawdy and obscene book" in June 1877 (5). Fittingly, the judge who presided over the trial was Alexander Cockburn himself.

Bradlaugh and Besant knew when they published their provocative edition of *The Fruits of Philosophy* that the ensuing trial would present them with a good opportunity to critique what they saw as *Hicklin's* conflation of cheap publication with obscenity, because the ruling had to form the backbone of the case against them. The prosecution argued that while Bradlaugh and Besant's intentions in publishing *The Fruits of Philosophy* were admirable, the *Hicklin* ruling clearly established that intent was not relevant to their case.⁶ It "may be absolutely necessary for the medical profession that

plates and works treating on obstetric matters should be published,” it acknowledged, “but who would say that it would be right to publish such things indiscriminately throughout England? ...*The morality or immorality of such a case must depend on the circumstances of publication.* We have here, in the work before us, a chapter on restriction published... in plain English, in a facile form, and sold in the public streets at sixpence” (16-17, emphasis added). While the prosecution conceded that *Fruits* was “carefully guarded from any vulgarity of expression,” it took issue with the detail and accessibility of its sexual descriptions, maintaining that “the whole scope and tendency of giving such a minute description of all that has relation to the sexual appetite and apparatus concerned therein—the effect of that is to constitute an obscene book” (9, 21). Such “minute” sexual detail, it contended, threatened to lead astray the “boys and girls” into whose hands the pamphlet might fall, given its low price, not simply because it might arouse readers with its descriptions of sexual bodies and acts, but also because it could instruct such readers on how to engage in immoral activity and could be interpreted as advocating that activity (21).⁷

Bradlaugh and Besant countered that the prosecution’s, and by extension, *Hicklin’s*, logic was elitist. *The Fruits of Philosophy*, they argued, was no more explicit or practically applicable than many far more expensive medical guides that circulated freely among middle and upper class readers (117-120; 163; 200). The only tangible difference between Knowlton’s pamphlet and the book that they chose as their prime example, William Benjamin Carpenter’s *Principles of Human Physiology* (1842), which the Recorder of the City of London had recently given out as a prize to schoolchildren, was its price at 10s 6d (118-120; 153). Indeed, they suggested that Carpenter’s book might be *more* likely to “deprave and corrupt” its readers, citing passages from the book which seemed to demonstrate “the kind of feeling which might be awakened in some minds by such a description as ...the attractive outward changes in the girlish form at the age of puberty” (137). As Gowan Dawson has pointed out, the pair further insinuated that “in the production and marketing of *Principles of Human Physiology*, the motives of both Carpenter and [the book’s publisher J&A Churchill] ...had been ...in keeping with the nefarious pornographers who plied their illicit wares in the same street” as Churchill’s Soho premises, citing Churchill’s decision to issue special circulars drawing attention to the work after it became associated with the trial, which substantially increased its sale (Dawson 134; Bradlaugh 148). In doing so, the pair demonstrated that *Hicklin’s* test for

obscenity was problematic not only because it was rooted in elitist views of reading competence, but also because even a well-respected medical work's publication context could be made to appear as proof that the work posed a social danger. Although the legal definition of obscenity's "net" had been deliberately "narrowed in order to enmesh Freethought" publications, they claimed, it would inevitably "catch other fishes" (qtd in Dawson 133). If the jury condemned *The Fruits of Philosophy*, it would "brand all medical men who had written medical works with obscenity," including the exceedingly respectable Carpenter ("The Trial of Mr. Bradlaugh" 5).

As the parallels that Bradlaugh and Besant drew between *The Fruits of Philosophy* and allegedly more 'respectable' medical guides suggest, the pair not only sought to vanquish *Hicklin's* use as a precedent in the legal sphere through this trial. They also attempted to combat cheap medical publications' debated associations with obscenity—formed through a decades-long struggle to manage the 'grey zone' between legitimate and illegitimate publications about sexuality and partly sustained by *Hicklin*—by aligning pamphlets like *The Fruits of Philosophy* and the politics that motivated their publication by radical publishers with respectable social and professional activity. Besant and Bradlaugh chose *The Fruits of Philosophy* as the instrument of their protest strategically: while it was only one of a number of popular advice manuals on sexual health previously condemned as obscene, Knowlton's pamphlet also had a rich historical association with radical politics. As their preface noted, the work had been authored by a freethinking American physician in 1832 and introduced to English readers the following year by the publisher and printer James Watson, "the gallant radical, who came to London and took up Richard Carlile's work, when Carlile was in jail" (Knowlton iii). Watson, who had who considered *Fruits* a work of such "great utility... to the poor" that its use-value was "ample apology, if apology be needed, for its publication" (Knowlton, 1845 ed., ii),

sold it, unchallenged, for many years, approved it, and recommended it. It was printed and published by Messrs. Holyoake & Co., and found its place, with other works of a similar character, in their "Freethought Directory," of 1853, and was thus identified with freethought literature... Mr. Austin Holyoake, working in conjunction with Mr. Bradlaugh at the National Reformer office... printed and published it in his turn... Mr. Charles Watts, succeeding to Mr. Austin Holyoake's business, continued the sale, and, when Mr. Watson died, in 1875, he bought the plates of the work... and continued to advertise and to sell it... *For the last forty years*

the book has thus been identified with freethought, advertised by leading freethinkers, published under the sanction of their names, and sold in the headquarters of freethought literature. If, during this period, the party has thus—without a word of protest—circulated an indecent work, ...few words could be strong enough to brand the indifference which thus scattered obscenity across the land (Knowlton iii-iv, emphasis added).

What Bradlaugh and Besant had put on trial was not simply a pamphlet on birth control, but a printed work that symbolized a long, established, and, in their eyes, respectable political publishing tradition that unjust and hasty changes in the application of obscenity law had begun to undermine.

Establishing their publication's respectability hinged, however, on distancing *The Fruits of Philosophy* from its longstanding association with the obscenity trade. The pamphlet had not, as Bradlaugh and Besant claimed, been sold "unchallenged" for forty years (iii). The police had seized it routinely from publisher's warehouses and bookseller's shops over the past thirty years, supported by medical organs like *The Lancet*, which considered the work to differ "in no apparent feature from [other] obscene publications circulated under a cloak of excellent purpose, but pandering to the most depraved of tastes ("The Fruits of Philosophy" 947). Dugdale himself dealt in *The Fruits of Philosophy* throughout his long career, advertising it alongside a variety of obscene materials in his privately printed catalogues and in newspapers under the multiple aliases. Throughout the 1870s it remained one of the most common medical works sold through the obscenity trade—second only, perhaps, to *Aristotle's Masterpiece*.⁸ During the trial, Bradlaugh and Besant attempted to divorce *The Fruits of Philosophy* and pamphlets of a similar nature from this history. The pair maintained that obscenity dealers rarely sold pamphlets on sexual health because *they did not elicit erotic effects*. Besant claimed, for example, that an obscenity dealer named Cook, who had been prosecuted for selling *The Fruits of Philosophy* shortly before Watts was in 1876, was "not really called up for publishing the pamphlet" (56). The bookseller was "of known bad character, and he sold very few of these works, because they were not written in a style which a vendor of obscene literature would find profitable to sell" (56-57). Ironically, given their intent to overturn the *Hicklin* ruling, the pair further distanced Freethought and *The Fruits of Philosophy* from the obscenity trade by citing obscenity dealers' typical processes of publication and distribution. Besant maintained "that it is the usual thing,

where an obscene book is published, that the printer's and publisher's names are omitted, and they so evade responsibility. I may say that there is no attempt at concealment here, when you find that right through [its history in Freethought circles] this book [was] openly published" (58).

Given Bradlaugh's earlier membership in the Cannibal Club, an organization whose members produced in collaboration with obscenity dealers some of the most explicit and self-consciously obscene print materials of their day—and Besant's probable knowledge of the club and its activities⁹—it is highly unlikely that the pair was ignorant of *The Fruits of Philosophy's* extensive history of circulation through the obscenity trade (Kennedy 169-170). Rather, their argument was strategic. Radical publishers' and obscenity dealers' activities intersected: they faced similar legal challenges, dealt in some of the same books, and resisted cultural obstructions to sexual discussion in some of the same ways. Yet, it was desirable for publishers like Bradlaugh and Besant to distance themselves from the taint of the obscenity trade, just as it was desirable for governing medical bodies to distance the profession from popular books and displays on sexual health amid an expanding unorthodox medical press. Both groups needed to acquire and maintain cultural respectability to achieve their goals. Associations with obscenity and quackery threatened their aims, even if the "grey zone" of medical and scientific publication also offered individual readers within such organizations—like Bradlaugh—exciting and productive opportunities to uncover new sexual knowledge and experience new sexual pleasures. As radicals like Bradlaugh and Besant affirmed their respectability, the reader was thus once again interpolated within Victorian discourses about obscenity and sexual-scientific legitimacy. This reader was not a "vulnerable" reader who might be harmed by sexual-scientific works themselves, but rather, a reader of fields and histories of publication—a reader that *Hicklin's* formulation demanded. Bradlaugh and Besant's recognition of this reader, even as they protested an iteration of the mode of reading (s)he employed, emphasises how ideas about the links between a sexual-scientific work's status and function and its circumstances of publication continued to shape evolving discourses about obscenity and sexual-scientific legitimacy in different ways after 1868.

Bradlaugh and Besant ultimately failed to overturn the *Hicklin* ruling and establish that the publication of inexpensive works on birth control was both lawful and

respectable.¹⁰ In the wake of the Knowlton trial, radicals therefore tended to “avoid the risks of publishing any matter containing details of contraceptive technique” even more than they had before (D’Arcy 433). But the “battle” for a “Free Press” through which “question[s] of ethics, of social science, of medicine” could be discussed openly continued (*Trial* 1). The Knowlton trial became a touchstone for radicals to protest the application of obscenity law to medical publications as an affront to free speech, free press, and social progress with increasing frequency, resisting charges of obscenity levelled against explicit medical works as elitist measures that took sexual information out of the hands of the public, and disavowing the dual function that these works served as sexual information and sexual entertainment. Again, these radical protesters therefore shared some of their goals, if not their methods, with many members of the orthodox medical and scientific communities, who sought to purify *scientia sexualis* and disavow the way in which it produced, as well as uncovering and disciplining, sexual pleasure. Much of this protest was accomplished through radical periodicals, which in the 1880s and 1890s formed what Humphreys has termed a “virtual community” for overlapping groups interested in social reform (1).¹¹ Some of these periodicals discussed sexuality more openly and extensively than others (1-5). *The Clarion*, for example, whose editor Robert Blatchford felt that airing ideas about sexual reform would compromise the journal’s attraction of working-class readers to socialist cause, confined such discussions to its women’s columns (Miller loc. 5038). *The Anarchist*, on the other hand, reported regularly on “outrageous attacks upon the liberty of the press and person” in both Britain and America, where the influential postal inspector Anthony Comstock’s crusade against obscenity was making it dangerous for American sex reformers to disseminate information about sexual health (“Free America!” 2).¹²

Within both kinds of publications, the scope of radical discussions of legal limitations on the dissemination of sexual information expanded. These discussions increasingly represented the freedom of the press as an urgent international cause, touching on cases of censorship in far-off regions like Russia, South Africa, and India as well as Britain and America in the 1880s and 1890s.¹³ They also encompassed concerns about literary censorship, fuelled by the writings of ally literary critics and authors who had grown uneasy about the way in which the subject matter of literature was delimited by wary publishers and censorious circulating libraries, and by sensational literary trials such as that of Henry Vizetelly for publishing cheap translations of Emile Zola’s works in

1888, which revealed how the elitism inherent in legal applications of *Hicklin's* logic to inexpensive medical manuals encompassed the nation's mechanisms of censorship more broadly.¹⁴ Radical arguments that obscenity law was applied against the interests of the public would reach a boiling point, however, in the 1890s, following the prosecution of the Secularist George Bedborough in 1898 for distributing Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds's pioneering textbook on same-sex desire, *Sexual Inversion* (1897). Radical protests of Bedborough's trial importantly highlighted for the first time how, while limiting ordinary people's access to important sexual information, medico-juridical authorities permitted the dissemination of highly explicit materials produced for the purposes of sexual entertainment to the elite. This state of affairs, as some commentators pointed out, implicated medico-juridical authorities and the *Hicklin* ruling's elitism with the late-Victorian expansion of the "high class" obscenity trade, explicitly linking regulatory discourses about obscenity as enablers to its deliberate production. In making these charges, radical protestors suggested how the "grey zone" into which sexual-scientific works fell, a zone born in anxieties about such works' effects on vulnerable readers, had shaped obscenity laws that were less concerned with identifying and exterminating obscenity for the social benefit than they were with regulating ordinary readers themselves, a state of affairs that infringed on the rights of free speech and free press and impeded social and scientific progress.

What set Bedborough's trial apart from every other trial that this dissertation has examined so far, and what made it especially important as a node for radical protest of the *Hicklin* precedent and its application, was that *Sexual Inversion* was arguably an elite book, having been written primarily with an educated professional audience in mind; priced expensively, though not prohibitively, at 7s; and affixed with a label stating that "[t]his book is a scientific work intended for Medical Men, Lawyers and Teachers. It should not be placed into the hands of the general public" (Singer 11). These choices had been guided by its authors' profound concern that the book appear both respectable and professional, lest any imputation of indecency compromise its reception and prevent the book from "obtain[ing] a sympathetic recognition for sexual inversion as a psychic abnormality which may be regarded as the highest ideal... preparing the way, if possible, for a change in" recent laws that had prohibited sex between men (Crozier, "Introduction" 46). Ellis and Symonds's only error in putting the work's "circumstances of publication" beyond suspicion was in seeking a generalist publisher for the work, both because they

desired that the work enjoy some influence outside the medical sphere proper and because Ellis depended on his publishing income (45). After much effort and Symonds's death in 1893, Ellis finally published the work with a respectable publisher known for its general list as well as its medical publications, Macmillan and Smith, in 1897, only to see most of its copies destroyed by Symonds's executor.¹⁵ When Macmillan and Smith declined to issue another edition, Ellis republished the book with Roland de Villiers, a publisher whose University Press of Watford mainly issued radical books and periodicals such as *University Magazine and Free Review* and *The Adult*, which supported causes such as divorce reform and equality in marriage (Humphreys 9).¹⁶ It was the book's publication through de Villiers' press that structured its indictment as an obscene book in 1898. That it was *Sexual Inversion's* radical publisher and distributor, not its content, its price, or even its target readership, that landed the book in court in 1898 incited outrage from radical commentators, giving rise to imputations that government authorities were misusing obscenity law to suppress the free speech and free press of political minorities. The textbook's indictment as an obscene work further exposed for these commentators *Hicklin's* function as a mechanism of control, one that did not work for ordinary readers, but against their interests.

Radical arguments that government authorities misused obscenity law to suppress the free speech and free press of political minorities had a basis in fact, as the circumstances surrounding *Sexual Inversion's* seizure and Bedborough's prosecution illustrates. In 1898, Scotland Yard had seized *Sexual Inversion* from an office belonging to Bedborough, the editor of *The Adult*, along with a number of the University Press's books and magazines, including High Mortimer Cecil's *Pseudo-Philosophy* (1897), M.W. Wiseman's *The Dynamics of Religion* (1897), and Geoffrey Mortimer's *The Blight of Respectability* (1897) ("Corrupting" 443). Considering the energy that radical publishers had invested in protesting juridical perceptions of their medical and scientific publications as indecent works, it is ironic that Scotland Yard's actions were not motivated by concerns about *Sexual Inversion's* indecency, which would become the focal point of Bedborough's trial, nor were they particularly concerned about the obscenity of the other books and periodicals that they seized. Rather, *Sexual Inversion's* risqué topic provided the police with a convenient excuse to arrest Bedborough, who was associated through *The Adult* with the Legitimation League, a Secularist organization that allowed anarchist groups whom Scotland Yard had under surveillance to congregate and speak at its

meetings (Humphries 1). Under the guise of searching for additional obscene books in his office and private residence, Scotland Yard was able to examine the League's private papers and search for information on these groups' plans; and while investigating *Sexual Inversion's* circumstances of publication, the prosecution was able to pressure Bedborough to relinquish information about de Villiers, who issued a variety of books, periodicals and pamphlets for the League (Humphries 11; Royle 276). *Sexual Inversion's* condemnation as an obscene book was, therefore, little more than a convenient ploy to investigate the League.

The prosecution's strategic application of the *Hicklin* precedent to argue that *Sexual Inversion* was obscene, and the broader implications of the precedent's application to free speech and scientific enquiry, became the affair's most charged point of public debate. While, as Bedborough's supporters pointed out, Ellis had medical qualifications and had rendered *Sexual Inversion's* text as clinical and inexplicit as possible, the prosecution argued that its publication by de Villiers' "University Press of Watford" suggested the obscenity of its content and its serious threat to the morals of the British public. A "medical man might be the author of such a book without it being considered wrong," it contended, "but it was different for another man to publish such works amongst all sorts of people" who would never have been able to acquire the book had it been published through a legitimate medical press ("Charge Against a Publisher" N. Pag.). John Sweeney, the Scotland Yard inspector who had infiltrated the Legitimation League, befriended Bedborough, and ordered his arrest, supported these claims. "Presumably," he reasoned, "if Dr. Ellis had wished to find out whether his book could be defended he would have submitted it to one of the many high-class publishers of medico-scientific literature. ... *there is nothing whatever in its mode of publication to suggest that it deserved a better fate*" than condemnation as an obscene book (185, my emphasis). So too did the medical community, which had viewed the book's publication context with suspicion even before Bedborough's arrest. The editors of *The Lancet*, for instance, admitted that even though the book had "proper claims for discussion" and was "written in a purely dispassionate and scientific style," their decision not to review *Sexual Inversion* in 1897 "was [based on] its method of publication" ("Question of Indecent Literature" 1344). Like Bedborough's prosecutors, they were of the opinion that "a book written solely in the spirit of scientific inquiry cannot possibly be included under the head of indecent literature. But such a book may become indecent if offered for sale to the

general public with a wrong motive” (1344). Because *Sexual Inversion* had not been “published through a house able to take proper measures for introducing it as a scientific book to a scientific audience,” *The Lancet* had “considered the circumstances attendant on its issue suspicious” and believed that the book might “fall into the hands of readers... very ready to draw evil lessons from its necessarily disgusting passages” (1344). In other words, the facts surrounding *Sexual Inversion*’s actual circulation, which was quite narrow, did not matter to these authorities: the mere act of shifting the work’s context of publication away from an identifiably professional one was, in their eyes, enough to activate its obscene potential.

Ellis understandably resented that both the trial and the medical community had “classed” him “with the purveyors of literary garbage” (“Note” 13). His frustration is palpable in “A Note on the Bedborough Trial,” the pamphlet that he issued in order to speak out against the social and legal conditions that had caused the trial to take place, after Bedborough’s unexpected decision to plead guilty lost him his chance to defend his book’s legitimacy in court. “If the sale of my book could be regarded as improper under such circumstances,” Ellis declared, “there were practically no circumstances under which it could well be regarded as proper” (5-6). As well as pricing the book in such a way that only people interested in scientific research on same-sex desire were likely to invest in the volume, he and his publisher had sought no “undue publicity” for the work (7). In fact, the “book was so little known before these proceedings were taken, except to specialists,” he claimed, “that the majority of my own friends had never heard of it until they saw it proclaimed as ‘obscene’ in the police news of every London newspaper” (7). If the police aimed to protect the public by seizing the book as obscenity, Ellis declared, they had not only failed in their task, but exacerbated the book’s potential to corrupt public morality by giving it publicity. He considered it far worse, however, that the state of affairs that had led to Bedborough’s prosecution threatened to impede scientific progress.

The mere expectation of such a prosecution is fatal. In submitting to these conditions an author puts his publisher and printer and their agents into an unmerited position of danger; he risks the distortion of his own work while it is in progress; and when he has written a book which is approved by the severest and most competent judges he is tempted to adapt it to the vulgar tastes of the policeman. (13)

The author fervently hoped that “this prosecution of a book-seller for selling a purely scientific work will mark an epoch so far as our own country is concerned... Henceforth public opinion will be strong enough to check at the outset any foolish interference of the police with scientific discussion” (12).

The medical press expressed some sympathy for Ellis’s predicament as a fellow scientist. Its longstanding anxiety about being associated with obscenity prevented it from being too supportive, however, of the author or his work. There was also little pressure for the medical community to support Ellis as one of its own because he was something of an outsider. Ellis had earned a medical degree in 1889, but he did not practice medicine or spend time among medical and scientific professionals who were not, like himself, interested in new theories of sexuality (Bauer, “Scholars” 199). Noting that his medical degree was the lowest and easiest he could have acquired, some scholars have even speculated that Ellis formally studied medicine primarily so that he could write on sexual topics respectably and authoritatively (Bauer, “Scholars” 199; Crozier, “Pillow” 391). He was certainly well aware of the risks of publishing sexually detailed literary material, having worked as an editor, translator, and writer for Vizetelly in the 1880s and, in the 1890s, for the publisher Leonard Smithers, who was well known for publishing and disseminating obscene books as well as issuing ‘risky’ avant-garde literary works.¹⁷ Ellis’s experiences as a socialist, which brought him into contact with Besant, suggests his equal familiarity with the risks of publishing works on sexual topics and that he endeavoured to protect himself accordingly by studying medicine. His greater devotion to social causes and literature than medicine meant, however, that he did not enjoy professional connections that might have protected his book from censure or, at the very least, elicited a greater show of support from medical organizations. Ellis found many allies within the radical community, however, which marshalled its protest of Bedborough’s prosecution and the trial’s representation of *Sexual Inversion* as an obscene book around several overlapping points of argument. One of the most interesting of these arguments implicated *Hicklin* and its opportunistic application by medico-judicial authorities, in Bedborough’s case and in others, with the expansion of the period’s “high class” obscenity trade, a clear indictment of obscenity law’s elitist characterization of “circumstances of publication” as the dividing line between an obscene and a legitimate explicit work. In doing so, these radicals exposed the ways in

which *Hicklin* was designed and put into action regulate popular print and readers more than it was to combat obscenity itself.

Like Ellis, many commentators in the radical press framed the Bedborough trial as an attack on scientific progress, citing Ellis's medical qualifications, the "disinterested standpoint" from which his work discussed the "causes of sexual abnormality," and *Sexual Inversion's* favourable reception among social scientists in Europe and America ("To the Breach, Freeman!" 159). In doing so, radical critiques of the Bedborough trial importantly advanced discourses about obscenity by appealing to *Sexual Inversion's* scientific merit, sowing the seeds for the twentieth-century the rise of discussions of literary and scientific merit as a concept that would gradually erode the tight links between obscenity and publication context that defined nineteenth-century legal and sexual culture. While historically important, however, these discussions of scientific merit were hardly central to radical protests of the book's condemnation as an obscene book. Radical critics also continued to represent the Bedborough case as a "matter of free speech rather than an issue in its own right" and as an attack on *radical* speech specifically, as in the writer William Platt's argument that Bedborough's arrest proved that the government was misusing obscenity law to suppress political "minorities merely because they are minorities" (qtd. in Miller loc. 4703; Royle 277; "The English Press Censorship" N. Pag.).¹⁸ One of the most substantial and perceptive indictments of the Bedborough trial, however, was published in *Reynolds's Newspaper*, whose editor, W.M. Thompson, was a driving force behind the efforts of the Free Press Defense Committee, an organization that had been formed shortly after Bedborough's arrest to fund his defense and which included among its members de Villiers, Grant Allen, Robert Buchanan, Edward Carpenter, Frank Harris, George Moore, and George Bernard Shaw. This sensational article entitled "Booksellers and Erotic Literature: Astounding Revelations," resuscitated charges that *Hicklin's* formulation of obscenity was elitist because it overtly focused on controlling middle- and working class reading materials. It suggested that police, the judiciary and the government were not primarily concerned with controlling the spread of obscenity, but with controlling print and managing public perception. Obscenity seizures and prosecutions, drawing from the links that *Hicklin* made between audience, mode of publication, and obscenity, were not earnest efforts to protect public morals, but public performances for the benefit of these authorities.¹⁹ These arguments were not new. What importantly distinguished "Booksellers" from other

radical critiques, however, was its additional charge that *Hicklin's* elitist treatment of sexual representation tacitly served the expansion of the period's "high class" obscenity trade.

Reynolds's argued that even as it suppressed relatively harmless literary and scientific works, their publishers, and their distributors, the government and police turned a blind eye those who dealt in

hundreds of books published in *editions de luxe* at huge prices ...[A] bookseller in the West End... will sell you volumes which, if exposed for sale in Holywell-Street, would ensure the prompt conviction of the shopkeeper and very likely twelve months imprisonment... [One] large bookseller who is an extensive advertiser... makes a special feature of medical books, which he carefully describes in his catalogues. They are sent broadcast, not to members of the medical profession only, but to anyone who writes for them... [T]here are collectors who buy nothing but works of this kind and whose libraries are valued at thousands of pounds. One well-known nobleman, who came into the possession of a specially sexual work, had a private press set up in his house, and printed off a hundred copies for distribution among his friends. There are Societies in existence under various high-sounding titles for the express purpose of reprinting books of the kind for the delectation of their members... but there is not the slightest danger. The Treasury is always particularly careful to wink at the proceedings of these purveyors for rich men's vices. They are contented now and again to prosecute and imprison the publishers of cheap editions of Zola's novels and of scientific works. Do we ever hear of [high-class erotica] dealers being prosecuted? ("Booksellers and Erotic Literature" 10).

Hicklin's elitism, in other words, offered the government and the police an excuse to ignore the production for and consumption of elite sexual entertainment by framing sexually explicit materials as a social danger only when they fell into the hands of ordinary citizens. In doing so, it allowed a growing sector of the obscenity trade to flourish, implicating authorities charged with suppressing obscenity as enablers of London's trade in vice, even as it allowed the same authorities to regulate print as they saw fit, targeting undesirable writers, publishers, and readers and burnishing their public images.

Reynolds's charges against the government, the police, and obscenity law are notable for their striking accuracy, particularly in their detailed depiction of London's "high class" obscenity trade. In making these charges, the populist newspaper both

revealed and glossed over its own ties to the same trade. Until just after the Bedborough trial began, *Reynolds's* had advertised for the notorious "high-class" obscenity dealer Charles Carrington, almost certainly the "large bookseller" and "extensive advertiser" who made "a special feature of medical books" mentioned in the exposé (10).²⁰ The newspaper had also puffed several of Carrington's openly published works, using these reviews to protest limitations on free speech and what the newspaper's editors saw as the government and aristocracy's hypocritical attitudes toward sexual discussion and sexual behaviour. *Reynolds's* May 1897 review of the publisher's dubious 'medical history' *The Secret Cabinet of History* (1897), for instance, had praised the "very curious book ...valuable [in] showing how much the changes in the government of peoples depend on the vices, frailties and diseases of rulers — dispositions to which they seem more largely to succumb than do ordinary citizens," while its February 1898 review of the gossipy *Les Dessous de la Pudibonderie Anglaise* (1898) declared it a "smartly edited and lively book" which offered "a picture of British morals and manners sufficient to moderate our inordinate self-esteem and offensive hypocrisy" ("Secret Cabinet" 2; "English 'Chastity'" 3).²¹ Combined with Carrington's demonstrable familiarity with Bedborough's cause²² and the suggestive appearance of the name "C. Carrington" in the Free Press Defense Committee's donor list, these advertisements and reviews suggest far closer ties between the newspaper and the "high class" obscenity trade than *Reynolds's* exposé suggested ("The Free Press Defence Committee" 4). Other radical critiques of the Bedborough case glossed over more tenuous, but still uncomfortable, ties between the obscenity trade, the trial's key figures, and its critics. They did not mention, for instance, that Leonard Smithers issued both Ellis's literary publications and "high-class" erotica of the kind described in the *Reynolds's* exposé out of his own West End bookshop.²³ Nor did Platt reveal in his discussions of print censorship that he had published several works on free love with Charles Hirsch, another "high-class" London obscenity dealer (Mendes 14).²⁴ Like Besant and Bradlaugh's critique of *Hicklin's* application two decades earlier, radical discussions of obscenity law's suppression of sexual discussion and debate in 1898 skipped over radicalism's own ambivalent relationship with the obscenity trade in their attempts to sanitize their works and their aims. Admitting to the blurry intellectual and economic boundaries between these fringe print circuits would only serve to emphasize the "grey zone" between sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment within which, to many observers, many radical publications

fell. As in the Knowlton trial, the interpretation of publication context—a mode of reading that medic-juridical authorities had promoted for decades, culminating in the *Hicklin* ruling that these radicals protested—became a key concern in the battle to overcome the difficulties that the “grey zone” of medical publication posed to establishing sexual-scientific respectability. It was not merely the “grey zone” itself that embattled these works’ recognition as respectable texts, but the history of publication within that grey zone itself—a history that was shaped by sanctions on access to such works—that compromised their reception.

The strange business of *Sexual Inversion*’s publisher Roland de Villiers offers an opportunity for better understanding the ambivalent relationship between the obscenity trade and radical print culture in the period. By showing how the “grey zone” encompassing sexual science created conditions in which these fringe publishing circuits often intersected—even though publishers working in these circuits could have very different goals—de Villiers’ business reveals how efforts to manage the “grey zone” and separate sexual science from sexual entertainment brought them closer together in ways that would, as I will highlight, further shape the development of sexual science. On one hand, “de Villiers” was a prolific radical publisher and author who demonstrated genuine commitment to radical causes (Humphreys 11). He contributed extensively to the radical periodicals he published, and issued two books on the Bedborough trial that focused on the problems that he considered inherent to obscenity law and its application. The first book, entitled *Judicial Scandals and Errors: Press Censorship and Compromise* (1899), was published under the name “George Astor Singer, M.A.” This work’s tone is often melodramatic, but it offers a careful and well-supported analysis of *Hicklin*’s application during the Bedborough trial²⁵ as well as skilfully linking the process through which *Sexual Inversion* was censored with the censorship of other important works of art, literature and science in late-Victorian Britain (7).²⁶ The same legal system that facilitated Vizetelly’s conviction for publishing “obscene” translations of Zola, “Singer” argued, “unfortunately allows the prudes on the prowl... to indulge in idiosyncrasies which... culminated in the prosecution of a bookseller for selling a purely scientific work... published by a respectable firm” (i). Such “prudes,” “Singer” declared, used *Hicklin* as a tool to suppress sex radicals like Bedborough—“the moving spirit in, [sic] a society which advocated ‘Freedom in Sexual Relationship’—and, in doing so, impeded real social progress as well as violating radicals’ rights to a free press (11). This argument, with its

overwhelming focus on the adversarial relationship between the conservative authorities and the radical cause, firmly situated *Sexual Inversion* and its publisher within a sanitized version of fringe publishing culture, in which the “grey zone” between sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment was a fantasy promulgated by medico-judicial authorities to control authors, publishers, and readers and maintain the political status quo.

De Villiers second work on the trial, which he authored in 1900 under the name “Democritus,” made a similar argument. Entitled *Darwin on Trial at the Old Bailey*, this book parodies the Bedborough trial, imagining that it was not Ellis and Symonds’s *Sexual Inversion* that was seized as an obscene work, but Charles Darwin’s *Descent of Man* (1871). The prosecution, led by “Sir Richard Bully,” insists that Darwin’s theory of sexual selection is “highly suggestive and obscene and... may create lustful desires in the liege subjects of our gracious Queen” (4).²⁷ As in the Bedborough trial, however, the prosecutor is not primarily focused on *Descent’s* explicit content, but in its circumstances of publication and circulation:

Psyche Hockey is only seventeen years old, and it is terrible to think that she handled this book, and perhaps read it. She was often seen reading in the prisoner’s shop, and the title of this work must have been very attractive to her. ...I must also mention a very suspicious incident connected with this case. A clergyman by the name of Christopher Whitfield, a parson in the country, ordered from the prisoner... a copy of the Bible... You may imagine his surprise when, instead of the Bible, he received a copy of *Sexual Selection and Human Marriage*. ...This seems a clear attempt to corrupt the morals of Her Majesty’s liege subjects. I dare say that the prisoner would have sold the book to any innocent young man or woman who asked for a copy, but the police authorities have happily prevented him from continuing this pernicious trade, and from poisoning the minds of pure and religious people (4).²⁸

Through this parody, “Democritus” demonstrates with biting humour how easily even such an acclaimed book as *Descent of Man* might be prosecuted under the *Hicklin* precedent if its explicit content and its process of circulation were taken out of context, whether ignorantly or deliberately. In doing so, the parody not only emphasises *Hicklin’s* potential application to the suppression of free speech, scientific efficacy, and social progress in the hands of stupid or prudish authorities, but sanitizes the history of sexual-

scientific publication, denying the space between sexual science and sexual entertainment that explicit medical publications inhabited.

But for all de Villiers' claims about the judiciary's self-interested and inaccurate representation of circumstances of *Sexual Inversion's* publication, the fact remains that the publisher and his business were quite dubious. While there is no evidence that de Villiers traded in obscene fiction and images, he operated his press very much like an obscenity business or "quack" medical firm. In 1902, The University Press of Watford was discovered to be an entity "promoted by, and... practically the alias of," George Frederick Springmühl von Weissenfeld, a confidence trickster of German origin who had been involved in several swindling schemes, including the spurious Brandy Distillery Company, from which he earned approximately £60000, probably between 1897 and 1901, by selling false shares ("University Press" 10; Humphries 16).²⁹ As the *Times* breathlessly revealed in 1902, the names of all of the signatories of the publishing company's memorandum of association—Roland de Villiers, Paul Grant Wilson, William Macmillan, George Astor Singer, A. Rudolf Wagner, Alfred Colcomb and Ernest Jarchow—were all Weissenfeld himself under various names, and he also operated under additional aliases ("University Press" 10). The company carried out its business in East London, stored its wares in a house on Bedford Row, and like many contemporaneous obscenity dealers, informed the public of its publications "by means of catalogues containing a syllabus of each work, which were sent to persons whose names were taken from directories" (10).³⁰ The University Press's works were published and printed in London, then Watford, and finally, after the police raided the Watford warehouse in 1899,³¹ in Paris, a major hub for publishing English language obscenity at the time (10). Weissenfeld eventually met a mysterious end. On 13 January 1902, the police raided his home in Cambridge on a warrant to search for obscene books ("A 'Doctor's' Tragic End" 3). He was discovered hiding in a small chamber on the second floor at the end of a secret passageway, surrounded by books and pamphlets that reports described only as "obscene" (3). After a brief scuffle, Weissenfeld was escorted to the Borough Police Station, but died less than an hour and a half afterward, apparently of apoplexy (3).

Given these revelations, some critics have suggested that Weissenfeld's publication of so many works on sexual topics was motivated by the value of their lubric

appeal as well as their political significance (Crozier, "Introduction" 60). We can only speculate on Weissenfeld's motivations. However, the similar strategies that Weissenfeld, obscenity dealers, and "quack" medical firms employed to circumvent medico-juridical attempts to suppress their activities in the nineteenth century—including the use of multiple aliases, spurious imprints, and the shift to continental production bases—usefully highlight how publishers operating at the fringes of 'respectable' publishing were caught up in, and had to contend with, the same legal and social challenges. As I have shown so far, these publishers' businesses were each shaped by changing cultural discourses about obscenity, the professionalization of medicine, and radicalism that were themselves deeply influenced by concerns about the impact that improving print technology and rising literacy would have on the public sphere. The notion of a "grey zone" between legitimate and illegitimate sexual representations that emerged across these discourses helped determine the medical works that these publishers chose to issue, the way in which they represented them, the social and legal action that was taken to suppress them, and how they attempted to circumvent that action, leading to significant parallels, intersections, and overlaps between these publisher's activities and the variously constructed and instructed readers who moved around them. While proving advantageous to medico-juridical authorities in its malleability, the progressive development and longevity of the notion that the obscenity of sexually explicit materials were linked to the circumstances under which they were published attests to the disruptive force that these fringe publisher's businesses, each invested in the publication of 'risky' texts and intersecting in a variety of ways at different points throughout the nineteenth century, represented.

Radical publishers attempted to remove explicit medical publications from their associations with borderline publication in the "grey zone," divorcing such works and their readers from the messy history of sexual-scientific publication in the period. The nebulous links between radical writing and publishing and the obscenity trade that emerge when this publishing history is interrogated emphasize, however, the ways in which the existence of this zone precluded the firm separation of the trade in sexual entertainment with the trade in sexual knowledge as much as it precluded the existence of a fully sanitized reader who encountered the sexual-scientific works that these publishers dealt without interpreting them through the lens of a cultural space in which sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure merged. As Part Two further shows, sexual

science's precarious legal and cultural position prompted the formation of unexpected alliances and intersections between a range of individuals who were invested in the publication of 'risky' texts for different reasons, from sexual scholars to social activists to collectors of obscene books. Emerging ideas about the relationship between obscenity and publication context, which this chapter has traced through their expression in discourses on obscenity, radicalism, and medical professionalization, surrounding the figure of the "vulnerable" reader, affirming the agency of the "capable" reader, and enabling the expansion of the "high class" obscenity trade in late-Victorian Britain, structured the discourses through which these alliances were forged, initiating new kinds of elite publication which expanded the interplay of sexual science and sexual entertainment in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and fostered their concomitant development.

Endnotes

¹ I quote William Dugdale here, speaking on the censorship of cheap literary materials in the 1830s, to draw attention to the fact that such radical publishers made similar arguments against the elitism of legal bodies that regulated print, attesting to the fact that while these social interest groups were very different, their interests also converged at both ends of the nineteenth century.

² The need to address changing ideas about gender and sexuality through legal reform—such as the elimination of inequality in marriage, the provision of divorce by mutual consent, and the official recognition of children who were products of extramarital unions—was one of the causes that many of late-Victorian social protest groups championed, for instance, but opinions about what the extent, methods, and outcomes of such social change should be differed significantly both within and across them (Humphreys 1-5).

³ Tellingly, one 1918 study of working-class reading practices in Sheffield found that respondents of all ages identified Aristotle “as the author of a sex manual” (Rose 206-207). For classified pages that contain advertisements which list both medical handbooks and erotic fiction and images in this period, see the following examples: *Illustrated Police News*, 12 March 1870: 4; *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 30 July 1871: N. Pag.; *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 4 February 1872: N. Pag.; *Illustrated Police News*, 28 June 1873: 4; *Illustrated Police News*, 11 October 1879: 4; *Daily News* 5 August 1880: 1; *Illustrated Police News*, 6 March 1886: 4; *Illustrated Police News*, 12 February 1887: 4; *Reynolds's Newspaper*, October 23, 1887: N. Pag.; *Illustrated Police News*, 25 August 1888: 4; *Illustrated Police News*, 1 June 1889: 4; *Illustrated Police News*, 16 August 1890: 4; *The North-Eastern Daily Gazette*, 11 January 1892: N. Pag.; *The Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser for Lancashire, Westmorland, and Yorkshire*, 16 September 1893: N. Pag.; and *Illustrated Police News* 29 February 1896: 4.

⁴ For an excellent case study of the techniques that government authorities used to exert such extra-legal pressure, see Alison Wee's close analysis of the Home Office's 1885 action against *Town Talk*, a weekly newspaper which expressed its intent on exposing an alleged conspiracy to allow the “abomination” of same-sex sexual activity to run rampant in the military, the police force, and the upper classes just a few months after the August 1885 passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act (“Secret” 182). Rather than prosecute the paper, the police and the Home Office jointly worked to convince the periodical's its owner that there would soon be a warrant out for his arrest for publishing obscenity. The owner subsequently shut the periodical down, resolving the Home Office's problem.

⁵ As Bradlaugh and Besant observed of the Watts trial, “a plea of “Guilty” was put in by the publisher, and the book, therefore, was not examined, nor was any judgment passed upon it; no jury registered a verdict, and the judge stated that he had not read the work” (Knowlton iv).

