

VICTORIAN QUEER: MARGINALITY AND MONEY IN NINETEENTH-  
CENTURY LITERATURE

A Dissertation

by

JUNG SUN CHOI

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Clinton Machann
Committee Members,	Mary Ann O'Farrell
	Claudia Nelson
	Melanie Hawthorne
Head of Department,	Nancy Warren

May 2013

Major Subject: English

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how Victorians used the word “queer” as associated with senses of “counterfeit” and “eccentricity” in selected Victorian novels. The word was popularly used, by Victorian writers of both genders and in various and diverse circumstances, to mean the unfamiliar, the unconventional, the incomprehensible, and the non-normal. Unlike the contemporary uses of the word, which are oriented toward a relatively particular meaning, the non-normal sexual, Victorian uses of the word had been fluid, unstable, and indeterminate, yet referring to or associating with the non-normal aspects in things and people. Knowing how the Victorians used the word helps us to understand that a concept of marginality can be extended to the extent of tolerating Otherness in marginalized positions and minority identities.

Victorian novels including Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Aurora Floyd* (1863), Wilkie Collins’s *Hide and Seek* (1854), and Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847) demonstrate how the word “queer” is indeterminately used and also represent how queer marginality is appreciated or rejected, and tolerated or discriminated against. As queerness is defined as the status of counterfeitability, a counterpart of authenticity, queer subjects are described to provoke a feeling of repulsion and tend to be criminalized or pathologized.

On the other hand, as queerness is defined as the status of eccentricity, queer subjects are sympathized and defended in the narrative. Manifestations of eccentricities in queer subjects are occasionally reprimanded, but admired for queer subjects’

uncommon or distinguished individuality. Victorian novels demonstrate that queer marginality can be employed as a self-fashioning identity or social status for any non-normal individual to deal with social pressure of conformity.

DEDICATION

*To my son Joonhyung & my husband Bongtaek*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Clinton Machann, Dr. Mary Ann O'Farrell, Dr. Claudia Nelson, and Dr. Melanie Hawthorne, for their guidance and support through my writing life completing this dissertation. Without their patience and their trust, I would not start my academic life as a Victorian scholar. I also want to express my gratitude to the department faculty and staff for making my time at Texas A & M University a great experience.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION: QUEER, MARGINALITY, AND MONEY IN VICTORIAN  
NOVELS

**The Word “Queer”: The Other of Victorian Keywords**

The word “queer” is worth noting since it has been used for a long time to reflect a social and cultural aspect of individuality that embodies a difference from what is normal. The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* records the entrance of the adjective “queer” into the English language around the early sixteenth century, when it had English spellings such as “queir” (1508), “queyr” (1513), “quere” (1550), “queere” (1598), and “quer” (1621). To the present period, the word has addressed certain characteristics of individual behavior that are regarded as “cross,” “oblique,” “squint,” “perverse,” or “wrongheaded,” and the word has been used on various occasions in which something is not right or not fitting. My objective in taking up this word is to examine the construction of marginality represented in nineteenth-century British literature and culture, with an emphasis on selected Victorian novels in which the word “queer” does not indicate directly a sense of marginality but is rather used to connote Otherness. Examination of the Victorian uses and meanings of the word elucidates how Otherness is defined and redefined, the boundary of Otherness is drawn and permeated, and the idea of marginality can be tolerated within Victorian society.

The word “queer” was frequently used by both male and female Victorian writers; it appears in fiction, poetry, and prose, and was casually used in realist and



popular novels. The word was also popular in non-fiction writings on a variety of diverse issues, including economics, law, arts, architecture, urban planning, music composition, and fishery. The problem or/and benefit about this pervasive use is that Victorian writers did not mean the same thing in using the word, so that there can be no single precise definition. Nevertheless, the Victorians used the word “queer” widely in conversation to describe anything related to the inarticulable and indescribable, such as “strange,” “odd,” “peculiar,” “eccentric,” or in appearance or character of “non-normal” condition. More generally, Victorian novelists relied on the word “queer” in representing the counter-normative categories that describe a difference from the ordinary, the majority opinion, the casual, the traditional and customary, and the normal in areas of political opinion, religious choice and practice, fashion, and the body (or body parts). Such was the popularity and pervasiveness of Victorians’ use of the word “queer” in referring to something different or variant from the so-called normal that it can be said to be a key nineteenth-century term.

Raymond Williams’s *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* offers an encouragement to those whose critical inquiry tends to orient their attention toward the smallest unit of language, a word. In his introduction, Williams claims the legitimacy of the employment of a word or words as a critical reading frame in analyzing issues and problems that society and culture have faced. He defines a group of chosen words, called “Keywords,” as “significant indicative words in certain forms of thought” and “certain uses [of these words] bound together certain ways of seeing culture and society” (15). The examination of words can expose social and political realities of a particular society

as the words reflect and also are embedded in social and political meanings and values of a particular moment and space. Williams states that social and political issues “could not at all be understood simply by analysis of the words,” and yet “unless we are conscious of the words as elements of the problems” many of these social and political issues could not attract adequate critical attention in understanding the ideologically naturalized beliefs, values, and perceptions of the dominant group (16).

In other words, the critical study of words is useful to understand how people are socialized, measured and normalized (or discriminated) as against. In *Bad Language: Are Some Words Better Than Others?* Edwin L. Battistella shows that the meanings and uses of English words have been modified, manipulated, and refashioned to conform to the social norms of the English language. He writes that intellectual ability, moral value, character, and political status are measured by the words speakers use and that social perception of normative language “provided a strong motivation for speakers to conform” to a standard of English language (13). Eric Hobsbawm offers what I am using as the epigraph for my project on the examination of the word “queer.” He states in *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* that “words are witnesses which often speak louder than documents” in historicizing human beings (13). The history of a word will be a history of people whose living conditions, perceptions, ideas and values are not separable from language. The examination of the history of the word “queer” will give us an understanding of human lives and relations in which the word “queer” is used, spoken, referred to, and signified. In other words, the history of a word must contain the history of persons the word has referred to.

One interesting point that the examination of words exposes for us is the sustainability of language. Language continuously changes and proves its vitality in refashioning the form and the sense of each word. Robert A. Leonard claims that “the words most likely to be borrowed, or ‘imported,’ into a language are those that refer to some new concept or artifact” (4). A word will either disappear from or stay in the language. Even when it stays, the word has to bear a sense, usage, or shape according to the demand of the users. Often compared with weather-stained and age-strained coins that “were too often clipped, bitten, counterfeited, chucked, and generally abused,” words are abused, tinkered with, and modified, and like coins, they also always struggle to fit to the constantly changing demand (Valenze 1). Much as base or counterfeit coins have historically been tolerated and used, words of dialect or slang can pass for standard words and enjoy their currency in society. In *Nineteenth Century English*, Richard W. Bailey notes that nineteenth-century society’s efforts to maintain “clean,” respectable English were often subverted by slang users and “honest” people who were fascinated by colloquial language (183). Thus, the survival of a particular word or meaning of a word can be said to depend on how frequently speakers use it in a specific way and how attractive a word appears to the speaker. I would suggest that the word is one of those words that show the vitality and viability of its use, as the word “queer” was initially used in the sixteenth century, continually has gained a new sense and usage, and still appears as a contemporary word.

## **The Versatility of the Word**

A noteworthy element in the history of the word “queer” is that the word has tended to relate to a new realm, extend its scope, and vary in its signification, which characteristics Williams defines as “the vitality of a language” (21). The generating force of a language often makes the relations between words and meanings complicated and problematic. Yet Williams points out that “the most active problems of meanings” are “always primarily embedded in actual relationships, and that both the meanings and the relationships are typically diverse and variable within the structures of particular social orders and the processes of social and historical change” (22). As Williams observes about the living force in a language, the word “queer,” depending on the senses of its inherent obscurity and its definitional lack, shows a tendency to relate, extend, and vary in its signification. A philological history of the word records that “queer” has been associated with diverse kinds of Otherness, including social, economic, and sexual Otherness.

In the nineteenth century the word “queer” was used to denote “strange,” “odd,” “peculiar,” and “eccentric” appearances in people and things and contemporaneously in monetary and economic matters. While it is not clear how and when the definition of the word “queer” began to include the monetary meaning, the *OED* tells us that the nineteenth-century usage of the word was often colloquially to mean “bad and worthless,” or “counterfeited and forged” paper money and “base” coin. For instance, a definition of the verb “queer” has been “to ridicule and to swindle,” which appeared to be used in association with economic relations around 1854. The noun “queer” also

commonly signified bad money or base coin and forged paper currency, as indicated by examples dating in use from 1812 until 1981. J. Redding Ware's *Passing English of the Victorian Era* (1972) provides entries related to the word that refers to economic matters. Found in police documents, terms such as "queer-bit makers" and "queer shovels" were used to mean coiners and bad money, respectively. The word was frequently used to refer to counterfeited money, as in "queer bill," and it was also used more generally, as a monetary-related referent.