⁶ The prosecution noted that Bradlaugh and Besant had not misrepresented themselves as physicians, and that they truly believed that such publications benefitted the poor by giving them access to information on contraceptive technique (Bradlaugh 9-11).

⁷ Although Knowlton's pamphlet framed sexual intercourse as a marital act, for instance, the prosecution maintained that the work's instructions on contraceptive technique and implications that sexual activity contributed to sound female health could be understood as suggestions that unmarried women should freely engage in sexual relations (Bradlaugh 21-22).

⁸ For advertisements listing *The Fruits of Philosophy* alongside erotic material before the Knowlton trial, see the following classified pages: *The Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* 13 April 1844: N. Pag.; *The Northern Star and National Trades' Journal* 8 March 1845: N. Pag.; *Reynolds's Newspaper* 11 February 1866: N. Pag. Unsurprisingly, *The Fruits of*

Philosophy continued to circulate through the obscenity trade after the Knowlton trial, with its popularity bolstered by the publicity that the trial garnered. See, for example, classified pages in *The Illustrated Police News* 11 October 1879.

⁹ See Swinburne's MS for his poem "The Cannibal Catechism" in the British Library, which, according to Edmund Gosse's notes on the work, was written, "at Oxford? probably in 1865. To amuse the Anthropological Society's Cannibal Club. ... Given to Bradlaugh by S., and by him to Mrs. Besant, and to her to her son, and to him to me. Oct. 1912. E.G."

¹⁰ The Knowlton trial concluded with Bradlaugh and Besant convicted of publishing an obscene libel. Although they were ultimately acquitted on a technicality, they were warned that any repetition of the offence would result in severe penalties (Mullin 27).

¹¹ Besant's biography demonstrates the fluidity between these groups: an ardent secularist, she was instrumental to the founding of the Malthusian League in 1877 (D'Arcy 429). In 1884, after studying socialism, she joined the Fabian Society (445).

¹² *The Anarchist* railed, for instance, against the conviction of Elmina D. Slenker, an elderly American activist who disseminated sexual health advice, for "mailing obscene matter" (7). For more details about Comstock's campaign against the circulation of information on birth control in America, see Silberman.

¹³ For example, see "Russia" N. Pag.; "In unhappy Russia" N.Pag.; "Up To Date" N. Pag.; and "The Democratic World" N. Pag.

¹⁴ There is considerable scholarship on movements against literary censorship in this period, much of which does an excellent job of showing how these movements related to the radical community. See, for example, Leckie, Mullin, Cummins, and Merkel.

¹⁵ *Sexual Inversion* was actually first published in a German translation, in Leipzig, in 1896. Its first publication in English, with Macmillan and Smith, took place a year later.

¹⁶ In many respects, the University Press was, however, a good fit for *Sexual Inversion*: while its previous publications had only rarely (and cautiously) addressed the topic of same-sex desire, they were almost uniformly strong champions of the free dissemination of sexual knowledge (Humphreys 6). An article printed in *The Adult's* November 1897 issue, for instance, called for a new "terminology of the art and science of sexual life" to "enable ordinary people to discuss in set, clear-cut, and clean phrases, the sexual thoughts, doubts and desires which arise in the minds of almost every human being," a sentiment that Ellis and Symonds shared ("Wanted: A New Dictionary" 57-58).

¹⁷ See Chapters Five and Six for more details about Ellis's awareness of and work with the publishers and distributors of 'risky' and obscene works.

¹⁸ "[U]nder cover of the warrant against Mr. Bedborough," Platt noted in this article, "the League offices were raided by the police and a number of books and private papers carried away for examination. This fact makes it look as if the attack on the book were merely a pretext for the raid on the League" ("The English Press Censorship" N. Pag.).

¹⁹ Many modern critics have similarly argued that governmental and juridical authorities used the spectacle of censorship to protect or advance their own interests. Sigel, for example, has recently suggested that "spectacular censorship allowed the state to prove its commitment to open debate, to clear process, and to free speech, critical practices during the inter-war years for a form of government that sought to position itself as ethically superior to its totalitarian rivals" ("Censorship" 62).

²⁰ See Chapter Seven for a detailed study of Carrington's career.

²¹ Reynolds's review of *The Secret Cabinet of History's* sequel, *Curious Bypaths of History*, which was published beneath the periodical's review of *Les Dessous de la Pudibonderie Anglaise*,

similarly declared that “the importance of this kind of knowledge is a revelation of the extent to which the domestic affairs of the great affect the policies of nations” (3).

²² See Chapter Seven for more details about Carrington’s close attention to public debates about obscenity, including the Bedborough trial.

²³ Similarly, no one in the radical press dwelled on the fact that Bedborough, who later lamented that “dealers in pornographic literature flood[ed him]... with their circulars,” enjoyed explicit images and had a “unique library” of books on marriage, sex and anthropology, as was discovered in the police raid on his home in 1898 (Laytone 194).

²⁴ Platt published the following works with Charles Hirsch: *Women, Love and Life* (1896), *Love Triumphant* (1896) and *Love’s Comedy: Being the Conversations & Anecdotes of Five Young Men Upon the Absorbing Subject of Love* (1896)

²⁵ To support his argument, “Singer” appended a number of documents pertaining to the trial to this book, including excerpts from defenses of Ellis’s work published in *The Cologne Gazette*, *The Saturday Review*, *Review of Reviews*, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, *Sketch*, *The Lancet* and *The British Medical Journal*, transcripts of the Bedborough trial’s proceedings, letters between de Villiers and Wyatt Digby, Bedborough’s solicitor, a circular that the Free Press Defense Committee published appealing for Bedborough’s release, Ellis’s pamphlet, *A Note on the Bedborough Trial*, which called for the secretary’s defence, and De Villier’s own letter to the Home Secretary defending *Sexual Inversion’s* publication.

²⁶ *Judicial Scandals and Errors’* preface, for instance, parallels *Sexual Inversion’s* seizure with Vizetelly’s trial a decade earlier (i).

²⁷ As Dawson points out, “Bully” illustrates his point by reading the same sexually detailed passages from *Descent* that had made Darwin and his publisher John Murray anxious that they might undermined the book’s respectability, “and which had been frequently emphasized by hostile critics of the book in the 1870s” (160). See Chapter Four for more details about the ways in which scientific naturalism negotiated discourses about obscenity.

²⁸ This passage of *Darwin on Trial* only thinly fictionalizes actual arguments that were used during the Bedborough trial, concerning the daughter of Bedborough’s housekeeper and a young man whose parents complained to the Home Office about De Villiers’ press after *Sexual Inversion* was mailed to him by mistake.

²⁹ While Anne Humphries and Arthur Calder-Marshall, whose discussion of Weissenfeld in *Lewd, Blasphemous and Obscene* is one of the most comprehensive to date, do not discuss the time span of de Villiers’ ponzi scheme, shares for the Brandy Distillery Company were advertised for sale in *The Standard* as early as 19 June 1897 (12). Agents from Great Britain’s Inland Revenue agency finally “came down” on the company in 1901 when it could not pay taxes, and it was subsequently liquidated (“Professor’s Aliases” 3). See “Professor’s Aliases” for a fuller account of how the Brandy Distillery Company was operated.

³⁰ See Chapter Seven for a detailed discussion of Charles Carrington’s parallel adoption of the practice of advertising unsolicited to people whose names and addresses were gathered from professional directories.

³¹ After this raid, Weissenfeld’s associate from the printing works, Charles Maurice Coleman, was summoned to show cause why the police should not destroy the 486 copies of Ellis’s book and over 2100 pamphlets concerning [publication’s] prize competition for the best essay on “Result of Celibacy in Women” (“Destruction of Improper Literature.” 8). A solicitor engaged in the case claimed to have received a letter from de Villiers which “said that the seizure had caused laughter in France, where the opinion was that England was trying to made up for defeats in the Transvaal by making victorious attacks on scientific prints” (8). His protests were for naught: after Dr. Lionel Smith Beale pronounced the book “very obscene,” the Bench ordered the books destroyed (8).

Part 2.

The Secret Museum, Radial Reading, and the Private Publication of Sexual Science

Moving from a broader history of the unruly field of medical publishing in the nineteenth century, I shift now to examine a specific network of fringe publishers and publishing practices that emerged around sexual science between the mid 1860s and early 1900s, just as the borders between science and obscenity would seem to begin to harden with the greater professionalization of the medical and scientific disciplines. This network of publishers, which emerged out of the loose circle of scholars, explorers, bibliophiles, aristocrats, and writers who coalesced around the notorious mid-Victorian Cannibal Club and extended to encompass fringe publisher-booksellers such as John Camden Hotten, Harry Sidney Nichols, and Leonard Smithers, produced and distributed social-scientific studies of sex for elite male readers, differentiating themselves from the popular modes of fringe publication that Part One examines. Medico-judicial discourses about the relations between obscenity, audience, and access limited the processes through which these fringe publishers brought sexual-scientific works into print, and exerted greater control over the unruly field of medical-scientific publication in this period than ever before. But, as I will show, fringe publishers interested in emerging disciplines like anthropology and sexology organized publishing practices that tapped into the productive possibilities of those regulatory discourses. These publishers translated three interrelated ideas about obscenity that circulated through medico-judicial discourses into experimental new modes of fringe publication, modes that expanded sexual science's dual function as a form of sexual knowledge and a form of sexual entertainment even as they increasingly articulated obscene fiction as a repository of sexual knowledge and a mode of sexual enquiry. These publishers accomplished this through their ongoing development of a productive new discourse about obscene books which I term the "secret museum: 1) that a wide range of works potentially fell into the category of the obscene; 2) that some readers were more capable than others of confronting these works, understanding their social value, and negotiating their eroticism; and 3) that the material contexts through which a work was produced, disseminated, and/or consumed were linked to the ways in which it functioned.

The discourse of the "secret museum" shared its origins with real institutional spaces that housed "forbidden" books. The most well known of these institutional spaces is the British Museum Library's Private Case collection, which was likely established in 1857, the same year that the Obscene Publications Act was passed, to conceal 'dangerous' texts and images that had made their way into the Museum from public view

(Fryer 40-41). Although such “secret museums” were not a Victorian invention,¹ the Private Case transposed two key aspects of the period’s discourses about obscenity into institutional space, which, in their linked state, were also foundational to the new discourse of the “secret museum”. First, the Museum’s directors accessioned an astoundingly wide range of works into the hidden collection, a range which materially represented the sum of works conceived at various points in the nineteenth century as a potential social and moral threat to “vulnerable” readers: obscene fiction and images, medical and scientific works on sexual topics, anti-religious and anti-government tracts, slang dictionaries, bibliographies of explicit books, bawdy poems and plates, titillating biographies, and even a catalogue for one of Europe’s first “secret museums,” Naples’s *Gabinetto Segreto*, became unified within the collection.² By flattening the huge variety of works that Victorian debates about obscenity encompassed into a single category of equally “forbidden” and “dangerous” materials, the Private Case’s composition effaced nuanced distinctions between licit and illicit ‘obscenity’ that emerged through those debates, and implicitly represented the works that they concerned as a vast field of comparable texts (Moore 211). Second, the collection’s system of management was rooted in the same elitist views of reading competence that motivated contemporaneous social and legal action against obscenity, including the passage of the Obscene Publications Act and Alexander Cockburn’s *Hicklin* ruling: access to Private Case materials was restricted to gentleman scholars who acquired knowledge of the collection through elite social networks—the only readers considered appropriately equipped by the period’s moral and social authorities to survey the dangerous materials it housed (Gaimster 12; Nead, *Law* 212).³ What is most significant about the Private Case’s transposition of these discourses about obscenity for the three chapters that follow is that the Museum’s act of preserving ‘dangerous’ works of all kinds for the use of privileged male readers—including both explicit materials that had been deliberately produced for commercial exploitation and delectation¹⁶⁹ and works that many Victorians considered artistically, scientifically, politically or historically valuable—constructed and constricted a whole field of ‘forbidden books,’ and affirmed that field’s simultaneously scholastic and erotic value.

This seductive institutional space became a central frame for the discourse of the “secret museum,” which, emerging through the elite publishing networks and practices that I examine, newly theorized obscenity and the nature of sexual science. This

discourse importantly situated obscenity not simply as a legal and moral category, but also as a diverse textual and material category of works. This category of works was defined through its (theoretical) occupation of a restricted cultural space that, like Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's closet, was at once public and private, "centrally representative of [Victorian culture's] moving passions, even while marginalized by its orthodoxies" (56). One of the "secret museum's" most significant functions is that it encouraged privileged readers to treat the wide variety of works that occupied this space as like texts. Jerome McGann's formulation of "radial reading" provides a helpful basis for understanding the associative mode of interpretation that they privileged, explaining how paratexts such as prefaces and footnotes act as associative mechanisms that encourage the reader to "read out" from a text into other acts of reading and reference, and incorporate those acts of reading into their interpretations of the text in question (13; 20). I argue that, in a period in which the bounds of sociological evidence were not firmly defined, the longstanding commercial and cultural association of a wide variety of genres under the designation "obscenity" acted similarly as an associative mechanism, encouraging cross readings of sexual science and other forms of explicit writing through its implicit representation of these works as like texts. This associative mechanism spread and intensified through fringe publishing activity, where the image of the archive or museum of forbidden works became central to the new discourse of the "secret museum". This discourse importantly articulated the wide range of works relegated to the category of the obscene or potentially obscene in Victorian culture as components of a restricted archive of works that, as a whole, represented the keys to accessing exclusive sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure. In other words, the secret museum represented a new way define the cultural "grey zone" into which sexual-scientific works fell.

In the three chapters that follow, I trace the way in which this discourse emerged through a loose fringe publishing network, and demonstrate both the "secret museum's" productive possibilities and its limits as a basis for the creation of new sexual knowledge. I show how, at mid century, a network of self-published sexual scholars not only read across the field of "forbidden" works, but loosely recreated it through their private publishing activities, marking the emergence of the "secret museum" as a discourse, a mode of reading, and a publishing practice. Like the British Museum's directors, these scholars restricted access to the wide range of explicit materials that they published, including a great deal of anthropological writing about sexual bodies, acts, and desires.

Unlike many of their peers, they were not threatened by such works' dual production of sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure—indeed, they embraced it. Like many medico-juridical authorities, however, they conceived the knowledge and pleasure that these works transmitted as the privilege of the elite, and fetishized their restricted access. Drawing on their social and business connections to these self-published writers, the late-Victorian fringe publishers John Camden Hotten, Harry Sidney Nichols, and Leonard Smithers subsequently experimented with using the “secret museum” discourse to expand their trade in obscene books—and the fringe publication of sexual science—in new directions. Some of these publishers adopted the mode of “private publication” to publish sexual scholarship alongside other explicit works, a mode which emphasized the exclusive and forbidden nature of sexual knowledge and helped these publishers to sell the tantalizing image of the “secret museum” back to privileged customers. In doing so, these fringe publishers both took advantage of the secret museum's allure as a material object of “feverish desire,” desire “to *have* it, or just for it to be there, in the first place” as well as to enter and use it, and exploited the fact that, under the terms of the Hicklin ruling, expensive works produced in limited numbers for elite readers were considered responsible “circumstances of publication” (Steedman 1-2). At the same time, however, these fringe publishers experimented with deploying the secret museum's interpretive logic in other ways to market a wide range of works, which gradually included new social-scientific studies about sex from the continent, to more varied readerships. In the late nineteenth century, fringe publishers thus began to play an important role in delivering sexual scholarship to a wide variety of groups, encompassing not only readers who read these works for erotic entertainment and pleasure, but also readers seeking out knowledge about sex for personal interest, community building, or social scientific research in emerging fields such as sexology.

By beginning to make new forms of sexual science available to sexual scholars and sexual activists through the framework of the “secret museum,” these fringe publishers encouraged the practice of reading, interpreting, and writing sexual science and other forms of explicit writing associatively, and helped propel a concomitant development of sexual science and sexual entertainment, in which sexual science and obscene fiction not only circulated alongside one another, but increasingly drew on one another and shared their ideas, language, and images. The history of the “secret museum” discourse, as developed through fringe publishing activity, thus not only attests

to the ways in which discourses about obscenity operated on sexual science dialectically, initiating the production of new sexual knowledge and pleasure through their restriction of sexual representation. It also reveals an erotic play that underpinned sexual science's production and circulation in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and shows how sexual scholarship did not necessarily involve the distanced unveiling of sexual truth and subsequent disciplining of sexual pleasure, as Foucault suggests, but also involved the production and reproduction of multiple modes of closeted sexual knowledge and pleasure. The closeted modes of production that surrounded and defined the "secret museum" were politically ambivalent. On one hand, they acted as an affirmation of conservative beliefs about the role of sexual discourse, situating sexual knowledge and pleasure as the privileged concern of a narrow elite. But, at the same time, these modes of production could serve the interests of marginalized sexual communities, helping them frame so-called 'perversions' like same-sex desire within what Sedgwick has termed a "universalizing" discourse, one which situated homosexuality at the centre of the Western literary canon and central to the development of Western culture more broadly (1). Both rooted in and sustained by discourses that framed sexual knowledge as forbidden to the public, the "secret museum" was, however, limited as a site for the creation of new sexual knowledge. Its associations with obscenity precluded its exposure in the public sphere, prompting its virtual erasure from new studies of sex produced by activist-scholars at the *fin de siècle*.

Endnotes

¹ Dedicated museum collections of explicit materials had been established across Europe throughout the nineteenth century, as the joint forces of Western imperial conquest and the emergent field of archaeology prompted the entry of sexually explicit antiquities into national institutions in increasing numbers (Nead, *Law* 212). The earliest of these was the Museo Borbonico's Gabinetto Segreto in Naples, which was established in 1821 to house explicit artefacts discovered at archaeological sites in Pompeii and Herculaneum (212). The British Museum had founded the earlier Secretum around late 1830s to segregate similar antiquities from collections open to the general public (Gaimster 10). See Gaimster and Nead, *Law* for more details about such collections, their establishment, and their operations.

² Peter Fryer and Patrick Kearney each provide detailed description of works consigned to the Private Case. Fryer helpfully attempts to provide an approximate date for when each work was accessioned, although his division of these works into various categories, which he treats in separate chapters of his book, effaces the carnivalesque variety of the Private Case collection. I draw from Fryer's work to make my claim here, that in the nineteenth century the Private Case encompassed a wide variety of works.

³ The Private Case's access policy followed that of the Museo Borbonico's Gabinetto Segreto and the British Museum's earlier Secretum (Gaimster 12; Nead 212).

Chapter 4.

Networking Science and Fiction: The Secret Museums of the Cannibal Network

Established in 1863 by James Hunt, the founder of the newly-formed Anthropological Society of London, the Cannibal Club brought wealthy and influential men such as Richard Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton), Sir James Plaisted Wilde (Lord Penzance) and General Studholme John Hodgson together with emerging cultural leaders like Sir Richard Francis Burton and Algernon Charles Swinburne to publish some of the period's most explicit works on sexual topics. As its name and official symbol (a mace carved to look like an African head gnawing on a thighbone) suggest, this organization was grossly provocative. Establishing a "kinship based upon self-proclaimed alienation" from bourgeois respectability, its privileged members relished the thought of outsiders speculating on their table talk, which incorporated more than "a dash of Satanism [and] a pinch of sadomasochism" into their discussions of race, sex, and the imperial project (Sigel, *Governing* 55; Kennedy 168). It is hardly surprising, therefore, that like many Victorian "men of science," twentieth-century historians tended to dismiss the club's focus on anthropology as the "ritual pretense" of a frivolous homosocial space that existed primarily to provide its members with an excuse to indulge in debaucherous "stag reveries" and read, write, and publish obscene material (Lyons & Lyons 3; Kennedy 168). But over the past two decades, scholars such as Matt Cook, Dane Kennedy and Lisa Sigel have begun to re-examine the dining club's role as a site for the creation, study and dissemination of sexual knowledge as well as the production of sexual pleasure. These critics have persuasively argued that as well as providing its members with a stage for resisting Victorian sanctions on the discussion of sexuality, the Cannibal Club acted as an important forum for developing new social-scientific ideas about sexuality and new forms of sexual entertainment in conjunction, at the fringes of the 'disciplines' of anthropology and pornography. What remains understudied, however, is the relationship between the crossover publishing activities of the Cannibal Club's

members, the sanctions on sexual discussion and publication that they claimed to oppose, and the “high class” obscenity trade’s development of new business practices in the late nineteenth century that extended the scope of the crossover publication of sexual science and obscene fiction.

Building on Sigel’s argument that the Cannibal Club acted as the centre of a social network that stretched outside the bounds of its official membership to encompass an elite network of scholars, explorers, bibliophiles, aristocrats, and writers who were each invested in the production of writing about sex, I show how the discourse of the “secret museum” developed through this network’s crossover publishing activity (*Governing* 58-63). This publishing activity laid the groundwork for the emergence of experimental fringe publishing practices that expanded the interplay of sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment between the mid 1860s and the mid 1890s through their exploitation of the “secret museum” discourse. Recent scholarship has shown how the publication of scholarship on human sexual behaviour and desire produced through the emergent and overlapping disciplines of scientific naturalism and anthropology was strongly conditioned in this period by contemporaneous discourses about obscenity.¹ The Cannibal Club members’ privilege meant, however, that the ways in which those discourses conditioned their publishing activities were very different from how they conditioned the publishing activities of their scientific peers. I argue that, in particular, it was two of the many beliefs that the privileged coterie held in common with the state—that a wide range of explicit works could function similarly, and that these materials should be circulated only among elite readers, within the confined space of private reading and discussion—that drove the ways in which they published their work. But while this network’s views of the nature and role of sexual writing overlapped with those promulgated by the state, these views were not quite commensurate, nor were the Cannibal network’s aims commensurate with those of the state. Drawing on discourses about the links between obscenity, audience, and access that were regulating sexual-scientific production in the public sphere, this loose coterie not only conceived literature and science as complementary sources of exclusive sexual knowledge and pleasure, but considered the production of sexual pleasure constituent of the production of sexual knowledge. By working with fringe publishers like William Dugdale and William Lazenby to issue explicit writings about sex underground and forming their own spurious “private societies,” which put sexual-scientific works into print in limited numbers and restricted

access to wealthy men who were, like themselves, interested in the simultaneously erotic and intellectual allure of sexual study, the Cannibal network made material a “secret museum” of sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment that they dreamed of. In loosely reconstructing this ‘museum’ through their publishing activities as well as their social exchange of existing books, this elite network provided a productive model for mid and late nineteenth-century fringe publishing experiments that would expand the dissemination of sexual-scientific works through the obscenity trade and intensify the interplay of sexual knowledge production and the production of sexual entertainment and pleasure in this period.

The Cannibal Club remains better known for its provocative nature than its member’s scientific insights. The “scandalous” works about race, sex, and imperialism these men put into print were seen by many of their peers to bring science into disrepute, undermining claims that secular, scientific ethics were as righteous, if not more so, than theological ethics and morality (Stocking 438). The very fact that their activities provoked controversy in wider scientific circles emphasises, however, that these men and their work were situated within, rather than ancillary to, the changing scientific culture of their time. Although the members of the Cannibal Club and its wide network of associates took pleasure in characterizing themselves as social, sexual, and scientific outsiders, many of them moved within privileged scholarly circles, sharing with eminent scientists of their day membership to such societies as the Ethnological Society, the Royal Geographic Society, the Anthropological Society, and the Royal Society (Sigel, *Governing* 55). The scholarly work that several of these men undertook, as Andrew and Harriet Lyons have shown, proved influential to the development of anthropology during the field’s “formative phase” in the nineteenth century, a time when the discipline was not clearly demarcated from neighbouring disciplines such as biology, sociology, and scientific naturalism, making the history of its publication important to understanding the embattled history of scientific knowledge production in general as well as crucial to clarifying the contexts that conditioned sexual science’s dissemination in the nineteenth century (6; 16). Comparing the Cannibal Club with the contemporaneous X Club, another dining club organized around an emerging area of scientific enquiry that acted as the centre of a larger network of scholars, shows how the Cannibal Club’s members and associates shared with some of the era’s most famous “men of science” the same needs, grappled with the same issues, and deployed many of the same

methods to advance their interests at a time when engaging in scholarly enquiry into sexual behaviour and desire was a risky venture. At the same time, however, this comparison also shows how there were significant differences in the ways in which discourses about obscenity conditioned these group's publishing activities, differences that were rooted in the ways in which these groups interpreted those discourses and applied them to their production of sexual writing.

The scientific culture of the mid nineteenth century was a culture of coteries, with the X Club and the Cannibal Club making up just two of London's extensive number of gentlemen's dining clubs devoted to scholarly interests (Barton 410). The X Club's members and associates, which included Joseph Dalton Hooker, George Busk, Edward Frankland, Herbert Spencer, John Lubbock, William Spottiswode, John Tyndall and Thomas Hirst, were brought together through their shared interest in Darwinian evolutionary theory (412). One of the primary goals that underpinned the X Club's formation was the advocacy of secular, empirical, naturalistic understandings of the world, which, at mid century, following Charles Darwin's 1859 publication of *On the Origin of Species*, were a point of turbulent conflict in both the scientific and religious fields (412). The establishment of the X Club provided its members with a social space that could anchor this advocacy work and allowed for freer discussion of Darwinism than was possible within the meetings of the larger scientific societies to which they and many members of the Cannibal network belonged, such as the Ethnological Society, the Geographical Society and the Royal Society. As Hirst recalled of the X Club's first meeting on November 3, 1864, "the bond that united us was devotion to science, pure and free, untrammelled by religious dogmas. Amongst ourselves there was perfect outspokenness" (qtd in 411). The Cannibal Club's members and associates shared with the X Club's circle this need for free discussion in a social and scientific environment rife with hostility to men who understood "race and sex as central to understanding the rapidly expanding world" (Sigel, *Governing* 52). Many of these men were already prominent members of the Anthropological Society of London, which was founded in 1863 by Hunt and Burton as a space where members "might express their opinions freely and openly, without regard to popularity or respectability" (qtd in Sigel, *Governing* 52). Seeking to bring "all the different branches of science relating to man" out of isolation, the Anthropological Society notably differed from the X Club and the rival Ethnological Society in its members' use of more diverse sources in the formulation of

their theories, greater emphasis on physiological and historical similarities in studying human development, and investment in creating an “anthropological museum” for the use of its members (Burrow 144-146; Rainger 57). These features of the Anthropological Society transferred into the Cannibal Club, which acted as the centre of a social network which gave its members even freer reign to discuss, share access to, and publish works on exotic physiological curiosities and sexual practices such as hermaphroditism, incest, clitoridectomy, fertility ritual, prostitution, polyandry, and polygamy and, as I will highlight, more fulsomely incorporate their interest in obscene books and sexual entertainment into these activities (Sigel, *Governing* 52).

One of the ways in which these coterie offered their members freedom to pursue their interests was how they facilitated the collective consolidation of power. The ways in which this power was acquired and expressed would influence their publishing activity, and play a crucial role in the “secret museum’s” development through the Cannibal publishing network. Most of the X Club’s members were not influential within Victorian social, scientific, or political circles upon the organization’s formation in 1864. However, they worked together to further each other’s careers and consolidate their influence both within and outside the scientific community, collaborating to acquire advisory positions in government and form “interlocking directorships on the councils of many scientific societies” (Barton 412). As a result of these efforts, the X Club quickly became the most powerful scientific coterie of its day, exerting enormous influence over British scientific politics and advancing the interests of scientific naturalism (412). In contrast, most of the Cannibal Club’s members and associates already exerted significant social, economic, and political influence at the time of the Club’s establishment in 1863. Many of these men represented “the state through their affiliations with Parliament, the courts, the Foreign Office, and the military” (Sigel, *Governing* 58). Milnes was a Member of Parliament and a close friend of William Gladstone when he was Prime Minister;² Wilde, a judge; Charles Duncan Cameron, a diplomat; Hodgson, a general; and Frederick Popham Pike, a barrister (57). Other “Cannibals” enjoyed fairly influential positions in scientific circles or notable cultural standing as writers, journalists, explorers, and translators (Kennedy 170). Like the X Club, however, the Cannibals worked together to exert their influence in service of their common cause. Some of the organization’s members attempted to block anti-vice legislation, including the Obscene Publications Act prior to the Club’s formal

establishment, which threatened the suppliers and publishers of sexually explicit material (Searle 225). More often, however, they used their influence to operate outside the law, taking advantage of their collective political influence, wealth and cultural capital to acquire, share, and publish explicit material without opposition from the authorities (Sigel, *Governing* 57). As Sigel has shown, for example, Frederick Hankey, the Paris-based son of a General and nephew of an influential bank director and politician, supplied Burton, the wealthy businessman and bibliographer Henry Spencer Ashbee, and Milnes with explicit works from the continent through “the bag of a sympathetic Queen’s Messenger returning from Constantinople with dispatches for Lord Palmerston,” and “in a British Embassy bag, addressed to a friend of Hankey’s at the Foreign Office” (qtd. in Sigel, *Governing* 57). It is no wonder that, as *Reynolds’s Newspaper* observed, the police, government, and anti-vice societies “wink[ed] at the proceedings of... purveyors for [these] rich men’s” explicit books (“Astounding Revelations” 10). In many cases, as Sigel has emphasised, these men *were* the government (*Governing* 58).

Although each of these coteries represented powerful collectives, contemporaneous discourses about obscenity significantly influenced how they undertook their publishing activities. As Gowan Dawson has shown, the X Club’s members’ and associates’ anxiety about winning the approval of the public and their scientific peers led its members to expunge “even the slightest hint of vulgarity” from their published writings, even though their private discussions of naturalism involved a great deal of “lewd drollery” (11; 94). Painfully aware of a “well-worn tradition of connecting materialism and unbelief with moral corruption and debauchery,” the X-clubbers had at first attempted to dissociate scientific naturalism (which views all objects and events as part of nature and subject to scientific observation) from impropriety by repudiating allegations of Charles Darwin’s atheism (4). By the late 1860s, however, the network of scholars in which the Club was situated had shifted its attention from concerns with naturalism’s political propriety to anxieties over its sexual respectability, which they saw, Dawson argues, “as perhaps the most significant impediment to establishing a naturalistic worldview as a morally acceptable alternative to earlier theological outlooks” (4). The increasing social and legal treatment of any widely circulated work that contained sexual content as obscenity, which the 1868 *Hicklin* ruling propelled through its proscription of a method of defining obscenity that hinged on publication context, threatened that project and compelled these writers to edit their

published work, making references to sexual bodies, behaviours, and desires much less explicit than they would have been otherwise (11; 117-118). Scientific naturalists' publishers and editors shared their concerns and encouraged this self-censorship. *The Descent of Man's* (1871) focus on sexual selection, for instance, obliged even Darwin, the scientist around whose theories the X Club was formed, "to be scrupulously careful about the language he used," but his publisher, John Murray, suggested that he veil references to human sexual activity, and especially to female desire, even further before publication: as Murray reminded him, such references were "liable to the imputation of indecency" and needed to be removed or "toned down" in order to remove "any impediments to [the book's] general perusal" (35-36). Evolutionary theory thus developed in the nineteenth century hampered by restrictions on how processes like sexual selection could be described in print (29-41).

At first glance, it would appear that the Cannibal network operated free of such restrictions. Perhaps in part because their privilege emancipated them from competition for paying positions as scholars, those members who published scholarly work were notably less interested in garnering peer approval: they did not, as Burton declared in 1873, "tremble at the idea of 'acquiring an unhappy notoriety'. We wanted to have the truth and the whole truth, as each man sees it" (qtd in Sigel, *Governing* 52). Nor were they particularly interested in exerting public influence or garnering public approval. The books and papers that the Cannibals published showed, therefore, "little reticence in describing extremes of sexual behaviour" as they "categorized sex and collated sexual experience rather as sexologists" were beginning to in continental Europe (Cook 91-92). The papers that Edward Sellon, Thomas Bendyshe, James Campbell Reddie and James Hunt presented at Anthropological Society meetings and later published in Hunt's anonymously published periodical, the short-lived *Anthropological Review*, were quite detailed in their descriptions of human sexual behaviour and desire, and focused on shockingly exotic topics such as miscegenation and phallic worship.³ The longer anthropological studies and translations of Eastern classics on sexuality that several members of the Cannibal network privately published provided readers with even richer descriptions of the sexual, conveying their authors' and other writer's observations about variations in genital size, intersex bodies, and exotic 'historic' and 'foreign' sexual practices such as pederasty, clitoridectomy, miscegenation, eunachism, bestiality, flagellation and infibulation. That these works were published privately and restricted in

their circulation—a time-honoured method of getting around laws against the publication of obscene libels—shows, however, that discourses about obscenity still conditioned them. But these discourses conditioned the Cannibal network’s publishing activities in more complicated ways, ways that extended well beyond demanding, and bringing about, such works’ restriction: they underpinned this network’s broader conception and publication of these works as both the products and components of secret museums of sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment.

It was not coincidental that the notion of the “secret museum” or archive framed the ways in which these men approached scholarly enquiry about sexual bodies, acts, and desires, and how they published their work. Privileged scholars and book collectors knew of and enjoyed varying levels of access to real “secret museums,” institutions that were born of the same regulatory discourses about obscenity that underpinned the Cannibals’ conception and publication of sexual writing. Some of these readers viewed “secret” collections in far-away places through books like M.L. Barré’s illustrated catalogue of the Naples Cabinet, *Musée Secret*, which circulated through the British obscenity trade regularly after its publication in 1840.⁴ The work made its way into the libraries of wealthy obscenity collectors, many of whom wove in and out of the Cannibals’ exclusive circle.⁵ Closer to home, well-connected collectors gained physical access to the Private Case. The bibliographers William Laird Clowes and Henry Spencer Ashbee, the latter a prominent figure in the Cannibal network, each refer to the British Museum’s “secret chamber” several times in their bibliographies of ‘forbidden’ books. Since Ashbee’s bibliography also cites Private Case shelf marks (and since his friends were among the Museum’s board of directors), it is more than likely that these writers were speaking from firsthand experience (*Index* viii; 7). The construction and maintenance of these archives, as I have shown, drew from changing Victorian discourses about obscenity, transposing the notions that a vast variety of writing about sex contained erotic potential, and that reading such works should be necessarily restricted to elite male readers, into the organization of institutional space. But where the Museum’s directors and medico-judicial authorities considered these archives of works mechanisms for containing a social and professional threat, the men who formed the Cannibal network considered them vital repositories of sexual knowledge whose eroticism did not compromise their intellectual value, but underpinned it. Constructing various fantasies of a larger, globally scattered, historically distinct, generically varied

field or “museum” of works that contained hidden sexual knowledge, they produced and reproduced versions of that archive through their clandestine publishing activities, and affirmed the “secret museum’s” restricted interplay of sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment and pleasure as a necessary and desirable feature of sexual scholarship.

The clandestine bibliographies of ‘forbidden books’ that were produced by and circulated through the Cannibal network are helpful for illustrating the nature of this archive of sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure, and how the Cannibal network reproduced that archive through their larger publishing activities. Published under the pseudonym “Pisanus Fraxi,” Ashbee’s three privately printed, limited-edition bibliographies of ‘forbidden books,’ *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (1877), *Centuria Librorum Absconditorum* (1879), and *Catena Librorum Tacendorum* (1885) are the most famous of these works. The wealthy London merchant had strong social ties to most of the club’s official members, frequently inviting Burton, Milnes, and Reddie to his private rooms at Gray’s Inn Road to eat, drink, peruse, and add to the collection of rare books to which he devoted his free time and much of his considerable disposable income from the 1840s until his death in 1900 (Gibson 22-38). This personal collection formed the basis for his voluminous writings, which provide detailed descriptions of the content, history and physical characteristics of each of the works they list. While Ashbee’s bibliographies are often described in modern scholarship as records of “pornography,” they actually encompass a wide range of works, including legal and religious tracts, obscure medical works and translations of Eastern sex manuals as well as obscene fiction, a generic makeup which mirrored those works accessioned into institutional collections such as the British Museum’s Private Case, and, more broadly, the field of literature deemed potentially obscene by juridical authorities. The same diverse makeup also characterizes lesser-known Victorian bibliographies of ‘forbidden books’ that travelled through the same publishing networks, such as William Laird Clowes’s shorter *Bibliotheca Arcana: Brief notices of books that have been secretly printed, prohibited by law, seized, anathematized, burnt or Bowdlerized*, which the author also privately printed, in 1885, under the pseudonym “Speculator Morum”. The ways in which Ashbee and Clowes negotiate their bibliographies’ textual variety show how regulatory discourses about obscenity underpinned the development of the myth of a material, globally dispersed, exclusive archive of sexual knowledge that shaped the Cannibal network’s wider publishing activities.

The notion that the varied works these bibliographies describe constitute a forbidden archive or museum is central to their organization. Clowes' *Bibliotheca Arcana* proclaims its reconstruction of an 'arcane archive' in its title itself. Ashbee imagines his bibliographies as virtual museums, which, like the Private Case or the Naples Gabinetto Segreto, gather together "into [a] common fold the stray sheep," "forbidden books...the pariahs of every nation"—works that might otherwise have been forgotten with the passage of time and the repeated attempts of the government, police, and anti-vice societies to destroy them (*Index* li; lxiii). Ashbee insists that in drawing these "miscellaneous" works together, he is not attempting "to generalise" them (xiv). His titles and introductory remarks contradict this pronouncement, however, not only by ordering the vast range of works that the bibliographies comprise in gathering them together into single lists, but also by insisting on the fact that these works are united through histories of illicit publication, restricted circulation, and suppression. Ashbee's first bibliography draws its title, which translates from the Latin as *List of Prohibited Books*, from the Catholic Church's list of prohibited publications, first promulgated by Pope Paul IV in 1559 (Schmitt 45). The titles of Ashbee's later bibliographies, which translate as "A Company of a Hundred Hidden Books" and "A Chain of Books to Be Passed Over in Silence" similarly underscore that the works they house are unified in their history of being "forbidden" (Kendrick 71). Ashbee's characterization of the histories of the works he describes is not strictly accurate. Rather, he conflates sexual explicitness and eroticism—something that all of these works *do* have in common—with such histories, using 'forbidden' as a shorthand for 'indecent'. In doing so, Ashbee's bibliographies pick up on and expand contemporaneous medico-juridical discourses that, attempting to regulate unruly readers and publishers, conflated sexual-scientific works' obscenity with the contexts of their material life, to imagine a closeted field of explicit works. With its preface's repeated references to the rarity, forbiddenness, and restricted nature of the varied explicit works it contains, and its subtitle, *Brief notices of books that have been secretly printed, prohibited by law, seized, anathematized, burnt or Bowdlerized*, Clowes's *Bibliotheca Arcana* emphasises how this view of the "secret museum" as an archive of explicit works defined and united by restriction is not unique to Ashbee's bibliographies but shared across the elite publishing network that they inhabited.

Equally important to understanding this publishing history is that this network considered all of the explicit works united within the restricted "secret museum" to

function similarly as sources of sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment. Ashbee's and Clowes' bibliographies illustrate this by not only representing works such as Richard Burton and F.F. Arbuthnot's anthropological-commentary filled translations of the *Kama Sutra*, *Kama Shastra*, and *Ananga Ranga*, and the eighteenth-century physician Martin Schurig's *Gynecologia Historico-Medica*, *Syllepsilogia Historico-Medica*, and *Embryologia Historico-Medica* as hidden or restricted sources of vital sexual knowledge, but also by framing explicit fictional works as "one of the surest sources whence to gather a picture of past times" (*Catena* xxxv). Ashbee focuses particularly strongly on the sexual truth that literary texts convey, framing them as documentary observations. "Truth," the bibliographer claims, is

what we want from a novel, if it is to be of permanent value... the author describes the epoch in which he lives, the people with whom he associates, the scenes which he has visited. Now, Erotic Novels... contain... the truth, and "hold the mirror up to nature" more certainly than do those of any other description... [T]heir authors have, in most instances, been eye-witnesses of the scenes they have described...themselves enacted, in part, what they have portrayed. Immoral and amatory fiction then... must unfortunately be acknowledged to contain... a reflection of the manners and vices of the times—of vices to be avoided, guarded against, reformed, but which unquestionably exist, and of which an exact estimate is needful to enable us to cope with them (xxxv-xli).

For Ashbee, then, an obscene novel like *Venus Schoolmistress* (1830), which narrates the experiences of Miss R Birch, the "daughter of a woman who kept a day school, and who never let pass an opportunity to flog her pupils," reveals the true nature of a "*lech*, which has existed from time immemorial" in the British Isles (*Index* 398-9). Similarly, he cites the novels *Vies des Dames Gallants* (1666) and *A History of the Rod* (1870) as evidence that "Tribadism is chiefly indulged in by Turkish and French women" and that "the propensity which the English most cherish is undoubtedly Flagellation," respectively (xxxiv-xxxviii; xl). Clowes expresses a similar sentiment in *Bibliotheca Arcana*. His bibliographic entries are far briefer than Ashbee's, and convey few of his thoughts about the use value of individual works, but his preface nevertheless devotes considerable space to arguing that the works listed in his bibliography are keys to realizing "the truth" of everyday life (iv). Admittedly, this preface never quite gets to specifying that literary works convey such "truth". However, Clowes strongly implies the

same idea when speaking more expansively of the epistemological force of the archive of forbidden works that his bibliography reproduces. Clowes frames this discussion by citing arguments about aesthetic merit: castigating John Ruskin for hurling “bolts against the ‘ignoble interiors’ and ‘glorified littleness’ of the Dutch school,” he calls for greater attention to be paid to the “truth” that a work conveys, rather than its “picturesqueness... [or] conventional propriety” (iv). Comparing the works his bibliography lists to respected realist novels and paintings, he argues that “these secret denizens of the library” similarly express “the secrets of the most shadowy and complex side of man’s nature,” and, in doing so, reveal valuable insights into “human motives and human passions” (viii). Like Ashbee’s bibliographies, *Bibliotheca Arcana* thus advances an argument for the sociological value of obscene fiction, with each work of fiction contributing to the larger network of hidden sexual knowledge and obscene pleasure formed by the secret museum.

Ashbee’s conceptualization of obscene books as “one of the surest sources whence to gather a picture of past times” has become a repeated point of critique among scholars of the period’s sexual culture (*Catena* xxxv). Steven Marcus considers Ashbee’s insistence that many episodes detailed in obscene fiction “really happened” a pathetic product of the bibliographer’s erotic fantasies, arguing that “the degree that one accepts” pornography’s representation of itself as something that ‘really’ happened correlates with the degree to which one is “involved in the pornographic fantasy itself. Ashbee, we can see, is fairly deeply involved” (46). Sigel views Ashbee’s insistence on obscene fiction’s sociological value differently, arguing that it functioned as part of a larger authorial strategy to distance his works from accusations of impropriety (*Governing* 61-62).⁶ Although it is true that Ashbee’s argument for the sociological function of obscene fiction expresses an erotic wish that sexual fantasy is rooted in reality, and that it functions to frame his bibliographies as respectable scholarly works, it is equally important to recognize that Ashbee’s insistence on fiction’s sociological value simply extended ideas about the function of ‘borderline’ works like sexual-scientific books that circulated through medico-juridical discourses about obscenity, discourses that his bibliographies draw on in other ways to conceptualize the “secret museum”. Bibliographers like Ashbee and Clowes considered that just as sexual science functioned within a legal and moral “grey zone” between the legitimate and the obscene because the sexual information that it conveyed produced sexual pleasure as sexual

knowledge, obscene fiction constituted a 'borderline' form of writing, one which produced sexual knowledge alongside sexual pleasure. The literal reading of fictional representation that this notion implies would not pass muster today. Notably, however, in conceiving literature as a "mirror" of reality, Ashbee and Clowes had not broken radically with contemporaneous scientific thinking. As Sally Shuttleworth and John Holmes have both shown, respectable scientific experts often cited poets and novelists as authoritative observers of human character in the nineteenth century, "even to the point," Holmes argues, "where fictional characters were taken as case studies" (Holmes 674; Shuttleworth 131-132).⁷ Ashbee's insistence on obscene fiction's sociological value may have operated to excuse his work with explicit texts, but it also expressed a genuine, and fairly understandable, conviction that just as the *whole* field of works consigned to the restricted "secret museum" transmitted sexual pleasure, they also transmitted valuable sexual knowledge.

The "secret museum" discourse that Ashbee's and Clowes' bibliographies engage with was thus an alluring interpretation of medico-judicial discourses about obscenity that pushed them to their logical endpoint, in which a range of texts discussed, produced, and/or circulated in the same context becomes a literal archive; in which a work's material and cultural history indicates its transmission of closeted knowledge and pleasure; in which the circumstances through which material books travel become loosened from their relation to 'vulnerable' readers, and become indicative of a text's function itself. It is easy to see why the "secret museum" would appeal to a certain kind of scholar—one whose position and privilege not only allowed him to access it, but also freed him of the necessity of presenting his work to the public. Expanding the scope of sexual knowledge and admitting to the pleasure that sexual scholarship produced, this archive promised possibility, rather than danger, in the "grey zone" between the medical and the erotic. It is worth noting that even as it gave permission to enjoy the eroticism of sexual knowledge, the "secret museum" was also erotic itself as a closeted material space, whose secret allure, often figured through metaphors of feminine seduction and secretion, suffused its characterization within elite Victorian publishing and collecting culture (Moore 211). Tellingly, the period's most expensive obscene fiction incessantly returns to the image of the archive, deploying a "metanarrative of an every-circulating 'canon' of pornographic texts" (Arondekar 113). Stories in the pricey erotic periodicals the *Pearl* (1879-81) and the *Boudoir* (1883), are replete with references to caches,

collections, or archives of forbidden books, with many of these narratives titillatingly recounting the tales of the journeys that the books belonging to these archives have made in secret, passing from hand to hand (113). The sensuous “biblio-erotics” of even individual ‘forbidden books’ within this archive was a focal point of desire for members of the Cannibal network, crystallized perhaps most memorably in Burton’s 1863 promise to add to Hankey’s collection of anthropodermic bibliopeggy by procuring him a human skin flayed from a live African woman (Sigel, *Governing* 50; Hunter, Saunders, & Williamson 40). The metonymic link this disturbing fantasy makes between a book about sexuality and the body of a suffering black woman captures, as Sigel has noted, the Cannibals’ interest in the intersections of race, sex, and sadism (*Governing* 50). This repulsive episode also emphasises, however, the specific eroticism of the material book as well as the broader eroticism of the secreted archive, and the pride of place that its history, its production, and its circulation enjoyed within the Cannibal network as it sought to tap into the pleasurable and knowledgeable possibilities of the “secret museum,” and to recreate it.

Working in collaboration with one another and with obscenity dealers such as William Dugdale, William Lazenby, and John Camden Hotten, many of the Cannibal network’s members issued obscene poetry, short stories, and novels anonymously or under pseudonyms, sometimes years or decades after circulating them from hand to hand within their private circle (Mendes 8; 42-43; 156; 172-173; 179; 193-194; 200-202; 236-237; 289; 345-347; 372-373). Often luxuriously produced and printed in small numbers, these publications were published and sold clandestinely, frequently through word of mouth, at high prices to privileged gentlemen like themselves (Sigel, *Governing* 55-57). Much of their scholarly work was ushered into print in the same way, intersecting with fiction through clandestine print networks just as obscene literature and sexual science intersected in the imagined ‘secret museum’. Some of the Cannibals’ earliest books, such as John Davenport’s collection of “essays on the powers of reproduction,” *Aphrodisiacs and Anti-aphrodisiacs* (1873), were openly published, but printed privately, often at the author’s expense, by discreet printers—frequently, the same ones who serviced obscenity dealers such as Dugdale and Lazenby and printed the Cannibals’ literary material (Gibson 24-25). While not clandestine themselves, they circulated along the same restricted circuits of access. As time wore on, some of the club’s members extended their restricted publishing activities by creating private ‘societies’ through which

to publish and distribute their scholarly works, organizations which themselves stood in for the “secret museum” through their simultaneous production and restriction of explicit material. Burton and F.F. Arbuthnot’s Kamashastra Society is the most well known of these societies. Under this imprint, these authors, translators, and explorers privately published numerous translations of explicit Eastern literature and sex manuals, including the *Ananga Ranga* (1885), the *Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night* (1885-1888), the *Perfumed Garden* (1886), the *Bharistan* (1887), and the *Ghulistan* (1888). The ‘society’ sold these prohibitively priced and luxuriously produced works only by subscription to wealthy men like, and including, themselves. The Cannibal network thus jointly produced a “secret museum” of its own, a diverse field of works that were restricted from public view, a collection that, not coincidentally, features strongly in Ashbee’s representation of the archive of “forbidden books”.

That the Cannibal network’s reproduction of the “secret museum” through their restricted publishing activities constituted a knowledge-making practice, and did not operate *only* as an excuse to indulge its members’ various erotic desires, is evidenced in its diverse publications themselves. Their scholarly publications, for example, reflect their conviction that science did not, and should not, preclude eroticism in a number of ways. First, whereas the writings of the X Club’s members and associates doggedly avoided any mention of their works’ potentially shocking nature as a way to negotiate contemporaneous anxieties about scientific eroticism,⁸ the Cannibal network’s scholarship addressed those anxieties head on, equating their works’ potentially offensive sexual detail with a sophisticated, worldly, and objective brand of scientific ethics. Davenport’s preface to *Aphrodisiacs and Anti-Aphrodisiacs*, for instance, defends the book’s descriptions of exotic sexual bodies, acts and desires as important sociological data, arguing that hypocritical social conventions impeding the dissemination of such information impede social-scientific progress itself:

The reproductive powers of Nature were regarded by the nations of remote antiquity with an awe and reverence so great, as to form an object of worship, under a symbol, of all others the most significant,—the *Phallus*; and thus was founded a religion... That scarcely any notices of this worship should appear in modern works... may be accounted for by considering the difference of opinion between the ancients and the moderns as to what constitutes —modesty; the former being unable to see any moral turpitude in actions they regarded as [sic] designs of nature, while the latter, by their over-strained notions of delicacy, render

themselves... obnoxious to the charge that... modesty, when banished from the heart, ...[takes] refuge on the lips (1-2).⁹

Burton and his frequent collaborator, F.F. Arbuthnot, similarly deployed paratext to frame their works as serious scholarship that Victorian prudery threatened to impede, often in caustic terms. They dedicated their translation of the Indian sex manual *Ananga-Ranga* [Stage of Love] (1885), for instance, to “that small portion of the British public which takes enlightened interest in studying the manners and customs of the olden past,” implying both that readers who found the work uncomfortable were not enlightened and that such material was itself enlightening (qtd in Sigel, *Governing* 62). Burton’s preface to his notorious translation of the *Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night* (1885-1888), meanwhile, deploys a direct critique of Edward William Lane’s heavily expurgated earlier translation of the work as a way to frame Burton’s far more explicit work as accurate, respectable, and responsible scholarship. Lane’s penchant for “avoid[ing] the ‘objectionable’ and aught approaching to licentiousness” in his translation, Burton complains, was only one of a litany of scholarly errors that had occurred as a result of cultural sanctions on sexual discussion, an intellectual sin equal to converting “the Arabian Nights into the Arabian Chapters, arbitrarily... convert[ing] some chapters into notes,” rendering “poetry by prose,” and grossly mistranslating certain phrases, but more unforgivable because its pandering to a prudish public was deliberate (1:xii). The Cannibal network’s members thus articulated their decisions to include graphic sexual detail in terms of scientific responsibility, and criticized sanctions against the inclusion of such material in scholarly texts as impediments to science.

Previous scholars have highlighted these critiques as aspects of a larger strategy that the Cannibal network’s members employed to distance themselves from accusations of obscenity, addressing their readers’ potential anxieties about obscenity and showing how such anxieties could be ameliorated. As Sigel has pointed out, these authors also assumed self-consciously objective (often third-person) voices in their scholarly works, employed robust scholarly apparatuses, and invoked the merits of “nature” and sexual “truth” to frame their writings as serious, objective, and respectable scholarship (*Governing* 62). These aspects of their works seem disingenuous, however, when one considers that they also covertly emphasised these works’ erotic appeal, drawing attention to the unusually explicit material that they contained, and even

expanding their eroticism (62). The scholarly apparatuses that Burton fashioned for the *Nights*, for example, greatly expanded the work's explicit content and erotic appeal. The 'anthropological' notes that surrounded the tale of "Abu Nawas and the Three Boys" in Burton's *Nights*—a story omitted from Lane's translation, which describes how the central male character seduces three youths—advised "all but anthropological students" to "'skip' over all anecdotes in which... [Abu Nawas's] name and abominations occur" (5:64). Like Stockdale's and Dugdale's tongue in cheek 'warnings' that young and female readers should avoid their explicit medical books, such warnings made the story's shocking homosexual content far more visible to readers. Burton's decision to annotate such episodes with footnotes that described "what Persian boys call... 'Alish Takish,'" further expanded the story's eroticism by greatly extending the volume of such content through the translator's own speculations about the sexual activities that the original text described (5:64-65).

Even expurgation covertly underscored and expanded these works' eroticism. Davenport's *Aphrodisiacs*, a work that studiously conforms to an objective, third person voice, reproduces the many anecdotes and excerpts from works about sex that it includes from other texts in languages other than English. The book quotes, for example, Jean Jacques Rousseau's French description of his desire to be beaten by his childhood guardian Madame Lambercier in his *Confessions*.¹⁰ An acknowledged method of expurgation in the nineteenth century, this refusal to translate explicit content restricts full readings of the work to well-educated, 'capable' readers, and, like Davenport's own 'objective' tone, conveys an aura of social respectability and scholarly learnedness to its readers (O'Sullivan 125). However, as Carol O'Sullivan has argued, this editorial method also draws attention to the text's censored status, and, in doing so, *highlights* an untranslated passage's potential eroticism, much as Davenport's preface highlights his book's erotic potential (123).¹¹ Furthermore, the reader educated in the languages in which the anecdotes and excerpts were published—most of the readers who would have access to this work, given its restricted method of publication and dissemination—would find that these anecdotes rarely conform to Davenport's 'objective' tone, and, as a result, counter it. *Aphrodisiacs*' textual construction thus causes it to skirt the bounds of the licit and the illicit, which perhaps explains why it has been variously characterized by Ian Gibson, Steven Marcus and Ronald Pearsall as the work of "a linguist and pioneering

sexologist”, that of “a semi-learned pornographic hack,” and dull “pseudo-scholarly pornography” (Gibson 24; Marcus 72; Pearsall 388).

The truth was somewhere between these critics’ characterizations. The Cannibal network’s distancing techniques did function to frame their works as responsible sexual scholarship, but they were not precisely disingenuous because they also highlighted and expanded their scholarship’s eroticism. Sigel and Colligan have argued that these works showcase the emergence of an exclusive new kind of sexual science that also overtly functioned as entertainment, a form of material that we might term “empirical obscenity” (Colligan, *Traffic* 57; Sigel, *Governing* 64-69). I want to argue that the “secret museum” played a major role in shaping this kind of sexual scholarship’s development. Such works were overtly written for elite readers interested in sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure, and restricted, through price and routes of publication: the quintessential product of the “secret museum” discourse. Conceived and published as part of a “secret museum” whose very existence was predicated on sexual science’s ‘forbidden’ dual role as a form of sexual knowledge and as a form of sexual entertainment, these works acknowledge that dual role, and celebrate it. For these writers, these works’ eroticism did not preclude their function as important scholarship, but rather, defined it. That much of their erotic appeal depends on the reader’s skills to look beyond the distancing techniques of scientific rhetoric or, perhaps more accurately, to look for them as *signs* of a scholarly work’s hidden or secret value as sexual entertainment points, however, to the important role that restricted publication and circulation played for these men in their understanding of sexual enquiry. These works’ restricted publication did not simply comprise a method of evading obscenity law, but also as a sign and a function of their knowledgeable, and exclusive, value. As in the imagined “secret museum,” in which a work’s (purported) history of restricted publication and circulation indicated its full disclosure of the ‘truth’ of sex, these works’ restriction from public circulation not only allowed the Cannibal network to engage fulsomely with sexual-scientific eroticism, but also functioned as a sign of their value as detailed works about sex, works which were considered unfit for the consumption of “vulnerable” readers.

I will shortly address the elitism of the Cannibal network’s publishing activities and view of sexual scholarship, but I first want to show the ways in which restrictive publication allowed the Cannibal network to engage with sexual enquiry in more

expansive ways than was possible for their peers. That their works were restricted meant that the Cannibal network's members could also write and publish obscene fiction as a way of engaging with sexual knowledge as well as eroticism. It is clear that many of these men shared Ashbee's conviction, theorized in his engagement with the "secret museum," that fiction could function as sociological evidence of human behaviour and desire. Perhaps the most famous, and most overlooked, example of the way in which fiction operated as evidence for the Cannibals is Burton's *Nights*. At its most basic level, Burton's *Nights* presents itself as an anthropological reading of a literary text. The translator's introductory and concluding remarks emphasise the work's value not simply as a "mere fairy-book, a nice present for little boys," as several of his predecessors conceived it, but as a work "of the highest anthropological and ethnological interest," which, "viewed as a *tout ensemble* in full and complete form, [reveals] ...a drama of Eastern life" (1:xi; 10:115; 156). Perhaps more than any other point in the text, Burton's Terminal Essay reinforces the impression of the *Nights* as an accurate reflection of Arab psychology and culture that his preface transmits: the "reader who has reached this terminal stage," Burton proclaims, "has seen the mediaeval Arab at his best and, perhaps, at his worst. In glancing over the myriad pictures of this panorama, ...[readers] will note the true nobility of the Moslem's mind in the Moyen Age, and the cleanliness of his life from cradle to grave (10:63). The Terminal Essay's infamous Part IV, which contains Burton's essay on pederasty, is particularly explicit in its treatment of the story collection as a historical and cultural record, proposing as it does "to treat of the Social Condition which The Nights discloses" (10:173). Notably, it is this section of the essay which is particularly replete with examples from the fictional text, including not only examples from the *Nights* to illustrate Burton's theory of a pederastic "Sotadic Zone," such as the tale of Abu Nawas (10:252-253), but also references to Greek, Roman and French literary classics and artistic works. When combined with Burton's earlier linkage of the projects of William Makepeace Thackeray, Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollett with the Anthropological Society's own labour to reveal sexual "truth," the reader is left with the impression that like science, literature represents for Burton a crucial method of recording and analysing sexual knowledge (1:xviii).

But the Cannibal network also published literature about sex, which, like the works of the "secret museum" they imagined, functions to examine sexual bodies, behaviours and desires as well as elicit sexual pleasure. Notably, the bulk of the material

that they published in collaboration with obscenity dealers focused on incest, flagellation, and desire between men, taboo topics that, as Sigel notes, were also prominent in their sexual-scientific writings (*Governing* 52).¹² Members of the network were almost certainly the authors of flagellant novels such as *Lady Pokingham, or, The All Do It* (c.1879), which was serialized in *The Pearl*, and *The New Lady's Tickler* (1866) (Mendes 156; 289). Similarly, *Venus in India; or, Love Adventures in Hindustan* (1889), aligned with the Cannibals' interest in foreign sexuality; *Laura Middleton: Her Brother and Lover* (c.1865) and *The Romance of Lust* (1873-1876), express their enduring interest in the incest taboo; and *Sins of the Cities of the Plain* (1881), probably the first explicit novel to examine desire between men, mirrors the interests of several of the coterie's members in same-sex desire (179, 194; 235-237; 214-216).¹³ *Venus in India*, published in Brussels in 1889 and attributed to Major Crommelin Henry Ricketts, an ancillary member of the Cannibals' circle who moved between London, Paris, and Brussels, explores the contradictory erotics of Imperial rule (179). Its hero, as Anjali Arondekar observes, cuts a surprising figure in an obscene novel, since he "cannot bring himself to have sex with native women" despite his ravenous sexual appetite and constantly feels the need to pledge his emotional (if not sexual) fidelity to his wife back home in England (120). That such incessant self-monitoring occurs in a novel ripe with the possibility of describing the exotic charms of foreign women is telling, betraying its authors' broader preoccupation with the dangers of miscegenation and anxiety of losing cultural strength and superiority within the uninhibited space of a colony. Without the opportunity to exploit its colonial setting's sexual possibilities to the fullest, the narrative soon "turns into an ethnographic journey," bearing a striking resemblance to the Cannibals' anthropological writings (120). The narrator of *The Amatory Experiences of a Surgeon*, published clandestinely, in London, in 1881, dabbles with theorizing the nature of sexual desire and practice (Mendes 243-244). In one episode, the narrator meditates on the physical processes of same-sex female relations, finding it "surprising how a perfect enjoyment could be arrived at, without a penetrating power on either side" since "Woman is formed within her to receive the all-important member of the other sex" (11). In another episode, the narrator attempts to theorize the nature of sexual pleasure. Posing a scenario in which the reader is "mounted on the body of a woman of pleasure," but imagines during the act of intercourse that he is "the first to pluck the maiden flower from a lovely and innocent girl," the narrator argues that sexual pleasure is a process rooted not in bodily desire, but

within the imagination and memory: imagination will deliver “precisely the same sensations that would be experienced in the actual deflowering of a maid” (11).¹⁴ These works thus function to explore ideas that the Cannibals developed in their social-scientific writings, overtly translating sociological insight into erotic narrative, while their social-scientific writings covertly reveal the erotic experiences that underpin such insights. As with the Cannibals’ brand of ‘scientific’ writing, these works emphasize the complexity of sexual discourse in the nineteenth century, as the incoherence of distinctions between sexual science and sexual entertainment incited deliberate crossings over of these genres to produce forms of sexual scholarship which did not, or did not in the ways we have come to expect, seek to discipline sexuality.

Sins of the Cities of the Plain, a novel that frames itself as a documentary source of sexual knowledge, offers additional evidence through its formal construction as well as its narrative that these men conceived and published explicit literature and sexual science as *like texts* within the secret museum, each acting as a way to establish sexual knowledge and transmit sexual pleasure. *Sins*, which has been attributed to Reddie and the painter Simeon Solomon, and was first published, clandestinely, by Lazenby in 1881 in an edition of 250 copies, invites readers to interpret it as a record of real-life ‘deviant’ sexual practice and psychology, depicting its protagonist’s sexual confessions as a true record of sexual activity that may be extrapolated to encompass the experiences of young male “sodomites” more generally (Mendes 214-216). The novel’s claims of accuracy and veracity are powerful because they are bolstered by the novel’s incorporation of real-life events, places, and texts strongly associated with same sex male sexual activity into its narrative, which carefully explains the process through which Jack Saul, a handsome male prostitute, comes to document his adventures for profit.¹⁵ The techniques of realism that *Sins* deploys can be dismissed as attempts to enhance the text’s eroticism: the novel’s incorporation of real places, events, people and texts associated with sexual intrigue and scandal is, after all, hardly unusual in Victorian obscenity. However, the addition of three short essays on “The Same Old Story: Arses Preferred to Cunts,” “Sodomy” and “Tribadism,” which appear in the back pages of the novel, strongly encourages the reader to interpret Jack’s “realistically” intertextual narrative not just as a story that is titillatingly true to life, but also as a document that forms a useful basis for scholarly study—even to the point of comprising a scientific record itself—by situating the narrative within a scientific framework. The essay on

sodomy, for example, implicitly parallels Jack's reported experiences with the French forensic specialist Auguste Tardieu's empirical observations of sodomite bodies. Before describing the specialist's conclusions based on his investigation of "two hundred and seventeen cases of passive sodomy—not always cases of French subjects," the essay informs readers, tongue in cheek, that "although we have *made the most careful research*, we do not know of many professional male sodomites in London" (115, emphasis added). The essay does not say that Jack Saul is one of the "professional male sodomites" that the author "knows," but since *Sins* is ostensibly the "true" confession of one "professional male sodomite," this passage's close proximity to his purported confession encourages readers to understand it as a case study told in narrative. At the same time, the essay emphasises the eroticism of its own narrative in suggestively highlighting the heights of pleasure that could be enjoyed by a "lusty fellow" in ancient Rome (117-118). The essays and the narrative contained between the covers of *Sins of the Cities of the Plain* thus show in unison not only that these genres each have the potential to convey sexual knowledge and arouse sexual pleasure, but also that they could speak to one another, forming a knowledgeable and pleasurable archive or "museum" that is more than the sum of their parts.

There is some allure in reading the Cannibal network's re-creation of the 'secret museum' through its publishing activity as a rebellious response to a dominant culture that wished to separate sexual knowledge from sexual pleasure, a reading that the Cannibal network's writings do a great deal to support in branding themselves social rebels. As in their scholarly and literary writings, they castigated the 'prudish' and hypocritical society in which they had been born in their private letters to one another, and lamented the demands to censor sexual detail, emanating from various spheres, which conditioned literary and scientific production in the last half of the nineteenth century (Sigel, *Governing* 51-52). However, the fact that these men were, in practical terms, unconcerned with the problem of censorship outside the field of their own narrow interests emphasises how, although these self-published writers rebelled against scholarly conventions that saw sexual-scientific eroticism as a threat, their publishing activities were in many ways conservative (52). The museum of knowledge and pleasure that the Cannibals theorized was an archive whose origins lay in the regulatory discourses about obscenity that surrounded the network's members through their economic stations, government appointments, and investments in imperialism. The

exclusive publishing practices through which they brought their works into print were not simply born of their abilities to operate outside of the law, but born of the law and, alluringly, transposed the authority of the state, whose construction of readership forged the restricted “secret museum,” into the authority of the elite reader. In recreating the “secret museum” they dreamed of, bringing explicit science and explicit literature together within a single field to create new sexual knowledge and new heights of sexual pleasure, the Cannibal network also created knowledge that only privileged readers like themselves could access. The “secret museum” is thus an important phase in sexual science’s history, for it not only reveals the ways in which discourses about obscenity operated on sexual science dialectically, initiating the production of new sexual knowledge and pleasure through their restriction of sexual representation. The “secret museum,” as expressed through the Cannibal network’s activities, is also important because it shows how sexual scholarship did not necessarily involve the unveiling of sexual truth, as Foucault suggests, but also involved the production and reproduction of closeted sexual knowledge and pleasure. The borders between *ars erotica* and *scientia sexualis* were not merely blurry in the nineteenth century because the possibility of initiating the reader in sexual pleasure always lay at the heart of sexual-scientific work. Writers and publishers deliberately confused these forms of sexual discourse because they saw them as constitutive of one another, and explored their knowledgeable and pleasurable possibilities through restricted production and circulation.

The discourse of the “secret museum,” and the ways in which it shaped the Cannibal network’s publishing activities, is also important for understanding how new forms of sexual science circulated in Britain through the action of fringe publishers throughout the period the Cannibal network was active, and beyond it. These self-published writers laid much of the groundwork for the development of new modes of fringe publication that expanded the interplay of sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure through their exploitation of the secret museum discourse. They did so by demonstrating the “secret museum’s” erotic allure for elite readers, and linking it with various forms of restricted publication, including the “private society,” a method of publication that offered a tactical advantage to fringe publishers as they sought to capitalize on the market for erotic works while evading prosecution. This tactical advantage is well illustrated by the *lack* of response of the police and government when Burton’s *Nights* became known to the public and provoked significant outcry against the ‘pornographic’ work in 1888

(Colligan, *Traffic* 60). In the midst of the outcry, Burton emphasized the *Nights* limited print run and high price, first in a circular “earnestly requesting that the book might not be exposed for sale in public places” and then in an open letter to *The Academy*:

One of my principle objects in making the work so expensive... is to keep it from the general public. For this reason I have no publisher. The translation is printed by myself for the use of select personal friends; and nothing could be more repugnant to my feelings than the idea of a book of the kind being placed in a publisher's hands, and sold over the counter (“The Thousand Nights and a Night” 104).

Despite increasing public suspicion that ‘private publication’ was synonymous with obscenity in the late 1880s,¹⁶ the *Nights*’ private mode of publication, small print run and high price made it practically immune from prosecution, since, as Burton’s adoption of the government’s own rhetoric highlighted, this mode of publication limited the social harm that it represented (Colligan, *Traffic* 61). The “secret museum’s” potential to act as a lucrative basis for a conservative model of fringe publication, one that protected the publishers of explicit writing from prosecution, was one of the things that would inspire fringe publishers to experiment with reproducing the secret museum, and the Cannibal network’s reading, writing, and publishing activities, through their own publishing activities in the late nineteenth century.

Endnotes

¹ Gowan Dawson's recent book *Darwin, Literature, and Victorian Respectability* provides the most comprehensive account of the ways in which these disciplines were conditioned by discourses about obscenity and respectability.

² Gladstone details his long acquaintance with Milnes in his obituary for the man, "Richard Monckton Milnes."

³ See Rainger for a detailed discussion of the *Anthropological Review's* genesis, publication, and the debates about the Cannibal Club's dominance over its and the Anthropological Society's activities that eventually embroiled it.

⁴ See, for example, Chapter 5, which details John Camden Hotten's publication of an edition of *Musée Secret*, and shows that he marketed it to collectors like (and including) those who belonged to the Cannibal network.

⁵ *Musée Secret* was listed for sale, for example, in the auction of the library of the late-Victorian collector William Wilkinson, which contained a number of other "curious" works ("Sales by Auction—Dutch Bulbs" N. Pag.)

⁶ Ashbee's continuous insistence on his readers'—and his own—powers of objective distance supports Sigel's argument. "As little, it is my belief, will excite the passions of my readers," Ashbee at one point insists, "as would the naked body of a woman, extended on the dissecting table, produce concupiscence in the minds of the students assembled to witness an operation performed upon her" (*Index lxx*). Wryly observing that Ashbee's intellectual distance did not preclude him from including incendiary images in his works, such as a frontispiece in *Centuria Librorum Absconditorum* that featured "a half-naked woman holding a liberty torch ... over the fallen body of a monk" Sigel argues that such images, like Ashbee's more fulsome descriptions of obscene novels, belie "the notion that his sole focus was bibliographic studies" (*Governing* 62). Ashbee's self-representation as a social scientist was thus, she concludes, motivated by his desire to justify his bibliographies' erotic subject and content and preserve his own respectability (62).

⁷ For instance, Charles Dickens' 1848 novel *Dombey and Son*, which linked the rapid expansion of railways in Britain with the increasing "velocity" of children's education, was cited in medical debates about child education in the 1850s (Shuttleworth 131).

⁸ Although Darwin's preface and introduction to *The Descent of Man* each contain the term "sexual selection," for example, he doggedly refused to acknowledge in these writings that readers might consider the work's core subject, the long-term biological causes and effects of sexual behaviour, improper. The naturalist's sole acknowledgement of the *Descent of Man's* controversial nature appears in the preface to the second edition, which vaguely refers to the "fiery ordeal through which the book" had passed, and focuses thereafter on refuting nuanced scholarly criticisms of his theory of sexual selection instead of addressing the public discussions of its sexual impropriety, discussions that caused him, according to Dawson, great anxiety (Darwin vi; Dawson 160).

⁹ Davenport is far blunter in his defense of sexually explicit writing in his introduction to his study *Curiositates Eroticae Physiologiae: Or Tabooed Subjects Freely Treated* (1874), which declares that readers should not suppose "from the author's remarks that the author's intention has been that of writing an *obscene* book, or even to employ obscene words. He holds that the grand subject—the Reproduction of the Human Race—which runs through more or less all the essays in this volume, is, in itself, most pure" (qtd in Sigel, *Governing* 62. Emphasis original).

¹⁰ The passage to which I refer reads as follows: “When [Jean Jacques Rousseau was] a child he was by no means displeased with the corrections administered to him by a lady considerably his elder, he even frequently sought for a whipping at her hands, especially after he perceived that the flagellation developed in him the manifest token of virility. ... “Assez long temps,” says he, “Madame Lambercier s’entint à la menace, et cette menace d’un châtement tout nouveau pour moi me semblait très effrayante, mais après l’exécution, je la trouvai moins terrible à l’épreuve que l’attente ne l’avait été, et ce qu’il y a de plus bizarre est que ce châtement m’affectionna davantage d’elle qui me l’avoit imposé. Il fallait même toute la vérité de cette affection et toute ma douceur naturelle pour m’empêcher de chercher le retour du même traitement en le méritant, car j’avais trouvé dans la douleur, dans la honte même, un mélange de sensualité qui m’avait laissé plus de désir que de crainte de l’éprouver derechef, par la même main. Il est vrai que comme il se mêlait, sans doute, à cela quelque instinct précoce du sexe, le même châtement reçu de son frère, ne m’eut point du tout, parut plaisant” (181).

¹¹ Such expurgatory techniques were frequently used, O’Sullivan argues, by well-known Victorian publishers like Henry Bohn, who “made a virtue of the necessity for censorship through a process of eroticization through the act of expurgation” and, in doing so, capitalized on a market for erotic materials (125).

¹² Outliers included Edward Sellon’s *The New Epicurean: The Delights of Sex, Facetiously and Philosophically Considered, in Graphic Letters Addressed to Young Ladies of Quality* (1865), imitated eighteenth-century forms, and James Campbell Reddie’s *Amatory Experiences of a Surgeon* (1881) and *The Power of Mesmerism* (1893) (which bibliographic evidence suggests was written by the businessman William Simpson Potter, probably in collaboration with Pike, Reddie, and Lazenby), which focus on the sexual opportunities that the mastery of surgery and mesmerism pose, respectively (Mendes 237).

¹³ Print materials about sex between men had been associated with the obscenity trade well before the formation of the Cannibal network. For example, William Dugdale published c.1855 a “night guide” called the *Yokel’s Preceptor*, which describes gathering places such as molly houses and theatres where male readers could seek out other men for sex. As I show in Chapters Five and Seven, links between obscene print culture and homophile culture seem to have expanded markedly the latter half of the nineteenth century, however, or, at least, they become more visible in the extant historical record.

¹⁴ For the narrator of *Amatory Experiences of a Surgeon*, the powers of imagination and memory are also what constitute the erotic pleasure that a written work conveys. “Language stops short of reality”: it is the reader’s also “own experiences [that] ...enable[s] them to sympathise with [the narrator’s recorded adventures], and thus by analogy, enjoy again some of the most sensual and moving experiences of their careers” (4).

¹⁵ *Sins of the Cities of the Plain*’s first pages situate its events within mid-Victorian London’s specific sexual geography, when Jack’s benefactor and client Mr. Cambon first encounters him in London in Leicester Square. Cambon reads the square’s proximity to “the neighbourhood of Regent Street, or the Haymarket” as a sign which confirms that the young man with “tight-fitting clothes” and “a fresh looking beardless face” is indeed one of the “Mary-Ann’s” [sic] of London, who I had heard were often to be seen sauntering in the neighbourhood ...on fine afternoons or evenings,” (8-9). Cambon and Jack’s encounter reads uncannily like one of the veiled reports about male prostitution that Charles Upchurch has shown were ubiquitous in mid-Victorian newspapers, which augments the novel’s realism (50-82). Other episodes in *Sins* are even more clearly inspired by press discussions of same-sex desire. For example, Ernest Boulton and Frederick William Park, two upper-middle class transvestites and suspected ‘sodomites’ who were famously charged with “conspiring and inciting persons to commit an unnatural offence” in 1871, make a conspicuous appearance in *Sins*’ plot as guests at a “sodomite ball,” whom Jack accompanies home at the end of the evening (Cook 15-20; *Sins* 61). The frequent appearance of

obscene novels in the narrative also serves suggest *Sins*' realism, both by implicitly contrasting Jack's 'real' experiences with the explicit fiction he encounters, and by suggesting how true to life fiction can be. When Jack kneels to peep through at keyhole to gaze at Boulton fellating another man, for instance, he is reminded of "the scene between two youths which Fanny Hill relates to have seen through a peephole in a roadside inn. I could both see and hear everything that was passing" (98). These devices thus act to reinforce the notion of fiction as documentary evidence of real human sexual experience that can be generalized into scientific insight.

¹⁶ Periodicals that participated in the outcry over the *Nights*' obscenity alluded to its private means of publication to emphasise its obscenity and subsequent moral danger to British readers. Noting that the Kamashastra Society purportedly operated out of Benares, for instance, the *Pall Mall Gazette* speculated that "[s]ome people say Benares is in America, while others place it in Germany. Who knows but Benares may lie in the gloomy courts of some London back street?" ("A Book For Students" N. Pag.). *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* also speculated about the real location of the Kamashastra Society's operations, suggesting that it was probably based in America or London ("London Correspondence" N. Pag.).

Chapter 5.

Marketing the Secret Museum: The Strategies of John Camden Hotten, Leonard Smithers, and H.S. Nichols

The rising circulation of the “secret museum” discourse through the obscenity trade in the latter half of the nineteenth century tracked the Cannibal Club’s changing publishing activities between the mid 1860s and the mid 1890s. While forging relationships with these elite readers and self-published writers, fringe publishers such as John Camden Hotten, Harry Sidney Nichols, and Leonard Smithers experimented with the interpretive possibilities of the ‘secret museum’ and the regulatory discourses about obscenity that underpinned it to develop their businesses, building on earlier publishing and marketing techniques pioneered by fringe publishers like Stockdale and Dugdale. Nichols and Smithers explored the commercial possibilities of the Cannibals’ most characteristic form of publication, the private society, to sell a wide range of works, including various kinds of sexual scholarship, to wealthy clients. This model of publication must have been exciting for such publishers. On one hand, it offered them an opportunity to fine-tune the existing trade in luxury obscenity, which relied on a “fine balance between scarcity and price,” by selling a business strategy as an erotic and intellectual fantasy (Potter, *Obscene* 63). But the private society was also appealing to these publishers because technically, under the terms of the *Hicklin* ruling, such modes of explicit publication were more socially responsible, and thus less difficult to prosecute, than were the businesses of Stockdale and Dugdale: high prices, limited numbers and private distribution were “circumstances of publication” that provided, as Campbell had declared in 1857, “a kind of check” against popular consumption and, by extension, public disorder (“Sale of Poisons and Poisonous Publications”). Although these publishers’ experiments with the private society had mixed success, this publishing model became a mainstay for fringe publishers interested in dealing in explicit materials, including an increasing number of social-scientific works about sex, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Perhaps more lucrative for all three of these publishers' businesses, however, was the looser way in which they translated the interpretive logic of the "secret museum" into an organizational model for their catalogues. These publishers each drew on the interpretive possibilities of the archive to fashion flexible catalogues of works that ranged across the continuum of the licit, the 'borderline,' and the illicit, surpassing the variety of the catalogues of publishers like Dugdale. This publishing model allowed these dealers to serve several different audiences at once, acting as "respectable publishers" and "obscenity dealers" at the same time. They did not strictly divide their businesses into "open" and "clandestine" sections, as some critics have claimed, but marketed overlapping categories of works within their larger catalogues to different readers. Unsurprisingly, sections of these publishers' catalogues were, to some niche readerships, overtly framed as a "curious space... both internal and marginal to the culture"—as secret museums which offered the reader exclusive knowledge, pleasure, and other kinds of value, reflecting the larger discourses in which their publishing practices were rooted (Sedgwick 52). What is most important about this and other iterations of the 'secret museum's' expression within these fringe publisher's businesses, however, is how they encouraged readers to read radially, across the archive or 'museum' of explicit writing, from sexual science to obscene fiction to literary classics, for different kinds of sexual "perversions" or taboos. This reading practice could, as I highlight, prove instrumental for community building among marginalized sexual communities by helping them frame 'perversions' such as same-sex desire as a universal cultural concern, as well as proving a useful resource for sexual scholars in the late nineteenth century.