In chapter two of this dissertation, I explore how Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Aurora Floyd* (1863) uses the word "queer" to emphasize the counterfeitability of the villain, which indicates that his social status is determined by economic norms. In focusing on a specific use and meaning of the word, that is a sense of counterfeit, I also examine the word as a monetary metaphor in the Victorian construction of social minority subjects in Braddon's novel. The concept of the counterfeit is important to the philological definition of the word "queer," but it is moreover an idea crucial to the understanding of nineteenth-century perceptions about gender, sexuality, class, and money. Braddon's narrators criticize queerness-provoking matters in things or persons that cause a representational crisis that emerges in an embarrassment between the real and the copy, and between the idea and the matter.

While Braddon's novels show that the concept of the counterfeit is often materialized in the word "queer," Braddon's narrators suggest that what the pervasiveness of counterfeit and queer as economic metaphors would tell us is that money is already being prioritized in the ways through which the Victorians understand

themselves and evaluate others; money also becomes a sign and an analytic term in understanding the construction of social relations between individuals. By examining the social uses and meanings of money in terms of a representational means, as well as in its metaphorical use, I argue in chapter two that Victorian counterfeit culture existed in an ambivalent response to non-normative Otherness, displaying attraction and repulsion simultaneously and therefore also admitting the possibility that non-normative Otherness might prevail. The history of the word “queer” shows that it is frequently connected to “counterfeit” money. In turn, histories of counterfeit money reveal the interesting story that queer money, illegal and illegitimate, has sometimes been accepted as currency and even preferred to official money (Selgin 31) and that the circulation of queer money was tolerated as an inevitable part of the economic culture (Valenze 43). Given the cultural representation of queer money and its “accepted” currency, I use Braddon’s novel as a means to suggest that queer subjects may provoke a similar response located between ambivalence or contradiction and acceptance or tolerance.

### **Victorian Queer and Marginal Subjectivity**

Like the other chapters, chapter three again looks into the nineteenth-century literary uses and cultural meanings of the word “queer,” particularly in another of its common associations, that with the concept of “eccentricity.” Collins’s novels show that the word “queer” is used in close relation to its correlative meaning “eccentric” as a referent for a socially marginalized subject. While Braddon’s use and meaning of the word in addressing a minority subject are inclined to build the monstrous Other who

must be removed or contained, Collins's use of the word tends to contribute to the construction of the relatively tolerable Other whose difference is a sign of unconventional attributes, but not of being repulsive. In *Hide and Seek* (1854), the social and cultural value of the word "queer" as a referent for the notion of eccentricity is heightened due to nostalgia for times before rapid changes began in industrialization, which endorses an individuality that resists standardization and commoditization. In this chapter, I examine Collins's uses and understandings of the word "queer" in association with the concept of eccentricity, which also reiterates John Stuart Mill's idea of eccentricity. Such an association can be said to reflect the Victorian fantasy of having one's own individuality, that is of being different from the anonymous public. While Collins's notion of eccentric individuality works as a way for an individual to cope with the social norm that validates assimilating to commonly acceptable ways of living, it also touches upon the fundamental question of how the boundaries of the human subject between the normative and the non-normative are drawn up through the economic language of gender, sexuality, and the body. While Braddon's novels show that money is a crucial factor in the formation of a difference that must be contained within, Collins's novels, agreeing on money's power, celebrate economic queerness as extraordinary.

Valentine Blyth is a figure of queer marginality that Collins takes an interest in for fostering his notion of social toleration of differences. *Jane Eyre* is also a representative marginal figure, in this case one used by Charlotte Brontë in showing how marginal subjects survive and, as an unintended result of discrimination, succeed in preserving their queer individuality. The narrator, older and married Jane, shows us how

queer little Jane sees that she is dependent and must prepare herself to be independent; she must be self-sufficient, supporting herself through her labor. After eight years of education and teaching work at Lowood, Jane concludes that what she can have is “servitude” even though she desires “liberty” (102). Jane says to herself, not loudly, that she will choose “servitude,” because “it does not sound too sweet. It is not like such words as Liberty, Excitement, Enjoyment: delightful sounds truly, but no more than sounds for me, and so hollow and fleeting that is mere waste of time to listen to them” (102). Jane chooses or rather accepts the opposite path to becoming independent. Her decision seems to tell us that she would survive in the face of adversity even though she needs to choose “servitude” instead of “liberty.” Jane’s marginality, which is constituted by economic destitution, being disowned by the world, and disconnection from the idea of sweetness, is queered because Jane can feel a sense of comfort in spite of being marginal (102), which makes her subjectivity non-categorizable, indeterminate, and queer. Defining Jane’s marginal subjectivity as the manifestation of her queerness, chapter four explores the ways in which marginal subjects are categorized by some terms, including “queer,” that indicate the intention of insult and critique, and they find a way of prevailing through embracing the categorization.

My focus on the Victorian uses of the word “queer” aims to understand the marginal subjectivity of the Other represented in nineteenth-century literature and culture. In analyzing what constitutes the category of the Other, critical readings tend to map out the binary oppositional relation between the dominant and the dominated and the oppressor and the oppressed. In other words, the dominant group can and will



categorize and confine the Other partially out of anxiety and based on a rationale that justifies their dominance and violence. In turn, the dominated may be assumed to be humiliated and crushed, and so they will choose to assimilate or disappear. Yet my appreciation and use of the word have been developed with an emphasis on an aspect of “noncompliance” in the history of the word and an interest in queerness beyond this binary opposition. My focus on the word “queer” will deviate from a militant battle of the dominated against the dominant group and pay attention to those queer subjects who do not and cannot contribute their energy to the subverting practices of challenging the dominant but instead accept and embrace the given category, often enjoying the marginal status of Otherness. They are those who want to get by or strive to remain and who want to take not despair but comfort out of being contained. This group of people is often doubly marginalized, in that their voices are taken to be insignificant, and they are constantly queered even by the marginal group.

In his book *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness and the Body*, Lennard J. Davis focuses on the word “normal” to understand the historical process of discrimination and marginalization of disability. As Davis notes, the word “normal,” which entered the English language around 1840, was used to mean “constituting, conforming to, not deviating or differing from, the common type or standard, regular, usual,” helping the construction of the average body as the norm that invalidates the disabled body (24). The word “queer” also signifies something that the word “normal” opposes and criticizes. The word “queer” tends to be associated with a variety of Otherness, whose appearance or presence is annoying and anxiety-provoking because

the origin and nature of Otherness is unknowable, unnamable, and indeterminate: it often resists categorization.

### **The Visibility of Money in Victorian Society and Culture**

In understanding the Victorian perceptions of marginality, it is important to see that the uses and meanings of the word “queer” are often influenced by money and economics. Just at/as the compiled records of the philological history of the word “queer” prove, the word has been used to literally mean “counterfeit” coins and paper money, and the word is also taken as a monetary metaphor to define the boundary line between socially acceptable and unacceptable. The proliferation of the economic discussions of the word “queer” and its use in Victorian novels has lacked critical attention. I argue that reading Victorian fiction through tracing the money-related uses and the effects of the word “queer” provides insight into the moment that the economic norm comes to be represented as determining the categorization of socially marginal subjects, while simultaneously the norm is often challenged. As the word has closely carried the meanings of economic Otherness in its linguistic currency, the economic dimension of queerness is helpful in examining the viability of marginal subjects represented in Victorian novels.

While the nineteenth-century “queer” was actively used to mean the economic non-normal, the history of the word indicates that money can be employed in making a strong argument about the value of the self, social rank, human relations of domination and subordination and aspects of race, class, gender and sexuality. Social historians such

as Hobsbawm have argued that the influences and values of the previous period's ideas, including religious and moral concepts, had been on the decrease, being superseded and overwhelmed by the economic. I uncover the multifaceted forms and meanings of money as related to several sets of social problems that compel us to consider money as an ideological sign, as any word is always preoccupied in generating an ideologically vested sense. In examining the Victorian understanding of marginality, examination of literary representations of money in Victorian novels is useful in terms of money's representational value, its metaphorical utility, and its disciplinary effect. In this section, I select several critical texts that focus on money's social meanings and its cultural influence represented in Victorian novels.