With its close ties to the Cannibal publishing network and scientific societies, the publishing business of John Camden Hotten is a revealing focal point for examining the emergence of these experimental publishing and marketing practices, rooted in the discourse of the 'secret museum'. While Hotten's business did not do a great deal to extend the dissemination of sexual scholarship in Britain, it marks an initial stage in the development of fringe publishing practices that would do so in their further exploitation of the "secret museum". Born John William Hotten in Clerkenwell, London, in 1832, Hotten first entered the book business as an apprentice to the bookseller John Petheram in 1846 (Eliot 62). Two years later, he moved with his brother to the West Indies and then to the United States, where he made his living as a journalist (62). When he returned to

London in 1856, Hotten set up shop as a bookseller in Piccadilly. By 1857, he had also begun to publish books. Hotten issued only a handful of books between 1857 and 1863, but his publishing activity expanded tremendously in the last nine years of his life, as he became increasingly involved with the Cannibal's circle (63). Simon Eliot has estimated that during that period, between 1864 and 1873, the publisher issued more than five hundred titles (63). In his study of Hotten's business, Eliot frames the mercurial businessman as a "general publisher," noting that his "wide and disparate collection of titles" included humorous works; American and European fiction; reprints of traditional and classic texts; poetry; novels; critical, biographical and learned works; "How to" books; puzzle books; books on current events; political treatises; illustrated gift books; historical reprints and facsimiles; works on local history and heraldry; popular histories; writings on science and technology; language and reference works; anthropological works; and "pornographic volumes" (63-64). But while Hotten's output was diverse, it was not random. The method that underpinned his varied catalogue becomes clear when Hotten's publishing and bookselling business is situated within the context of his carefully cultivated social networks and suggestive marketing techniques. Anticipating Nichols' and Smithers' later publishing and advertising practices, Hotten exploited the "secret museum's" interpretive possibilities to expand his market share, selling a significant proportion of his works to a variety of readers in the open market as well as clandestinely, to elite readers in the Cannibals' circle. His "acuteness in feeling the pulse of the bookmarket, in gauging the public taste, and in supplying it with exactly the sort of literary pabulum it required" allowed him, as Henry Spencer Ashbee observed, to pioneer a new kind of obscenity business that opened the print marketplace for a "respectable ...publisher of tabooed literature," a business model that would be picked up and developed by later fringe publishers to further extend sexual science's dissemination (*Index* 252-253).

The structure of Hotten's catalogue translated the dazzling variety of the secret museum into a strategy that allowed his business to straddle the lines between multiple markets. "[T]he most striking thing about Hotten's publishing profile," Eliot has observed, "was its continuity. ...[T]here is a seamless transition from one sort of publishing to another, so seamless in fact that in certain circumstances it is difficult to say where one publishing *genre* ends and another begins" (69). More specifically, there was a remarkable slippage between the 'respectable' and the 'not so respectable' within most

of the categories of works that Eliot identifies as the chief components of Hotten's catalogue (69). Among the considerable number of "language reference works" that Hotten published, for example, are Hotten's own *Dictionary of Modern Slang* (1859), Herbert Coleridge's dry *Glossarial Index to the Printed Language of the Thirteenth Century* (1862), and Captain Grose's far more explicit *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1866) (68). The publisher's "reprints of traditional and classic texts" included sexually detailed works by Chaucer, Boccaccio and Rabelais, which were often cited in Victorian debates about the propriety of obscene content in historical literature, as well as more 'respectable' classics by Aeschylus, Malory and Bunyan (69). Among the works that Eliot consigns to the category "historical reprints and facimiles" include both a reproduction of *The Statutes of Henry VII* (1869) and a classic product of the late-Victorian obscenity trade, *Exhibition of Female Flagellants in the Modest and Incontinent World* (1872) (69-70). Likewise, Hotten's "popular histories" included the innocuous *History of Sign Boards* (1866) and—in exactly the same format and price—another work of flagellant literature, *A History of the Rod* (1870), also advertised as *Flagellation and the Flagellants* (70).

Drawing on these observations, Eliot concludes that "for Hotten, it might have been difficult to see where 'legitimate' publishing ended and pornography began within categories as well as between them" (70). The ways in which Hotten represented these works suggests, however, that the publisher was well apprised of how blurry the lines between the licit and the illicit were within the categories of works that he produced as well as the blurriness of the lines between these categories themselves, and that fostering that blurriness was a strategy that defined his business and its success in the years preceding his death. Works such as the collection of publications that Hotten entitled the *Library Illustrative of Social Progress* (1872)—which sounds dryly official, but was in fact a facsimile collection of six explicit eighteenth-century pamphlets on the subject of flagellation and Johann Heinrich Meibom's *De Flagorum usu in Re Medica et Venera* (1873)—suggest how Hotten played with the different ways in which a work could be perceived, in a culture that increasingly emphasised publication context as a signifier of a work's function, to create a flexible catalogue, whole parts of which could be marketed in different ways to different readers. Partly because of its title, the *Library* could be marketed as a collection of historical reprints, as anthropology, or as obscenity (70). In other words, the publisher's catalogue, made up of the transparently offensive, the innocuous, and the in between, operated as the foundation of a radial publishing

practice. Hotten took up genres associated with obscenity and published a range of works within the various market categories into which they fell. These categories moved both outward toward respectability in order to capture certain niche audiences—such as the rising numbers of amateur genealogists that his more respectable “histories and historical facsimiles” served, as well as many of his ‘borderline’ works—and inward, to encompass some ‘borderline’ works and all of the clearly ‘obscene’ ones to appeal to consumers like the Cannibal Club’s members (88). ‘Borderline’ works were thus the most valuable works in Hotten’s catalogue, since they helped ‘join up’ the categories of books he sold. Straddling the line between anthropological enquiry and sexual entertainment, for example, John Davenport’s *Aphrodisiacs and Anti-aphrodisiacs* (1869) and Richard Payne Knight’s *Ancient Worship* (1873) could usefully be “classified under ‘Historical Reprints and Facimiles,’ or under ‘Anthropological,’ or under ‘Pornography,’” and expanded the number of works in each of those lucrative categories (70).

As Hotten’s wide-ranging periodical advertisements and clandestine prospectuses suggest, his technique of radial publishing allowed him to reach a wide range of readers, from wealthy obscenity collectors to middle-class female readers to working-class teens. That reviews of many of his ‘borderline’ works appeared in popular periodicals such as *Bell’s Life in London* (a sporting newspaper that Hotten had briefly written for on his return to London), *Every Boy’s Magazine*, *Routledge’s Magazine for Boys*, *Fun*, *Sporting Times*, *Sporting Gazette* and *Judy* alongside more innocuous works such as *History of Signboards* and *John Billings: His Book of Sayings* (1866), attest to the appeal of these works for the young middle- and working-class male readers that these periodicals targeted and their subsequent use value for their publisher. Many of these reviews subtly highlight their erotic appeal. *Bell’s Life’s* review of Hotten’s edition of the *Canterbury Tales*, for instance, underscores its appreciation of this reproduction of the “original version over any alteration of any sort,” while its assessment of Hotten’s own *Slang Dictionary, or the Vulgar Words, Street Phrases, and Fast Expressions of High and Low Society* refers to the work as “curious” no less than three times (“Literature” 2; “Literature: The Slang Dictionary” 3). Hotten’s advertisement of *Musée Secret de Naples* (1864)—a version of César Famin’s *Musée royal de Naples; peintures, bronzes et statues érotiques du cabinet secret, avec leur explication* (1832) and a favorite of obscenity collectors—in the end-papers of popular, mainstream publications such as *Thackeray the humourist and the man of letters* (1864), alongside

innocuous works such as *Monastic Ruins of Yorkshire* and *Mundy's Pen and Pencil Sketches of India*, further suggests the elasticity of his catalogue as well, perhaps, as its inspiration:

Musée Secrete [sic] *de Naples*—A most curious work PRIVATELY PRINTED IN Paris, *representing some of the most remarkable* “Peintures, Bronzes, Mosaiques,” &c *depicting the CEREMONIES OBSERVED AT THE EARLIEST KNOWN FORM OF WORSHIP*. Paris MD.CCC.XL. The Secret Museum at Naples, from the extraordinary nature of its contents, has always excited the liveliest curiosity amongst antiquaries and students (“Popular and Interesting Books.” N. Pag.).

This work, which described and provided illustrations for the collection of erotic artefacts from Pompeii and Herculaneum housed in the Gabinetto Segreto, one of Europe's first “secret museums,” exemplified how a work's placement within the larger field of art and literature mattered to the ways in which it was used, how it was interpreted, and how it was imagined, a lesson that Hotten used as fulsomely in his publishing and bookselling business as medico-juridical authorities had used in fashioning the obscenity laws he evaded.

Hotten not only published radially, but also encouraged readers to read radially themselves and, in doing so, shift between the loose readerly categories he identified. He attempted to instigate this reading process for potential clients through strategic advertising, exploiting the circulation of ‘borderline’ works that he did not publish himself to sell his own publications, publications that were more firmly (though usually not definitively) associated through content and context with obscenity. Hotten's opportunistic advertisements in the respectable *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, which, between 1867 and 1870, published an overwhelming number of letters to its editor on the topic of corporal punishment, are illustrative of this practice. As Sharon Marcus has pointed out, these letters often read like the expensive flagellation novels that had become a lucrative means of income for obscenity dealers like William Dugdale and William Lazenby at mid century (139). Many of these letters describe in minute detail the rituals, optics, and physical sensations of “birching” and “being birched,” employ “onomatopoeia, teasing delay, first-person testimony,” and even “punning humour”—the hallmarks of flagellant Victorian literature (139). These letters are framed as contributions to an important social debate about the merits and drawbacks of

corporeal punishment, and while it is clear that many of their writers were seriously interested in participating in such a debate, it is also clear that more than a few of these writers—and their readers—considered them erotic (141). It is little wonder that Lazenby capitalized on their appeal as obscenity, republishing verbatim extracts from these letters in expensive, clandestine productions such as *The Birchen Bouquet* (1881), a compilation of flagellation stories (140). Hotten capitalized on this ‘borderline’ series of letters differently. He advertised his own explicit works on flagellation on the same pages in which they were published, encouraging the magazine’s readers to seek out further erotic entertainment by sending a postal order for such volumes as *A History of the Rod* or visiting his shop in Piccadilly (“A History of the Rod” N. Pag.). He also advertised the same works in other women’s magazines, anticipating that some of these readers would share erotic interests with many of the *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine’s* subscribers. Hotten advised the readers of the *Ladies Treasury*, for instance, that “Mr. Hotten has just completed a curious work entitled “Flagellation and the Flagellants: A History of the Rod in all Ages and Countries,” by the Rev. W.M. Cooper, B.A. The book is illustrated by numerous characteristic engravings” (“Mr. Hotten has just completed” 65). Hotten’s general method, which centred not on recycling erotic material produced for one market for the consumption of another, but on showing readers how they could extend their reading and even become part of a different market that the publisher served, was certainly one that he shared with many more firmly ‘mainstream’ publishers as the print marketplace expanded, emphasising how such ‘fringe’ publishers shared more with the larger publishing industry than is usually recognized. The ways in which Hotten marketed these materials to his clandestine readership demonstrates, however, how his iteration of this common publishing and marketing practice specifically tapped into the radial, thematic reading practices that the ‘secret museum’ discourse, emerging within the Cannibal publishing network, encouraged.

Hotten was well apprised of this discourse and its commercial possibilities, perhaps in part because he had become a fixture in the Cannibals’ circle, a circle that proved as interested in *Musée Secret* and *A History of the Rod* as were the readers of Thackeray and the *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine*. In the early 1860s, as he worked to expand his publishing and bookselling business, he had inserted himself within the same scientific circles that the Cannibals travelled in, joining the Royal Geographic Society and Royal Ethnographic Society and using his membership in those

societies to promote his expanding publishing business. As *Bell's Life in London* reported in 1868, Hotten exhibited works such as “a volume of pen and ink sketches of remarkable scenery in Abyssinia, with portraits of the natives” at the meetings of the Royal Geographic Society, tantalizing its members with previews of his publications on topics of interest prior to their release (“Miscellaneous News” 3). Hotten’s announcement of his connection to such societies on the title pages of works such as *Abyssinia and its People* (1868), and in advertisements for such works, which he placed in specialist scientific publications, further underscores how he parlayed his membership to these societies into business opportunities. Some of the most lucrative connections that Hotten cultivated through these scholarly circles as well as through his other business dealings as a publisher and bookseller were his close relationships with members of the Cannibal network, whom he appealed to by loaning out his extensive library of erotic works via “a select mailing list” (Sigel, *Governing* 56; Eliot, “Transnational” 81).¹ Hotten also endeared himself to club members by coming to the rescue and republishing Swinburne’s *Poems and Ballads* in 1866 after the publisher Edward Moxon withdrew the work from circulation, after a charge of indecency was brought against it (Gosse 23). Hotten’s cultivation of these social networks—and particularly, his friendships with James Campbell Reddie and Richard Monckton-Milnes—paid off when he was welcomed into the Cannibal’s publishing network. The publisher began to issue the Cannibals’ obscene novels clandestinely, printing them “privately” and selling them, largely through word of mouth, alongside ‘borderline’ productions such as such as the *Library Illustrative of Social Progress*, Payne Knight’s *Ancient Worship*, and obscene literature and images for extraordinarily sums (as high as ten or fifteen pounds) back to their wealthy circle (Sigel, *Governing* 56).² In doing so, Hotten cultivated a market for a subsection of his catalogue that was “very small and very rich,” and used that market itself as a source of new material (Marcus 70).³ That Hotten’s exploitation of this market hinged on the social interplay of the period’s obscene print culture as well as the social interplay of different kinds of obscene works themselves, emphasised through rising discourses about the links between publication context and a work’s function of obscenity, affirms how interaction and proximity between people and texts defined such elite routes of sexual-scientific production and dissemination.

That Hotten's publishing practice rearticulated the "secret museum" in print and made it accessible—though not *too* accessible—was a fact that he was eager to emphasise, particularly in selling his 'borderline' scholarly works to wealthy audiences, which required stressing their place within a larger archive of rare sexual knowledge. As the publisher's advertisement for *Musée Secret de Naples* shows, Hotten often emphasised that his 'borderline' works were "privately printed" to underscore their secret appeal, a longstanding tradition that took on additional meaning amid the Cannibal network's emerging experiments with private publication. For wealthy audiences like the Cannibals, however, Hotten went much further in emphasising the ways in which such 'borderline' works fit in to an imagined 'secret museum'. The publisher's clandestine circular for Richard Payne Knight's study of ancient phallic cults, *Ancient Worship*, for instance, situates the work within a global context to underscore its cosmopolitan appeal, notifying readers that "this is a very extraordinary volume upon a subject that is now attracting almost universal attention of the learned and curious in Europe" (Ashbee, *Index* 8). At the same time, the circular stresses the work's rarity and exclusivity, apprising readers that since "only *one hundred and twenty five copies* have been privately printed, and the great libraries of Europe have absorbed many of these, the volume will soon become one of the RAREST OF MODERN BOOKS" (qtd in Ashbee, *Index* 8). These claims about *Ancient Worship's* rarity, audience, and production numbers should not be taken at face value, since many of the publisher's claims of this nature were fabricated. Hotten similarly advertised his reprinted edition of Davenport's *Aphrodisiacs and Anti-Aphrodisiacs*, for example, as an edition of "only ONE HUNDRED COPIES...for private distribution," when in fact, the edition comprised at least two hundred and fifty copies (qtd. in Marcus 72). But Hotten's appeals to his works' internationally rarefied learnedness were not meant to be accurate. Whether his target audience even believed them is questionable. As Steven Marcus has observed, making and responding to such claims were "all part of the ritual" surrounding volumes on sexual history and culture, which served "to thicken the atmosphere of the arcane" that characterized the "secret museum" and lent it its expanding value as a marketing tool in the late nineteenth century (71).

Hotten's rhetorical removal of himself as publisher from the processes of the books' production enhanced the impression of their "curiousness," rarity, and exclusivity that he sought to construct. His circular for *Ancient Worship*, described above, frames

the work as an autonomous entity, circulating simultaneously within a global context and a private space, that Hotten has heroically discovered and made newly available for an exclusive number of lucky clients, a strategy that emphasises the work's place within an imagined archive of rare sexual knowledge that had been scattered with the passage of time and the action of censorship. Hotten's circular for the *Library Illustrative of Social Progress* similarly emphasises the work's place within the "secret museum" by framing the collection as an exciting new discovery, long concealed from the public eye:

[I]t is well known that the late Henry Thomas Buckle collected a large library of curious books. Among the many topics that engaged his attention was the subject of CHASTISEMENT...By rare good fortune, he collected an almost complete set of the astounding books issued by George Peacock, in the last century, and as no other examples of some of these rarities are known to exist, it is proposed to privately print a few copies as 'Curiosities of Literature.' Apart from their extreme rarity, the works are remarkable for the light they throw upon the state of society in the last century, and the mania that possessed all classes for chastising and being chastised (qtd in 73).

As with Hotten's claims about *Aphrodisiac's* print run, there was "not a word of truth" to this circular: "the original tracts did not come from the library of Buckle, not had he, in all probability, ever seen them," Ashbee complained of the advertisement.⁴ But far from being irrelevant to Hotten's business, as Marcus has suggested, this claim firmly anchored the *Library Illustrative of Social Progress*, itself an 'archive' or 'museum' of erotic works on flagellation, including a comic opera entitled *Lady Bumtickler's Revels* and the novels *Madame Birchini's Dance* and *The Sublime of Flagellation*, into a wider, imagined, historical archive of works long forbidden or lost, an archive which like the *Library Illustrative of Social Progress* itself could reveal to its privileged readers through the sum of its varied parts the mysteries of flagellation (Ashbee, *Index* 239-241).

By exploiting the interpretive possibilities of the 'secret museum,' Hotten's publishing and bookselling business, therefore, encouraged some of his readers to read across an archive of works to discover the 'secrets' of sexual 'perversions' like flagellation. While his business was motivated by profit, it was also a productive social force, putting elite readers in particular in front of a number of different texts and genres from which they might draw sexual knowledge and pleasure in combination. This marketing practice, which intensified how discourses about obscenity acted as

associative mechanisms that incited radial readings of a wide range of texts, including social-scientific works about sex, would expand through the businesses of the publishers Harry Sidney Nichols and Leonard Smithers in the 1880s and 1890s. These publishers, often working in collaboration, also employed social networking, private publication, and the discourse of the “secret museum” to form experimental new publishing businesses that, like Hotten’s, served a wide range of readers while carving out a comfortable niche in the market for obscenity. It was, in particular, these publisher’s overt exploitation of the ‘private society’ and the ‘privately printed,’ and their more robust inclusion of social-scientific works about sex in their catalogues, that expanded the productive possibilities for this form of reading and creating new sexual knowledge, making their businesses a potentially rich resource for nascent homophile groups who were increasingly seeking out a ‘secret museum’ themselves, a canon of texts that revealed an affirming history of same-sex desire. The parallel ways in which the history of books was imagined in elite obscene print culture and in emergent homophile culture not only emphasise the considerable intersections between the two cultures in the late nineteenth century, but also show how commercially exploitive publishing and marketing practices offered readers productive opportunities for self-fashioning and community-building.

After beginning his career as a printer, around 1884 Nichols opened a bookshop in Sheffield, styled “Nichols’ Grand Emporium and Literary Lounge” (Godsall 398). Nichols’s early catalogues for this bookshop were quite diverse, revealing his initial interest in serving, like Hotten, a wide-ranging market that included, but did not solely focus on, wealthy collectors of obscene books. Many of the works listed in his early catalogues, such as his *Catalogue of an Interesting Collection of Books*, would not be out of place in any generalist bookseller’s shop: they included volumes on architecture, botany and natural sciences, physiology and phrenology, art books, philosophy, agricultural works, books about printers and printing, geography and geology, biography, and novels by such writers as Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot. By the late 1880s, however, these catalogues also included a range of works that would be of interest to collectors of obscene works. Some of these materials, such as Rabelais’ illustrated works, English translations of Emile Zola’s novels, Swinburne’s *Chasteland*, and Havelock Ellis’s 1887 edition of Christopher Marlowe’s dramatic works, were well known to the public as ‘borderline’ publications. Others were works that a collector would normally find only in an obscenity dealer’s shop. Hotten used headings in his catalogues

to underscore these works' specific appeal to such readers. His catalogue for March 1888, for example, labels a list of the following books, priced between 1s 6d and an astounding 37s 6d, "CURIOUS": *The Romance of Chastisement*, *The Whippingham Papers*, *Rose Pompon*, *The Dancing Girl Millionaire*, *Memoirs of Cora Pearl*, and *The Divorced Princess*" (*Catalogue of a Few Old Books*). Nichols applied the same technique to highlight the illicit appeal of anthropological studies and translations of Eastern works on sexuality to the same collectors, labelling them RARE or SCARCE. Including Davenport's *Aphrodisiacs and Anti-Aphrodisiacs* ("45s very rare"); F.F. Arbuthnot's *Early Ideas: A Group of Hindoo Stories* (1881) and *Persian Portraits* (1887); Burton's translation of the *Kama Sutra of Vatsayana* ("Kama Shastra Society Ed. £2.10s—very scarce"); Edward William Lane's *Arabian Nights* (which Nichols disingenuously touted as "a new translation from the Arabic—35s—SCARCE"); and a full-page advertisement for Burton's translation of the *Nights and Supplemental Nights* ("Kama Shastra Edition. £35 for all the volumes"), these works were all produced by, or associated with, the members of the Cannibal network (*Monthly Catalogue of Rare and Out-Of-The-Way Books*). These catalogues signal Nichols's growing investment in the interpretive possibilities of the "secret museum" in the late 1880s. Recognizing that a wide range of works—not only obscene novels but also social-scientific works about sex—were associated with elite obscene print culture, he used headings to curate these works within his expansive catalogues into smaller 'museum lists,' recognizable as such by an elite audience that, as his subsequent publishing activities reveal, he sought to make one of his most important markets.

Nichols' inclusion of the Cannibal Club's sexual-scientific studies and translations in his catalogue lists importantly coincided with the beginning of his partnership with Leonard Smithers. It was through this partnership that his exploitation of the 'secret museum' would extend beyond bookselling to encompass more ambitious forays into private publication, expanding the interplay of sexual knowledge production and the production of sexual entertainment and pleasure in the late nineteenth century through the construction of elite 'archives' of forbidden books. Smithers is best known for his pivotal role in publishing some of the most important literature of the *fin de siècle*, having taken avant-garde artists and writers such as Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley and Ernest Dowson under his wing after his closest competitor, John Lane, cut ties with them in the wake of Wilde's trial for "gross indecency" in the spring of 1895.⁵ Smithers's

abandonment of his profession as a Sheffield solicitor to enter into the publishing and bookselling business was originally motivated, however, by his interest in rare, sexually explicit books. Around the same time that he made Nichols's acquaintance, probably through visits to his shop in Sheffield, Smithers was working hard to contrive a friendship with Richard Burton, whose daring translations of Eastern and Classical works he had long admired (Nelson, *Publishers* 8-12). One of the original subscribers to the *Nights*, Smithers wrote to Burton in the mid 1880s expressing admiration for his books, and offered to lend the explorer-translator works from his private collection (10-11). It was perhaps this relationship that suggested a publishing opportunity for Smithers and Nichols, leading to their first major collaboration, a clandestine publishing scheme known as the Erotika Biblion Society. This publishing venture experimented with exploiting the the private society's potential at a moment when a ready-made market for the "secret museum" of luxurious explicit works was becoming apparent through the popularity of Burton's newly notorious *Nights*. Unexpurgated copies of the work could be sold at tremendously high prices throughout the late 1880s and 1890s. In 1890, a complete 16 volume edition of Burton's *Nights* sold at a Sotheby's auction for £25 10s ("Sale of Books" 3). In 1892, the same complete set commanded £25 and by October of 1893, it sold for £30 through Puttick and Simpson ("Book Sale" 6; "Messrs. Puttnick" 2). By 1898, Burton's *Nights* brought Christie, Mason and Woods an astonishing £45 ("Book Sales" 2.). The formation of the Erotika Biblion Society may have been initiated, as James Nelson has argued, by Smithers's admiration for Burton and love of the kind of luxurious books that the Kamashastra Society produced (12-13). Undeniably, however, it also tapped into a lucrative new market that Nichols had also begun to serve through his "Literary Lounge".

The Erotika Biblion Society was overtly modelled after Burton and Arbuthnot's Kamashastra Society, publishing luxuriously produced, limited editions of explicit works, many of them translations of Eastern and Ancient classics, for private subscribers at high prices. The Society's first and second published works, Smithers's own translation of the *Priapeia* (1888) and *Les Tableaux Vivants* (1888), based on an 1870 French original, were printed by Nichols and well poised to attract the same wealthy, well-educated, and well-connected audience that had subscribed for the Kamashastra Society's publications (Gibson, *Publisher* 315-316). Indeed, this audience included Burton, who not only subscribed for some of the first books that Smithers and Nichols published through their

society, but also attempted to guide the publishers in establishing it. Writing to Smithers in 1888, Burton asked if the publisher had “finally established [the Erotika Biblion Society] with list of members... subscribers, etc. Or is it like the Kama Shastra awaiting development? ...to be flushed out with members” (qtd in Godsall 398). “Something of the kind is necessary,” he warned the publishers, “to abate a... bawdy publisher [Edward Avery, one of the period’s most active distributors of obscenity] who asks guineas for books worth only one shilling and who drums the market only for his own benefit” (qtd in Godsall 398).⁶ The Erotika Biblion Society not only distinguished Smithers and Nichols from such dealers, however, but took the place of the Kamashastra Society within Burton’s circle. Like Burton and Arbuthnot’s society, it reproduced the “secret museum” through its inclusion of a range of explicit texts—including an edition of Burton’s incendiary “Terminal Essay” to the *Nights*, which firmly linked the society with the one that had inspired it—whose forbiddenness, exclusivity, and function as keys to sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure Smithers and Nichols emphasised through paratexts such as editor’s notes, forewords and clandestine prospectuses. Each work contained a note highlighting its production as both limited and private, which emphasised its rarity, as well as its appeal to “Scholars and Students of Sexual Psychology,” notes that were often repeated in prospectuses for the books (Nelson, *Publisher* 318). The pair represented one of the last books published through the society, *The Mistress and the Slave: A Masochist Realistic Love Story* (1905), as “a realistic Masochist novel, written with great power,” which, in relating “the ascendancy which a woman of the lower class gets over a man of position and wealth,” revealed the nature of a newly coined perversion, masochism (Smithers, “The Mistress” 3). The prospectus for this work, in particular, emphasises the larger way in which, by situating a variety of works at the boundary between science and entertainment, the instructive and the erotic, and the licit and the illicit, the Erotika Biblion Society acted as a “secret museum” that encouraged radial readings of works published through the Society, from translations of classical works to anthropology to obscene fiction.

That Smithers and Nichols subsequently experimented with expanding the generic reach of such private societies attests to their commercial goals, despite the potentially liberating reading practice that the ‘secret museum’ represented and encouraged. In 1894, several years after Henry Vizetelly had been found guilty of publishing obscenity for issuing English translations of Emile Zola’s novels, the pair

began to publish “scholarly and undiluted retranslations” of Zola’s most controversial works, together with Alexander Taxiera de Mattos, a Dutch journalist, literary critic, publisher and translator, and an up-and-coming obscenity dealer, Charles Carrington, under another spurious imprint, the Lutetian Society (Merkel 75). The Lutetian Society was, like Smithers and Nichols’ other spurious imprints, a clandestine imprint that deliberately set its limited-edition books at a high price and did not advertise (76). The authors they hired to translate these works were some of the best-known names of English literature and science, including Arthur Symons, Victor Gustave Plarr, Ernest Dowson, and Havelock Ellis. Unfortunately for Smithers and Nichols, however, the Lutetian Society was a financial disaster. It seems very few readers were interested in buying its translations for two guineas apiece, quite possibly because the only people who could afford to do so could already read Zola’s works in the original French, editions of which were easy to acquire in Britain at the time through open channels (Longaker 133).⁷ The allure of such translations, and the society that produced them, was greatly diminished by the fact that, while it published works that were considered ‘risky’, the Lutetian Society did not actually make a “secret museum” accessible. Its works were neither diverse nor difficult to access.

Thereafter, the pair largely abandoned publishing through private societies, putting the Erotika Biblion Society’s activities on hold for ten years and drifting from collaborative work. Each publisher continued, however, to parlay the allure of the ‘secret museum’ into his business. Nichols continued to issue varied catalogues of books for well-heeled clients which featured a mixture of “rare” and “curious” obscene fiction, old medical works on sexual topics (including Robertson and Stockdale’s *Kalogynomia*), and a wider range of social-scientific studies of sex than ever before, including sexual-scientific works from the continent, now easily available to a publisher who was increasingly basing his publishing activity in Paris.⁸ This pattern of marketing and catalogue expansion also characterized the internationalizing and interacting businesses of competitor-allies like Smithers, Avery, and Carrington, whose business Part Three examines. Smithers, however, focused much of his energy in the mid and late 1890s in publishing avant-garde literary works for the open market, joining a number of small publishers who sought to publish the works of young avant-garde writers and artists who would have found it nearly impossible to publish their work with the large, commercial houses who controlled the market, such as Murray and Blackwoods (2-3). But the

publisher's foray into the avant-garde literary scene at the *fin de siècle* did not bisect his business into 'open' and 'clandestine' schemes. Through his "Catalogue[s] of Rare Books," Smithers folded his developing business in publishing *belles lettres* into a larger "rare book" business that encompassed the literary and the scientific, the obscene and the innocuous, and the old and the new, to sell a new "secret museum".

As Peter McDonald has argued, competitors such as the publisher John Lane capitalized "on the prestige of the 'limited edition,' the 'beautiful book,' and the appeal of the risqué" in their publication of late-Victorian aestheticism to commodify and popularize it ("Modernist" 227). Smithers went several steps further, not only embracing public scrutiny for publishing works by authors and artists like Oscar Wilde, Arthur Symons, Ernest Dowson, and Aubrey Beardsley, but folding their works into his "Catalogue[s] of Rare Books" and into the secret museum, alongside a number of new social-scientific works from the continent. These varied catalogues, which Smithers began to publish in 1894, represent themselves as collections of rare, valuable, and arcane objects. The publisher's April 1895 Catalogue of Rare Books, for instance, ostentatiously announced itself as a key to the world of arcane knowledge and pleasure by advertising, on its first page, "A GRUSOME CURIOSITY," a "miniscule" 1858 edition of Thomas A'Kemipis's *De Imitatione Christi* which was not only printed in microscopic type but also "most tastefully and appropriately bound in HUMAN SKIN, emblematically blind-tooled with Death's Heads, Crossbones, and Hour Glasses, gilt edges, by LORTIC. £10 10s".

This is the only example of Human Skin Binding that has been offered for sale for many years past. Owing to the severe restrictions of the Medical Schools, and the prejudices of Medical men, it is extremely difficult to obtain any portion of dead humanity. The only other example that at present I know of, is in the Paris Municipal Museum. Apart from the nature of the covering, the binding of the above item is an extremely fine specimen of execution (1).

Smithers advertised this symbol of luxurious deviance, which recalls the Cannibals' own fetishization of anthropodermic bibliopeggy, and of the obscene book more generally, alongside a varied library of books and manuscripts. Some of these works had been produced by members of the Cannibal Club, such as Arbuthnot's *Vikram and the Vampire: Tales of Hindu Devilry*, Burton's *Nights*, and Burton's translation of *Il Pentamarone*, which, Smithers emphasises, is marked by "a great freeness of language;

so much so indeed that Lady Burton made unsuccessful efforts to prevent the Book appearing in its uncastrated state” (4: 14).⁹ Other works, such as *The Courtier’s Calling* (1675) and *Lives and Surprising Amours of the Empresses* (c. 1720), which Smithers advertised under the heading “CURIOUS,” were reprints of gallant works that were well represented in other “secret museums” of the era (6: 149). These works served to frame a range of other volumes that have a less obvious interest to the seeker of arcane knowledge and sexual pleasure, many of which, it is worth noting, were neither rare nor expensive at all. Such works include Smithers’ own literary publications, including his 1897 edition of Alexander Pope’s *Rape of the Lock*, illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley, and Arthur Symons’ *London Nights* and *Silhouettes* and quantities of innocuous works on American history and geography, generally dating from the previous century. Importantly, however, they also include a range of new sexological and anthropological works, sexual-scientific works not associated with the Cannibals, but works from the continent. These materials ranged from the dubious “Dr. Jacobus ****’s” *L’Amour aux colonies* (1893), which Smithers advertised as “£3 10s. Only 330 Numbered Copies Printed; one of the most Remarkable Works of the Century,” to the Austro-German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s respected *Psychopathia Sexualis*, “with especial reference to CONTRARY SEXUAL INSTINCT. A Medico-Legal Study. £3 3s,” further advertised as the “most remarkable and exhaustive work on the Sexual Instinct and its wonderful and almost incredible distortions ever issued. Written by one of the most distinguished psychopathic physicians of the day” (6: 144; 3: 25).¹⁰ New works of sexual science, acquired from the continent amid the increasing internationalization of Smithers’s business thus became associated within the publisher’s catalogue ‘museum’ with curiosities banal (the American books), beautiful (manuscripts), erotic (gallanteria), avant-garde (Symons’ poetry) and truly disturbing (the edition of *De Imitatione Christi*), expanding the range of the ‘secret museum’ as never before and extending the circulation of social-scientific works from the continent.

It is important that Smithers’s “Catalogue[s] of Rare Books” drew late-Victorian aestheticism and new social-scientific studies of sex together, reframing them as a single category of “rare and valuable” materials, at a time when these emerging artistic and scientific movements intersected in Britain, particularly through the period’s nascent homophile culture (Bauer, *English* 7-8). Such catalogues act as a synecdoche for larger cultural overlaps between these movements at this moment, and point through their

integration of aestheticism and sexual-scientific works about 'sexual inversion' within a 'secret museum' to the broader role of that discourse in the consolidation of homophile communities in the 1890s. As Mark Mitchell and David Leavitt have argued, the homophile culture of the late-Victorian period considered works that referenced same-sex desire crucially important to affirming their experiences and establishing strong communities. Readers interested in same-sex desire "displayed astonishing tenacity," they note, "in locating those poems, stories, novels, essays, and even individual sentences in which references to homosexual experience might be found" (xiv). Those interested in same-sex desire found a way to imagine for it a history and theory by reading explicit classical works, for example, as "the origin and paradigm of a millennial tradition that persistently connect[ed] male love to the higher forms of culture" (Evangelista 231). According to Stefano Evangelista, aesthetic Platonism in particular emerged through this process as "a school of radical reading" that was particularly crucial to "the emancipation of homosexuality in modern culture" through its location of the literature of sexual 'perversion' hidden at the centre of the Western canon (231). Importantly, this reading practice was not simply radical, however, but also *radial*, involving the cross reading of many different kinds of works for secret and hidden references to same-sex desire in order to construct a tradition of homosexual writing, a reading practice based on a version of the fantasy of the "secret museum" to which Smithers' catalogues offered access.

That the radical reading of *fin de siècle* homophile groups also comprised radial reading is evident in the composition of works such as Edward Carpenter's 1902 anthology *Iolaus: An Anthology of Friendship*, the first English-language anthology with a homosexual theme. Through this work, Carpenter expressed the experience of being "struck by the remarkable manner in which the customs of various races and times illustrate each other, and the way in which to a solid and enduring body of human sentiment on a subject" of same-sex desire (qtd. in Mitchell and Leavitt xiii). However, as Mitchell and Leavitt point out, "in order to find...positive models [of same-sex desire], Carpenter had to ransack world literature; to construct a version of history in which friendship, not marriage, was the defining term" (xiii). *Ioluas*, in other words, is "less a collection of homosexually themed writing than of homosexually themed reading" that necessarily radiated out to encompass a wide range of works in order to construct a canon that conveyed the secret history of same-sex desire (xiii). Some of the readers

who counted themselves as part of the homophile movement at the *fin de siècle* were trepidatious about this mode of reading: Oscar Wilde's short story 'The Portrait of Mr. W.H.,' for instance, meditates on the possible outcomes of searching for queer "truth" through literary criticism, acknowledging that such a search may result less in the location of truthful facts than in "a kind of spiritual and artistic sense" of a writer's or tradition's true meaning that could be just as affirming of same-sex desire (qtd in Evangelista 241). The truth of this revisionist criticism, in other words, was located in its suggestive power, not its analytical arguments. But whether or not it located factual "truths" of sexual history, in opening the whole literary field to the possibility of queer reinterpretation, this mode of reading operated as an important community-building mechanism for readers interested in same-sex desire (241). Mitchell and Leavitt have pointed out that "the works in which such content lay—nascent, unbudded—these readers passed on to one another," forming a common canon which made it possible for this nascent and scattered sexual community to build a common minority identity even as it also helped that community frame same-sex desire as anything but a marginal concern in the development of Western culture (xiv). This characteristically social reading practice and the images of the 'secret' or hidden canon that underpinned it shares a great deal with the reading, writing, and publishing practices employed by the Cannibal network and encouraged by publishers like Smithers, pointing to the intersections of marginalized sexual communities, sexual scholars, and readers in search of erotic entertainment and pleasure around the reading, writing, and publication of sexual information in the period. It also emphasises one of the most radical ways in which 'the secret museum,' born of censorship, came to operate as a productive force through the publishing and bookselling businesses of publishers like Smithers.

Smithers's catalogues had the potential to assist homophile readers in their task of reconstructing a radial archive of homosexual writing by making books connected in different ways with same-sex desire, both fictional and sexual-scientific, more readily available. Furthermore, the "secret museum" acted as a dialogue between Smithers and his well-heeled readers, suggesting, if not always articulating, the ways in which the works he sold could speak to one another, created a potential "finding aid" for a literary canon about same-sex desire. It is notable that Smithers emphasized the homoerotic content of many of his works in his catalogues, both implicitly, as in his advertisements for Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*, "Jacobus X's" *Untrodden Fields of*

Anthropology, and explicitly, as in his advertising for the novel *Teleny or The Reverse of the Medal. A Physiological Romance of To-day* (1893) as “based to some extent on the subject treated by an eminent littérateur who died a few months ago—i.e. on the Urning, or man-loving man” (Mendes 252-254). Smithers refers here to John Addington Symonds, whose *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891) he privately printed in 1896, claiming to have originally published the author’s companion *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (1883) in an edition of only ten copies, and emphasising, explicitly its value to the reader seeking information about same-sex desire (*Album* 7, no. 55; Nelson, *Publisher* 346; Brady 2). The references to rarity and, covertly, secrecy, that accompanied his advertisements for these works, as part of Smithers’s larger instrumentalization of the “secret museum” of obscenity in his marketing practice, resonated with the way in which same-sex desire was structured by its distinctive public/private status as an open secret within late-Victorian homophile culture (Evangelista 232-242; Sedgwick 22). Indeed, that Sedgwick’s figure of the closet, a restricted space at once central and marginal to culture, also describes the “secret museum” emphasises how ways of reading and understanding the textual history of sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure within obscene print culture and homophile culture were not simply complimentary, but part of the same far-reaching tradition, born of censorship and restriction (56).