At a time of industrialization and commercialization, Victorian society and culture moved fast toward material comfort, technical convenience, entertainment, financial prosperity, and a refashioning of traditional values and beliefs. Many economic critics, including Gordon Bigelow, Paul Delany, Francis O'Gorman, and Deborah Valenze, observe that Victorian people's affinity with monetary ways of thinking shows how money was crucial to nineteenth-century society. Money is the subject matter in more than economic relations since it is compelled to extend its concerns and interests to non-economic areas, intervening even with the formation, redefinition, or destruction of people's behavior and belief about how society is managed. Social and cultural changes driven by economic forces influence the ways in which people view values, beliefs, and common sense in economic terms.

The value of money or having money had been realized long before the nineteenth century. From the seventeenth century onward, money had become a basic element in determining social relations, in deciding the validity of human life, and in contributing to the legitimacy of a national identity. In *Social Life of Money in the English Past*, Valenze, borrowing from Karl Polanyi's term "monetization," points out a social transition in which the economic, previously a subordinate determinant to human living, was gradually taken to be the primary factor in measuring the value of human beings through the invention of credit and the allowance of local coinage (11). As money either in abstract or material form affects individual perception about value, money is closely associated with the value of the individual, and early modern people tended to extend the influence of money to social relations (Valenze 23). The economic culture of monetization continued into the nineteenth century, and yet the process was more concentrated by economic desire of individual subjects. Victorian novelists had witnessed new cash pouring in from outside England, and they also observed people with new cash assume a higher social status. Victorian society was under the spell of an idea of unbounded progress, witnessing new industrial towns and factories spring up in the heart of the city and welcoming technological inventions to mobilize the process faster. Victorian society seemed to abound in products, and to be affluent in comforts, even while destitution existed amidst the prosperity.

Occasionally, Victorian novelists were compared with or confused with economic journalists. Victorian texts show their authors' complex and complicated positions, relations and responses to money and what it can do and should not do. They

also perceive money's involvement with the formation of meanings, values, beliefs, and assumptions, an involvement capable of driving conceptual reorientation on the largest scale. Observing the complementary relationship between the rise of economics and the rise of the novel, critics point out those Victorian novelists developed their narrative plots and characterizations relying on their perceptions of economic changes and financial issues.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, as Mary Poovey argues in her book *The Financial System in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, these novelists along with economic journalists, interpreted the difficult financial world for the common reader, even though their interpretations were "not always reliable" (4). Poovey points out the ways in which knowledge and "facts" were produced in the nineteenth century by these novelists who helped to make the unstable and unknown financial system "trustworthy" and "visible" in their literary representations (3). In her chapter "Financial," Christina Crosby also states that Victorian novels present the "abstractions and contradictions of money" to be understandable to the common reader and moreover they provide the reader with the imaginary aspects money create in social relations (226).

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the socialization of money was more visible, and the sheer scale of money's influence and persistent ability to permeate various, even non-economic areas was recognized and attracted wide attention. It is

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the complementary relationship between the economics and the literary, the analogous relation has been examined in terms of the concept of representation. See Marc Shell's *The Economy of Literature* (1978) and *Money, Language and Thought: Literary and Philosophic Economies from the Medieval to the Modern Era* (1993), Florian Coulmas's *Language and Economy* (1993), Jean-Joseph Goux's *The Coiners of Language* (1994), Joshen Horisch's *Heads of Tails: The Poetics of Money* (2000). My next chapter also examines the relation between Victorian novels and money at the conjunction of signifying the idea of counterfeit.

clearly a primary concern of Victorian fiction was money, which was a perennially profitable topic the narrative can rely on. Victorian scholars take an interest in Victorian fiction for the ways in which novelists are engaged in representing the social and cultural repercussions that the conceptual domination of the economic had created. Examining the novelist's relation to a literary market and monetary reward, O'Gorman in his book *Victorian Literature and Finance* argues in that there were many Victorian writers, especially women and popular fiction writers, who chose to "profited from capitalism" and "manipulated their economic environment" for a better social position (8). These Victorian novelists, including Braddon, seem to understand the "secular notion of money" and they seem to be satisfied with the privilege they earn with money (O'Gorman 13).

Victorian fiction seems to be keenly aware of money's social function, namely the measuring of the social value in person, things, and issues. While being fascinated and alarmed by the extensive influence of money, Victorian fiction also capitalizes on the motif of money, suggesting that money is the boundary between normative and non-normative value in persons, things, matters, and even money itself. As I note in chapters two and three, Victorian novelists, including Braddon and Collins, enjoyed a changing literary market that could appreciate the commercial value of their labor without compromising their artistic status. More interestingly, nineteenth-century novels are a cultural vehicle through which the novelists talk about a complex web of social relations and the society in general. While they were aware of the fact that they were part of the commercial system, Victorian novelists were able to self-reflectively examine the

process in which a cultural commodity such as the novel is produced and consumed. Victorian fiction consists of cultural products emerging from the commercial system supported by technical advancement, capitalistic expansion, speedy production, fast consumption, and vast numbers of consumers.

In contrast to O’Gorman, in his book *Literature, Money and the Market*, Delany presents Victorian novelists’ skeptical observation about the liberating effect money might bring to Victorian people and novelists. Nineteenth-century culture seems to be preoccupied with the attraction of new money and new identities that new money raise but it is aware that “great capital and great lands might easily be found in the same family” (Delany 11). Delany argues that as Victorian culture validates the distinction between vulgar money and genteel money, Victorian novelists also respect the line that is drawn for a novelist between a literary figure (genteel) and a trader (vulgar) (13). Money was everywhere announcing its prestige over other matters, and it would have been clear to contemporary readers that Paul Dombey’s question of what money is or what money can do, in Charles Dickens’s *Dombey and Son* (1848), has real depth. Dickens’s novel aims to show that material progress can accompany the destruction of moral values; similarly, both Collins’s *Hide and Seek* and Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847) demonstrate that worldly success, that is economic convenience, may ask each individual to scarify his or her individuality, along with a moral self of his/her own.

Victorian fiction does not hide the reality that money is troublesome because the value of money is often unstable and it is constantly susceptible to the bankruptcy of its meanings and values. They also keenly responded to economic matters, particularly to

the darker side of the British economy of financial fraud, bankruptcy of individuals and local banks, counterfeit banknotes, and failures in the business ethic. Defining Victorian economic culture as “monetization,” “economism,” “commodification of everything,” and “commodity culture,” scholars claim that Victorian novelists, including Dickens, George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, and many others, often tend to express their anxiety about the idea of money, social concentration on getting money, and the desire for unlimited prosperity that had an immediate and drastic impact on people’s lives.

In his article “Filthy Lucre: Victorian Idea of Money,” Christopher Herbert points out that money for Victorian society was more than a means of exchange. Money affected the psychological structure of the Victorian people concerning social relations and became an interference with “the deep structure of the Victorian soul” (186). Herbert observes that the Victorians witnessed an age of booming economic expansion as a tangible reality but that they could not avoid the psychological conflicts with that reality, which were aggravated by the traditional religious perception that English “Christianity idealized poverty and anathematized money” (190). As Herbert argues, Victorian writers could not compromise over “an ultimately irreconcilable incongruity” between the value system of capitalistic material society and that of puritanical religious belief (191) because money carries paradoxical and self-contradictory character that signifies a causal relation between material wealth and spiritual poverty (194). Instead, Victorian writers, relying on the fable of financial ruin, try to warn against the Victorian economic culture being enslaved to money.



While it is Herbert's view that the Victorians could not negotiate with the monetizing process of wealth, other scholars point out that the Victorians did not see puritanical religious belief as adequate for the task of challenging the already overwhelmingly and attractively capitalist culture. Scholars argue that Victorian novelists tend to believe that an emphasis on the moral dimensions of money-getting and money-spending is the best guideline for desirable economic living. In *The Hell of the English: Bankruptcy and the Victorian Novel*, Barbara Weiss states that Victorian novelists seemed to admit the irresistible force of economic domination and try to negotiate with it. As novelists "by and large accepted the prevailing code of commercial honor," the narrative of Victorian fiction is efficiently structured based on a correlation between economic success and moral character (Weiss 71). As Weiss points out, the idea of bankruptcy as a profitable topic and an effective metaphor sheds light on Victorian novelists, including Eliot, who asserted concerns and anxieties about the fast-moving monetization and desired to propose a moral code for the problematic economic culture.

Crosby agrees with Weiss's observation that Victorian novelists endorsed a moral character in the achievement of economic success and that the narratives are produced to the benefit of moralization of wealth. She writes that "if the good characters [of Victorian fiction] are well off in the end, as is often the case, the good things of the world are valorized by bringing their possession, not the other way around" (235). Against the monetizing effects of wealth, which are often troublesome to novelists who cannot welcome money for its own sake, Victorian fiction tends to emphasize that wealth is a reward for the morally good deed, not a sign to determine the moral character.

Critics of nineteenth-century literature observe that economic normalization based on moral value of economic relations often takes effect on the individual person's level. In *Fictions of State: Culture and Credit in Britain, 1694-1994*, Patrick Brantlinger argues that money had been successfully placed under governmental care but money problems were systematically depoliticized and more personalized (139). While later British society held that money even in the form of credit was crucial to the construction of a powerful national identity, nineteenth-century society tended to highlight the individualized and personal aspects of economic problems. The individual is responsible for the maintenance of the moral currency of money and for the proof of monetary value of his moral character. In a culture where wealth can be a sign of moral value and moral character is guaranteed to have monetary rewards, money's disciplinary influence is strengthened in dividing and labeling the social value of people. The ultimate use of money appears at the scene where social marginalization begins (Brantlinger 38).

While novelists take an interest in the moralization of money as a means of making it socially acceptable, they also often participate in the construction of the economic norm. As money is known to be problematic because it is susceptible to a crisis and easily involved with the bankruptcy of monetary values, Victorian economic society is required to construct consensual rules based on which the society can protect the economic system from the threats posed by the instability of money. Scholars, including Jeff Nunokawa, Gordon Bigelow, and Gail Turley Houston, agree that Victorian novels often concentrate on the establishment of the home as a site of protecting moral character that might be contained in the business world. In Victorian

novels, the home is embodied in the figure of the female body (Nunokawa 13) or is conceptually associated with the bank (Bigelow 10, Houston 2). The home, whether the female figure or the bank represents the economic norm that represents abstract values, including moral, faith, belief, and trust (Crosby 229).

Money makes the human and then shapes human relations. Victorian novels seem to raise similar questions of how money can be really the primary evidence and criterion in establishing socially distinctive values of people. Victorian novels offer a material sense of economic relations through the precise account of wage, salary, price, and also point out that social relationships are often defined by the economic: the one who pays and the other one who is paid. Even though one who serves the master and gets paid for her labor is hierarchically placed at the lower level, her money can be liberating. Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is paid thirty pounds per year and usually carries all of her coins in her purse. Jane, who chooses "servitude," shows a sense of ownership over her property that is her earned money. Collins's *Hide and Seek* similarly describes the pleasure of earning money, when Valentine Blyth, a painter, receives a ten pound bank note for selling his painting. Both Jane and Valentine are placed as dependent on their employers' or patrons' purses, but their senses of ownership are simultaneously cultivated through economic transactions. Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65) describes Silas Wegg, a street-seller, who estimates his labor in his dealing with Mr. Boffin. Wegg is paid with two pence and half penny per hour. Even though he is hierarchically lower in his economic relation with Mr. Boffin, Wegg reveals that he is able to negotiate for better pay for his labor and defend the validity of his negotiation.

Occasionally money seems to produce liberating affects even on the part of the marginal Other.

Victorian fiction shows an insightful understanding and analysis of economic circumstances as naturally contributing to the production of economic marginality. In this light, reading Victorian fiction with an emphasis on the monetary metaphor is useful in scrutinizing the ways in which normalization of money influences the categorization of Otherness. Particularly for the objective of my project, reading Victorian fiction through tracing the effects of the word “queer” in use will show the moment that the economic norm, which is not the extreme above and not the extreme below, is a determinant of the categorization of social marginal subjects, since the norm is not abided by and is often challenged.

The second outstanding sense of the word “queer” has been associated with sexual Otherness, particularly meaning “homosexual.” Yet it is unclear how the word that was used to mean the economically marginal gained a sense of homosexuality or became sexualized. Most dictionaries, including the *OED*, record that the newly attained sexual sense of the word appeared in the early twentieth century. The *OED* lists as the first occurrence of this meaning a judicial description of a young man’s character reported in the *Practical Value of Scientific Study of Juvenile Delinquents*, published by the Children’s Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, in 1922. The report used the word “queer” in defining a young man’s sexual tendency.

Yet scholars have sought to prove that a sexual sense of the word would have been recognized and used earlier. In *Henry James and Queer Modernity*, Eric Haralson

claims that the word “queer” as a sexual reference was probably used in the late nineteenth century, particularly in Henry James’s novels, even though there is no explicit connection between the word and sexual matters in Anglo-American literature from the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century (16). In “Queer Money,” Will Fisher also focuses on the conceptual linkage between the word and homosexual, a linkage that was recognized in the early modern period. Fisher argues that the linguistic conjunction of the word “queer” is not a “mere coincidence” and that the conceptual linkage existed before the word gained its sense of homosexuality (10). Examining the social and cultural meanings and values of homosexuality in association with the notions of luxury and usury, Fisher points out that the monetary concept was used and useful in formulating the early sexological language and that illicit and illegitimate sexual relations often were economically described, relying on monetary metaphors (1). Fisher suggests that an examination of the homology between money and sex can be useful because it will show the ways in which the coining process in which “a form (often the image of the monarch) was stamped upon a piece of metal” is imagined to be similar to the reproductive process of “the active male form impressing itself on female matter” (9).<sup>2</sup> Fisher describes a conceptual link between money and sex, focusing on queer’s

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<sup>2</sup> While the word “queer” is associated with the sexual or the economic due to the word’s inherent attribute of obscurity in its reference, there are several other examples of linguistic uses and practices in dictionaries and literary texts in which economic language is linked to sexual meanings. Like many other dictionaries, Alan Richter’s *Sexual Slang: A Compendium of Offbeat Words and Colorful Phrases from Shakespeare to Today* compiles records of some words which are commonly used in the economic realm carrying the sense of the sexual. For instance, while “bank” means a place where money transactions take place, the nineteenth century colloquial term is used to mean “female genitals”; this word derives its connotation from another word, “deposit,” which is also used in banking and colloquially means “ejaculate” in the sense of the sexual. The word “spend” is, according to Richter, a bridge term of connotations covering a

suggestiveness of the conflation between bad money and bad sex. According to Fisher, the conceptual linkage might influence the ways in which the word “queer” is used to contain the meaning of “homosexual.” What Fisher’s conceptual linkage suggests is not that homosexuality was considered illegitimate or counterfeit but that same-sex relations were not considered the problem as long as monetary exchanges or overpriced gifts were not present. His approach to understanding homosexuality in terms of monetary language is useful to my argument, but his effort to bind the definition of the word “queer” with the meaning of homosexuality seems problematic. It is because the word “queer” seems more obscure and indeterminate in its signification or that the word is

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linkage between the sexual and the economic. The word implies making a payment or deposit of money, but its usage to mean “to ejaculate” dates back to the sixteenth century. The word “deposit” as a noun means “semen” as well. “Commerce” in the sixteenth century was euphemistically used to refer to “sexual intercourse.” Also, monetary terms are often taken to mean the sexual organs of both sexes. While “jewels” means both male and female sexual organs, “money” has been one of the oldest British euphemisms to signify female genitals, and in the late eighteenth century, the word was colloquially said or used by children, especially in the phrase “don’t show your money.”

In his book *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, Thomas Laqueur also offers cases in which monetary words are commonly taken to mean sexual practices, desires, and behaviors, and often they are used as sexual terms in reference to body parts (64). While he tries to nail down the historical moments that influenced a conceptual shift in the sexual identity of the body from a one-sex system to a two-sexes system, Laqueur pays attention to certain words that were originally monetarily used but starting from a certain historical point were used as sexual terms. For instance, “bourse,” the male genitals, referred “not only to a purse or bag but also to a place where merchants and bankers assemble” (Laqueur 64). Laqueur points out that the uterus was also described in a monetary simile as “a tightly sealed vessel, similar to a coin purse,” in an anonymous German text (64). While Laqueur’s exemplary words become historical evidence of sexual non-distinction before the sexual divide, they also show that the economic and sexual languages are used interchangeably. In his article “Sexual Desire and the Market Economy during the Industrial Revolution,” Laqueur observes that while monetary language is used to address the sexual, the sexual language and concept was invoked to understand the newly emerging marketplace during the industrial revolution (187).

associated with the sexual realm, it shows proximity to any kind of non-normal and non-conventional sexuality rather than to the meaning of a specific kind of sexuality, homosexuality.