The 1893 novel *Teleny, or the Reverse of the Medal: A Physiological Romance of To-Day*, which blurs the boundaries between pornographic memoir and sexual-scientific record, operates as an illustrative node for the kinds of reading and writing practices that Smithers’s business tapped into and helped foster through its exploitation of the “secret museum,” and the ways in which those reading and writing practices could be liberatory. In its purportedly round-robin composition, its reliance on burgeoning scientific theories of homosexuality to represent same-sex desire, its imitative links to such works as Oscar Wilde’s *Picture of Dorian Gray*, and its mode of publication—*Teleny* was clandestinely printed and distributed by Smithers and Nichols in two volumes in 1893, in an edition of 400 copies, which were priced prohibitively at four guineas each—the novel is a multifaceted product of the “secret museum” discourse and the audiences that moved around it (Nelson, “Leonard” para. 3). One of only a few obscene novels of the period to address desire between men primarily, *Teleny* has long been associated with ‘round-robin’ authorship and Oscar Wilde. According to the account of the publisher-bookseller Charles Hirsch, the novel was delivered and picked up from his

shop in Coventry Street by several different men, and written in several different hands, including that of Oscar Wilde (para. 3). Hirsch had no idea how the manuscript got into Smithers' hands, although Nelson theorizes that if Wilde was one of its authors, his acquaintance with Smithers' business probably led him to approach Smithers about publication of the book in 1891 (para. 4). The book's circumstances of publication thus crystallized the allure of the "secret museum," being private, forbidden, illegible, and based in secret, collaborative interaction. Meanwhile, the text of the work itself draws on and retransmits the archive of varied texts that lay at the heart of the fantasy of the "secret museum," by referencing a number of works that might be included in a secret museum about same-sex desire and by overtly reproducing its interplay of the instructive and the erotic, science and entertainment, and the licit and the illicit through its narrative.

In contrast to *Sins of the Cities of the Plain*, which focuses chiefly on describing the physical delights and repercussions of same-sex desire, *Teleny* delves into the psychological challenges of grappling with one's own 'deviant' sexuality, mirroring the shift in focus from the physical effects of same-sex male sex acts to the origins and psychology of same-sex desire that occurred in the scientific field between the mid- and late-Victorian periods (Crozier, "Nineteenth-Century British" 68-69). Set in Paris,¹¹ *Teleny's* plot centers on a burgeoning romantic relationship between Camille des Grieux, the novel's aristocratic narrator, and Réne Teleny, a professional pianist. As the novel depicts a startling array of same- and cross-sex sexual acts, Des Grieux struggles to locate the origins of his sexual and romantic desire for Teleny and his lack of sexual desire—at times, even disgust—for women. In the process, his musings come to parallel some of the most cutting edge sexual-scientific theory of the late-Victorian period. Like many contemporaneous sexual scientists, Des Grieux argues that his desire for men is congenital, frequently returning to memories of his childhood to support his theory.¹² At the beginning of the novel, for instance, he confides to an anonymous interlocutor that "I had felt the first faint stimulus of love already long before [I met Teleny], but as it had always been with my own sex, I was unconscious that this was love" (23). In another passage, he recalls that his desire for men "had grown...unawares, from my very childhood. I began to feel their carnal strings long before I could understand what conclusion they imparted" (86). When Des Grieux meets Teleny, he understands

[f]or the first time in my life... that lovers could be so foolish as to entwine their initials together. I felt like carving his name on the bark of trees, that the birds seeing it might twitter it from morn till eventide...I wished to write it on the shingle of the beach, that the ocean itself might know of my love for him, and murmur it everlastingly. (86)

“Had I committed a crime against nature,” he subsequently asks the reader, “when my own nature had found peace and happiness thereby?” (86). Because his emotional history suggests a biological origin for his desires, Des Grieux reasons that same-sex sexual acts are natural and therefore cannot be criminal. In using such reasoning to naturalize his desires—reasoning that closely paralleled contemporary sexual-scientific arguments for a congenital basis for same-sex desire—and pass his knowledge of them on to the novel’s anonymous interlocutor, Des Grieux acts as both an observing sexual analyst and an observed sexual subject. *Teleny* becomes a novel that is at once erotic, analytical and polemical, representing sex like a sexological study even as it invites its readers to be stimulated by its highly explicit depictions of sexual activity.¹³

At the same time, *Teleny* draws on intertextual references to other literary texts considered at the time essential works in the canon of same-sex desire’s representation. As John McRae has noted, its “literary references run from Chaucer and Dante to the 1890s, taking in Shakespeare..., Paradise Lost..., Laurence Sterne, Shelley, Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King*, and the contemporary poet [John Addington] Symonds. These, with classical allusions, notably to Hadrian (here Adrian) and his lover Antinoüs—a story frequently quoted in the ‘Uranian’ literature of the period, and found several times in [Oscar] Wilde’s own poetry” were central to homophile groups’ understandings of themselves and the history of same-sex desire at the *fin de siècle* (para. 46) Perhaps the text that the work references most strongly, however, is Oscar Wilde’s *Picture of Dorian Gray*, which had been serialized three years before in *Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine*, and then, having been significantly revised and expanded, published as a single book by Ward, Lock, & Co., in 1891. Several critics have noted the striking similarities between these novel’s narratives. Teleny and Des Grieux’s first meeting, which involves a telekinetic ‘current’ that brings them together, both spiritually and sexually, through the medium of Teleny’s music, is in many ways a more explicit and detailed version of Basil Hallward’s account of first meeting Dorian Gray in Wilde’s novel. Hallward describes experiencing a “curious sensation” meeting Dorian, an erotic charge at having “come

face to face with some one whose mere personality was so fascinating that... it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul” that leads, despite Hallward’s terror, to their figurative joining through the medium of a portrait that betrays his desire (24). Each novel is replete with images of doubling,¹⁴ and its characters bear similarities: to name a few, Dorian and Teleny are each amateur musicians, each enchant every woman they meet, and each die at their own hands, using knives.

As McRae has argued, *Teleny*’s references to other works raise it “above the level of the merely titillating. The setting of sensuality and sexuality in a wide-ranging historical and cultural context is an indication of the serious intentions of a generation of writers” intent on demonstrating same-sex desire’s affirming aesthetic history (para. 47). This setting also indicates, however, of the larger way in which explorations of same-sex desire were situated in a broader tradition of understanding the keys to sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure as contained within an archive of dangerous or forbidden books, an archive in which the controversial *Dorian Gray*—popularly charged as obscene long before Wilde’s trial and the obscenity trade’s capitalization on his notoriety—was partially situated (Frankel 5-7; Stern 1-6). Through the action of publishers like Hotten, Nichols, and Smithers, the obscenity trade functioned as an important space in which such texts met one another, making a secret archive of sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure visible and accessible to a variety of privileged readers. If these publishers translated the “grey zone” of sexual-scientific publication into a larger textual space inhabited by a wide range of explicit works for commercial purposes. While playing on reader’s desire to access closeted sexual information and pleasure to expand the marketability of their varied catalogues of works, they also provided through their transmission of the secret museum a logic and a cultural space through which readers could discover the ‘truth’ of sexual desire and its history and apply those discoveries to their own personal and political aims. Whether the works they published and sold as component parts of the secret “museum” actually revealed the empirical ‘truth’ of sex and its history was beside the point: the museum’s suggestive power was itself a productive force for the late-century construction of a universalizing discourse about homosexuality that framed it as an influential force and key concern in Western culture.

Endnotes

¹ Hotten had an extensive library of explicit works, which after his death was “purchased *en bloc* by an English amateur”—probably, Marcus suggests, Henry Spencer Ashbee himself (68).

² See Mendes for detailed descriptions of the processes through which arrangements were made to publish each of these works.

³ William Lazenby, another publisher who formed close ties to the Cannibal Club, did much the same, lending certain obscene books to his most trusted readers for a fee of 10s a week as well as publishing and even contributing to their obscene fictional works (“Wholesale Seizure” N. Pag.).

⁴ “All seven [of the tracts printed in the *Library Illustrative of Social Progress*] had been for many years,” Ashbee noted, “in the possession of a well known London collector,” by which Ashbee probably means himself (*Index* 241). “The fact is,” he underscores, “the present possessor of the volume in question lent it to Hotten, who has it surreptitiously reprinted, without the owner’s permission of knowledge (241).”

⁵ James G. Nelson’s *Publisher to the Decadents* provides the most comprehensive account of Smithers’s role in avant-garde publishing at the *fin de siècle*.

⁶ Smithers and Nichols were, by 1888, likely already involved in business with Avery, a London bookseller who, according to Smithers, “seems to have been the chief source of erotic publications” in London after 1886 (Nelson 28). Avery seems to have been acting as their London distributor that year, circulating books that Smithers and Nichols printed in Sheffield (28). In advising Smithers about starting the Erotika Biblion Society, Burton went on to warn Smithers of other active dealers in the obscenity business who might take advantage of his and Nichols’s work. “Avery is a most perfidious rogue; he pirated my friend Arbuthnot’s book.... What is the address of Mr. Nichols? I presume the London agent is Robson and Kerslake of Coventry St. ... Nichols will be a useful man in the matter of the Scented Garden which progresses well — especially if he has a list of 250 subscribers to the Erotika Biblion Society. Beware of Robson and Kerslake, they are ‘in the trade’ ...perhaps it would be wise to repudiate them” (qtd in Godsall 398).

⁷ Merkle notes that the Lutetian Society published two additional translations: Voltaire’s *La Pucelle d’Orléans* translated by Ernest Dowson as the *The Maid of Orleans* (1899) and M.G. Lewis’s the *Four Facardins* (1899), a translation and continuation of le Comte Anthony (Antoine) Hamilton’s *Les Quatre Facardins* (77-78). According to James G. Nelson, Smithers also published Ernest Dowson’s translation of Choderlos de Laclos’s *Les Liaisons dangereuses* under the Lutetian Society imprint (339).

⁸ See Nichols’ *Catalogue of Books on Sale* and *Catalogue of Books* for an impression of the kinds of works that he traded in during the 1890s and early 1900s.

⁹ This catalogue also advertises cheaper works along the same theme as the Cannibals’ works that might appeal to readers interested in them, such as *Arabic Authors: A Manual of Arabian History and Literature*. (1890), *Early Ideas: A Group of Hindoo Stories* (1881), and *Persian Portraits: A Sketch of Persian History, Literature and Politics* (1887).

¹⁰ Other sexological and anthropological works advertised in Smithers Catalogue[s] of Rare Books include Jacques Duval’s *Traite des Hermaphrodites* (1880), the anonymous *L’Amour et ses Caprices, suivi de la Jalousie, ses Fureurs et ses Crimes* (1822), “Docteur Cabanés” *Le Cabinet Secret de l’Histoire, entr’ouvert par un medecin* (1895), and a French edition of Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis*.

¹¹ *Teleny* was originally set in London. See Colligan, *Publisher's* 224-229.

¹² See Upchurch, "Liberal Exclusions" 424, for a useful summary of sexological debates concerning the congenital nature of same-sex desire.

¹³ Diane Mason argues that *Teleny* also draws on sexology to conceptualize homosexual desire when it describes the deep psychic connection that Teleny feels between himself and his "sympathetic listeners" (Mason 84; *Teleny* 8; Krafft-Ebing 255).

¹⁴ For example, in *Dorian Gray*, Dorian and the portrait are figured as doubles, while in *Teleny*, Rene Teleny and Camille Des Grieux are represented as doubles of one another.

Chapter 6.

The Productive Limits of the Secret Museum: Iwan Bloch, Havelock Ellis, and the Resources of Early Social Science

The aesthetes' turn to myth and literature as a way of understanding sexual history and the nature of sexual desire was a practice that they shared with sexual scientists who sought to taxonomize sexual desire. Across Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, sexual scholars working within the emerging field of sexology drew on a varied literary canon to inform their studies, and even viewed the key texts that had emerged out of Britain's elite obscene print culture, around the developing "secret museum" discourse, as important contributions to sexual science. The period's nascent community of British sexologists was, as Heike Bauer has argued, driven by many of the same political, aesthetic and social goals as homophile aesthetes, moved in overlapping circles, and believed fervently in art and literature's potential as a vehicle for social change (*English* 52-81). It also shared with this sexual community its use of the "secret museums" traded and created by the obscenity trade as sources of acquiring closeted works on sexual behaviour and desire. Yet, unlike their continental peers, these scholars were divided when it came to acknowledging their debts to literary insight, and erased their engagement with obscene fiction and their interaction with the obscenity trade from their published writings. This section examines the ways in which the "secret museum" and the fringe publishing practices that propelled it offered unique opportunities for exploring and developing ideas about the nature of sexual bodies, acts, and desires for scholars working in the nascent field of sexology, in Britain and beyond. While early British sexologists drew on the works of the "secret museum," however, they did not cite them in their own publications, thus effacing *scientia sexualis*'s debts to an important location within the "secret museum" discourse, as well as its broader debts to, and overlaps with, *ars erotica* itself. That these sexologists considered citing the varied works of the "secret museum" an impediment to their goals of influencing social change

underscores the limits of the “secret museum,” created and sustained by discourses about obscenity, as a productive scientific resource.

It is clear that the “secret museum” was, in its various iterations, woven into the practices of *fin de siècle* British sexual scholarship. Mitchell and Leavitt’s examination of Carpenter’s and Symonds’s works demonstrates how these sexual scholars engaged in radial readings and constructed for themselves a “secret museum” of literature that revealed affirming ‘truths’ about so-called ‘perversions,’ but their interaction with the culture of the secret museum, like that of the aesthetes, seems to have extended further than the practice of creating a canon of sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure of their own by reading the classics. Havelock Ellis’s significant knowledge of and involvement with the obscenity trade and the “museums” of sexual knowledge and pleasure that it made available to readers suggests how these scholar-activists also interacted with the obscenity trade to acquire the varied information that they used to develop their theories, becoming part of the elite print culture that coalesced around the businesses of publishers like Smithers.¹ The writer and scholar’s private letters and bolder public writings, composed after he was an established sexual scientist in the 1930s, reveal that he “often had to refer” to bibliographies of ‘forbidden books,’ including Guillaume Apollinaire’s 1913 bibliography of works housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale’s own “secret museum,” *L’Enfer de la Bibliothèque nationale*,² and Hugo Hayn and Alfred Gotendorf’s massive, eight-volume *Bibliotheca Germanorum erotica et curiosa* (1912–1914) (Ellis, Letter, 28 December 1926; Ellis, *Revaluation* 30). Ellis was also familiar with Ashbee’s bibliographies—so much so, in fact, that in 1926 he advised the English author and clergyman Montague Summers on the benefits and drawbacks of his plan to publish an “enlarged Pisanus Fraxi,” noting that there “would be difficulties” with publishing such a work, though he “suppose[d] that it could at least be printed,” and was confident that there would be “buyers as I see the old edition advertised at £42” (Letter, 28 December 1926). Ellis’s private correspondence shows that he not only read such works, but also fashioned a ‘secret museum’ of his own, collecting obscene literary and visual works as well as a wide range of sexual-scientific studies, many of which circulated through the obscenity trade through dealers like Smithers, Charles Carrington, and the Parisian publishing house Select Bibliothèque.³ Ellis may even have contributed to the literary side of the obscene “secret museum” himself. An obscene novel, *Gynecocracy* (1893),

has been attributed to him, although as Peter Mendes emphasises, there is no hard evidence to corroborate his authorship of the work (Legman, "Lure" 55; Mendes 248).⁴

Ellis may have been introduced to the obscenity trade and its productions of the 'secret museum' through his work with Smithers, which involved him in the clandestine Lutetian Society and likely familiarized him with other 'risky' materials that the publisher traded in, materials that included sexual-scientific books unavailable through other sources. In his correspondence with other sexual scholars, Ellis complained of the difficulty of obtaining such works in Britain, where the "grey zone" of sexual-scientific publication made publishing and circulating these works a potentially risky business in which many booksellers declined to participate.⁵ Suggestively, the route he advised Edward Carpenter to take when buying books for him in London involved visiting both a mainstay of the 'respectable' medical publishing community, the publishing firm Baillière, Tindall & Cox, and "Arnold, who publishes numerous medical and pseudo-medical books" (Letter, 12 November 1916). That Ellis and his circle acquired sexual-scientific works through obscenity dealers is further suggested by the fact that he cites in his books and refers in his letters to reading a handful of sexual-scientific works, including some authored by the mysterious "Dr. Jacobus X,"⁶ which circulated solely, as far as I have been able to determine, through the obscenity trade in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The anthropologist Branislav Malinowsky's 1934 request to Ellis to write the introduction for Alfred Rose's bibliography of erotic books, *Registrum Librorum Eroticorum* (1936), published under the pseudonym Rolf S. Reade, further emphasizes that other scholars based in Britain had knowledge of and connections to the period's obscene print culture, and also that they were convinced of the "secret museum's" utility to social science:

A friend of mine, Mr. Alfred Rose, is preparing a bibliography of erotic books, an enterprise in which, I am certain, you will be very interested, He would esteem it of a very great favour if, after you have seen some of his material... you would write just a few words expressing your approval of such a publication and indicating its importance for the students of the psychology of sex. ...In my opinion it is so great, that I take the liberty of troubling you about it...

The secret museum, circulating through the obscenity trade, was a source of valuable information about sex, one that sexual scholars used and even contributed to. Yet the

only sexual-scientific work from this period connected with Britain in which this influence is transparent is a study produced by a foreign sexologist, Iwan Bloch.

Bloch's *Sexual Life in England* [*Das Geschlechtsleben in England*] (1901-1903) offers a useful focal point for illustrating the secret museum discourse's productive possibilities in the British sexological context and its relative respectability in nascent sexological circles on an international scale, belying its virtual erasure in works produced by sexologists like Ellis. The work presents a particularly fascinating case study because its analysis draws heavily from the contents of a real library of 'forbidden' materials, the personal collection of Henry Spencer Ashbee, joining what I will highlight as a continental model of reading across genres for sexual information with a coterminous British 'archive' of sexual knowledge. Bloch, at the time a young, ambitious German dermatologist, wrote to Ashbee in the late 1890s requesting access to his extensive collection for his research on sexual experience in England from the Medieval period onward (Gibson 141).⁷ Ashbee acquiesced, with only one stipulation: that Bloch refrain from revealing his true identity. "That you have no intention of associating my name with P.F. [Pisanus Fraxi], I am thankful," Ashbee wrote. "*That must never be done*" (141). In Bloch's three-volume study, which was published in German between 1901 and 1903 under the pseudonym "Eugene Duren," the name "Ashbee" never appeared, belying the study's strong affinity with and affirmation of the bibliographer's vision of the "secret museum" and its productive possibilities.

Like Ashbee, Bloch advocated a sociological approach to reading fictional narratives about sexual bodies, acts, and desires, viewing them as representational of real English sexual practice and the "national characteristics" that inflect it. "The conception of the erotic in literature is of the greatest importance in gauging the character of a people," Bloch proclaims in *Sexual Life in England*, "and in forming an opinion of a given period in its cultural development" (499). While he concedes that such a 'conception' could also be surmised by examining other cultural products, he argues that a scholar's impressions "may *best* be tested for correctness by examining its most blatant expression in erotic literature" (499, my emphasis). "Indeed," the scholar emphasises, "the character of a people is very clearly reflected in its erotic literature. The extreme excrescences of the English national character, harshness, coarseness and eccentricity, obtrude even more in erotic literature proper than in the ordinary literature of

fiction and poetry” (499). In his chapter on the “English” practice of flagellation, Bloch thus cites the obscene novels *Venus Schoolmistress*, *The Romance of Chastisement*, *Exhibition of Female Flagellants*, *The Sublime of Flagellation*, and *The Merry Order of St. Bridget*—mainstays of the obscenity trade, issued by such publishers as Dugdale, Lazenby, and Hotten, and described in Ashbee’s bibliographies—in his chapter on flagellation as evidence of the fact that clothing “plays a great part” in the erotic performance of flagellation, “both in the case of the woman flagellating and of the man being flagellated. Numerous active flagellants, both men and woman, want the full uncovering of their victims only in part, as this affords them greater pleasure” (340-341). Only two pages later, he quotes from *Memoirs of John Bell, a Domestic Servant* as proof of “the existence of feminine voyeurs” (343). The rest of the chapter, and indeed, the rest of the study (with the exception of an early chapter on marriage rituals) is similarly replete with references to obscene fiction, much of it dating from the nineteenth century, as evidence of the nuances of English sexual “character”.

Bloch was only one of many early continental sexologists who turned to fiction as evidence for their theories.⁸ Most of these scholars were not also writers, poets, or literary critics, as early British sexologists tended to be. But they did, as Anna Schaffner has demonstrated, adopt terms and concepts from fictional sources in their work and even drew on literary texts as evidence of sexual behaviours and desire, treating fictional representations as case studies equally valid to empirical observations—emphasising that the reading practices characteristic of the “secret museum” extended beyond British borders (“Fiction” 165). It is well known that the Austro-German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840-1902), one of most influential sexual scholars of the nineteenth century, was inspired by the novels of the Marquis de Sade and the Austrian writer Leopold von Sacher-Masoch to coin the influential terms “sadism” and “masochism.” Krafft-Ebing did not simply draw inspiration from such fictional works, however, but also used them as proof for his theories. The psychiatrist’s ground-breaking study *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) frames literary references to the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Charles Baudelaire, Heinrich von Kleist, Freidrich Schiller, and William Shakespeare, as well as the works of Sade and Sacher-Masoch, as evidence of the existence of certain pathologies, giving them are the same status as empirical observations drawn from forensic and medical archives (170). As Schaffner observes, “Krafft-Ebing frequently uses certain words or phrases, including the verb ‘beweisen’ [‘to

prove’], to lend... factual status to literary sources, as, for instance, when he claims ‘that contrary sexual feelings are not a rarity is evidenced by the fact that they are frequently the subject of novels’” (170). The sexologist’s famous appropriation of Sacher-Masoch’s name to designate a new pathological category was the result of his detection in the author’s *Venus im Pelz* [*Venus in Furs*] (1870) of typical images of the perverse inner lives of masochistic men. For Krafft-Ebing, the author’s depiction of the symptoms of this newly discovered pathology does not simply represent a sexual feeling observed through the course of treating patients, but “*corroborates* a medical fact in the literary sphere” (173, my emphasis). Krafft-Ebing’s colleagues were similarly invested in fictional representation as a basis for their theories. The French psychologist Alfred Binet (1857-1911) mentions the characters Rosalba from Jules Amédée Barbey d’Aureville’s *Les diaboliques* [*The She-Devils*] (1874) and Vellini from the author’s *Une vieille maîtresse* [*An Old Mistress*] (1851) in his study *Le fétichisme dans l’amour* (1897), for instance, as “examples [which] suffice to prove that by fixating on a psychological quality, sexual desire does not always become simpler” (qtd in Schaffner, “Fiction” 177). The German sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld, meanwhile, praised the psychological insights of *Gynecocracy*, the 1893 obscene novel attributed to Ellis (Bullough and Bullough 211).

Many of these sexologists were anxious about establishing the accuracy of literary descriptions of sexual bodies, acts, and desires. Some became preoccupied with confirming that the literary representations that they drew from were based on real-life observations. Binet, for example, wrote to Alexandre Dumas while preparing *Le fétichisme dans l’amour* to ask whether the author’s description of fetishism in his story “La maison du vent” [“The House of Wind”] (1875) was based on a real case (Schaffner, “Fiction” 30). The Berlin-based sexologist Albert Moll was also cautious in drawing from literature as evidence, and took care to make distinctions between literary representations and empirical observations in his work. While Moll’s *Handbuch der Sexualwissenschaften* [*Handbook of Sexologies*] (1912), “makes a cogent argument about what the sexologists can learn from literature and art,” for instance, “he does not mix insights that are presented as fiction with those that are not” (166-7). But, as Schaffner points out, like the Cannibals in their earlier analyses of foreign and classical literature, most of these early continental sexologists remained blind to the metaphorical and stylized nature of literary representation (181). They assumed that if a certain sexual perversion existed textually, it also existed in reality as an empirically observable

behaviour (182). That these scholars were some of the first to develop sexual case histories, which formed a pivotal role in the construction of early sexological knowledge—since there are few physical signs that can be used to analyze sexual acts and desires—raises the question of why they would turn to such literature as additional evidence. Such records, which translated the stories their patients or other volunteers were willing to tell sexual scholars into narrative histories were, as Ivan Crozier has pointed out, what made “sexology a medical discipline, rather than simply musing about sexuality” (“Pillow” 376). By establishing an archive of case studies, early sexologists demonstrated their seriousness, professionalism, and respectability in engaging in sexual study. Literature, even if commonly viewed as a reflection of human experience, did not enjoy the same respectable origins or contexts. Why turn to these works as sources of evidence at all?

Schaffner suggests that it was because there were few empirical sources to which sexologists could refer that they resorted to fiction as evidence for their theories (“Fiction” 167). Despite the importance of the case history to sexology’s early development, individual theorists did not always have the resources to gather such studies independently. Many early practitioners thus had to recycle a limited number of case histories gathered only by a few individuals to advance sex research: Krafft-Ebing’s case histories, in particular, show up time and again in early sexological studies, sometimes decades after their original publication (167). It is reasonable to assume that the formal affinities between the literary narrative and the case history made literature an especially compelling source of sexual-scientific evidence amid the dearth of case studies that resulted from practitioners lacking the opportunity, resources, or inclination to construct or locate case histories of their own. Although early sexologists framed their case histories as objective reports, these histories were narrative reports based on patients’ stories of their lives (Crozier, “Pillow” 376). Each case history in John Addington Symonds and Havelock Ellis’s *Sexual Inversion*, for example, comprised a detailed mini-biography, describing each subject’s family medical history, genital size, age, schooling, and occupation; first sexual feelings, orgasm and dreams; masturbatory habits; the kinds of men or women they were attracted to, including their ages, professions and physicality; the way they wore their hair; the kinds of sexual acts that they engaged in and their preference, in ascending order, for each of them; whether they had sexual contact with the opposite sex; and finally, their own views on the causes and relative

morality of their sexual preferences (149). While these case studies are largely presented in the third person, text from many of these individual's original accounts of their lives are often inserted into the narrative, imbuing a document that might otherwise comprise a series of dry facts with literary interest. Case XXII, for instance, quotes a 27 year old gentleman of "Scotch extraction, without profession":

I had an uncle on the maternal side whom I have every reason to believe had the same inclinations as myself. Homosexual tastes began to show themselves at about age 12, when I was devotedly attached to a cousin of about the same age... The habit of self-abuse has always had a great hold on me, and it is only within a short time that I have broken myself of the practice. It is especially strong when I am away from sympathetic friends and the opportunity of meeting others of similar tastes. ...I prefer boys of about 17 to 20 years of age, though occasionally slightly older men attract me. I like the smooth, hairless face and body of a boy... In the case of a few boys I have indulged in *paedicatio*, but only when they are particularly attractive to me. As a general rule, I am satisfied with such pleasure as can be obtained by the use of the hand, and indeed, prefer it. (82-83).

Notably, the fictional narratives most commonly used in early continental sexological studies, such as Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs*, were constructed around a confessional model that formally mirrored the patient case history.⁹ Indeed, Michel Foucault suggests a common root between the case history and the confessional novel in his study *The History of Sexuality*, when he argues that the sexual-scientific case history had its origins in the religious or legal confession (61). "Western societies," Foucault contends, "established the confession as one of the main rituals we rely on for the production of truth," playing a central role in the order of civil and religious powers (56-58). Sex in particular became a "privileged theme of confession" in the West, disciplining subjects and their sexualities, and was eventually impressed into the service of scientific discourse, which recorded the confession, studied it, and categorized it (61). In this sense, the insistence that explicit fiction and sexual science functioned similarly that characterized the "secret museum" discourse in Britain thus had more of a basis in truth than first meets the eye. Obscene Victorian novels function strikingly like the case histories, being structured by a narrator's confession of the scandalous, perverse or forbidden sexual acts and desires that he or she had experienced (Sigel, *Governing* 42).¹⁰ Although a narrator may be ostensibly motivated to produce such confessions for a multitude of reasons, these novels' narratives typically track the structure of the case

study, following the same general trajectory of describing sexual development and accounting for the confessor's sexual experiences from an early age, which progress and escalate in intensity and, often, perversion as the narrative wears on. A typical example is *Miss Coote's Confession, or, The Voluptuous Experiences of an Old Maid, in a Series of Letters to a Lady Friend*, published serially in the *Pearl* in 1879-1880. This novel presents itself as an "account of the reason of [the narrator's] penchant for the rod, which, in [her] estimation, is one of the most voluptuous and delicious institutes of private life" (6). The narrator, Rosa Coote, locates the roots of her desire to flog and be flogged in her early experience under the birch of her grandfather (6). Her first "dreadful summons to attend the old man's *punishment drill*," purportedly for idle behaviour, results not only in pain, but also in "exquisite sensation," a "most pleasurable warmth and excitability impossible to be described" (8, 12). The experience fixes Rosa's erotic sensibility and soon motivates her desire to flog other women as well as being flogged herself. By the end of the novel she is the President of a "Ladies Club exclusively for the admirers of Birch Discipline": her identity becomes fused with her desire for flagellant activity (259).

Narratives like *Miss Coote's Confession* maintain readers' interest in their frequently repetitive episodes by enhancing their realism through the conceit of the confession, a conceit that also emphasizes the voyeuristic pleasures of reading. It is precisely these elements, however, which made such novels worthwhile for sexologists like Bloch, reading them through Ashbee's "secret museum," to draw from.¹¹ Obscene fiction, which violated the "authorized vocabulary" that attempted to discipline sex, represented a perfect resource for early sexologists in search of detailed information about sexual bodies, acts, and desires: it offered up an accessible narrative of sexual behaviour and desire that could easily be translated into scientific discourse because it was, in a sense, not much different from scientific discourse (Foucault 17-18). In the British context, the 'grey zone' into which sexual science fell influenced the obscene literature of the period, shaping its play with scholarly and scientific concepts, forms, and conceits—making it a particularly useful as a scientific resource. New formal elements such as the appearance of an interlocutor in *Teleny*, who drives its narrative by posing a series of questions to the novel's protagonist, Camille des Grieux, are emblematic of the case history and further emphasise the blurriness between these forms¹². Many of the interlocutor's questions in this novel are transparently designed to elicit graphic

descriptions of sexual bodies, acts and desires, such as when des Grieux diverges from describing the scene an all-male orgy to contemplate the homoerotic artworks that decorate the home in which the orgy takes place. “Please finish this digression on Briancourt’s paintings,” the interlocutor interjects, “and tell me something of the more realistic scene” (98). However, the majority of the interlocutor’ queries plumb des Grieux’s psychology. After des Grieux and Teleny consummate their love, for instance, the interlocutor comments that “surely [des Grieux] must have felt rather seedy, after the many—“ only to be interrupted by des Grieux, who assures him, at length, that he was “far from ashamed” of his “crime” (85). The interlocutor continues the line of enquiry, repeating that still, “I had thought that on the morrow—the intoxication passed—you would have shuddered at the thought of having a man for a lover?” (86). When Des Grieux denies it, he persists, mirroring earlier questions about his first stirrings of sexual desire and sexual experiences:

“Still, not having, like most of us, been inured to sodomy from your schooldays, I should have thought that you would have been loathe to have yielded your body to another man’s pleasure” (86).

“...you did not consider sodomy a crime?” (88).

“Then you never loved before you made Teleny’s acquaintance?” (23).

“Was it [your first experience of sexual desire] for some boy your age?” (23).

“I suppose that you never had [sex with] a woman?” (24).

The way in which these questions mimic the scientific method, and force des Grieux to argue for same-sex desire as a congenital, natural, and reasonable desire, not only transform an explicit romance novel into a polemical defense of love between men, but also help to reframe the novel as a case history itself, making even more obviously useful as a potential resource to the sexologist.

That British writings of this period which frame themselves as sociological records of sexual experience continue to be taken as such by modern scholars as further emphasises the blurriness of the lines between record and fiction, and suggests how persuasively creative writing, arising out of a culture that recognized the eroticism of medical and scientific records, could function as evidence for sexual behaviour in the past as well as the erotic register of sexual-scientific work. *My Secret Life*, an eleven-

volume work that purports to be the erotic diary of an upper-class Victorian gentleman, is a classic example, providing the reader with a an extremely long series of biographical facts spiced up with personal analysis. As with Ellis and Symonds's case histories, the narrator Walter's sexual life is recorded in minute detail, beginning with his first memories of sexual knowledge and feeling and progressing to record his first (and subsequent) masturbatory experiences, voyeuristic pleasures, sexual contact with women and men, impotence, and experiments with flagellation and object fetishism. Like many of Ellis and Symonds's patients, Walter reflects on sex as well as describing it, taking note of his changing sexual preferences, his increasing sexual knowledge, and his observations about other people's bodies and sexual preferences, including genital size and shape, a mainstay of nineteenth-century sexological and anthropological case studies and draws parallels between the body's physical makeup and sexual desire.¹³ The effect reading of this avalanche of minutiae is so much like reading a case study or anthropological record that modern scholars have often attempted to use *My Secret Life* to glean historical information about Victorian sexual practices and desires. Importantly, however, that which makes the diary so useful to the sexual scholar—its graphic detail—is precisely what causes it to be characterized as pornography (Marcus 128; 78; Sigel, *Governing*, 8). The continuous debate over *My Secret Life's* realism that has surrounded it since its private publication, around 1888, in Amsterdam, emphasises how blurry the lines between these two forms were becoming in late nineteenth century Britain, with sexual-scientific works falling into the 'grey zone' between the medical and the sexual not just because they risked initiating the reader in sexual pleasure, but also because such works were looking increasingly similar, fitting themselves not into a precise genre so much as a forbidden archive of sexual knowledge, the 'secret museum' (Gibson 163-234).

Indeed, it was not only the development of obscene fiction in Britain alongside the "grey zone" of medical publication that offered exciting opportunities for the country's sexual scholars, in an environment in which sexual case histories of domestic patients were, until Ellis and Symonds's intervention, virtually nonexistent. In initiating the "secret museum" discourse, that "grey zone" had also created new modes of publishing practice that made these works available in conjunction with new continental scholarship (often in translation), and a body of domestic scholarship that affirmed the scientific use value of such texts, priming the way for new sexual scholarship that drew on English-language

obscene fiction to taxonomize, as continental scholars did, sexual behaviour. By not only drawing on obscene British novels as case studies, but also by overtly adopting the 'secret museum' via Ashbee's library and bibliographical notes as scientific source material and scientific history, Bloch's study affirms the productive way in which the "secret museum" and the texts that had been produced around and through it could act as both source material and a foundational scientific tradition for new scholarly studies of the sexual. The vast majority of the obscene works that Bloch proffers as exemplary representations of English sexual mores, as I have highlighted, are works that Ashbee commented on in his bibliographies, and were thus in his library, or works that circulated through the obscenity trade via publishers who capitalized on the 'secret museum'. But Bloch's analysis is also transparently indebted to the bibliographer, drawing generously from Ashbee's own analysis in his bibliographies even to the point of plagiarism, a process that translates a 'forbidden' bibliography of the secret museum into a foundational study of sexology.

Bloch's chapter on "Flagellomania," for instance, reproduces Ashbee's discussions of the subject to describe and analyze the "specifically English abuse" (320). In the chapter's introductory paragraph, Bloch argues that the while "connection between active or passive flagellation and the sexual impulse has always been a matter of universal knowledge," it is nevertheless

possible to maintain that England was at one time the classic land of flagellation. For this assumption rests on factual evidence. In no other country had the passion for the rod been so systematically practiced and developed; nowhere else had the whole of literature since the seventeenth century — poetry and prose, decent and indecent — been so occupied with this theme. At the same time no stage or daily newspaper elsewhere had handled the theme with such openness — which is specially [sic] remarkable in view of English prudery considering sexual matters. ... The greater prevalence of flagellation in England is largely due to the fact that in other European countries this passion is nearly always concealed under the cloak of religion, whereas in England its pure worldly character was calculated to give it considerable prominence... (320-1)

Bloch's discussion of the "English Vice" bears an uncanny resemblance to Ashbee's own anxious introduction to the practice in the *Index*:

The propensity which the English most cherish is undoubtedly Flagellation. That the rod has been used in all Roman Catholic countries by the priests as an instrument to serve their own lubricity is of course not to be denied... yet this vice has certainly struck deeper root in England than elsewhere, and only here, I opine, can be found men who experience pleasure at receiving than in administering the birch... Books innumerable in the English language are devoted to the subject alone; no English bawdy book is free from descriptions of flagellation, and numerous separate plates exist, depicting whipping scenes; ...and formerly it was spoken of without reserve on the public stage. Flagellation anecdotes frequently occur in ...such domestic periodicals as "The Family Herald," "The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine," &c. (xl-xli)

From Ashbee, Bloch takes not only the view of flagellation as a specifically English vice (although, admittedly, this was a widespread view), but also his argument that flagellation obscenity was associated with religious lubricity in other European countries, that England was unique in its population of men who enjoyed 'passive' roles in its performance, and that the theme's popularity had a long history of being expressed in the popular press and on the stage as well as in obscene literature. In Bloch's hands, knowledge gleaned from reading across the secret archive of obscenity for sexual "truth" is translated into foundational disciplinary knowledge.

Bloch's study further imbues Ashbee's work with authority by paraphrasing and even directly transcribing the bibliographer's descriptions of obscene texts into its analytic work. While Ashbee's own name is never mentioned, his bibliographies are quoted or cited incessantly throughout under the name "Pisanus Fraxi," with many of Bloch's citations adulating their author as an expert in sexual history. For instance, on page 333, Bloch employ's Pisanus Fraxi's "opinion that flagellation, if it has any value at all, should only be a preparatory act, 'an incentive to higher pleasure', a means to an end, not an end itself" to support his own observation that "[p]assive flagellation plays a great part as a simple preliminary to intercourse". On page 352, he quotes Ashbee at length on the subject of London brothels specializing in flagellation, noting that "Pisanus Fraxi has collected absolutely authentic details about these flagellation brothels". On page 360, he uses Ashbee's assessment that "[t]he doings of... male flagellants are... according to actual facts, very clearly described in a completely sadistic work: *The Experimental Lecture of Colonel Spanker* (London, 1879)" to support his own view that this obscene novel accurately illustrates the practices of male flagellants. For Bloch,

Ashbee's bibliographies are a stamp of authenticity, an expert compilation of literary 'evidence' of the nature of sexual bodies, acts, and desires throughout British history which must be trusted unquestioningly. *Sexual Life in England* does not merely use the *Index*, *Centuria* and *Catena* as reference material, or simply draw on Ashbee's ideas about and descriptions of obscenity, but inscribes Ashbee's bibliographies and the tradition of crossover collection and publication in which they are situated as central to sexual science itself.¹⁴

Bloch's study does draw from sources other than Ashbee's bibliographies and the library on which they were based. While the sexologist undertook no original empirical research of his own, he engaged with the studies of contemporaneous social-scientific researchers that circulated openly in Europe, where he was based, as well as more mainstream works of fiction, philosophy and history.¹⁵ His chapter on sodomy is particularly striking in this regard, citing theorists such as Havelock Ellis, Magnus Hirschfield, Albert Moll, Benjamin Tarnowsky and Paolo Mantegazza (387, 391-3; 387, 417; 393; 416; 426). Yet even here, Bloch's interest in the practices of the 'secret museum' through the clandestine traffic in information about sex apparent in his discussions of lesser-known works about sex between men that largely circulated through the obscenity trade at the time, such as "Jacobus X's" *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* and John Addington Symonds's *A Problem of Greek Ethics*, published and distributed by the publishers Charles Carrington and Leonard Smithers (414; 420). But for all his dependence on the "secret museum," which was born amid regulatory discourses on obscenity and continued to be shaped by those discourses, the conditions that forced their traffic through the obscenity trade outraged him. In his introduction, for example, Bloch rails against the seizure of an English translation of Charles Féré's *La Pathologie des émotions* by the English police on December 19th, 1899—published by Carrington the previous year—on the grounds that the book was 'obscene', as well as the seizure of Ellis and Symonds' *Sexual Inversion* two years earlier (10).¹⁶ Important sexual scholarship had been driven underground, he argued, by a national prudery that had even tainted Britain's scientific community against the interests of science.¹⁷ For Bloch, as with the Cannibals and their circle, literature on sexuality was levelled into one valuable archive of sexual knowledge. Unlike the Cannibal network, however, he did not think that this archive should remain hidden, the exclusive property of a select group of privileged men. Bloch expresses in this work the desire to bring the archive of the "secret

museum” to the surface of scientific culture, if not the public, bringing it out of its association with obscenity and putting its knowledge to work.¹⁸

It was the very paradox of the “secret museum” that Bloch’s work highlights—that this productive discourse and publishing tradition was shaped by censorious discourses about sexual-scientific representations—that limited its potential as a resource for scientific enquiry in Britain. Cultural anxieties about the moral “grey zone” into which sexual-scientific studies fell and the subsequent delimitation of the boundaries of open representation through the terms of the private and the public, the elite and the popular, the capable and the vulnerable, had fostered the development of a discourse about sexual knowledge and sexual pleasure that shaped, through the action of fringe publishers, the ways in which late-Victorian sexual scholars arrived at new insights about the nature of sexuality.¹⁹ But for scholars who, unlike the Cannibals, aimed to effect social and scientific change, the way in which the “secret museum” discourse and the publishing circuits through which it was expressed associated sexual-scientific enquiry with the obscene posed a serious professional problem. Ellis’s private letters and later writings reveal the ambivalent relationship to obscenity that shaped his own writings’ erasure of his interest in ‘forbidden’ literature that represented sexuality. On one hand, Ellis viewed obscenity simply as “the naturalistic aspect of sexual processes” which had been “left off the scene, and not openly shewn on the stage of life”—a view very much in line with modern scholars of obscenity, such as the film scholar Linda Williams, but also a view that shared affinities with the “secret museum’s” situation of sexual knowledge as “forbidden,” secret, and hidden (Ellis, *Revaluation* 3-4; Williams 3). Ellis was not keen to keep ‘obscenity’ off stage. He lamented “how much we lose in civilization by foolish and futile attempts to abolish the public expression of obscenity” in a pamphlet, *The Revaluation of Obscenity* (1931), which was inspired in part by D.H. Lawrence’s 1929 polemic against pornography, *Pornography and Obscenity*. In attempting to abolish obscenity, Ellis argued, “we lose its canalising, stimulating, and relieving virtues” while, at the same time, “we magnify and exacerbate all its vices” (7). We have “learnt too much to be afraid of obscenity,” he concluded (40). Like Bloch, Ellis desired for sexual representation to become more accepted, in the scientific sphere and among the general public, in part because such acceptance could effect positive social change. At the same time, however, like the earlier members of the X Club, Ellis attempted to censor “any crude + repellent details which did not seem ...necessary to the comprehension of the

matter at hand,” including most references to potentially obscene materials (Letter, 10 January 1924). Like scientific naturalists at mid-century, Ellis was convinced that doing otherwise would not only put himself and his publishers at (greater) risk, but would also compromise the development of sexology, in Britain and elsewhere. “During recent years it has, for the first time, become possible to deal with sex matters” in scientific work and remain respectable, he wrote to Malinowski in the early 1920s (Letter, 26 December 1923). Lifting “the subjects of sex... into the pure air + sunshine” had, however, “been a very slow + painful + difficult process” (Letter, 26 December 1923).