It seems difficult to point out the exact moment that the word gained a sexual sense, but from the 1980s onward the word began to be used as an umbrella term to represent non-normal sexual subjects such as gay men, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered people. Many queer theorists also take on the political meaning of the word “queer” as a referent to “homosexual” and try to expand it beyond sexual identity in order to dismantle the category itself. Cultural perceptions of the word “queer” in association with “homosexual” have been ambivalent, a combination of welcoming, reluctant, suspicious, offended, anxious, and disinterested responses. Even though it still carries the pejorative reference, the word “queer” is considered to transform successfully to a more positive sense for and by its users. Concomitantly, critical attention to the word “queer” focuses overwhelmingly on fostering the legitimacy and visibility of the affiliation of sexual minority subjects in the queer struggle against the normal and the normalization of heterosexuality. Because popular Victorian writers do not employ the term in its sexual sense, I do not have a whole chapter examining the sexual queer but my conclusion provides a space in which to review contemporary uses and understandings of the word “queer” and to examine how the senses and utility of the word within the queer community are continually changing. My review shows that the word’s inherent indeterminacy endows queer theorists and scholars with a resource to foster a strategically efficient affiliation beyond essentialism.

The social and cultural assessment of a shifting process in the meanings and uses of the word “queer” from the visibly economic to the radically sexual is beyond the scope and scale of my present project. My project does not contribute to the retrieval of an empirical queer history but aims to provide an insight concerning the future direction in queer scholarship. Yet, my dissertation focuses on the word “queer” as used in Victorian novels, initially taken from the social and political uses in queer theory and queer studies and adopted in reading economically non-dominant and non-normative manifestations and representations in nineteenth-century British literature and culture. Even though the word “queer” must be considered a sexual term when used by contemporary theorists and critics who are wary of the ways in which the issue of sexuality is overdetermined by others such as class, gender, and race, I would argue that emphasizing the economic dimension to the utilities and values of the word “queer” enriches queer scholarship by showing how extensive affiliations are made possible across social minority subjects in various differences. Consequently, the proliferation of the economic in discussions of the word “queer” and its use in Victorian novels will be elaborated throughout the dissertation.

While dictionaries suggest the word “queer” has meanings of “counterfeit,” “eccentric,” and “homosexual,” Victorian users seemed to have a different idea about the utility of the word, which is that the word was used more contingently, partially, and incoherently in referring to something that is not easily determinable and expressible. My point is that we should pay attention not only to the history that the word “queer” has been used to refer to “counterfeit,” “eccentric,” and “homosexual,” but also to the



history that the word has been appreciated for its utility of indeterminacy and it had long been associated with difference from the standard, the conventional, the familiar, and the acceptable, a difference that is categorized as Otherness. The analysis of the word “queer” as a sexual term has been productive in the fields of queer theories and queer studies. In this dissertation, I examine the other uses and meanings of the word “queer,” including “counterfeit” and “eccentric,” used in the selected Victorian novels, in terms of Victorian marginality.

In this dissertation that elucidates an idea of Victorian marginality, my assumption is that social meanings of the word “queer” in various ways encompass matters of sexuality, money, and language, yet are often associated with or related to the other side of the normative boundary, in which the non-normative signs of sexuality, money, and language are crucial to validate the categorization of certain individuals as the Other. The word “queer” was popularly used in and out of Victorian novels, and its frequent use helped in the construction of the boundary between the familiar/expected/normal and the unknowable/non-categorizable/non-normal. The chapters that follow will discuss the literary uses and understandings of the word “queer” as represented in the novels of various Victorian writers, including Braddon, Collins, and Brontë. These Victorian novels help to show how the word “queer” was used and understood in addressing the marginalized Other whose queerness is discriminated, apologized, internally empowered, and redefined as a desirable identity.

## CHAPTER II

### COUNTERFEIT QUEERS IN MARY ELIZABETH BRADDON'S *AURORA FLOYD*

#### **Appearance of “Counterfeit” Queers**

Currently the word “queer” refers to a non-dominant sense of sexuality and is taken as a sexual term addressing either a personal identity or a political category. While the *OED* and other canonical dictionaries record queer’s usage as a sexual term, they also note the sexualized “queer” as a recent phenomenon, specifically in its usage to refer to either homosexuality or to a variety of sexual “deviations.” In nineteenth-century literary studies, substantial queer scholarship has been conducted to produce queer readings of literary and cultural texts, using the structure of queer theory to investigate other sexualities and identities. However, what makes the word “queer” as an analytic term interesting is that the word does not inherently contain definitional certainty to mean either something sexual or something monetary. As embodying a kind of difference or a sense of indeterminacy in appearance and affect, the word “queer” has evolved to travel through seemingly different trajectories, always associating with the non-dominant and the non-normative. Even though one of the primary usages and definitions of “queer” in Victorian fiction and culture is money-associated, scholarship has not paid attention to the word “queer” in terms of the economic. The examination of the word “queer” in its cultural and social relationality to the concept of the counterfeit is necessary in analyzing the construction of the non-dominant and non-normative

represented in Victorian novels, suggesting that economic normalization permeates the whole of the nineteenth-century society and culture.

As the word “queer” was used to mean “counterfeit” money in the Victorian context, there were many stories concerning economic queerness in Victorian periodicals. One representative story “Some Queer Doings at Leipsic Fair” (1864), published by *Bentley’s Miscellany*, emphasizes queerness’s proximity to the concept of counterfeit money. The story is about a young Jewish merchant who intends to cheat the economic system in the market but in fact is the one who is tricked by the veteran manufacturer. The reason for the merchant’s failure in his financial fraud is that he does not understand how paper money works in market relations. Paper money can be only “mere waste-paper” if it is not guaranteed by a respectable reference (306). The story teaches the reader a business lesson that participants in any economic relations, if they use credit, must assure the trustworthiness of each other’s character. The word “queer” is used to refer to the countefeitability of the economic relation when paper currency is employed in the transaction.

Dickens’s *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-5) contains a scene concerning a more direct use of the word “queer” to refer to counterfeit money even though the word is used to mean “peculiar” and “odd” in other scenes. As Dickens seems interested in the trope of the counterfeit, he creates a character, Fledgeby, whose knowledge and power are embedded in the counterfeit economy. Fledgeby runs the Pubsey Company, a money-lending and bill-broking business in Saint Mary Axe and employs Riah as a vicarious authority to represent the firm and to deal with the customers. On one foggy

day, Fledgeby gives his deputy Riah an instruction to buy “queer bills” from “queer lodgers” in “Queer Street.” Queer bills refers to counterfeit money sold in parcels or lumps at “waste-paper price” (413), and Queer Street is named after the circumstance that presumably its denizens are involved in all kinds of illegitimate business including forgery of money. The word “queer” was used to mean “counterfeit,” whose dominant sense is “money of bad alloy” or “base money.” Counterfeit money was often carried into the domestic market from abroad and used in cases of fraud, according to nineteenth-century writings such as “On Counterfeit Money” in *The Weekly Entertainer* (1801), “Counterfeit Coin” in *Cobbett’s Political Register* (1805), “Central Criminal Court on Charge of Passing Counterfeit Coin” in the *Examiner* (1808), and “Test of Counterfeit Sovereigns” in the *Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction* (1839).

Victorian uses of the word “queer” as a sense of counterfeit are interesting in ways that are beyond what a philological history can offer. “Queer” and “counterfeit” are references to coins and paper money that are forged, but extend their metaphorical uses into other areas ranging from human character, behavior, and identity to bills, wills, and written documents, threatening the given order of the economy with a reduction of the value assigned authenticity and originality. For instance, “The Counterfeit Presentments of Two Brothers,” published in *Bentley’s Miscellany* (1838), deals with unintended marital fraud conducted by two men in England and France who cannot deliver on their promises of financial security to their domestic companions. As published in *Reynolds’s Miscellany of Romance, General Literature, Science and Art*, “Counterfeiters” (1863) voices the author’s lamentation that his current society is full of

counterfeiting in money, men and women, love and hearts, and more (1863). The word “counterfeit” also appears in a discussion that evaluates the authenticity of a building in “The Counterfeit in Architecture” in *Fine Arts Journal* (1847). The discussion takes place in order to determine the extent to which a building’s value relies on engineering and the extent to which it relies on aesthetic pleasure. Similarly, there are also short fictions concerning the idea of the counterfeit, some of them published in *Bow Bells* such as “The Counterfeit Heiress” (1879). While these stories use the word “counterfeit” in metaphorizing a self or identity with deceptive appearance, they often deal with the idea of counterfeiting as a central plot in advancing the narrative.

While the monetary meanings of the word “queer” include reduced originality and disguised genuineness through dilution or adulteration of substantial material, the word also provokes anxiety toward the deceptive or unidentifiable appearance of the self, identity, and social status of individuals in various classes. Victorian novels tend to employ the monetary concept of queerness as a metaphor in categorizing marginal Others and segregating them elsewhere. In this chapter, I use Braddon’s novel *Aurora Floyd* (1863) to explore how Braddon’s construction of social marginality relies on the cultural use of the word “queer,” a sense of counterfeit, arguing that Braddon’s idea of marginality capitalizes the concept of counterfeitability that provokes cultural anxiety and simultaneously attraction about the tenuousness between authenticity and copied authenticity. The category of queer marginality is pathologized and criminalized but is helpful in questioning the validity of authenticity itself.

The category of counterfeit closely relates to both Braddon as a novelist of popular fiction and her novels that are defined as sensation fiction. Queer and queerness in a sense of the counterfeit plays a significant role in Braddon's novels, in characterization, narrative structure, plot development, and her self-reflective definition of the novel genre itself. In this chapter, first, I examine how Braddon the novelist is categorized as the counterfeit Other of realistic, highbrow novelists and how Braddon capitalizes on the accusation made by dominant literary criticism by refashioning her cultural identity as a popular novelist who reaches a wider audience. Braddon's novels, particularly *Aurora Floyd*, reflect her attitude about the category of counterfeit. Next, by exploring the figure of the counterfeit subject, I look at *Aurora Floyd* to reach an understanding of nineteenth-century cultural meanings of money in terms of economic normalization that entails the construction of non-normative subjects. *Aurora Floyd* reflects the literary anxiety of the representational crisis that emerged from the embarrassment of a relation between the real and copy. Against a Victorian cultural compulsion that endorses the concept of authenticity and invalidates the concept of counterfeiting, Braddon's novels try to embrace that representational gap as a reality and further utilize the obscure moments of deceptive appearance, which obscurity is often oriented toward the articulation of the word "queer." Deploying the metaphor of counterfeit and a queer figure, Braddon's novels describe the ways in which non-normative subjects are often categorized, labeled, and marginalized based on the economic meanings and values of their class status, gender identity, sexual nature, and bodily function.

### **Counterfeit Novelist: Mary Elizabeth Braddon**

In the nineteenth-century literary community, money was a crucial issue. Many novelists became financially successful by producing best-selling products, making their fortune and improving in social rank. Like Wilkie Collins, Braddon can be categorized as a “star” novelist. Leading a cultural trend, Braddon’s *Lady Audley’s Secret* (1862) and *Aurora Floyd* were popularly received in the nineteenth century, echoing the extreme popularity of Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White* (1860) and *The Moonstone* (1868). Yet oddly (or perhaps naturally), due to their financial success, these two novelists and their novels were particularly harshly criticized. Their popularity was not welcomed or congratulated but provoked an alarming or shocking response. Victorian reviewers saw Braddon’s novels along with other popular fiction as problematic, lamenting the degradation in the value of literature. While acknowledging the public demand for certain kinds of novels including Braddon’s as a commodity, H. L. Mansel categorizes these novels as “mere trash or something worse” (575).

Unlike Mansel who tries to recognize reluctantly the popularity of Braddon’s novels as a cultural phenomenon, William Fraser Rae claims that Braddon’s popularity is only recognized and welcomed by the “unthinking crowd” who regards her “as [faking] a woman of genius” (582). Rae criticizes Braddon’s narrative skills “as a very round-about way of stating a very simple fact,” an error “a true artist would never commit” (585). Braddon’s novels “glitter on the surface, but the substance is base metal,” and the artistic value of her novels falls short of the literary standard (Rae 591). While the meanings and values of money are considered social and cultural and

monetary language often appears in non-economic circumstances, the metaphorical use of monetary language is conveniently productive. In Victorian reviews, Braddon's worth was being considered as metaphorically analogous to counterfeit coins because the alluring appearance of her novels was not considered to be accompanied by substantial value.

As Victorian critics would summarize the common view, while "serious" and "real" literature presents a genuine representation of people and human life, "light" and "trash" literature tends to focus on unrealistic and untrue experience that does not correspond to reality. The value and meaning of Braddon's literary identity was often depreciated along with those of many popular women writers of the 1860s since their artistic status was typically measured in relation to George Eliot's achievement in her "serious" realistic novel writing. Richard Nemesvari and Lisa Surridge point out that high popularity and marketability tended to thwart the ways in which Braddon's literary merit was recognized (13). As they imply, in contrast to her contemporary Eliot, who was disappointed by the sales record of her novels, Braddon is the entertainer-writer who merely produces "a highly profitable trash," which is a sign of her inferior moral value (13). Pointing out Eliot's validation of moral currency in literary representation, Richard Mallen also notes that Eliot argues that "serious" and "real" literature must aim to foster the value of moral trust in either monetary form or novelistic form, of which "light" and "trash" literature cannot make a copy (47). Whereas the "serious," highbrow, realistic novel is the norm, the cultural "gold" standard, popular novels, including sensation fiction, can be reduced to a collection of waste paper. Braddon is considered to behave



like money, particularly the counterfeit coin. Braddon's literary identity was accused of being base and counterfeit, and Braddon's novels are also blamed for an artistic baseness, whose substance is absent or without a respectable reference.

Winifred Hughes in *The Maniac in the Cellar: Sensation Novels of the 1860s* defines the popularity of Braddon's sensation fiction as an ugly "phenomenon, something in the nature of a traveling-circus exhibition, prodigious, exciting, and agreeably grotesque" (5). While attempting to offer an explanation concerning the customary relations between the literary market and the novelist, Hughes participates in invalidating Braddon's artistic value. If the literary market created an arena for "most piratical stuff" (9) and Braddon's fiction is a literary product out of the culture that tolerates the literary counterfeit, Braddon does not need any genuine talent in writing her novels because there are many from which she could plagiarize. In her article "Responding to the Woman Questions: Rereading Noncanonical Victorian Women Novelists" Nicola Diane Thompson argues that in a binary perception of literature that divides popular and serious writing, popularity can be a trap because "the more appealing to a mass audience, the more suspect the quality of the work" (8). Even if artistic skills and novelistic seriousness are suspected, Braddon's novels can attract attention from the common reader as well as the intellectual critic, which cannot be easily dismissible. Whether or not her novels have purchasing power (Montwieler 43) and contain a fantasy element for women readers (Showalter 2), they can materialize her own style of a mystery-revealing and secret-exposing narrative structure in which her "narrative strategies were developed to tantalize the reader by withholding information

rather than divulging it” (Brantlinger 2). In other words, her novels gain widespread popularity because Braddon writes in a way that she knows well to please the reader. Popular novels, best-sellers, or lowbrow novels that are accused of cheapness are already part of a system in which popular novels reflect a cultural transformation in empowering mass readers and their voice of legitimating lowbrow reading as a literary form.

### **Refashioning an Identity as the Victorian Popular Novelist**

Victorian economic culture seems to abound in anxieties about the thin line between authenticity and the counterfeit; hence, it often shows an impulse to establish a normative guideline. Braddon’s gender became suspect as her novels took on issues that were not deemed to fall within normal womanly concerns.<sup>3</sup> Braddon’s queerness as a novelist is conflated with sensation fiction’s extreme popularity and money-sweeping reality, which often justifies the dominant reviewers’ reluctance to acknowledge its meaningfulness and its literary value. Additionally, as popular novels were scrutinized for their representational inadequacy, the literary value of popular novels including

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<sup>3</sup> Topics that Braddon often takes in her novels are domestic scandal, secrecy, fabricated identity, bigamy, murder, child-abandoning mother, and marital fraud, which her contemporary critics viewed as improper for a woman novelist. Her sensational topics were more problematized as her private life was known to the literary community and general public. Braddon started her successful literary career when she was associated with publisher Robert Maxwell. Her relationship with Maxwell became romantic and later in 1861 Braddon and Maxwell began to live together. But the fact that Maxwell’s wife was incarcerated in a mental institution was kept secret within their coterie. Braddon’s first child was born in March in 1862 and Maxwell had to advertize their “marriage” as a way of hushing growing gossip about them. This strategy did not go well. Real Mrs. Maxwell’s brother wrote a letter to each newspaper claiming that Maxwell’s real wife was still alive (Nemesnari and Surridge 11). After this incident, Braddon’s relationship with a married man was made public and her gender respectability was undermined. But Braddon legally married after the real Mrs. Maxwell died, and throughout her life, she was a hardworking person as a professional writer, a housekeeper of her suburban home, and a mother of her own five children and her step-children.

Braddon's was often positioned in contrast with that of serious literature or "real" realistic novels.