Making sexual-scientific enquiry palatable to the larger British medical and scientific fields not only demanded that works like Ellis and Symonds’s *Sexual Inversion* were often carefully, if not always successfully, published in a semi-restricted “professional” context that situated them away from the “vulnerable” reading public.²⁰ It also demanded that the varied archive of sexual knowledge that many *fin de siècle* British sexual scholars drew on was not greatly reflected in their writings. They did not cite obscene fiction in their writings, and were even divided about the wisdom of citing less ‘risky’ literary writings in their works. In the British context, in a scientific culture replete with anxiety about the “grey zone” between sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment, drawing from outside medical discourse in published works when handling “risky” topics associated sexual scholars and their works with prurience and marked them as outsiders to the medical and scientific professions. As Crozier has observed, Carpenter wrote a number of works on homosexuality whose conclusions were almost identical to Ellis and Symonds’s *Sexual Inversion* (“Pillow” 391). However, the *British Medical Journal*—a periodical that commented more than once that, while certainly risky, Ellis’s work was undeniably scientific—ridiculed Carpenter’s works (391). The journal’s dismissal of Carpenter’s theories lay, Crozier argues, in the fact that Carpenter had no medical qualifications (391). Ellis the doctor enjoyed “credibility denied to non-doctors writing about sexual perversions” (391). But another reason for the medical community’s dismissal of Carpenter’s work was that just as its author had no medical qualifications, the work itself was not indisputably situated within a scholarly framework. Carpenter’s theories, drawn from his own experience and citing many literary works, lacked the aura of scientific detachment that empirical case histories alone could provide. Ellis, on the other hand, rarely cited literature to support his claims, and devoted considerable assets to acquiring his own case histories—for the very purpose, Crozier

has argued, of affirming his scholarship's respectability ("Introduction" 34-57). As his negotiations with Symonds over *Sexual Inversion's* style and content reveal, Ellis argued that the local medical community's positive reception of the work demanded that its authors excise literary references from the texts (50). With it, these authors effaced the "secret museum's" influence on their work.

Ellis and Carpenter's critique of the existence of a real "secret museum" further illustrates how the very mechanisms that had initiated the emergence of the "secret museum," a space that was in many ways a scientifically productive one, further threatened sexual scholarship. If these authors' works became associated with obscenity in any way, despite their best efforts to prevent such an association, they would be consigned to restricted archives where their scientific and social influence would be strictured. Written in collaboration with the lawyer E.S.P. Haynes, Ellis and Carpenter published an article in *English Review* entitled "The Taboos of the British Museum Library" in December of 1913. The article argued that in accessioning a number of works into the Private Case, the institution had failed "to hold its unique position of usefulness" (123). "[I]t is perhaps not generally realized," they wrote, "that there are numerous books belonging to the British Museum Library, and in some sense on its shelves, which are absolutely not mentioned in any way in the general catalogue, and are practically inaccessible to the public.... the number of such books is very large... they cover a variety of subjects, and include serious and important works of modern science" (123). Ellis and Carpenter contributed to this article because they had been enraged to discover that their works had been restricted from public view. Both Ellis's *Psychology of Sex* series ("a monumental and most important work in six volumes on all phases of the sexual question") and Carpenter's *Intermediate Sex* (a book "written in a quiet and most inoffensive style with a special view to the needs of schools and educational authorities") were "simply not accessible, and ...not even mentioned in the catalogue" (124-125). These authors argued that in restricting such books from public access, the library had placed itself within "a most dubious position" (124). That there seemed to be "no definite principle of selection" for which books were accessioned into the Private Case was dangerous, they argued, for if the library could not answer "the old and ever-recurring query: 'Where to draw the line?' If some books are to be made accessible, and others not, *where* is the line to be drawn?," "the wisest and by far simplest plan would be to draw no line at all" (126; 128-129).

But if attempts to draw the line between licit and illicit sexual-scientific knowledge had not been made, the “secret museum” on which these scholars drew would not have existed. Born of the “grey zone” between the instructive and the erotic and made accessible by publishers who capitalized on its exclusive allure, the “secret museum” could only exist in a culture where the “line” between science and entertainment was always in question, allowing for a productive interplay between a wide range of writings about sex. At the end of the nineteenth century, sexual scholars drew on the secret museum’s interpretive possibilities to formulate their theories, making use of publishing networks formulated to make a profit out of the “secret museum” to acquire some of their works. Early networks of self-published scholars, whose activities had initiated these publishing practices, did not view the restrictions on access that underpinned the secret museum’s emergence as a problem: they were conservative, agreeing with, and even taking pleasure in, the fact that sexual knowledge and pleasure circulated underground. But as Ellis and Carpenter’s protest of the Private Case’s management suggests, they viewed the same legal and discursive systems of regulation as outmoded and damaging to scholarly enquiry and social progress. In critiquing an official mechanism of this discourse, like the radical publishers with which they were associated, these scholars represented sexual-scientific knowledge in a sanitized form, removing it from its debased associations with sexual entertainment and the obscenity trade. As sexual scholarship continued to develop in Britain in the early twentieth century, this trend continued on an international scale, with sexual scholars distancing themselves from their field’s ties to obscene print culture. Part Three reveals, however, that the interpretive force of publication context continued to delimit how a wider range of readers approached sexual-scientific material in the marketplace into the twentieth century.

Endnotes

¹ Ellis's intellectual method, as Lisa Sigel has noted, "emphasised the collection of a wide assortment of materials to understand sexuality in all of its variety. He made use of medical texts, anthropological writings, biologist's papers, literature, and autobiographical disclosures" (*Modern*, loc. 693). Sigel further notes that Ellis's use of varied materials, and indeed, his turn to the "secret museum" was not unique, recalling that Marie Stopes worked with the Cupboard Collection at the British Museum Library, which housed obscenity (loc. 632).

² The full title for this work is *L'Enfer de la Bibliothèque nationale: Icono-bio-bibliographie descriptive, critique et raisonnée, complète à ce jour de tous les ouvrages composant cette célèbre collection avec un index alphabétique des titres et noms d'auteurs*.

³ In an 1936 letter to the binder Mills Whitman, for example, Ellis requests that Whitman prepare one of his collections of explicit images for sale, which he called "no doubt the best collection of erotic works of art there is" (Letter, 8 August 36). This letter corroborates the historian Gershon Legman's claim that Ellis's private library was "heavily supplied with cheap sado-masochistic semi-pornography of the kind published in Paris in the 'Select Bibliotheque'" (Legman, "Lure" 55). Legman apparently discovered this when cataloguing Ellis's library at the Kinsey Institute, "though its provenance is not [now] marked" (55). Due to the fact that many of the works Legman saw were in private or uncatalogued collections several decades ago, and since he is often vague about where he got his information or what actually constituted the works he saw, I take his claims with a pinch of salt.

⁴ Legman also attributes *Sadopaidia* (1907), written under the pseudonym Cecil Prendergast, to Ellis (*Rationale* 335).

⁵ See, for example, Ellis, Letter, 9 February 1893.

⁶ See Chapter Seven for more details about "Dr. Jacobus X" and "his" sexual-scientific book series.

⁷ I have not been able to locate this letter, which Gibson quotes from Gershon Legman's uncited quotation in his introduction to Grove Press's 1966 edition of *My Secret Life* (li). That a correspondence existed between Bloch and Ashbee, and that Bloch drew on Ashbee's library specifically, is corroborated, however, by a letter from Iwan Bloch to Henry Spencer Ashbee now archived in the Magnus Hirschfeld Gesellschaft e.V., Berlin, Bloch Collection. This letter also indicates that Ashbee may have had the chance to read *Sexual Life in England*, or at least its the chapter on "Pisanus Fraxi": Bloch advises him that "[t]he Prospectus on my book about 'Sexual Life in England' with a special chapter on 'Pisanus Fraxi and his three eminent bibliographical works' will be ready at the end of the week. You will get it next week together with the work on Odours" (2-3).

⁸ Iwan Bloch not only analyzed Sade's descriptions of perverse sexual desire as though they were real case studies, but insisted that the 'perversions' other sexologists had 'discovered' were, in fact, already described in Sade's work to such an extent that his writings should be treated as medical treatises themselves (Schaffner, "Fiction" 193).

⁹ That Symonds casually framed the narratives that he and Ellis transformed into cases histories for *Sexual Inversion* as "confessions" is telling of their literary appeal as well as their structural affinity with obscene fiction: these studies always contained a ghost of the original confession despite sexologists' claims about their objectivity and empiricism (130).

¹⁰ Eighteenth and early nineteenth-century obscene novels, such as John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748) and *The Lustful Turk* (1828), employ epistolary narratives in which the narrator, almost always female, relays her sexual confessions to friends. The epistolary form

waned in popularity as the nineteenth century progressed, but obscene novels continued to be structured around the confession of one or many characters.

¹¹ See Bloch 340 and Ashbee, *Catena*, 344, for Bloch and Ashbee's discussions of *Miss Cootie's Confession* in particular.

¹² This new element of obscene fiction seems to be a scientifically flavored play on the erotic dialogue, a popular form of sexual writing in the Restoration and the eighteenth century, which usually involved an older woman answering questions about sex posed by a younger woman (Mudge viii).

¹³ Compare, for example, Ellis and Symonds 129, Krafft-Ebing 200, and Walter 247.

¹⁴ Notably, Bloch's reliance on Ashbee's work is not only present in his discussion of the bibliographer's favourite vice: all of *Sexual Life in England's* chapters—with the exception of the first, on English marriage rituals—mine Ashbee's bibliographies for historical and primary-source detail. Like the chapter on flagellation, for example, Bloch's discussion of homosexuality draws heavily on Ashbee's commentaries on the practice, despite the fact that Ashbee devoted relatively little space in his bibliographies to works on sodomy. Strikingly, Bloch brings Ashbee's conclusions into question for the first time in this chapter, calling "Pisanus Fraxi's" argument that "the number of homosexuals in England must be very small compared to those in other, especially Latin, countries" "doubtful" (387-388). Bloch nevertheless draws on his work extensively. In one section, for instance, he reproduces Ashbee's description of *Sins of the Cities of the Plain: or, The Recollections of a Mary-Ann* (1881) almost word for word—and along with it, Ashbee's notion that the novel most have been written "obviously from personal experience," citing the novel's inclusion of Bolton and Park as characters as evidence (416-17). Similarly, he follows Ashbee in quoting *Satan's Harvest Home* (1749) as evidence that "pederasty in former times was a vice almost unknown to [the English] people"; in citing *The Phoenix of Sodom* (1813) as evidence of the existence of a London district which "seems to have been favored in homosexual circles"; and in describing *Letters from Laura and Eveline* (1883) as an obscene novel that describes sexual practices among "hermaphrodites" (401; 403-7; 431).

¹⁵ Examples include Hector France's *Les Nuits des Londres* (1900), Max Schasler's *Aesthetics* (1872), and T.B. Macaulay's *History of England* (1848).

¹⁶ Bloch read about the seizure of both books in *Progres Medical* 52 (Dec. 30 1899) (10). He clearly followed major scandals surrounding homosexuality in England at the time, and their impact on writers who were interested in homosexuality or homosexual themselves. On page 418 of *Sexual Life in England*, for instance, he quotes an article by W.T. Stead, published in *Review of Reviews*, and on the next page excerpts a speech that Wilde gave at that trial.

¹⁷ The "review by a Continental doctor of a strictly scientific book on sexual pathology, written by an accredited expert, was rejected from one of the foremost English medical journals with the comment: 'Not for English readers,'" Bloch recalls here, outraged (11).

¹⁸ An English translation of *Sexual Life in England* was not published until 1934.

¹⁹ Instead of engaging with this developing body of scholarship, until the early twentieth century most English physicians used forensic medico-jurispudent approaches to investigate sexual behaviour, focusing chiefly on the effects of onanism (masturbation), sodomy, and rape, largely for the purpose of providing expert testimony at the trials of sexual criminals (Crozier, "British Psychiatric" 69; Porter and Hall 96; 139; 141).

²⁰ In 1928, Ellis republished his volumes in a four-volume set entitled *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, which remained "cordoned off from the public by price, length, and limited availability and functioned more as a textbook than as a self-help manual: in fact, it was recommended for medical students by the 1930s" (Sigel, *Modern*, loc. 684).

Part 3.

Charles Carrington's Marketing of Sexual Knowledge, 1896-1921

Parts One and Two describe the development of two distinct, but overlapping, routes of sexual-scientific publication and dissemination through the nineteenth-century's expanding obscenity trade. The first was highly commercialized, publicly visible, and primarily served middle-class readers. The second was self-consciously private, even clandestine, and largely served elite readers who were often active participants in the publication process. These routes of sexual-scientific publication and dissemination each emerged around the moral and legal "grey zone" that encompassed sexual-scientific works in this period, as fringe publishers recognized how their location within that zone lent them value as erotic entertainment and collectable items—value that could augment, or even surpass, their practical use value as instructive materials. In publishing and distributing these works, these fringe publishers drew on and contributed to changing discourses about obscenity, medical and scientific professionalism, and radicalism that sought to regulate sexual-scientific publications and their readers. By exploiting these discourses in different ways, they importantly represented the "grey zone" between instruction and entertainment as a cultural space that different kinds of readers could also inhabit. In the 1890s, these divergent publishing and marketing practices would merge in the business of Charles Carrington, one of the most notorious fringe publisher-booksellers of the late-Victorian period. His business marks an important stage in the publication of sexual science, for Carrington's concerted attempt to hybridize and expand previous forms of fringe sexual-scientific production and dissemination by further capitalizing on culturally imagined links between a work's "circumstances of publication" and its function, initiated a more expansive fringe trade in social-scientific studies about sex in Britain. At the same time, Carrington's engagement with several of the different publishing practices, discourses, and methods of reading that I have described in Parts One and Two offers an opportunity to re-examine them, and consider how fringe publishers of sexual science performed important critical labour in the long nineteenth century, critiquing the "grey zone" of sexual-scientific publication even as they exploited it.

In the following chapter, I show how, like his predecessors, Carrington perceived that the "grey zone" into which sexual-scientific publications fell presented him with an opportunity to expand his catalogue and market share. What set him apart from them was the scale and sophistication with which he manipulated discourses about obscenity and scientific legitimacy surrounding that zone to shape an ambitious publishing and

marketing strategy for his books, a strategy that combined, even as it extended, the commercial practices of publisher-booksellers like William Dugdale with the highbrow branding of “high class” dealers like Leonard Smithers. Carrington recognized that the ways in which discourses about obscenity linked an explicit work’s “circumstances of publication” with its legitimacy impelled Victorian readers to assess the circumstances under which writings about sex had been produced to determine their legitimacy. Like his predecessors, he modelled that practice to market a wide range of social-scientific works about sex to several roughly differentiated types of readers. Carrington modelled this reading practice, however, on a much larger and more targeted scale. Instrumentalizing the language of Victorian debates surrounding sexual-scientific legitimacy, his editorial interventions, enormous number of advertisements, and even the text of his original works themselves, strategically situated his varied publications within sexual knowledge’s broader field of production and circulation, attempting to control readers’ interpretive labour. Carrington’s publishing business thus offers valuable insights into how a variety of readers encountered sexual-scientific works at the *fin de siècle*, amid the “grey zone” of medical and scientific publication, while not necessarily engaging with the “secret museum” that Part Two outlined. Carrington’s career is also important, however, for its own critical accomplishments. While the force of the publisher’s marketing technique resided in its calculated representation of culturally and professionally alleged *distinctions* between sexual science and sexual entertainment, his advertising materials also exposed the instability of those distinctions, deconstructing prevailing ideas about what constituted legitimate scholarship and how it differed from obscenity. Carrington’s sophisticated reading of sexual science’s precarious cultural predicament not only empowered him to alter how, and among whom, explicit works about sex circulated. It also constituted an intellectual intervention into debates about sexual science, its purposes, and its readership that, half concealed, entered private homes, government offices, and popular newspapers in the form of his books and advertisements.

Because of his notoriety as a publisher in the 1890s, his prodigious production of books and advertisements, and his social and business ties to avant-garde literary movements at the *fin de siècle*, Carrington is often cited in scholarship on Victorian print culture. Neither his involvement in scientific publishing nor his marketing strategies, however, have received detailed critical attention. While situating Carrington’s marketing

strategy within the context of his wider career, the first section of the chapter that follows briefly addresses previous scholarship on the publisher's business, and shows why it is worthy of further examination. Subsequent sections describe Carrington's marketing practices, how they manipulated discourses surrounding obscenity and sexual-scientific legitimacy, and the processes of their development—for importantly, Carrington's marketing strategy was always a work in progress, evolving over time to address its failures as well as changing conditions in Victorian sexual debate. I trace his failed attempt to market his first sexual-scientific publication, *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* (1896), to medical and scientific scholars, as well as readers titillated by public debates about anthropological eroticism. He subsequently revised his marketing strategy—and the book itself—better to appeal to both markets, as well as readers who sought to collect rare, suppressed books. In doing so, Carrington developed rhetorical techniques that he used to produce a dubious sexual-scientific book series that capitalized on an explosion of scholarly—and prurient—interest in sexual inversion in the late 1890s. He applied the same techniques to advertising these books to the public, and many other sexual-scientific studies, using announcements in popular newspapers and periodicals, mail-order catalogues, prospectuses, and end-paper notices in his books to associate them with the latest debates about sexual-scientific enquiry. Carrington simultaneously applied similar tactics in his clandestine advertisements for elite readers, which manipulated the “secret museum” discourse to reinvigorate the aura of exoticism that surrounded his fictional publications by aligning them with contemporaneous struggles over sexual science and its suppression, even as he used the same discourse to emphasise sexual science's eroticism and exclusive knowledge to these readers. Like the publications that Carrington presented to the public, however, his representation of the works of the “secret museum” in his clandestine publications exposed the instability of prevailing distinctions between sexual science and obscenity.

Chapter 7.

Charles Carrington's Marketing of Sexual Knowledge, 1896-1921

While many of Carrington's publications and advertisements survive, relatively little is known about his early career. The smattering of details about his early life reconstructed by Peter Mendes and, more recently, Colette Colligan, suggest a resilient, ambitious and unscrupulous individual who quickly developed a knack for marketing and self-promotion as a young entrepreneur. Born Paul Ferdinando to an East End Jewish tradesman in 1867, he was out of school and working as an office boy by the time he was thirteen (Colligan, *Publisher's* 69-70). Only a few years later, he reportedly entered the bookselling business by keeping a book barrow in the Farringdon Market, where Mendes speculates that he formed his first connections with other book dealers and became involved in the obscenity trade (32). According to Mendes, bibliographical evidence suggests that Leonard Smithers and Edward Avery subsequently employed Ferdinando as a travelling agent in the late 1880s and early 1890s (32). Colligan has demonstrated how, in about the same period, he also worked under a variety of aliases as an "independent stockbroker" in London with his brothers, George and Frederick Ferdinando (*Publisher's* 71-75). Their business was in fact a fraudulent "bucket shop" which promised clients "fabulous returns" while making no actual securities transactions. Skilfully attracting marks by posting circulars on "How To Make Money" and advertising in newspapers like the *Liverpool Mercury*, the trio pocketed investments and reported huge losses to their clients after a few months. Unsurprisingly, the scheme operated for only a few years, folding in 1894 when George and Frederick were arrested in Dublin and indicted on nine counts of obtaining money under false pretences. This event probably instigated Ferdinando's move to Paris shortly thereafter, and his emergence as Charles Carrington, the owner and operator of a bookshop and publishing house at 32 rue Drouot, in 1895 (75). It was the start of a career that would see him issue more than three hundred works, a career which would end only with his death in 1921.

From Paris, where he was able to evade his homeland's stricter censorship laws, Carrington quickly dominated the British market for obscenity by selling explicit novels primarily through the post.¹ Some of these books were rare works of obscenity like *Teleny; or, The Reverse of the Medal* (1893) and *Sins of the Cities of the Plains* (1881), which had been published years before he had opened his bookshop by publisher-booksellers like Smithers and John Camden Hotten. Others, he published himself. Ranging from reprints of older obscene novels like *Venus in India* (1898) and *The Yellow Room* (c. 1907) to original productions such as *Raped on the Railway of the Scotch Express* (c.1900?) and *Suburban Souls: The Erotic Psychology of a Man and a Maid* (1901), he had these books printed in France and Holland before transporting them back to his Paris bookshop to await sale (Colligan, *Publishers* 99-101). Most of these novels were not particularly well written, but they were often expensive and luxuriously produced, typically printed on handmade Van Gelder paper in large crown octavo format with fancy type and illustrations.² This aspect of their production complimented Carrington's self-branding as a high-class gentleman publisher, which he used to market obscene novels as rare collectables to elite customers (76). As Rachel Potter notes, the publisher's business thus had much in common with that of Smithers, who aimed to serve readers interested in the rarity and bibliographic appeal of their books as well as their erotic effects ("Obscene" 98). Potter argues that Carrington's interests were "more simply financial" than Smithers', whose "commitment to making beautifully bound and illustrated books" bankrupted him in 1900 (98). As I argued in Part Two, Smithers's instrumentalization of private publication and the secret museum suggest that money motivated his business more than was previously thought; however, Carrington was certainly more ambitious in his gambit to expand his market share, targeting elite readers, but also moving beyond them.

Like Smithers and all of the other fringe publishers that this dissertation has examined, Carrington did not exclusively deal in obscene fiction. While it is that aspect of his business that has received the most scholarly attention, having been extensively catalogued and described by Colligan, Howard Guacamole,³ Mendes, Sheryl Straight and Lisa Sigel, the flow of publications that continuously emerged out of the publisher's Paris base was in fact, as Mendes notes, composed "concurrently [of] above and underground" works, with some produced through the process of clandestine publication and sold via private subscription, and others published openly and advertised and sold in

the open market (34).⁴ These publications had many things in common: Carrington's so-called "open" works were almost all sexually flavoured, and, cohering with the way in which he branded himself as a gentleman publisher, tended to be expensively produced and priced. These books varied widely, however, in terms of genre, literary quality, and sexual explicitness. Some were major works of literature, such as the future Nobel Prize winner Anatole France's novel *The Well of Santa Clara* (1903) and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), debased at the time due to their various associations with obscenity; others, like Jean de Villiot's *Whipped Women* (1903), were salacious formulaic novels that had been written on commission (Colligan, *Publisher's* 114-118; Mackie 980). Still others were not (or at least not represented as) fiction at all, but memoirs, such as *A French Volunteer of the War of Independence* (1897), biographies, like *Sophie Arnould, Actress and Wit* (1898), salacious court and medical histories, including *The Secret Cabinet of History* (1897) and *Curious By-Paths of History* (1898), and translations of lubric Eastern and Classical texts, such as *Marriage—Love and Woman, or The Book of Exposition* (1896) and *The Satyricon of Petronius* (1902). While diversity marked most Victorian obscenity dealer's publishing activities, it is only recently that critical work on Carrington's career has started to address his diverse catalogue. The precise focuses of their studies differ, but Colligan and Douglas, and to a lesser extent Rod Borouhgs, Gregory Mackie and Potter, all argue persuasively that Carrington's so-called "open" publications acted as an extension of his trade in obscenity.

Little scholarly attention has been paid, however, to the more than 30 sexual-scientific studies that the publisher issued openly between 1895 and 1907 and how they fit into his business. Nor has any previous study acknowledged that throughout his career, Carrington dealt in a number of sexual-scientific works that he did not publish, importing many of them from America to Paris before selling them to his British clients.⁵ These materials clearly played a very important role in Carrington's business, as crucial to his business as medical handbooks had been to Dugdale's enterprise. Carrington not only produced and sold them in significant numbers,⁶ but also invested very heavily in marketing them, advertising them incessantly in mainstream newspapers and periodicals, mail-order prospectuses and catalogues, and in the back pages of his scientific and non-scientific publications.⁷ He virtually ceased to publish sexual science after 1907, when his expulsion from Paris for publishing pornography⁸ resulted in an

overall reduction in his publishing activities; but the fact that he continued to sell sexual-scientific books published elsewhere, as well as copies of those sexual-scientific works that he had issued before his expulsion, suggests that they retained an important place in his business.⁹ Competing obscenity dealers like Harry Sidney Nichols sold some of the same scientific works and even pirated Carrington's original scientific productions in the late 1890s and early 1900s, which further suggests their value to the publisher's business.¹⁰

Since Carrington's sexual-scientific works comprised some of his most widely advertised, pirated, and surviving publications, their relation to his business has not been understudied due to a dearth of primary material. Rather, it is the mindboggling heterogeneity of these works that has probably stymied research, leading critics to lump them in with the rest of his open publications—and, in the process, characterize them variously as works as important scholarship, as erotic pseudoscience, and as pornography—instead of studying them as a specific division of the publisher's business.¹¹ Many of Carrington's sexual-scientific publications, like "Jacobus X's" *Crossways of Sex* (1904), combine sophisticated scholarly discussion and critical citation with salacious anecdotes and excerpts from sexually detailed poetry. Others, such as *Flagellation in France* (1898), are so crudely explicit in their descriptions of 'deviant' sexuality that it is difficult to imagine them to be serious scholarship. Their obvious erotic appeal, anonymous or pseudonymous authorship, and expensive "get up" make them difficult to distinguish from the publisher's pornographic productions. Such works contrast sharply, therefore, with the highly technical works authored by respected social scientists like Charles Féré, Benjamin Tarnowsky and Havelock Ellis that Carrington also published, as well as the other studies by specialists like Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Albert von Schrenck-Notzing, Albert Moll and Magnus Hirschfield, that he imported and sold intermittently. These works received considerable acclaim throughout continental Europe and the United States in the 1890s and early 1900s and began to define sexology as a distinct discipline.

What binds these books together is Carrington's own incessant characterization of them as sexual-scientific studies in his advertisements, prefaces, and correspondence. Observing the publisher's framing of these diverse works as such, Boroughs and Douglas speculate that alongside his other openly published books, he

aimed for them to act as a cover for his trade in obscene fiction, camouflaging it from government authorities even as they served market demand for sexually explicit works (Boroughs 13; Douglas 63). Carrington certainly emphasized the scholarly interest of his above-ground publications to government officials when it suited him, once, for example, designating them works of “indisputable character” while attempting to stop the Postmaster General from detaining his business correspondence (“Letter” 1; “Writ” 2). Yet, as the Bedborough trial demonstrated so forcefully in 1898, the complicated late-Victorian legal, cultural and commercial positioning of sexual scholarship actually rendered it incredibly vulnerable to scrutiny by vice societies like the Society for the Suppression of Vice, watchdogs of the medical profession like *The Lancet*, the police force, and government agencies like the Home Office. Indeed, Carrington’s openly published works probably propelled government investigations into the clandestine side of his business, since those investigations were instigated by complaints about his advertising from private citizens.¹² That he continued to trade in a significant number of sexual-scientific studies—and market them as such—for years after his trade in obscene fiction became the focus of Home and Foreign Office investigation suggests, therefore, that these books were more valuable to his business commercially than they were as camouflage, and that part of their value resided in their (alleged) status as *sexual-scientific studies*. Carrington’s emphatic representation of these books as science, and the relation of that representation to their commercial success, therefore deserves more detailed and serious examination than has been undertaken in previous scholarship.

Conceptualizing Carrington’s advertisements, editorial techniques, and even the narrative of his books themselves as paratexts helpfully emphasizes the link between his insistence on the scientific worth of his books, his readers’ experience of them, and their commercial value. As Gérard Genette has argued, “the paratext is... a *threshold*... that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside [the book] or turning back. It is... ‘a fringe of the printed text which in reality controls one’s whole reading of the text’” (*Paratexts* 1-2). Composed by a text’s author or one of his associates—such as a publisher—paratexts comprise both peritexts, or texts that act apart from the body text of the book while being attached directly to it, such as chapter titles, prefaces, and notes, and epitexts, or texts which relate to a book but circulate outside it, such as advertisements, personal letters, and interviews (5). Their illocutionary force may be employed merely to communicate a piece of information concerning a text, such as the

name of the author; but they may also serve to communicate an *interpretation* of a text which encourages, or even commands readers to understand it within specific formal or cultural frameworks (9-11). As Parts One and Two have shown, nineteenth-century fringe publishers from Stockdale to Smithers recognized the power of the paratext and used advertisements and prefaces to draw reader's attention to the "grey zone" in which sexual-scientific publications fell, and reframe that zone as a cultural space which they could also inhabit. What makes Carrington's command of the paratext significant and worthy of further study is that it involved far greater intervention into the textual makeup of his sexual-scientific works themselves, and that his paratexts' interpretations of the texts at hand anticipate and attempt to control the ways in which a far wider range of readers approached them.¹³ Carrington recognized the interpretive force of discourses about the links between a work's legitimacy and its material life early in his career, and gradually developed a marketing strategy that exploited the paratext's illocutionary powers to reinforce and manipulate their effects, intertextually situating his own books within those debates, the sexual-scientific field, and the "secret museum" to encourage his clients to understand his books variously as courageous works of science, as collectables, and as erotica.¹⁴ Ironically, the cultural primacy placed on context to define and differentiate science from erotica assisted him in selling elite readers a more diverse range of books, while also lucratively expanding his readership outside that circle to scientists and scholars, sexual radicals, individuals who sought titillation, and bibliophiles. The publication of his first book that he expressly represented as a sexual-scientific work, *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*, in 1896, marks an important beginning in his marketing technique's development.

§

Carrington published *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* in 1896, shortly after he opened his Paris bookshop. Like many of his books, this work was an English translation of a French original—in this case, *L'Amour aux Colonies* (1893), an anthropological study that had been issued under the pseudonym "Dr. Jacobus X" three years earlier by the Parisian bibliophile-publisher Isidore Liseux. Though he was not the first to introduce the book to Britain,¹⁵ Carrington often framed his decision to publish its translation as a symbol of his unique understanding of the literary marketplace. *L'Amour aux Colonies*, he declared once, had been poorly suited to French readers since they had "no taste for

geography ...while their patriotic pride is puffed up to know that the glorious tricolour is waving over far sun baked shores, they do not want to go there, nor to read about them” (*Forbidden* 60). The book, he reported, was subsequently “far from ...a success” in France, despite its informal attribution to Louis Jacolliot, a popular French travel writer (60). By contrast, he claimed, his English translation was enthusiastically embraced by “far seeing and sensible” British readers, despite its steep £2 10s price (60- 61). It was especially popular, he implied, among Britain’s medical and scientific community, emphasizing that it was *after* he sent *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* to such privileged forums as *The Lancet*, *The Medical Press and Circular Advertiser*, *The Edinburgh Medical Journal*, *The Glasgow Medical Review*, *The Bristol Medico-Chirurgical Journal* and *The Birmingham Medical Review* for review in late 1896 that its first limited edition of five hundred copies quickly sold out (*Untrodden* [1898] xiii). This tremendous success, he boasted, forced him to publish in 1898 a thousand copies of a new edition of the book whose “three hundred pages of fresh matter... numberless notes... lots of gorgeous pictures, full indexes, [and] lists of works consulted” poised it to even better appeal to that community (60-61).

But Carrington’s fond reminiscences of *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*’s entry into the British market were based more in fantasy than fact. While the appearance of the second edition in 1898 suggests that the book’s sales were probably respectable, it was virtually ignored by medical journals and popular media outlets.¹⁶ Worse, it spectacularly failed to win over the only periodical to deem it worthy of discussion — *The Lancet*, which published this excoriating assessment of *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* on March 6, 1897:

MR. CHARLES CARRINGTON is a person who describes himself as a “publisher of medical folk-lore and scientific works.” We do not know in which category he would place a book which he has had the insolence to forward for us for review, bearing the innocent title of “Untrodden Fields of Anthropology.” . . .The book, said to be written by a French army surgeon, is solely a record, and a very badly written record, of garbage from the sewers of human nature. It has no scientific importance whatever. It is of no interest to a student of human nature or of natural history. We shall be happy to supply the Paris police with Mr. Carrington’s address and to hand over the book with its accompanying prospectus to Her Majesty’s Postmaster-General, so that he may, if he will, take steps to stay the dissemination of such abominations by the agency of his department (“Purveyor of Garbage” 681).

That *The Lancet* reacted negatively to the book is hardly surprising. As Boroughs notes, it approached even the most serious and technical sexual-scientific works with caution, even declining to review Ellis and Symonds's *Sexual Inversion*, as I have shown in Part One, because of its suspicious circumstances of publication (14). *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* gives the impression of being neither serious or learned, for while it disseminates detailed information about the reproductive anatomy and sexual practices of peoples in Africa, Asia, and South America, its frequent eroticization of Jacobus X's subjects makes it difficult to take seriously as scholarship (Forman, "Colonialism" 294). While the racism implicit in the author's descriptions of the "lasciviously well-rounded" thighs and buttocks of Tahitian "quadroons" and joking comparisons of a Pacific Islander's penis to a tail, for instance, suffused even the most venerated anthropological studies of the Victorian era, the crude, colourful language with which "Jacobus X" expresses himself, his detailed observations of sexual pleasure as well as sexual anatomy and acts, and his thinly veiled admissions that he had been sexually involved with some of his subjects stepped significantly outside the bounds of Victorian propriety (I: 305; 88; II: 180). Medical reviewers, especially in the context of social panic surrounding male homosexuality in the mid-1890s, would have looked with particular askance at the book's frequent and explicit descriptions of pederasty in the Middle East, China, Cambodia and Vietnam, where Jacobus X claims it to be a virtual "addiction" of the people (I: 126). *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology's* unknown publisher and unconventional bibliographic form probably did not help matters. Leading medical periodicals like *The British Medical Journal* had long contended that serious sexual-scientific studies must not only be written in "strictly technical language" that reflected "an absolute purity of speech, thought, and expression" (qtd. in Dawson 129). They also needed to reproduce that professionalism in their visual appearance, displaying complex critical apparatuses—which included footnotes, appendices, bibliography and indexes—and spare, utilitarian typefaces and bindings that marked them as both unsuitable and uninteresting to the general reader (129). *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology's* scholarly pretensions were thus compromised by its virtual lack of a critical apparatus.¹⁷ Considering that *The British Medical Journal* took umbrage even at scientific books whose spines were lettered in gilt, its unconventional format, which at 7 ½ x 5 inches could easily be stuffed into a coat pocket, may have compromised its reception as well, since it suggested that the book could easily be perused privately and pruriently.

Discussing Carrington's career, Boroughs speculates that the publisher must have been "remarkably naïve" when he sent the "preposterous" *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* to medical professionals for review (14). Yet like *The Lancet*, Carrington clearly recognized the book's erotic appeal. In fact, he had already begun to capitalize on its eroticism in 1896 by representing it as an alternative to Richard Burton's incendiary translation of *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night* and *Supplemental Nights* (1885-86). His editor's foreword to *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*, for instance, reminded readers that

Scholars, and Bibliophiles have paid £25 and £33 ...for a copy of SIR RICHARD F. BURTON's "*Thousand Nights and a Night*". In many cases, such sums have been disbursed *only* for the sake of the anthropological notes which are scattered throughout the sixteen ponderous volumes. But, the present far handier work teems with facts, served up in that gay and perennially attractive style which Frenchmen alone seem to possess. Here we have no sparse and scanty notes to illustrate an Arabian story-book, but marvelousness [sic] of detail that dazzles and amazes at once by its very abundance, and the extensiveness of the ground covered (vii)

As I have mentioned in Part Two, the crude literalism of Burton's translation, as well as its enormous critical apparatus, which detailed a parade of Arab sexual practices including "bestiality, sodomy, eunachism, clitoridectomy, and miscegenation," justified its sexual content as scholastically valuable even as it enhanced the translated text's eroticism, had ignited widespread controversy when it was brought to the attention of the public, and ushered the term 'pornography' into public literary debate for the first time (Colligan, *Traffic* 58-59). This publicity resulted in high demand—and stratospheric prices—for unexpurgated copies of the *Nights* throughout the late 1880s and 1890s. Like Smithers and Nichols, Carrington capitalized on the book's popularity in establishing his Paris publishing house in 1896 by issuing works that mimicked Burton's notorious translation as well as selling the work itself. One of Carrington's first publications, for instance, was *The Book of Exposition: Marriage—Love and Women Amongst the Arabs* (1896), a sex manual that is dedicated to Burton, "[exalts] his knowledge of the Arab world," and imitates the style of his prose (57). *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*, with its focus on foreign sexuality and explicit passages, was similarly well poised to capitalize on the *Nights*' infamy. By referring to the *Nights* in its preface, Carrington hailed his own publication as desirable reading material to his base clientele of elite readers, who would

have been familiar with the *Nights*' prominent position within the clandestine book trade. In aligning his book with the *Nights*, he also solicited the custom of what I will term "titillated readers"—those members of the public who had been drawn to the exciting aura of scandal and obscenity that surrounded Burton's translation in the media, and might seek further excitement by reading books that were associated with it.