Nineteenth-century fiction must be aware of a metaphoric junction of counterfeitability between paper money and paper novel, and often tends to be diversely responsive. The critique of the counterfeit nature of paper money culturally and metaphorically extended its scope to the Victorian novel itself. As nineteenth-century reviewers often compared Victorian popular fiction with the counterfeit commodity, the Victorian novel's linkage to money is interesting to examine. The analogous relations between novel and money and between language and money seem a long-standing tradition. However, there are also some concerns expressed about the approach of examining the relation between two different realms, the linguistic and the economic. In her book *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-century Britain*, Mary Poovey argues that representation of both the literary and the economic faces the problem "only when it ceases to work—that is, when something in the social context calls attention to the deferral or obfuscation of its authenticating ground" (6). While language and money as a means of exchange in human relations become problematic when they are taken as a representational means, the concept of counterfeit in language and money is constantly and continually sought out and marginalized in constructing the concept of authenticity in language and money as the norm. With the concept of counterfeit, popular Victorian novels are associated with paper money and are criticized for the lack of trust value or respectable reference to

their genuineness. On the other hand, Victorian popular novels are asked to play along with the dominant discourse about the separation between serious novel and trash novel.

Warning us of an approach to metaphoric aspects of both language and money as reductionist thinking, Florian Coulmas suggests that we need to “examine whether the regularities governing one of them are also valid for the other” in order to testify the “comparability of two phenomena belonging to different realms of experience and discourse” (1). Yet our concern is not whether language and money can be really analogous but rather why language and money are interactively used in many cultural scenes and how the conceptual linkage, even though they are obviously separate entities, influences us in our understanding of society and culture at a specific time and space.

In a study of the interrelation between word and coin, Marc Shell in *The Economy of Literature* shows that both language and money are symbolic forms at work representing the sovereignty of the ruler and protecting him from the possible over-thrower by playing a crucial role in making the ruler invisible to his subjects, which invisibility itself becomes the source of his power (19). Given that they are similarly imagined as the useful device for the effective dominance of the ruler, language and money, as Shell points out, do not contain any inherent value; they are the abstract signs of the matter (4). Whereas Shell’s *The Economy of Literature* establishes the relationship between writing and money in metal form and emphasizes the political meanings of the relation, his later book *Money, Language and Thought* shifts its focus from metal money to paper money and its notorious associate, the novel written on paper. Considering the Greeks’ cultural response to the interactions between economic matter and linguistic

matter, Shell argues that the relation between face value and substantial value has been persistently problematic in the representation of the matter as it truly is (2). Shell leads us to see the cultural association between the fate of paper money and that of paper fiction, toward which association the nineteenth-century novel takes an ambivalent attitude. Critical interests in the intersection between the paper novel and paper money reiterate an increasing cultural anxiety toward the blurring line between the real and the counterfeited.

Other scholars take a slightly different turn and consider language and money of bad sorts. In *The Coiners of Language*, Jean-Joseph Goux examines a link between word and coin in terms of their status as symbolon in terms of focusing on the symbolon as signs that contain the growing difference between the matter and the idea, which provokes a cultural anxiety over the idea of counterfeiting. In his reading of Andre Gide's novel *The Counterfeiters*, Goux argues that the representational limits of a medium, including language and money, result from the fact that both language and money as signs are "padded with hollow inauthentic meaning" and they can only signify when they gain trust (27): "[T]he novel is like the false coin, which shines and jingles like a genuine coin, so convincingly that one would swear it was truly gold—whereas this gold is really no more than a superficial layer covering a crystalline substance, destined to be worn transparent with use" (8). The novel that contains the metaphor of the coin consists of words that are already within the system of representation producing a crevice between real and represented, and yet language like money must be produced like the real. In the breakdown of the boundary between the real and the false, on the one

hand the authentic is suspected of being counterfeited and on the other hand “bad things remain to circulate and pass as real” (27). Goux addresses a switching moment in perception of value from the real to the counterfeited, which takes place in accordance with awareness about a representational crisis. The suspicion or awareness often brings the confusion to the surface in which the authentic becomes “suspect, unworthy of credence,” and the false one is put into currency (27).

In a similar approach to Shell, Joschen Horisch in *Heads or Tails: The Poetics of Money*, points out that paper money as much as the novel is “fiction” that is not covered by actualities or realities (17) because money is a “simulacrum” of the real, yet still never is the real (66). Money begins its life as a copy of the real, which has long been forgotten by the user’s confusion of a copy with the real. If money is already a copy of the real, the counterfeited money is a copy of a copy, which tells us that there can be no firm boundary between the representation and the real. At the same time, the status of money as a copy becomes a persistent link to the novel as “a copy of the world” (70). Language and money share similar features in their function, use, and value, raising questions about their genuineness and their authenticity that are constantly and continually tested. Additionally, paper novels and paper money seem to have mirrored each other’s fate throughout the nineteenth century. If coins or paper money are excessively circulated and democratically perceived, they can undergo depreciation in value and often be perceived as false. Like the abundantly circulated paper money, nineteenth-century novels are also one of the mass-produced and mass-circulated products that can be seen or bought anywhere at a cheap price. While novels and money

are democratically accessible to the common people, they also demonstrate their capabilities of interfering with “every” topic and “every” realm to expand their territories. The tendency of language and money to expand beyond their realms can cause the depreciation of the value of the authentic material. Considering the socially and culturally crossed path of language and money, the matter of authenticity is already lost, which plays an important role in bundling language and money in the Victorian cultural imagination.

In a distinction between the fact that literature makes money and the fact that literature degrades itself to make money, the boundary of acceptable literature is constructed, leaving money a bad name as well. If the literary and the economic are inextricably intertwined to influence the regulation of social relations and the formation of social individuality, the nineteenth-century novel’s affinity with money must be scrutinized. Scholars and critics whose interests lie in the development of the nineteenth-century novel have investigated the association between the growing popularity of the novel form and the increasing use of paper money in their association with a simulacrum reflecting authenticity and genuineness. Since the eighteenth century, British culture has been preoccupied with the idea of authenticity and genuineness as related to conventions of identity, class, gender, sexuality, race, and the body; thus cultural anxiety about the idea of the counterfeit embedded in paper money and the novel could produce a significant impact on every conventional value at a given moment.

Patrick Brantlinger in *Fictions of State: Culture and Credit in Britain, 1694-1994* asserts that the crisis of value associated with money and words anticipates the

shaken value of a national identity as well in the ambivalent attitude of the Victorian novel toward money. Completely separating from material matters, the value of paper money only gains currency if based on the guarantee of “faith” or “trust.” For Brantlinger, money is without substance but “nevertheless one of the supreme fictions—perhaps the supreme counterfeit—on which the legitimacy (or illegitimacy) of those cultures is based” (24). Toward money as a substantially emptied sign and the economic power of the British state built upon that money, the Victorian novel, according to Brantlinger, ambivalently embraces a comparability “by metaphorizing its own lack of reality (its fictionality) as no different from that of money (always a form of debt)” (7).

As we have now seen many scholars argue, money is at the center of the realistic representation in novel writing. Yet in contrast to the perception that popular novels naturally are placed the farthest from reality, popular novels take money as the primary force in human relations as grappling with realities affected by changing economic situations. Brantlinger describes the interplay between realistic novel and the economic:

Realism as narrative reification, moreover, is related to commodification not just because novels are commodities written, manufactured, and marketed for profit but because the social realm depicted in them consists largely or wholly of commodities and commodified relations: of goods to be purchased and owned; of forms of property to be bought and sold, inherited or lost; and of characters who themselves either behave like commodities or, if they are good, honest, and at least semiheroic, struggle not to behave like commodities. (146)



The economic criticism through which Brantlinger and Vernon theorize their position also intends to alter our perception of the Victorians and money in the Victorian era, to represent the co-existence of enunciating and self-saving idealist and enjoyable economic manager. Complex layers in cultural response to moneymaking are reflected and configured both in terms of the miser, counterfeiter, forger, bill-broker, and in terms of money-worshiper.

Critical concerns about similarities between money and language in terms of symbolic value, metaphorical function and material substance (paper money and paper novel) obviously affect the development of the novel with a novelistic style. Like Brantlinger, John Vernon in *Money and Fiction: Literary Realism in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* sees the parallelism between the growth of paper money and that of the Victorian realistic novel and argues that the money and the novel in a representation system benefit by their intimate relationship. While both money and the novel claim to represent reality or real things, the Victorian novel involved with economic matters was becoming “more mediated, more representational, more omniscient—in a word, more realistic” (18). According to Brantlinger, Vernon, and others who have investigated nineteenth-century literature through an economic lens, the Victorian novel could not exist or prolong its lifespan without money as a topic, theme, plot, metaphor or language. To the extent that money is an increasingly important factor in an actual life, it has a different form of existence, thus becoming more newsworthy to the nineteenth-century novel. Changing ideas of inheritance, investment, life insurance,

gambling, married women's property, bankruptcy, or debt frequently appear to induce an affective response from the reader.