But while the "gay style" with which *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* described foreign sexuality would have appealed to titillated readers and obscenity collectors, *The Lancet*'s 1897 review leaves little doubt that it was this aspect of the book that compromised its reception with individuals who, like the journal's representative, were primarily interested in the scholarly efficacy of the works that they read. Whether Carrington anticipated this problem when he sent the book to medical journals for review must be left to speculation. Perhaps, as Boroughs implies, the publisher naïvely anticipated that most men of science would be inclined to overlook or forgive its obvious eroticism—or that medical reviewers would not bother to read the book closely before recommending it.¹⁸ His effort to cultivate a scholarly readership for *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* in 1896 and 1897 appears to have been genuine, however, for instead of ceasing his attempts to sell the book to medical and scientific professionals after *The Lancet* issued its damning review, Carrington radically revised *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* to better appeal to that community. Importantly, his changes did not involve expurgation, but centered instead on making additions to and revisions of its peritexts—the very signs that medical professionals were instructed to examine first by periodicals like *The British Medical Journal* in order to assess a book's respectability and scientific legitimacy. Adopting the *Nights*' characteristically overwhelming scholarly apparatus, which emphasised and expanded its eroticism, as a model, Carrington fashioned an interpretive framework for his 1898 edition of *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* that suggested its scholarly worth by dramatically recontextualizing its content and production history.

Carrington expanded the book's physical size to two 10 x 7 ¼ inch volumes, and added a bibliography, an index, an "anonymous physician's" favourable review, and copious footnotes, appendices and excurses to the 1896 edition's original text, which he left otherwise unaltered. By engulfing the book's explicit passages with the voices of influential sexologists, criminologists, anthropologists, anatomists and historians,

including Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Havelock Ellis, John Addington Symonds, Cesare Lombroso, Everard Westermarck, Albert Moll and Karl Ulrichs, this new critical apparatus transformed *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology's* tone and visual appearance into one that was far more scholarly than before. So too did the book's redesigned epigraph pages, whose new excerpts from the works of Havelock Ellis suggested its scientific currency far better than had the 1896 edition's quotations from Goethe, Aristophanes, Pope and Shakespeare. When he wrote a new preface for the 1898 edition, Carrington used these additions to suggest that *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology's* original composition had been informed by the texts that now cited, neglecting to mention that almost all of these works were never referred to in the 1896 edition or *L'Amour aux Colonies*, and that some had not even been published until after both of those books had been issued. "...[W]hile there could be no doubt as to the authenticity of the names quoted [in the 1896 edition]," he wrote, "...many students and scholars preferred ...to turn up and consult the original works and documents for themselves. We have therefore supplied this deficiency; our only fear now, is that we may perchance have overstepped the mark, and gone to the other extreme" (ix). 'Extreme' or not, the publisher's peritextual revisions forcefully situated *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* within a genealogy of social-scientific studies that had earned the respect of the professional scientific community, and in doing so, showed readers how the book could itself be understood as respectable scholarship. Subsequently, the 1898 edition was far more marketable to the scientific community than its 1896 iteration had been, and serious scholars appear to have become convinced of its merits.¹⁹

Yet, crucially, the 1898 edition's peritextual and intertextual insistence on its scientific value and respectability did not make the book less marketable to titillated readers and elite readers who formed the audience for his clandestine works. In fact, adapting the structure of Burton's model had allowed Carrington to retain *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology's* explicit text almost entirely, and to add new, detailed sexual descriptions to the book in the form of excurses taken from other volumes. As with Burton for his *Nights*, the model also made it possible for the Carrington to enhance the book's eroticism by providing readers with clues that drew attention to the arousing material that lay beneath its cocoon of scholarly citation. His editor's foreword, for instance, still paralleled the book with the *Nights*, claiming that *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology's* "aim has been precisely as had in view by Sir Richard Burton, who was

not afraid to illustrate his books on travels and voyages with facts of real anthropological value" (I: xiii). By invoking Burton's notorious name, he implicitly suggested *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology's* eroticism to readers who sought titillation, even as he preserved the book's scholarly pose by defending the scientific courage of its explicit descriptions, if not their eroticism. Far more audaciously, the scholarly apparatus itself acted as an advertisement for Carrington's wares. In addition to a plethora of famous sexual-scientific works, the book's copious footnotes cite a number of the publisher's own productions, including dubious 'studies' like *Curious Bypaths of History* (1898), *Eunuchs and Eunachism* (1898) and *Flagellation in France* (1898). They also cite and excerpt several highly explicit privately printed books that Carrington had not published, but listed for sale around the same time, including Henry Spencer Ashbee's rare *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (1879) and, of course, Burton's *Nights* (I: 273-9, 123; *Bibliotheca Arcana* 64,16). These footnotes usually suggest such books as alternatives to more famous sexual-scientific studies—all the more 'informative' because they are "unexpurgated" or "uncastrated" editions—and hint broadly that they can be procured through *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology's* publisher (I: 116). While superficially enhancing the book's visual appearance as a well-cited scholarly text, this practice effectively encouraged readers who were aroused by the strange sexual practices that "Jacobus X" described to purchase even racier publications from Carrington's bookshop, whose address is helpfully printed on the book's title page. It also more powerfully demonstrated the book's appeal to the elite audience for his clandestine publications through its references. Readers who were knowledgeable about the obscenity trade would have recognized many of the more scholastically dubious works that the 1898 edition cited as its products —and the products of the "secret museum," an imaginary that these citations recall by forming a hidden network of 'forbidden' of literatures about sex.

Additionally, the 1898 *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology's* peritexts demonstrated the book's *material* value to another type of reader that Carrington was familiar with through his work in clandestine publishing: bibliophiles, whose taste for rare and luxurious books often attracted them to expensive obscenity and whose custom Carrington invited by opening his first bookshop on rue Drouot, a hotbed of Parisian bibliophile activity (Silverman 86). That the publisher explicitly targeted bibliophiles is clear from his peritexts' incessant digressions into the fraught histories of reputable

scholarly works and more straightforwardly erotic materials alike: if any book cited had been seized, banned or burned at any point in history, Carrington noted it in *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology's* scholarly apparatus as a way to underscore its scarcity. Discussing Friedrich Karl Forberg's *Manual of Classical Erotology* (1884) (which he reissued the following year), for example, Carrington apprises readers that "[t]his book... is now rare ... [it] is much sought after by amateurs and is likewise not often to be found" (I: 255). Likewise, he noted the rarity certain elite scientific volumes, such as the first English edition of Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds' *Sexual Inversion*, most copies of which had been destroyed shortly after its publication (II: 469). Throughout, he links this scarcity with material value: banning books, Carrington declares in another footnote, "immensely enhance[s] the value of productions ("Fanny Hill" by John Cleland for instance) which, if allowed free publication would fetch pence instead of pounds" (I: 123). Importantly, he equates *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* with this cadre of publications, emphasizing its "absolutely unique" content in its foreword and its limited print run and high quality paper on its copyright page (I: xii). In doing so, like Elkin Matthews and John Lane's publishing house The Bodley Head, Carrington "brilliantly made a virtue of necessity" by transforming weaknesses—*Untrodden Fields of Anthropology's* subversive topic, small print run, and high price—into selling points to a clientele that would pay a high price for exclusivity. Publishing sexual science became part of the capitalization on the craze for rare books, which had arisen in the late nineteenth century on both sides of the English Channel, that he had begun through his pornography business two years earlier (Stetz 74; Silverman 29).²⁰

But as a result, these citations—and indeed, the sum of the 1898 *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology's* peritexts—made visible the cultural indeterminacy of sexual knowledge in Victorian Britain, showing how a startling variety of writings about sex might be, or were in the past, characterized both as publicly celebrated objects of scientific discovery and as privately circulated, forbidden works of the "secret museum". That they also alternately emphasize and disavow *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology's* own eroticism further underscores the book's own indeterminate position within the scientific field. The value that these indeterminacies represented to Carrington's business is clear: as with John Camden Hotten and his radial catalogue, the publisher could potentially persuade different kinds of readers to understand a book like *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* as they desired by selectively modeling different

frameworks through which it could be interpreted. It is true that making the book's indeterminacy visible by peritextually modeling these different practices of interpretation in the same work undermined the impression of scholarly propriety and legitimacy that many of the book's peritexts strive to impart, thus rendering it vulnerable to scholarly scepticism. But, as Chapter Two has underscored, there was a serious market of scholars who acknowledged, and even valued, that indeterminacy —perhaps one wider than we know. Instead of wholly attempting to conceal the book's flaws as a scientific document, many of the peritexts that Carrington appended to it give scholars permission and encouragement to approach the book seriously as science, even as they also invite readers to peer beneath the book's scholarly pose and become excited by the eroticism of its sexual description.

Carrington's peritextual revision of *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* appears to have been at least marginally successful, for it powerfully shaped his publication and marketing practices in the years that followed. When the publisher decided to issue more sexual-scientific studies during and after 1898, he similarly equipped them with scholarly apparatuses and other peritexts that carefully reference and excerpt a diverse range of books about sex.²¹ At the same time, he published advertisements that increasingly employed the same rhetorical techniques to market his books and gain greater control of their reception through their epitextual effects. But these advertisements situated Carrington's sexual-scientific publications within rising debates about sexual-scientific legitimacy with far greater specificity. In doing so, these documents powerfully enhanced their market value by branding their purchase as acts of intellectual courage and social rebellion.

§

Just as the popularity and notoriety of Burton's *Nights* inspired Carrington to publish and represent *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* as its successor in 1896, George Bedborough's sudden, scandalous May 1898 arrest for selling Ellis and Symonds's study of same-sex desire, *Sexual Inversion*, inspired him to publish a range of sexual-scientific works that explicitly focused on aberrant sexual acts in the late 1890s and early 1900s.²² Both publishing decisions exploited public curiosity about these books and the expectations that the debates surrounding their publication had set up when readers

encountered materials that resembled them. The discussions of the *Nights* that suffused the periodical press in the late 1880s emphasized its eroticism, while debates about Bedborough's trial in 1898 represented *Sexual Inversion* in contradictory terms, defending its social and intellectual value as a scientific study even as it incessantly repeated charges that the book's descriptions of same-sex sexual acts and desires were obscene. In Genette's terms, these media discourses had the potential to act metatextually, "unit[ing] a given text" to others of a similar style, "of which it [seemed to speak] without necessarily citing [them].... [or]... even without naming" them (*Palimpsests*, 4). During and after 1898, when Carrington began to trade in books that resembled *Sexual Inversion* stylistically, methodologically, and topically—such as Benjamin Tarnowsky's *The Sexual Instinct* (1898), Ellis's *The Sexual Impulse* (1899), Charles Féré's *Evolution and Dissolution of the Sexual Instinct* (1904), and even, to some degree, the revised *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*—he exploited the way in which debates surrounding the Bedborough trial encouraged readers to interpret such books as similarly important scholarly studies and/or forbidden archives of erotic knowledge, just as he had previously capitalized on the way in which public debate surrounding the *Nights* underscored anthropology's erotic potential by issuing books like the 1896 *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* and *The Book of Exposition*.

Carrington's decision to trade in studies of 'deviant' sexuality also took advantage of a more generalized increase in market demand for works on same-sex desire, prompted partly by Oscar Wilde's sensational arrest, trial and imprisonment for committing acts of "gross indecency" three years earlier in 1895. As Gregory Mackie has demonstrated, the publisher exploited subsequent public interest in sexual inversion as well as the "vague fog of obscenity" that surrounded Wilde's name by issuing such books as *The Trial of Oscar Wilde* (1906),²³ a salacious record "taken from the firsthand reports" of the disgraced author's trial, pirating more than half of Wilde's bibliography, and falsely claiming that Wilde was the translator of a number of other publications, including Carrington's English editions of *The Satyricon of Petronius* (1902) and Barbey D'Aurevilly's *Ce qui ne meurt pas* (1883), published under the title *What Never Dies* (1902) (Mason, qtd. in Mackie 980).²⁴ The advertisements that he issued for these books played on readers' prurient interest in Wilde's 'vices,' and reinforced the trial reportage's intertextual relation to his books, hinting that they would enlighten readers about the sexual condition of this important "figure... [in] the bizarre gallery of the pathologist"

(*Choice* 17-18). Like Wilde's trial, the Bedborough affair prompted increased public curiosity about same-sex desire in the late 1890s, instigated a social panic about its ostensible spread, and forced Britons to debate whether the topic of sexual inversion, "repulsive as it is, [may be] a necessary branch of medical inquiry" (Thompson 1). Carrington not only catered to that curiosity by pirating Ellis's works and publishing and selling studies of sexual deviance written by his colleagues. He also developed a sexual-scientific book series that focused strongly on sexual inversion and other forms of 'deviant' sexuality.

I use the term "series" cautiously, for the eleven sexual-scientific studies that I speak of were never marketed using the term. Issued over a number of years, they were, however, all attributed to the same individual, "Dr. Jacobus X". Their material "get up"—their size, binding, typeface, layout, and even the range of handmade papers that they were printed on — were always similar, if not identical. Taken in combination with their shared authorship and publisher, this aspect of their physical makeup gives the impression of a book series.²⁵ Carrington's advertisements, which this section focuses on, also deliberately associated "Jacobus X's" publications with one another: they virtually always listed his earlier publications within announcements of his latest works, and assumed that readers were familiar with them—another typical characteristic of a book series. These aspects of their production show one way in which Carrington's publishing business became more sophisticated over the years, as he adopted production and marketing techniques that were at the time mainly the province of larger, more mainstream publishers. Viewing these books as a series is also useful because it helps to make sense of their relatively formulaic content. After 1898, "Jacobus X's" books appear to have been issued on a market-driven publication schedule that sought to meet public demand for sexual-scientific examinations of sexuality, valuing speed to publication over literary and analytical originality. Carrington's second edition of *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* suggests his emerging realization that public debate about and interest in deviant forms of sexuality could be concertedly exploited. His growing awareness of early forms of sexology and the debates that surrounded it is evident through the book's citation of authors like Krafft-Ebing, Moll and Ellis and careful notes about the seizure and suppression of their books, while his realization that books that resembled theirs could be marketed to a fairly wide range of readers is evident in the book's diverse target readerships. That he perceived then that his potential readers

specifically desired more information about sexual inversion is also illustrated by his significant augmentation of the book's exploration of the topic by appending to the main text multiple excurses from the works of Symonds, Ashbee, and Krafft-Ebing that focused on same-sex desire. Starting in 1899 with the publication of *Ethnology of the Sixth Sense*, the series subsequently broke more fully with Burton's style and the topic of foreign sexuality and began to resemble books like *Sexual Inversion* and other early works of sexology, such as Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*—a model that it would retain until the series was discontinued in 1906. Like these books, "Jacobus X's" later publications typically discuss various theories of sexual typology, extensively cite a wide variety of sexual theorists, and analyze dozens of case studies. They also focus much more strongly on sexual inversion than even the second edition of *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* does—one work, *Crossways of Sex* (1904), focuses solely on the topic—as well as other 'deviant' sexual behaviours like masochism, sadism, and fetishism, whose origins were at the time central the emergent sexological field's investigations.

Carrington maintained that the series' author, "Dr. Jacobus X," was a retired French army surgeon and amateur sexologist, who "being so cordially received by the ...public of England and America, resolved to give his other manuscripts to the world in English" (*Forbidden* 60). "Jacobus X" was probably a collective pseudonym, however, that was first associated with Jacolliot and *L'Amour Aux Colonies* in the early 1890s and subsequently adopted by several different writers in Carrington's employ. That after 1898 these books were written to order by more than one person is suggested not only their remarkable shifts in subject matter, but also by their quality. While the fact that their case studies are rarely original should not necessarily be viewed as a sign of hurried production,²⁶ their overwhelming reliance on other sexual-scientific studies to bolster their content was not conventional, and suggests hasty preparation. *Crossways of Sex*, for instance, is less an original study of sexual behaviour than a collage of excerpts borrowed from some of the most important sexual-scientific studies of the late nineteenth century and sutured to anecdotes taken from *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*. Indeed, it quotes so heavily from Charles Gilbert Chaddock's 1894 English translation of Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) that it virtually replicates some of its chapters.²⁷ *Ethnology of the Sixth Sense* similarly relies on excerpts from a wide variety of anatomical, sexological, and literary writings to formulate the bulk of its discourse on unusual sexual bodies and practices, while *Marquis de Sade et son oeuvre* (1901)

appears to be deeply indebted to Iwan Bloch's *Der Marquis de Seule und seine Zeit* (1899). The timing of "Jacobus X's" death in 1906, which Carrington announced in his preface to the author's "final work," *Lois Genitales* (a French translation of *The Genital Laws*), also supports the theory that "Jacobus X" was a collective pseudonym. The author's supposed demise conveniently coincided with waning public interest in sexual inversion as the Bedborough trial faded from memory, whereas the years of "Jacobus X's" most prolific production, 1900 and 1901, closely followed the height of its discussion in the press.²⁸ In short, rather than reflecting the whims of one author, the series crystallizes what Carrington perceived as marketable between 1898 and 1906. Like the 1898 *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*, it was attentive to the latest sexual-scientific research on a topic of explosive interest and would have been genuinely useful to readers who wanted to learn more about how a variety of sexual scientists theorized behaviours that had become the subject of furious public debate. But it also depicted such 'deviant' sexual practices far more salaciously than most sexual scholarship did at the time to retain its appeal to titillated readers—prompting Ross Forman, who studies "Jacobus X's" ideas as legitimate sexual science, to regard the 'author's' works as "rather pornographic" (582).

As the previous section demonstrated, Carrington was not content to rely solely on changes in public discourse to attract readers to his books and instruct them how to read them. His post-1897 sexual-scientific publications were thus equipped with complex critical apparatuses that act similarly to the one that he appended to the 1898 *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*. But these peritexts did not do much to attract *new* customers, especially in Britain, where readers probably acquired most of his books through the post. Therefore, like Dugdale and his Holywell Street competitors, Carrington apprised potential new clients of his sexual-scientific publications through advertising. Carrington's periodical advertisements were, however, even more wide ranging than Dugdale's had been. They appeared in everything from inexpensive entertainment weeklies like the *London Illustrated Standard*, the sensationalizing *Pall Mall Gazette*, and the populist *Reynolds's Newspaper*, to upmarket periodicals like the *Academy* and *Athenaeum*. Only a handful of short notices concerning his most respectable sexual-scientific publications, such as Tarnowsky's *The Sexual Instinct* and Féré's *Evolution and Dissolution of the Sexual Instinct*, appeared in medical journals in 1898.²⁹ That on examining the 1896 edition of *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*, *The Lancet* had

threatened to report Carrington to the authorities and give them his address suggests that he may have stopped attempting to advertise with and solicit reviews from medical journals to avoid further complaints—unless his books’ authors were so well-known to the scientific community that they were virtually beyond reproach.³⁰ While the publications that carried Carrington’s advertisements served working-, middle-, and upper-class readers respectively, his books themselves remained quite expensive: his least expensive sexual-scientific publication, *The Sexual Instinct*, cost seven shillings, and the Jacobus X books were priced at two guineas on average. This suggests that although he aimed to make his works as visible as possible to potential readers, Carrington’s attempts to expand his market share focused primarily on middle- and upper-class readers: like *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*’s peritexts, his advertisements appealed to unevenly “differentiated but formally equal groups of readers... classified by their interests” rather than readers of different social ranks (Delany 97-98). So too does the fact that his other advertising ventures involved printing his announcements on the back pages of his other books, and sending advertising circulars, often unsolicited, to private middle-class residences through the post, whose addresses he was suspected to have gleaned from professional directories.³¹

As with Carrington’s advertisements for his Wilde publications, advertisements for his sexual-scientific works attracted readers through intertextual reference, incorporating elements of the peritextual marketing strategy that he had used in his editorial revisions for the 1898 *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* to simultaneously situate them within the scientific field, the obscenity trade, and the debates about the legitimacy of sexual-scientific research that surrounded and radiated out of the Bedborough trial. Carrington’s newspaper advertisements for the *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* were, unsurprisingly, some of the first to deploy these rhetorical strategies, since they developed alongside his revision of the book’s second edition. The handful of notices that had heralded the book’s 1896 edition baldly announced its publication with its title, the offer of a free prospectus, and the address of Carrington’s bookshop in Paris, which by late 1896 had relocated to nearby 13 Faubourg Montmartre (*Academy*, “Untrodden” 414). But by 1897, when he was in the process of revising the book to appeal more strongly to a scholarly audience, Carrington’s copy had become more sophisticated, emphasizing the book’s scientific interest by proclaiming it a “Remarkable Study of the Sixth Sense” (*Medical Press*, “Untrodden” ii). By 1898, the year of the

revised edition's appearance, his advertisements echoed the book's scholarly apparatus even more strongly: they situated *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* within a critical genealogy by listing the names of well-known sexologists like Ellis and Krafft-Ebing alongside its title, suggesting the book's scholarly worth intertextually by placing it within the context of their studies:

"Untrodden Fields of Anthropology" is a record of a French army surgeon of thirty years experience in Asia, Africa, America and Oceania, on the esoteric manners and customs of semi-civilized people, with special reference to the works of Sir Richard Burton, Havelock Ellis, Lombroso, Mantegazza, Krafft-Ebing, and others. It is published by Charles Carrington, 13, Faubourg Montmartre, Paris, price £2 10s. The work, which is translated into English, is illustrated by Amedee Vignola, and it contains some of the most curious information ever published with relation to sex matters. (*Reynolds's "Books" 2*)

But even as they framed the 1898 *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* as scholarly enquiry, these advertisements subtly highlighted its illicit sexual content by referencing Burton and Ellis, whose work had been deemed obscene as well as pioneering research, making offhand allusions to the "curious information...with relation to sex matters" that the book disseminated, remarking on its French origin, and noting that the new work was to be issued only to private subscribers (*Reynolds's, "Books" 2*). Carrington's use of terms like "rare," "curious," and "French" to describe sexual science recalls the newspaper advertisements of commercial obscenity dealers like John Joseph Stockdale and Dugdale, who transferred the terms' use as code for pornography to played on sexual science's reputation as borderline obscenity in their own marketing practices. "[F]or subscribers only," meanwhile, borrowed from the shorthand that publishers of luxurious, explicit reading material like Smithers used for works that had been restricted from public sale to avoid police prosecution (Kendrick 71; Potter 96-7). By employing phrases like these, Carrington's advertisements subtly associated his works with erotica to attract readers, while maintaining a rhetorical structure that plausibly framed *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* as respectable scholarship.³² Acting as epitexts for Carrington's books, these documents subsequently encouraged medical and scientific professionals and the social activists who supported the development of sexual-scientific enquiry to read them as courageous scientific works, while at the same

time encouraging readers to understand their explicit descriptions also as “curious” and forbidden reading material.

Carrington would go on to use the same rhetorical techniques in periodical advertisements for his subsequent sexual-scientific publications. They also made an appearance in the publication announcements that he solicited in the literary sections of many of the same newspapers. That these documents often follow the style and content of Carrington’s paid newspaper advertisements suggests that the publisher wrote them himself. *Reynolds Newspaper’s* announcement of Féré’s *Evolution and Dissolution of the Sexual Instinct*, for instance, replicates Carrington’s practice of placing his own publications within a genealogy of sexual-scientific thought:

The present fine and comprehensive treatise has been written by a Specialist. Dr. Féré is the leading physician of a great French Hospital. The aim of his books is to demonstrate the necessity of control and responsibility in sexual acts. His works are recognized as ranking with such masterly books as Dr. Krafft-Ebing’s “Psychopathia Sexualis;” Dr. Havelock Ellis’s “Studies in the Psychology of Sex,” and “Crossways of Sex,” by Dr. Jacobus X (*Choice* 35).

This announcement economically advertises two of Carrington’s books at the same time—and situates both as authoritative scientific works—by placing them within a broader literary context, intertextually weaving his own titles among the works of more famous scholars. It additionally emphasizes their scientific merits by underscoring Féré’s professional qualifications, even as it hints at the book’s explicit sexual content, noting Féré’s aim to demonstrate “the necessity of control and responsibility in sexual acts” and choosing Krafft-Ebing’s and Ellis’s works, whose exploration of sexual inversion continued to be referred to as ‘obscene’ even in 1904, as exemplary “masterly books”.

Carrington recycled the techniques I describe above frequently in advertisements that he published on his own, printing them in on the back pages of his books or mailing them out, often unsolicited, in the form of catalogues or prospectuses to private homes. While these documents contain longer and more detailed descriptions of the books advertised, often including chapter headings and excerpts from their prefaces for potential clients to peruse, they similarly align the publisher’s sexual-scientific productions with better-known sexual-scientific authors and studies and explicitly hail

them as scientific writings. The back pages of the 1898 *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*, for instance, frame the mixture of scientific and pseudo-historical works that they present to readers for sale as a “List of Mr. Carrington’s Recent Medical and Philosophical Publications” (unpaginated).³³ Likewise, two of the prospectuses that Carrington published for his 1900 sexual-scientific production *The Genital Laws* claim that the book had been “Privately Printed for Students of Psychopathia Sexualis” or “Students of Anthropology” and written on “strictly scientific lines”.³⁴ At the same time, like the publisher’s newspaper announcements, these advertisements are inflected with veiled admissions that the works advertised are too explicit, and thus potentially erotic, for open circulation. For instance, one of Carrington’s prospectuses for “Jacobus X’s” *The Genital Laws* (1900), states rather suggestively that “[w]e never publish the names of our subscribers”. Importantly however, these documents played far more strongly on reader’s knowledge of specific sexual-scientific books and the debates surrounding their moral legitimacy than did his newspaper advertisements. They not only situate Carrington’s works within a scholarly genealogy by naming more famous sexual-scientific books alongside an advertised title, but also contextualize their ostensibly “pure” and “scientific” content and aims through narratives that expound on particularly “courageous” Victorian sexual scientists’ and activist’s struggles to acquire respectability for their work in a nation riven by anxiety about its potentially damaging moral effects. Carrington’s prospectus for *The Genital Laws* allies it, for instance, with “Dr. Havelock Ellis’s book ‘The Psychology of Sex’ and Geoffrey Mortimer’s ‘Chapters on Human Love,’ of which some 500 copies were recently seized and destroyed in England by the Police” after an 1899 raid on George von Weissenfeld’s University Press headquarters in Watford (*Genital Laws II* 2; Reynolds’s “Liberty” 8).³⁵ Having been made aware of the “abominable prosecution and destruction” of these books, this prospectus claims, the author of *The Genital Laws* “hesitated to arrange [his] notes for publication, because [he was] aware of base motives too often attributed by unthinking persons to those who seek to shed light upon these psycho-physiological problems” (2). Similarly, Carrington’s advertisement for Tarnowsky’s *The Sexual Instinct* in the back pages of “Jacobus X’s” *Ethnology of the Sixth Sense* allies the book with “a work dealing with similar topics by the distinguished author, Dr. Havelock Ellis, which is now the subject of prosecution,” as well as framing its author as a brave social scientist equal to “the great Vienna inquirer, Dr. Krafft-Ebing” (unpaginated). These documents intertextually link events surrounding

the Bedborough affair and other widely publicized seizures of sexual-scientific materials with Carrington's own publications to frame them as important works of science produced within a brave new scientific field, reinforcing the metatextual effect that such debates could engender on Carrington's books. But by the same logic, these narratives also link Carrington's sexual-scientific works with censored materials, highlighting their implicit obscenity, and thus their erotic appeal, by emphasizing that the knowledge they disseminate was considered endangering by many British authorities.

How the various readerships that the publisher targeted reacted to the marketing practices that I have described is difficult to gauge. Although the publisher's advertisements were viewed by thousands of people, and hundreds of individuals read the books that he produced, few records of their reading experiences survive. The reviews of his books that appeared in periodicals like the *Times*, the *Glasgow Herald*, *Reynolds's Newspaper*, the *Graphic* and the *Era*, suggest a mixed reception. The *Glasgow Herald's* assessment of Carrington's dubious 'medical history' *The Secret Cabinet of History* (1897), for instance, attacked its "diffuse and long-winded style" and pronounced it not "particularly interesting" save for its "coarse and repulsive" subject matter ("Secret Cabinet" 10).³⁶ Other reviews were fawning. When examined in the context of Carrington's advertising, these latter reviews suggest that the publisher's tactic of aligning his books with controversial titles like *Sexual Inversion* could effectively solicit a favourable reception from readers who opposed the more famous book's censorship. For example, *Reynolds's Newspaper's* review of Carrington's equally dubious *Flagellation in France, Considered From a Medical and Historical Standpoint* praised everything from the quality of its translation and material "get-up" to its "singular interest to the student of mind and manners," and refused to denounce Carrington for publishing a "volume of pathological studies" that included such explicit content ("Flagellation" 2).³⁷

Significantly, *Reynolds's* strongly advocated for Bedborough's release in 1898 and championed *Sexual Inversion* as a courageous scientific study. The newspaper's enthusiastic interpretation of *Flagellation in France* as a similarly courageous book suggests that some readers could be less than critical when they encountered new sexual-scientific books, because deeming them 'obscene' would have seemed antagonistic to the politics of free speech that *Sexual Inversion's* seizure provoked.

Flagellation in France's peritexts and epitexts manipulate that logic, aligning the book with the cause of scientific freedom and virtually daring readers to condemn it. For instance, Carrington's prospectus for the work (which reproduces portions of its preface) railed against the fact that

There are subjects which an Englishman is generally taught he must not talk about, hint at, or even think about. Such tabooed topics are those relating to everything sexual. Whether a man is suspected of being a Nihilist or an Anarchist, and the police search his dwelling, woe unto him, innocent or guilty, if there be found the least scrap of ultra-radical literature. With printed works bearing upon the relations of the sexes, the bibliophile is put down as a vile seducer, a madman, or as a follower of Oscar the Outcast. Thanks to this system of hypocrisy, ...many social problems which, if resolutely worked out in the open light of day would be undoubtedly conducive to the happiness of nations ...are left untouched, and when a timid searcher tries to throw a feeble ray of light upon them with only a half opened lantern, he is warned off such dangerous territory by cries of fear, terror, disgust and scorn. ...We hold up our head, look the enlightened Public straight in the eye, and declare that flagellation is one of the passions inherent to the human race, and as such is worthy of research, study, exposition and dissertation. (*Flagellation* N. pag.)

Carrington's impassioned defense of sexual "research, study, exposition and dissertation" recalled numerous letters to *Reynolds's* editor that lamented the impossibility of "honestly discuss[ing] the problems of sexual life without giving offence to certain timorous minds" in 1898 (Oct.9 1898). The prospectus's discussion of the police searching the dwelling of a suspected "Anarchist" also alluded to an 1898 police raid on Bedborough's private residence, where it was discovered that he was in possession of an album of erotic photographs, while its allusion to Wilde recalled the fact that after *Sexual Inversion*, one of the most frequently discussed works that Bedborough was indicted for distributing was an issue of *The Adult* that had favourably reviewed *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* ("Charge Against A Publisher" N. Pag.). That this narrative virtually compelled *Reynolds's Newspaper*, and probably many of its readers, to interpret *Flagellation in France* as brave and legitimate scientific research in spite of its eroticism and suspicious circumstances of publication is suggested all the more powerfully by the fact that *Reynolds's* editors did so, even though they were clearly aware that publishers like Carrington (perhaps even Carrington himself) profited by marketing medical and scientific books as obscenity and obscenity as medical and scientific writing.³⁸ Yet, *Reynolds's* chose to turn a blind eye to this aspect of *Flagellation in France's* eroticism

and questionable circumstances of publication. Its editor's own desires to look the "Public straight in the eye" and boldly declare that sexual-scientific research was a valuable and respectable endeavour may have overridden any misgivings about the book itself.

By contrast, many established members of the medical profession remained deeply sceptical of Carrington's sexual-scientific works, and refused to take the claims that his advertisements made about their sexual-scientific value seriously. Britain's leading medical journals, *The Lancet* and *The British Medical Journal*, were as well aware that obscenity dealers marketed erotic books as science as *Reynolds's Newspaper* was. Indeed, only a month before *The Lancet* had issued its damning review of *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*, it had warned its readers that a certain "man of filth" calling himself "Henri Robert of Paris"—a man who many suspected to be Carrington, though he was, in fact, one of Carrington's agents³⁹—had been posting circulars advertising "pornography.... of a semi-scientific appearance" to "certain members of the medical profession" ("A Vile Trade" 468).

We know that members of the medical profession are not likely to be attracted by the lubricity of any circular ...[but] the medical writer might be tempted to purchase the books for other than lewd reasons. Let him not give in to temptation. Traffic in these books may not be penal in Paris, but it is penal in England. The man Robert's circulars are posted in England. What is to prevent Robert from communicating to his agents in England the names and addresses of his English clients? On such event blackmail would follow. The recipient of these circulars should send a letter to the Postmaster General and ask His Grace the Duke of Norfolk to earn everyone's gratitude by devising some scheme to prevent his Department from being made the medium of incentive to vile immorality and even unmentionable crime (468).

Having perused *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* and concluding it that it was similarly "pornography.... of a semi-scientific appearance," *The Lancet* therefore kept a close eye on Carrington's business, and considered his circulars at best a nuisance that threatened to degrade the reputation of genuine scientific enquiry. In 1901, *The Lancet* again called on the Postmaster General to stop

the flood of objectionable circulars which are daily and hourly distributed to His Majesty's faithful subjects by means of the department over which he presides. There are the delectable circulars of Charles Carrington, the

swindling notices sent out by Tanqueray, the allurements of money-lenders, and the filthy little books sent out by the blackguard who calls himself Dr. Bell – to say nothing of numerous others (“Degredation” 1843).

The British Medical Journal was equally suspicious of Carrington’s circulars. There is no evidence that the editors of the journal actually read any of his books; rather, it was his advertisements themselves that suggested their obscenity to these individuals and the professional readers they served. That many of the sexual-scientific books that the publisher advertised were in fact “Pornographic Literature,” as the title of the article that they published on the topic was phrased, was to them evident in the language that he deployed in his mail-order advertisements:

[S]everal medical correspondents have written to complain that they have received at their private residences a circular emanating from Paris offering a book stated to be written by Dr. Jacobus X***, at the price of two guineas, upon the subject of *Genital Laws: Their Observance and Violation*. The author claims to be working upon strictly scientific lines, and states that he has had the support of men of the highest standing in the English-speaking world, but it is remarkable that on the order form the publisher prints: “N.B. - We never publish the names of our subscribers.” Another remarkable fact about this circular is that although it emanates from Paris the publisher has an English name, so that it suggests that he is attempting to do from France that which the laws of England would not permit. Among other books published by the same publisher there are some at least which, while professing to be of a scientific character, appear really to be designed to pander to the most depraved tastes. (1269).⁴⁰

Clearly, many of the individuals who read Carrington’s advertisements and books understood his references to their erotic delights as well his insistent arguments for their scientific value. While readers like those who wrote to the *British Medical Journal* chose to understand their references to erotic content and circumstances of publication as admissions that Carrington’s works were not “really” scientific volumes, others, like Havelock Ellis, Iwan Bloch, and the reviewers at *Reynolds’s Newspaper* chose to ignore them: their investment in freedom of speech and, in Ellis’s and Bloch’s case, conviction that erotic texts housed valuable sexual knowledge anyway, required that they do so. It is very likely that still other readers understood Carrington’s references to his sexual-scientific books’ erotic appeal and bought them for that very reason. The Home Office

certainly suspected that it was the references to sexual content in Carrington's newspaper advertisements that prompted schoolboys to purchase his open publications through the post.⁴¹ It also seems unlikely that French scientific publishing houses like Vigot Frères would have adopted similar marketing techniques in the late 1890s and early 1900s if this had not been the case (Cryle and Moore 106-114). These publishers similarly aimed, as *The British Medical Journal* suspected in 1908, to expand their readership and thus, their sales:

Les eunuques à travers les âges,⁴² by Dr. R. Millant, is issued by Vigot Frères, 23, Place de l'École Médecine, Paris. This postal address in itself suggests that the work should be of scientific interest to the faculty. But, somewhat greedily, the publishers spread their net wide, and hint that the work should have its place in the library of the curious as well as that of the man of science and the man of letters. ... It was in a somewhat carping spirit of resentment at the masquerade of pornography in the guise of science that we perused *Les eunuques*, which we find to be a reasonably complete treatise on the subject, more interesting, we hope, to the philosopher than the curious (*Les eunuques* 905).

If Carrington's marketing techniques were not uniformly successful in convincing readers of the scientific value of his books, it was partly because he insisted on representing them *simultaneously* as important scientific productions of immense public value and as titillating, even "obscene," works whose worth was fundamentally private. Doing so comprised a risky and audacious strategy: far from protecting his business from scrutiny, Carrington's sexual-scientific books and advertisements prompted major organs of the scientific community to criticize their circulation and even call for the publisher's arrest. Yet, the publisher's marketing strategy clearly enjoyed success: opportunistically, it exploited many reader's desires to rebel against what they saw as stifling cultural policies that controlled sexual discourse. His marketing materials called on readers to put their reservations about the explicit nature of his books aside in the name of scientific progress and social justice — or to privately embrace their erotic aura of obscenity. But in doing so, Carrington's marketing materials subtly emphasised the "grey zone" into which sexual-scientific works fell, showing how they were treated similarly to other forms of explicit writing by the authorities, and revealed science and obscene fiction's shared history of suppression, binding them generically through intertextual reference. These aspects of the marketing materials that this and the previous section has examined anticipate how Carrington exploited the discourse of the

secret museum to market the same sexual-scientific materials to his *clandestine* readership, shifting the focus of his epitextual discussions of sexual knowledge's legitimacy from public debate to private networks of sexual knowledge that only a privileged few could access.

§

In contrast to his open advertisements, Carrington's clandestine circulars emphasize the value of sexual-scientific studies as erotic entertainment and rare, luxurious collectables over their technical scholarly interest. His 1902 catalogue *cum* bibliography *Forbidden Books*, for instance, focuses strongly on the 1898 *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology's* racist depiction of foreign sexual practices, and implicitly compares it to a sex manual. "Nothing has been left to the imagination," Carrington assures readers. "...[A] study of this volume will teach the casual reader as much about the way the women of these countries love and slake their lust as if he had taken a ship and gone out... to sample the black and brown lasses" (60). More subtly, these book catalogues emphasize the eroticism and rarity of the sexual-scientific books that they advertise by listing them side by side with obscene fiction and other forms of erotic writing. In doing so, they visually imply generic continuity among all of the works that they offer for sale—a twist on Carrington's practice of situating his sexual-scientific books within critical genealogies in his open advertisements, and a method that he shared with the other fringe publisher-booksellers that this dissertation has examined. He strengthened this impression further through peritexts such as title pages and prefaces that proclaim rarity, luxuriousness, explicitness and eroticism of *all* of the books advertised. The publisher's forward to his clandestine catalogue *Choice English Books*, for example, boasts that every one of the books "advertised in this List are equal in scholarship and typography to the finest productions of the Kelmscott Press, or the books issued by the Kama Sutra and Villon Societies," while his *Catalogue of Rare and Curious English Books* draws its diverse materials into a common fold by using the code words "rare" and "curious" in its title (2). Together, these tactics underscored sexual science's value to the publisher's base clientele of obscenity collectors and bibliophiles.

Like his predecessors, Carrington did not, however, completely gloss over the fact that many of the books his clandestine catalogues list were products of the scientific

field. Rather, they negotiate the circumstances of these works' publication as sexual-scientific works by subsuming that history into a broader imagined history of sexually explicit print materials. The title page of Carrington's clandestine catalogue *Bibliotheca Arcana* (1899), for instance, advises readers that they are encountering a

ROUGH LIST OF Rare, Curious and Uncommon Books, Pamphlets, Prints and Engravings That have been Privately Printed, Prohibited by Law, Seized, Anathematized, Burnt or Bowdlerised; more particularly those relating to the Mysteries of Human Affinities, or dealing with the Attractions and Aversions – Vices and Virtues – Loves and Longings – Hates and Failings – Passions and Peculiarities of Live, Moving Men and Women – and throwing light upon the PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX.

This title page collapses the boundaries between the sexual-scientific works and erotic writings advertised in *Bibliotheca Arcana*, not only by implicitly likening them through their shared histories of suppression and common subject matter, but also by fusing the obscene and sexual-scientific fields at the level of language itself. Its phrasing is borrowed from William Laird Clowes' bibliography of erotic literature, *Bibliotheca Arcana: Brief notices of books that have been secretly printed, prohibited by law, seized, anathematized, burnt or Bowdlerized* (1885), Carrington's 1898 prospectus for *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*, which advised readers that "[a]nthropology is a name for all that relates to Man in general; his Vices and Virtues, Loves and Longings, Hates and Failings, Passions and Peculiarities," and the title of Havelock Ellis's series of sexual-scientific textbooks, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. In doing so, the title page's intertextually constructed narrative not only doubly mimics the suturing of obscene and sexual-scientific genres that the interior of the catalogue, which mixes science and obscenity indiscriminately in its lists of books for sale, performs; it also anticipates *Bibliotheca Arcana's* longer peritextual narrative—the publisher's preface—which *explicitly* theorizes both the sexual-scientific and obscene works that the catalogue offers for sale as rare, valuable artifacts of an archive of sexual knowledge whose history stretches "from the earliest times down to the present day" (3). According to the preface, this secret archive simultaneously represents a moral threat to Britain's social body and promises its moral salvation: the dangerous "eroticism" of its component parts is justified by their power to privately assist the "Lawyer, Preacher, Doctor, or Magistrate"—the catalogue's implied readers—in understanding sexual experience, and therefore, in

publicly managing it, just as a poisonous chemical agent may be used as a medicine by an experienced physician (3-4).

By positing the works they advertise as social “poisons” which may be responsibly accessed in secret by only select male elites, catalogues like *Bibliotheca Arcana* intertextually manipulate the discourse of the secret museum, framing such works as forbidden and secret knowledge and pleasure necessarily hidden from the public eye, but essential to social understanding and public governance. *Bibliotheca Arcana* incorporates genuine sexual-scientific works like Schrenck-Notzing’s *Therapeutic Suggestion in Psychopathia Sexualis* (1885), Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886/1895) and Tarnowsky’s *The Sexual Instinct* (1898), into the field of the “secret museum” both explicitly, by drawing them into its historical narrative, and implicitly, by intertextually incorporating them into previous discussions about that history. In doing so, the catalogue suggested their value as rare, forbidden and erotic collectables as well as informative works to erotica enthusiasts and bibliophiles. By the same logic, *Bibliotheca Arcana* also recuperated the obscene fiction that it advertised alongside these scientific books as works of literature that similarly imparted socially valuable sexual knowledge. And intriguingly, that recuperation does not appear to have been merely an inadvertent effect of Carrington’s efforts to incorporate his sexual-scientific publications into the tantalizing imaginary of the secret museum. In fact, the publisher’s clandestine catalogues and prospectuses frequently *hailed* obscene fiction’s depictions of sexual bodies, acts, and desires as social analysis:

The Petticoat Dominant; or Woman’s Revenge... displays great knowledge of Human life and a curious power of Psychological Analysis, having evidently been written by a man of considerable culture.... [E]ach chapter while being thoroughly erotic, voluptuous and exciting, is yet written with a rare command of language and an insight into the Undercurrents of certain phrases, ranks, and walks of modern Society, which will astonish even those readers who may be familiar with this kind of literature (Catalogue of Rare, Curious and Voluptuous Reading [1901], 7-8. Emphasis added).

...[T]his exceptional work ...is simply and honestly true. The hero of this story has written his own life, with the exactness and scrupulous order of the English nation. ...He ...narrates with painstaking manner [the] habits, customs, and modes of sexual pleasure [of many peoples], not forgetting to describe the physical idiosyncrasies of every different typical race... as well as of male and female prodigies and monsters, such as double-

sexed beings and hermaphrodites of various kinds, giants and dwarfs of the tender sex, and when he meets with men of abnormal proportions, he does not forget to give every astounding incongruity. ...[He] *discourses of them boldly and knowingly in real philosophical vein*. All public or private places where he procures the partners of his lubricity are *also studied with the minutest precision*... The different sort of brothels are naturally *analysed*... To sum up, we have *the unvarnished tale* of his... carnal delights... He even omits nothing concerning the *medical side of free love and the mechanical instruments appertaining thereto*. (Prospectus for *My Secret Life* [c.1900], *Album 7* 65. Emphasis added)

The author of "Suburban Souls," [sic] has not tortured his brain to invent a fable of sentiment, or show us scenes of spectral horror... [b]ut... has taken up his pen and carefully written down a curious, incredible adventure... which is *really and truly, solely and wholly – the TRUTH*. ...*The writer is to be praised for having dared to paint with cruel justice, and drag into pitiless light of open day, one of the most curious social sores of the present age, sparing no one, and sacrificing himself on the altar of veracity*. ...[The author] is a *scholar of vast powers of expression, who ...proves himself a logical reasoned man of no mean analytical order*. ...*The compiler – for we cannot call the author a romance-writer, for he tells the truth – ...tells all*. ...This book is *too truthful*, and on that account may be dangerous. *It explains and analyses ruthlessly the operations of the mind when swayed by the senses*... (Prospectus for *Suburban Souls* [1901], *Album 7*, 68. Emphasis added)

Like Ashbee's and Clowes' bibliographies, these catalogue descriptions implicitly parallel obscene fiction with sexual scholarship, justifying a potential reader's desire to peruse such works even as they emphasize the appealing realism of their sexual depictions. Carrington's characterizations of his obscene novels as sexual "truth" were often much more specific than those of publishers like Smithers and Nichols, however, frequently making explicit connections between fictional and sexual-scientific depictions of sex. In doing so, his arguments not only justified his works' erotic content, but also attempted to work through what the imaginative and material overlaps between sexual science and obscenity might imply about how they should be read.

Carrington's catalogue descriptions propel the notion that obscene fiction and sexual science informed one another, both when these texts were composed and when they were read, by employing technical sexual-scientific terms and intertextually referencing sexual-scientific books to describe obscene fiction, on a much greater scale than did Smithers and Nichols. When the publisher's preface to *Forbidden Books* announced that his fiction would illuminate readers about the psychology, physiology

and practices of a number of deviant sexual ‘types,’ including “nympho-maniacs, onanists, exhibitionists, necrophilists, practicers of bestiality, Sadists, Masochists and erotic maniacs in general, male and female,” it constructed, as Sigel observes, a list akin to a “sexological study’s index” that implicitly suggests how sexual typology could both inform and be informed by obscene fictional representations of aberrant sexual activity (*Forbidden* 33; Sigel, “Overly Affectionate” 118). Several of his other catalogue descriptions more directly modeled reading practices that would integrate fictional and sexual-scientific knowledge, by linking the particular sexual activities portrayed in obscene novels with specific writings about sexual deviance that the reader might have encountered previously in the public sphere. For instance, Carrington’s clandestine advertisements for *Teleny, or The Reverse of the Medal* (1893), showed readers how the narrator’s sexual inversion could be interpreted via popular discussions of the topic when it noted that “the urning, or man-loving man ...was recently treated in a veiled manner in an article in a largely circulated London daily paper which demonstrated the subtle influence of music *and the musician* in connection with perverted sexuality” (*Bibliotheca* 21, original emphasis).⁴³ An advertisement from his catalogue *Choice English Books* offers another good example of how Carrington subtly modeled such integrated reading practices between the works that he sold as well: its description of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch’s *Venus in Furs* (1870) highlights how the novel encompasses a range of “observations regarding a certain sexual passion or aberration... known as ‘Masochism,’ and it is under this name that the passion or aberration in question is recognized and catalogued among other lascivious manias by scientists and criminologists” such as Krafft-Ebing in *Psychopathia Sexualis* (*Choice* 25). In doing so, the publisher not only implies that one text could inform the other, but also points out correctly that *Venus in Furs*’ representation of masochistic desire informed Krafft-Ebing’s famous study (Sigel, “Overly Affectionate” 17). Meanwhile, Carrington’s clandestine advertisements for one of Britain’s first pornographic novels about same-sex male desire, *The Sins of the Cities of the Plain; or Recollections of a Mary-Ann* (1881) used the novel’s peritexts to suggest that sexual science and pornography should be read alongside one another, while claiming explicitly that the novel’s representations of same-sex desire themselves constituted a valuable source of knowledge about sexual inversion. Proclaiming that the “vice of Love between boys and men...amply described and set forth on these pages” is “founded on facts,” Carrington indicates that the novel

might valuably be read alongside sexual-scientific studies of the “vice” when he directs readers to the two “Short Essays in Sodomy and Tribadism” conveniently bound into the back pages of the volume (*Rare and Curious* 23).

In linking these fictional works with popular and scientific discussions of sexual topics, Carrington may have been attempting to revitalize their appeal, especially when they were older works like *The Petticoat Dominant*. The publisher had used the scandalous aura of obscenity that suffused sexual science in public debate to suggest the eroticism and forbiddenness of his sexual-scientific studies to titillated readers in his open advertisements. Here, like Smithers and Nichols, he used that aura to paint his own publishing business as a channel through which readers could access a full and exclusive range of “true” sexual knowledge that had been publicly deemed too dangerous for the eyes of the ordinary reader.⁴⁴ By emphasising that the older fictional works he sold were not only ‘forbidden,’ but also spoke to topics of current debate, Carrington perhaps sought to freshen their appeal. The publisher may also have been attempting to increase his sales of obscene fiction to sexual scholars, whose custom he was actively courting through the more open division of his business. As I have shown in Part Two, some of these scholars had access to clandestine catalogues and bibliographies, and might have been even more eager to purchase obscene novels when the ways in which they could offer illumination on the behaviours that these scholars researched were highlighted. And of course, suggesting that obscene fiction and science should be read alongside one another might encourage other elite readers to purchase a wider range of Carrington’s books, buying up his sexual-scientific works as well as his obscene novels.

Yet, while they were formulated to convince readers to buy his books, Carrington’s claims that obscene fiction resembled, influenced and was influenced by sexual science were not unfounded. As Part Two has shown, both European and British sexual scientists were influenced by fictional—including obscene fictional—depictions of sexual acts, bodies and desires. Meanwhile, late-Victorian obscene fiction increasingly incorporated sexual-scientific forms of expression, even more so than some of the works examined in the previous chapter. The titles and subtitles of obscene novels, for instance, frequently borrowed scientific or pseudoscientific terms: Carrington’s catalogue *Bibliotheca Arcana* lists works of obscene fiction such as *The Powers of Mesmerism*

(1891) and *Modern Studies in the Science of Stroking: The Horn Book* (year), while Carrington's *Raped on the Railway* (c.1899) was purported to be part of a series entitled *Social Studies of the Century* (a title that echoes Hotten's own *Library Illustrative of Social Progress*), and his 1902 pornographic novel *Suburban Souls* bore the subtitle *The Erotic Psychology of a Man and a Maid*. The expectations that Carrington's advertisements and the titles of such works set up for some of these books, of cross influence, held up when his readers actually perused some of these works. *Sins of the Cities of the Plain* and *Teleny, or the Reverse of the Medal*, for example, as I highlighted in Part Two, interact with sexual science in a number of ways as well as representing sexual inversion.

Perhaps the most compelling of the novels that Carrington marketed as science, however, is his own *Suburban Souls: The Erotic Psychology of a Man and a Maid*. Published in 1901 just after the height of the Jacobus X series' production and likely written by Carrington or one of his brothers, *Suburban Souls* was also influenced by sexual-scientific ideas and modes of expression (Colligan, *Publisher's* 189-195). Centering on its middle-aged narrator's sexual relationship with the daughter of a close friend, *Suburban Souls* reads like the surprisingly dry record of a rather unprofessional sexual study. As its subtitle suggests, it focuses far more strongly on its narrator's analysis of his lover's "erotic psychology" than on their physical relationship. Like a scientist, Jacky S gathers evidence for his analysis by meticulously observing his paramour, Lily's, behaviour during and after each of their meetings, analyzing the form and content of her love letters, observing her interactions with her mother and stepfather, and even sending a spy to the hotel where she stays with her stepfather on a trip to Brussels to record her comings and goings. He forms his conclusions by comparing Lily's behaviour to a normative female "erotic psychology," his knowledge of which, he claims, is a result of both his own sexual experiences of other women and of his study of sexual-scientific examinations of female sexuality (432-435). His diagnoses are often relayed in sexual-scientific terms. At one point, for instance, Jacky concludes that Lily "suffers from anemia or chlorosis. There is evidently psychopathic deterioration, and she is a neurotic subject. Masturbation and unnatural practices before the age of puberty have produced neurasthenia, with its attendant symptoms. It is a clear case of hysteria" (171). Meanwhile, Jacky remains oblivious to the fact that his sexual-scientific detective work—he refers to himself as a detective, and even as "a kind of sensual

Sherlock Holmes,” several times—reveals more about his own erotic psychology to the reader than it does about Lily’s (179). His early fantasies that Lily and her stepfather, Eric Arval, are involved in a pseudo-incestuous affair, come to obsess him as the novel progresses, causing him to increase his surveillance of Arval’s and Lily’s relationship while attempting to provoke both parties to confess to their incestuous relationship by introducing them to newspaper articles and pornographic novels about incest. Neither confesses, but Jacky’s clouded logic leads him to conclude that Arval’s silence signals that he is a “convert to the doctrines of Sacher-Masoch, and [in parading] his sexual inversion, proves that he is entirely under the charm of the enchantress,” Lily (304).

But while *Suburban Souls*’ psychological realism and focus on psychosexual health merges sexual science and obscene fiction at the levels of language and theme, and genre, it also incorporates the genres’ shared textual condition into its narrative, reconstituting the ‘secret museum’ as a specific archive of sexual knowledge that moved through and around the same print networks. Books about sex play a central role in Jacky’s project: they not only influence his conception of normative “sexual psychology,” but are also instrumental to his analytic method. One of his most common means for gathering new material for observation is to give Lily and Arval texts that focus on certain sexual acts and desires and watch how they respond to them. For Jacky, the ways in which people respond affectively to sexual representations is profoundly linked to both their prior knowledge and experience of sex and to their desires.⁴⁵ But crucially, *Suburban Souls*’ “sensual Sherlock Holmes” employs popular, sexual-scientific and obscene writings about sex for this purpose virtually interchangeably, secretly showing Lily and Arval everything from “stories, scandals, police cases and gossip in society papers” to Jacobus X’s *The Ethnology of the Sixth Sense* to the epic obscene novel, *The Romance of Lust* (1873) (423). That these works also interchangeably provide diagnostic evidence of Arval’s ‘incestuous’ relationship with Lily at the novel’s climax underscores Jacky’s conceptualization of these works as functionally similar in their useful representation of sexual “truth” as well as in the erotic sensations that they elicit. The packet of periodicals and circulars that he sends his friend here reveals his ‘discovery’ by marking “with a red pencil all paragraphs that seemed to have a bearing on illicit connections between fathers and daughters, or brothers and sisters” and making notes that intertextually incorporate scientific and obscene works into that body of knowledge (422).

I found a number of stories, scandals, police cases and gossip in society papers, which had a special meaning to him and me... A prospectus of a new work on sexual anomalies, entitled: *The Ethnology of the Sixth Sense*...the second page gave a table of contents, and following the mention "Monstrous clitoris," I added "Compare with Dorothee (*Justine*.) Conversations in January. Compare conversations on the same topic in May. Compare *Romance of Lust*, vol. II, p. 72: Lizzie." ...I also added two cuttings, one relating to the crime of Bordes, an incestuous murderer, and the other headed: "A Horrible Crime" (423).

Jacky's treatment of these texts as similarly informative and erotic works in his investigation mirrors his own indiscriminate reading practice, which comprises perusing "amatory literature and all books and novels relating to sexual matters... whether wilfully obscene or cunningly veiled; whether written by medical authorities, novelists, or even issued from the secret presses of Belgium and Holland" (9). While he admits that not all are "true to nature," the best of these books "impress us with an idea of the truth" and, as he goes on to demonstrate, may be mined for clues that may lead to a real sexual truth as well as sexual stimulation (9).

Jacky's tautology of sexual knowledge and pleasure—that they may be disseminated through everything from a gossipy piece in a periodical to a sexual-scientific text to a pornographic volume—recalls the secret museum that Carrington narrativised in *Bibliotheca Arcana*, which claimed to both materially and imaginatively encompass diverse works whose important information had been suppressed because its eroticism was deemed morally "poisonous" to the ordinary reader.⁴⁶ Importantly, this material aspect of the secret museum, which had served to underscore the interchangeable uses of the varied works in Carrington's catalogues, also shows up in *Suburban Souls*. Sexual science, obscene fiction, and popular writings about sex are not only shown to act alike as conduits of sexual knowledge and pleasure, but also to travel through and around the same print networks. Jacky acquires both his scientific works and obscene fiction, for instance, from "A Worthy Dutch bookseller, Mynheer Vanderpunk, who... frequently procured old and curious works for [him]... from his dusty old shop at Rotterdam" (44). What is particularly intriguing about this is that the novel's representation of these genres' material co-circulation is only a thin fictionalization. The works cited throughout the novel—among them, *Ethnology of the Sixth Sense*, *Justine*, *The Romance of Lust*, *Venus in Furs*, *The Pleasures of Cruelty*, *The Double Life of*

Cuthbert Cockerton, Dolly Morton, The Confessions of Nemesis Hunt, The Yellow Room, The Horn Book—are all real sexual-scientific works and obscene novels that Carrington himself published or distributed through his own bookshop in Paris. The periodical articles and advertisements that Jacky refers to throughout the narrative are also, with one possible exception, real documents that were readily accessible within the geographic bounds of the publisher's business (Colligan, *Publisher's* 204).

Including such books in its narrative serves to augment *Suburban Souls'* realism, as well as acting as an advertisement for Carrington's books. Just as Jacky situates an assortment letters, telegrams, and books in relation to each other in order to lead him to Lily's secret 'incest,' we are encouraged to search for the key that unlocks the secrets of *Suburban Souls* by reading the works that it cites. While acknowledging that these were important functions of their citation, I want to emphasize how *Suburban Souls'* intertextual incorporation of Carrington's publishing business into its plot also underscores the social and material reality of Jacky's 'museum' of sexual evidence as an actual network of texts that travelled together through the same channels—as Colligan terms it, a "literary family" (210). But unlike *Bibliotheca Arcana*, which described the secret museum as an *arcane* archive of sexual knowledge accessible solely through the private sphere of the publisher's catalogue, *Suburban Souls'* familial 'museum' encompasses works that are shown to circulate both under- and aboveground: several of the short pieces on incest that Jacky handles, for instance, were published in popular periodicals like *Society* and *Le Figaro*. As a result, *Suburban Souls* tantalizingly shows how its sexual secrets circulate between and within public discourse as well as beneath it. The novel depicts a startlingly true-to-life illustration of sexual knowledge networks in late-Victorian Britain. As I have shown, explicit works about sex—and their discussion—circulated dynamically through and between public and clandestine communications networks. They comprised less of a secret archive than an open secret whose production, circulation and reception incited debate after debate that only served to strengthen their mobility and desirability.

Suburban Souls' not-quite-secret archive of sexual knowledge also recalls the highly intertextual makeup of Carrington's marketing materials. In their incessant citation of everything from elite scientific studies to newspaper articles to obscene novels like *Fanny Hill*, these documents draw on a collection of diverse texts that similarly existed in

flux between public and private space, travelling together through Carrington's business and speaking to one another intertextually. Although they were formulated for the purposes of profit, this aspect of their composition points to the way in which the publisher's marketing materials more broadly illustrate the complex web of social relations that operated between and around sexual knowledge over the course of the nineteenth century. Their pragmatic manipulation of debates surrounding sexually explicit texts both reveals and conceals Carrington's own recognition that the policies of limited circulation which incited them engendered multiple, overlapping points of signification and communication between readers and texts about sex, and between those texts themselves. This should urge us to consider that far from being crudely exploitive, the fringe publication of sexual science in Britain was underpinned by its agents' highly sophisticated readings of the cultural and literary field. Their trade in sexual science should not be viewed simply as commercial opportunism, but also as an intellectual intervention in the politics of public and private reading practice that suffused Victorian discussions of sexual knowledge and pleasure, discussions that had real effects on its circulation and reception. And, while primarily, their business interests informed their readings of sexual science's cultural predicament, they also importantly spoke to the interests and concerns of their readers, and put sexual knowledge and sexual entertainment into their hands.

Endnotes

¹ As Colligan has shown, the absence of publishing records makes the production and distribution phases of Carrington's business the most obscure of his operation (*Publisher's* 94). However, the "interception of Carrington's correspondence through Home Office warrants," she notes, "suggests that he usually received and stocked the shipments at his address at 13, rue du Faubourg Montmartre, from where he then sent books to paying customers by international post. Detailed instructions in his catalogues about shipping costs and remittances seem to confirm this method. But there are also other stories of Carrington and his agents smuggling books into Britain, such as the hapless Robert Mercier and Van Dyck who were caught posting Carrington's books from British coastal cities" (101).

² This description best fits Carrington's open publications. However, many of his pornographic works were also notable for their quality.

³ Guacamole is a pseudonym. It has been linked with the name Hans Walravens.

⁴ See Guacamole and Straight for detailed bibliographies of Carrington's publications.

⁵ For example, see *Catalogue of Rare Books*, *Bibliotheca Arcana* and *The Paris Book Gazette*. See also CUP.364.t.3 at the British Library: a sticker reading "Charles Carrington, 13 Faubourg Montmartre, Paris IX" is pasted over the original publisher's imprint on this copy of Albert von Schrenck-Notzing's *Therapeutic Suggestion in Psychopathia Sexualis* (Trans. C.G. Chaddock. F.A. Davis & Co, 1895).

⁶ Sexual-scientific publications thus comprised over ten percent of Carrington's total production between 1895 and 1907. See Guacamole and Straight.

⁷ Carrington published about 85 percent of his catalogue during these years. See Guacamole and Straight.

⁸ Carrington lived in exile in Brussels until around 1912, when he moved back to Paris. He died in Paris in 1921. See Colligan, *Publisher's* 80-90.

⁹ See BNF Fons Q10B (salle T), Catalogues d'éditeurs: III. Catalogues Paul Ferdinando, as well as Guacamole's and Straight's bibliographies.

¹⁰ Nichols pirated several of Carrington's original scientific productions in the early 1900s under his own imprint, The Walpole Press. See, for instance, Straight's notes on Nichols's piracies of *The Genital Laws* (1900/1901) and *The Genital Sense* (1900/1900) in her checklist of Carrington's works. The publisher Charles Hirsch also pirated Carrington's publications in the early 1900s, but he does not appear to have done so with his sexual-scientific material. See Straight's checklist.

¹¹ For example, see Boroughs 13-15; Craig 52; Potter, "Obscene 98; Sigel, *Governing* 84 and Searle 565.

¹² See "United Kingdom, "Charles Carrington". Investigations into Carrington's business were instigated by complaints to the Home Office about his "indecent" advertisements. That the Foreign Office first characterized them as comparatively innocent in September 1895 indicates that their investigation was sparked by advertisements for his open publications. As the Office's investigation progressed, they labeled his publications with stronger terms like "obscene" and by 1899, "pornographic," suggesting that they had become aware of the clandestine side of his business. Unfortunately, the "specimen" catalogues that the Foreign Office worked from were destroyed.

¹³ See Genette, *Paratexts* 9 for a discussion of the paratext's addressee.

¹⁴ Since it was coined by Julia Kristeva in 1966, the term ‘intertextuality’ has been borrowed and transformed repeatedly. Since I am interested here in the way in which an author’s borrowing of another text, by referencing it or by inserting it, either in part or in whole, into the main text, transforms the meaning of that text, I prefer to use it rather simply in Genette’s sense: that is, it connotes here “a relationship of co-presence between two texts or among several texts” and as “the actual presence of one text within another” (Genette, *The Architect* 1-2).

¹⁵ Leonard Smithers had advertised a copy of *L’Amour aux Colonies* priced at £3 10s in several issues of his *Catalogue of Rare Books* in 1895. See Volumes 2, 4, and 6.

¹⁶ Aside from *The Lancet*, I have discovered announcements of the 1896 *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*’s publication in only two medical journals, *The Medical Press and Circular Advertiser* and *The British Medical Journal*. *The Medical Press and Circular Advertiser* did not actually review the book, but merely assented to printing Carrington’s paid advertisement, which announced the book’s title, publisher and price for at least three issues. *The British Medical Journal* also neglected to review the book. It did, however, note its publication alongside several other recent medical and scientific books. See “Advertisements” and “Books, Etc, Received”.

¹⁷ The 1896 *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* has only a rudimentary scholarly apparatus, comprising two or three footnotes and very a short index.

¹⁸ Discussing the dubious ‘scientific works’ that they frequently received from France, *The British Medical Journal* observed that it had “become the custom of French publishers to supply with each copy of a book sent out for review a printed slip for the use of the reviewer suggesting, and, in fact, supplying that exact notice that the publisher would desire to read” by 1908 (*Les eunuques* 905). Like these publishers, Carrington may well have hoped that medical journals would print his own summary of *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* instead of actually reviewing it. Alternatively, Carrington may simply have been seeking publicity in any way that he could: when *The Lancet*’s reviewer deemed *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* to be filth, it still received great deal of publicity—albeit as a titillating or pornographic work instead of a scholarly study.

¹⁹ Both Havelock Ellis and Iwan Bloch, for instance, cited the 1898 edition of *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* in their own studies in the early 1900s, but made no mention of its predecessors (Ellis, *The Sexual Impulse* 38, 83-4 and 212; Bloch 414).

²⁰ Carrington may well have been inspired by Lane in this regard: aside from the fact that The Bodley Head was well known for its publication of fine “first editions,” the publishers’ circles overlapped. They corresponded between 1919 and 1920, and may have known each other before that period. See BL RP 3208 for reproductions of their correspondence.

²¹ This excludes Féré and Tarnowsky’s books, which were authorized editions. As far as I can determine, Carrington did not edit or add to these works’ scholarly apparatuses to emphasise their eroticism.

²² I discuss Bedborough’s arrest, trial, and their discussion in the media, including in *Reynolds’s Newspaper* and *The Lancet*, at length in Chapter Three.

²³ Carrington also published an American version of the same book entitled *The Shame of Oscar Wilde* in the same year.

²⁴ Carrington also purchased the copyright to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in 1905 for £60 (Mackie 986).

²⁵ Rachel Sagner Buurma identifies the practice of issuing books “in a uniform format and under the unifying publisher’s imprint” as well as, in the case of pseudonymous authorship, a pseudonym as a key characteristic of a book series (18)

²⁶ Many early sexologists, including Krafft-Ebing, analyzed narrative sketches of sexual pathology compiled by other specialists. See Chapter Six for more details.

²⁷ It is probably not a coincidence that Carrington also sold this edition of *Psychopathia Sexualis*. See his *Catalogue of Rare Books*.

²⁸ The chronology of the Jacobus X series was as follows: Carrington published *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* in 1896, and its second revised edition in 1898. *Ethnology of the Sixth Sense* appeared in 1899; *The Genital Laws* and *The Genital Sense* followed in 1900; and *The Psychopathy of Love, The Basis of Passional Psychology, L'Ethnologie du sens Génital* (a French translation of *The Genital Sense*) and *Marquis de Sade et son oeuvre* were published in 1901. Production of the series subsequently dwindled. *Crossways of Sex*, the series' last English-language work, was published in 1904, and *Lois Genitales* (a French translation of *The Genital Laws*), its last French-language work, was published in 1906, announcing "Jacobus X's" death in its preface.

²⁹ Carrington's claims in the preface to the *Satyricon of Petronius* that he never sent another work to the *Lancet* to review again (vi). I have found announcements for only two of Carrington's publications in medical journals after 1897—his authorized English and French translations of studies by Benjamin Tarnowsky and Charles Féré in 1898 and 1904. Féré's and Tarnowsky were both influential Continental scholars. They were frequently mentioned in British medical journals, and had published in them. *The Lancet* was thus unlikely to complain to the authorities about their circulation, even though they almost certainly remembered that Carrington also sold "filth".

³⁰ By 1898, Carrington had become well known to the Home Office, which was closely monitoring his activities in Paris and, through the Foreign Office, urging the French authorities to prosecute him for publishing and disseminating obscenity. As early as September 1895, the Home Office had alerted the Foreign Office to Carrington's mail-order business and entreated its officials to collaborate with the Paris police to suppress his circulars (NA PRO FO 83/1786). While the Foreign Office's repeated efforts to convince French authorities to suppress his business were largely unsuccessful until 1899, when Carrington was finally convicted of selling indecent literature in Paris and expelled from France, it is probable that well before that date he was aware that his activities were being scrutinized (NA PRO FO 83/1786). He hardly needed them to have another reason to agitate for his arrest.

³¹ See NA PRO HO 45/15139/A59329/2.

³² Early- and mid-nineteenth-century publishers like John Joseph Stockdale and William Dugdale also made use of this technique in their periodical advertisements. See Chapters One and Two for more details.

³³ These works include *Criminal Ethnography* (Dr. Corre), *The Dangers of Debauchery* (Dr. Virey), *Anthropological Studies of the Esoteric Habits and Customs of Antiquity*, *Polygamia Triumphatrix: the History and Philosophy of Polygamy*, *The Morbid Manifestations of the Sexual Instinct* (Tarnowsky), *Medical Studies of the Latin Poets* (Dr. Meniere), *Curious Bypaths of History* (Cabanés), *Lectures on the Origin, Progress and Elimination of Syphilis* (Paul Robertson, MD), and *La Jeunesse rendue aux Viellards*. The advertising pages to which I refer differ sharply from those that accompanied the 1896 *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*: That it was originally formulated to appeal to a wide middle-class readership is evident from the kinds of books it advertises within it, which include salacious open publications like *A French Volunteer of the War of Independence*, *Facetious Folklore: Stories from the Russian*, *The Book of Age-Rejuvenescence*, and *The Pleasant and Satirical Stories of Jerome Morlini*.

³⁴ (*Genital Laws* I 1; *Genital Laws* II 1; *BMJ*, "Pornographic"1269)

³⁵ See Chapter Three for a detailed account of this raid.

³⁶ This review probably would have attracted some readers because, while negative, it drew attention to the book's eroticism. Carrington certainly didn't consider any publicity bad publicity, and was fond of quoting such negative reviews in the prefaces to his books. See, for instance, his editor's foreword to *Curious By-Paths of History*, viii – xx.

³⁷ Reynolds's sudden enthusiasm for Carrington's sexual-scientific publications makes sense if we consider that at the time that the review for *Flagellation in France* was published, it was mounting an enormous campaign against sexual-scientific censorship. See Chapter Three for more details.

³⁸ During the summer of 1898, even as *Reynolds's* displayed Carrington's advertisements in its classified pages, the newspaper published an article entitled "Booksellers and Erotic Literature: Astounding Revelations" which drew attention to "a ...large bookseller who is an extensive advertiser. He makes a special feature of medical books, which he carefully describes in his catalogues. They are sent broadcast, not to members of the medical profession only, but to any one who writes for them" (10). See Chapter Three for more details.

³⁹ Home Office officials suspected that Henri Robert was one of Carrington's aliases, but, as Colette Colligan has recently shown, Robert was one of the agents who smuggled Carrington's books into Britain from France (*Publisher's* 30-32).

⁴⁰ Carrington may have written to the *British Medical Journal* in 1896 asking them to advertise *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology*, as they noted that they had received a letter from Mr. C. Carrington, Paris, in their Correspondence section ("Books, Etc, Received" 1816).

⁴¹ See NA PRO HO 45/15139/A59329/2.

⁴² At present, I have been unable to locate detailed information about this publisher. However, a review of Vigot Frères' publications via WorldCat reveals that the published medical and social-scientific works in the late nineteenth century, and continued to publish on biological science and medical and veterinary practice well into the 1970s.

⁴³ Carrington's advertisements for *Telery* also implicitly suggested that its scenes are genuinely instructive because Oscar Wilde, an 'urning' himself, had written them. His *Catalogue of Rare and Curious English Books* announced that the "work is, undoubtedly, the most powerful and most cleverly written erotic Romance which has appeared in the English language during recent years. Its author – a man of great imagination – has conceived a *thrilling story based to some extent on the subject treated by an eminent litterateur who died a few months ago – i.e. the urning, or man-loving man*. It is a most extraordinary story of passion; and, whilst dealing with scenes which surpass in freedom the wildest license, the culture of its author's style adds an additional piquancy and spice to the narration" (25). His *List of Rare and Curious Books* went further, advising readers that he "may say that *the writer referred to above is stated on good authority to be none other than Oscar Wilde*. This becomes more convincing when we compare the style of his famous "Dorian Gray" with the present brilliant but AWFULLY LEWD book" (14. Emphasis added).

⁴⁴ Carrington was certainly not the only publisher to use sexual-scientific language and other references to market smut: as Sigel has noted, publishers that traded in erotic images also advertised them using sexual-scientific language to emphasize the exoticism and deviancy of the sexual practices that the images depicted ("Overly Affectionate" 117).

⁴⁵ To some extent, this theory rather intriguingly crystallizes the assumptions that underpinned Carrington's marketing tactics, which drew their power from his reader's established assumptions about and understanding of sexual science, pornography, and the factors which defined (or did not define) their difference.

⁴⁶ This also implicitly explains *Suburban Souls'* own indeterminate genre status as erotic novel, diary, and learned study.

Conclusion

Charles Carrington's death in 1921 did not signal the end of the traffic in medical and scientific works through the British obscenity trade. While the scientific study of sexuality slowly gained public acceptance over the first half of the twentieth century, sexual health manuals and sexological studies continued to circulate along some of the same networks of distribution, exchange and sale as mass-market pornography (Cocks, "Saucy" 465). Bookshops in London's Charing Cross Road, which became a new centre of business for dealers in sexual writing in the interwar period, sold obscene books and images, nudist magazines, health manuals, and sexological works such as *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* to customers alongside one another (Sigel, *Modern Love* loc. 417; Cocks, "Reading Obscene" 282-283). The same mixture of publications also continued to be advertised for sale in periodicals, including magazines that themselves straddled the boundaries of the licit and the illicit. Memorialized in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, the sexual writing available to readers through the racy periodical *Photo Bits* included "night guides" to Paris and London, gallant works, and racy novels alongside versions of *Aristotle's Masterpiece* and new "marital aid[s]" such as R. T. Trall's "wonderfully illustrated" *Sexual Physiology* (Burns-Levin 261). Readers of the fetish periodical *London Life* would similarly view advertisements for reprints of sensational, sexually explicit works such as *The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk* (1836) and W.M. Cooper's *History of the Rod* (1870), one of John Camden Hotten's bestselling 'histories' of sexual 'perversion, alongside birth control manuals (Sigel, *Modern Love* loc. 429). As Sigel has noted, and as the descriptions above suggest, a great deal of the sexual-scientific material available to readers through obscenity dealers' businesses in the first half of the twentieth century comprised the same works that had circulated through the trade in the late nineteenth century (loc. 348). For Sigel, the continued currency of these works illustrates the depth of demand for sexual information in the interwar period (loc. 348). The fact that British readers encountered works such as *Untrodden Fields of Anthropology* among "'art studies', pin-ups, birth control ads, cyclostyled manuscripts, and pulp magazines" within and past the interwar years, also, however, illustrates the

enduring influence of nineteenth century fringe publishing activity (Cocks, "Reading Obscene" 282-283). By establishing a varied trade in explicit writing, by emphasising certain social-scientific works' erotic appeal, and by publishing new works for that purpose, nineteenth-century fringe publishers-booksellers shaped the kinds of reading material that twentieth-century readers encountered when they sought out sexual information and sexual entertainment and influenced how they approached them, as a new generation of obscenity dealers drew on the reservoir of ideas, metaphors, and narratives about sexual science which was the legacy of their businesses.¹

By tracing the actions of fringe publishers of sexual science over the course of a turbulent century, this dissertation has attempted to pinpoint these publisher's earlier influence on sexual science's development and cultural predicament in the nineteenth century. I have examined the the rise of the obscenity trade's exploitation of medical and scientific eroticism and its changing character throughout the century, and shown how unorthodox medical publishers and radical publishers worked alongside, and had to contend with, the commercial force and cultural influence of these publishers, as well as the common legal, social and economic forced that shaped and were shaped by fringe publishing activity in a broader sense. Many of these publisher's legacies, such as that I have traced above, remain to be teased out properly.² That their publishing practices not only instigated the formulation of new laws to regulate the print marketplace, but also initiated the development of a variety of interrelated discourses and reading practices that situated scientific legitimacy in relation to publication context, however, attests to the disruptive cultural force that these publishers represented, whether they were motivated by social and political concerns or simply out to make money. One of the most enduring legacies of these publisher's actions, however, is the way in which the historical record of their activity brings into focus the fundamental incoherence of Victorian distinctions between sexual science and sexual entertainment, an incoherence that certainly emerged in public and legal debates about obscenity and sexual-scientific legitimacy, but only becomes clear to its full extent once the details of the fringe publication of sexual science are, after much labour, uncovered. My hope is that, in using these publishers as a lens to examine the incoherencies of divisions between sexual science and sexual entertainment in the nineteenth century, this dissertation has opened up new possibilities for understanding a sexual culture and a scientific field that are each frequently—and often problematically—considered foundational to our own ideas about

sexuality, and that considerations of the historical methods of reading and interpretation that these publisher's businesses make visible will be brought to bear on future considerations of the character and operations of Victorian sexual discourse.

Endnotes

¹ The publishing practices and key discourses surrounding the moral and legal “grey zone” of sexual representation that this dissertation examines cast a long international shadow whose investigation is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but bears mentioning in order to emphasize just how influential they were. In America, a country in which evolving discourses about obscenity paralleled, and had been influenced by, the British context, sexual science also fell into a “grey zone” between the legitimate and the obscene, a social and legal problem that the country’s authorities sought to manage by adopting the Hicklin “test” of obscenity in the formulation of their own rulings. Unsurprisingly, the American obscenity trade was influenced by, and intersected with, the expanding British trade in erotic materials. As Donna Dennis has shown, since at least the 1840s, American fringe publishers had looked to the British trade to acquire erotic material, were inspired by the publishing activities of its most notorious players, and capitalized on their notoriety across the Atlantic as they reprinted and repackaged their works (133; 155; 265). In the interwar period, as the American police, government, and anti-vice societies treated copies of John Cleland’s *Fanny Hill* and Margaret Sanger’s works on birth control with the same intolerance, American fringe publishers similarly looked to the British trade to capitalize on the “grey zone” between science and entertainment (Gertzman, *Bookleggers* 22). New York-based obscenity dealers such as Samuel Roth, Esar Levine and Benjamin Rebhuhn reprinted and marginally repackaged a significant portion of Carrington’s original productions, as well as a canon of works that had circulated through the “high class” late nineteenth-century obscenity trade more generally to tap into a market of readers who liked to think that their tastes were exclusive (187; 230; 311; 413). As with Nichols, Smithers’ and Carrington’s businesses, these publishers advertised their editions’ origins in the elite Cannibal network through their paratexts, liberally mentioning Burton’s name and underscoring that the works had been “Privately Printed” or “Privately published for 500 subscribers” (Gertzman, Roth 307). It was thus not only the works of nineteenth-century British fringe publishers that these American fringe publishers adopted as their own, nor even the techniques that they used to package and repackage their wares, sexual-scientific and otherwise. These fringe publishers also exploited the weight of the history of the nineteenth-century fringe trade in sexual science, using a history of books that accrued, through the history of their publication and republication, immediately recognizable associations with exclusivity, secrecy, and eroticism.

² How the “grey zone” shaped and was shaped by the activities of other publishers of the time, particularly the nineteenth century’s gradually emerging body of specialist medical publishers, might shed greater light, for example, on the ways in which professional medical textbooks on sexual topics were published, and who could access them.

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