As many scholars of money mention, the novel may be generically linked to paper money because the language the novel relied on to deliver the author's idea is already a copy of the real while claiming to represent the real. Many novelists deny, ignore, apologize, or self-ridicule. Some novelists admit the alliance of the novel to paper money in terms of counterfeiting. In a chapter "Mary Elizabeth Braddon," Lyn Pykett argues that during her editorship of *Belgravia* Braddon uses her position for "defending popular fiction in general and the sensation novel in particular against its critics" (128). Beth Palmer also claims in her book *Women's Authorship and Editorship in Victorian Culture* that Braddon was the "central authority" in *Belgravia* (58), in which she "[promoted] and [performed] the sensational strategies for which her fiction is famous" (60). As Pamela K. Gilbert points out, Braddon's writing is produced to maintain "power and control of her selfhood or her social self" through economically successful authorship (93). Whereas Braddon's novels are called deviant from the dominant or "mimetic reformation of the master text of realism" (Tromp 104), she tends to appoint herself and her novels as the Other opposed to the dominant mode of writing, serious and realistic novels, because she understands how to capitalize on her counterfeit identity.

In their defending of the literary significance of Braddon's novels, Richard Nemesvari and Lisa Surridge rather ask whether there is such a thing as the realistic novel or the norm in writing. The Victorian popular novel including the sensation novel

“subverted realism by exposing the essential artificiality of its conventions, and revealing that the realist novel had no more claim to be a direct reputation of experience than any other form of art” (Nemesvari and SurrIDGE15). Any mode of fictitious writing can contribute to the development of “realism” in literary representation. Yet in attempts to reclaim her from the realm of the counterfeit, Braddon can be called a “serious” and “realist” novelist, representing the reality that respectability requires money rather than moral improvement. In fact, if Braddon’s novels along with other popular ones were “making fiction out of daily newspapers,” they can be “more real than realism” (Nemesvari and SurrIDGE 15).

### **“Queer” Reading of *Aurora Floyd***

Interestingly Braddon’s novels are filled with the figures of the counterfeit: the man who is good at forging his identities and often forging his sham death; the figure of the counterfeit who forges counterfeit money and passes it in an economic transaction; and the figure of the counterfeit who kills others in his way in order to get a small sum of money. They all also display their obsession of gaining access to economic achievement. In the midst of her crimes, including bigamy, identity theft, marriage fraud, forgery of an official document, attempted murder, arson, and counterfeited death, Lady Audley tends to remind the reader of the fact that obtaining money, or living financially secure is her primary goal. Moreover, if Lady Audley is Braddon’s female archetype among the criminals, there are mercenary male criminals who reveal Braddon’s originality in characterization of the archetypical villain. *The Trail of the Serpent* (1861) introduces

Jabez North, a murdering machine who would drink blackened water from the same sink where he washes his bloodstained hand. Like Lady Audley, North can take the lives of others, including his own twin brother, without compassion or compunction, all for a pile of gold coins. Paul Marchmont in *John Marchmont's Legacy* (1864), in order to seize his niece's inheritance, deceives, kidnaps, and imprisons his pregnant niece until he takes over the family title and property. In *Henry Dunbar* (1864), Joseph Wilmot forges a gentleman's signature to satisfy his master Henry Dunbar. But betrayed by Mr. Dunbar who does not take responsibility, Wilmot is sentenced to be imprisoned and lives as an outcast after being released. When he encounters his successful master later, Wilmot mercilessly kills Mr. Dunbar and, assumes the role of his master by counterfeiting everything about him. Just as money is critical to the formation of value and moral character in the working-class people who simply need to make ends meet, it is invaluable for measuring and perceiving the moral character of upper-class people of both genders. In her later novel *Phantom Fortune* (1883), Braddon presents us with the upper-class figure Lady Maulevrier. When she becomes destitute, Lady Maulevrier shows that her class prestige and respectability are of no use. In order to avoid family ruin, she decides to confine her husband and stages a sham death, by means of which she can contrive to spend gold coins in the treasure box on paying off the family debt.

Braddon's novels often concentrate on ways in which money comes to influence human behaviors and thoughts, while they acknowledge that money is at the heart of human relations connected to gender, class, sexuality and national identity. Braddon's criminals who are involved in counterfeiting of money, selfhood, identity, and body

show the extent to which money can make people do bad things. They kill others for money. The representation of criminals who kill for money is not unique to Braddon's novels. But Braddon's villains are differentiated from those in other novels of Dickens, Collins, and many other Victorian novelists because they are bold and reckless (most of them), do not have a human heart (Jabez North), and they are not able to experience feelings such as maternal affection (Lady Audley), sympathy for the underprivileged (most of them), and even sexual desire (most of them). I would view Braddon's villains as mercenary subjects who are obsessed with their monetary desire so that they tend to ignore their sexual desire or avoid feeling a sexual self.

*Aurora Floyd* reflects the nineteenth-century cultural anxiety about the obscured relation between genuineness and counterfeit in people, things, and money. At the center of the anxiety, Aurora Floyd is placed as sole heiress of the wealthy banker Mr. Floyd. If we read *Aurora Floyd* alongside with the cultural discourse concerning paper money, Aurora can represent symbolically the legitimate money under the care of the British banker and the government. Aurora embodies not the value of gold but rather the value of paper money that must be authorized and circulated by the financial authority. At the earlier part of the novel, Aurora's genuineness is already suspect, and thus she must prove her authenticity or demonstrate her successful transformation into an authentic entity even if she does not contain any intrinsic genuineness. It is also necessary for Aurora to differentiate her genuineness from the counterfeit of others including Conyers and Hargraves who represent the illegitimate and the counterfeit.

The novel shows that money is gentrified and authorized when it is used by upper- and middle-class gentlemen: Mr. Floyd, who was a retired banker with a saving account; Mr. John Mellish, the landowner with a solid yearly income; and Mr. Talbot Bulstrode, an heir of an aristocratic family with his inheritance on its way. The government was at work with the social and cultural normalization of Victorian money in order to protect the assets and property of upper- and middle-class families and the British nation against forgers, petty gamblers, and working-class “financiers.” In the novel, the narrator makes Aurora see not only that she as the asset of Mr. Floyd and of later Mr. Mellish must be within the male authority’s protection and supervision but also she constantly performs her genuine value according to the credit she signifies. Money exchange is acceptable as long as it is kept within the circle of dominant classes. On the other hand, the narrator in *Aurora Floyd* warns the novel’s protagonist Aurora of working-class “counterfeiters” and “speculators” whose monetary schemes, including marital fraud and blackmailing, may bring the danger into the Victorian home of dominant classes. These working-class criminals may provoke a financial loss and they for money may take advantage of young girls in the upper- and middle-class households. They are regarded as a threat because their economic plots often undermine the stability of the class boundary and then dismantle the upper- and middle-class idea of home and domestic respectability.

On the opening page, the narrator reiterates cultural anxiety toward artificial representation of the real, which appears more real than the real. The narrator writes that “[f]aint streaks of crimson glimmer here and there amidst the rich darkness of the

Kentish woods. Autumn's red finger has been lightly laid upon the foliage—sparingly, as the artist puts the brighter tints into his picture: but the grandeur of an August sunset blazes upon the peaceful landscape, and lights all into glory” (45). In describing an autumn landscape, the narrator uses a variety of colors that collaborate to stress the redness of autumn, sunset, and later Mr. Floyd's red-brick mansion. That redness results from the addition of the painter's “brighter tint” to autumn's natural beauty. The manifestation of artificiality makes a passerby become “half fearful that there must be something more than natural in the glitter of those windows, and that maybe Maister Floyd's house is a-fire” (45).

As in any old romantic story, a wealthy old man marries a poor young girl at first sight after falling in love with her; he brings her home, and they live happily in spite of the community's constant and petty disapproval. Eliza's working-class background and acting experience collide with the prevailing norm about womanhood and motherhood, questioning her respectability and undermining the genuineness of her feeling for her husband. But in her defense of Eliza, stage performance, and British drama, the narrator tries to mollify the unsympathetic voice. The narrator asks, “Is a star less bright because it shines on a gutter as well as upon the purple bosom of the midnight sea? Is a virtuous and generous-hearted woman less worthy because you find her making a scanty living out of the only industry she can exercise [?]” (51). The narrator's effort to gentrify Eliza's acting experience manifests itself in her assertion of a truth-telling claim. While the narrative progresses toward the establishment of Aurora as the heroine of a story, the narrator must defend Eliza's genuineness in order to construct the legitimacy of Aurora.

The problem arises when Aurora mirrors her father's behavior, falling in love with a lower-class man, a groom to her father, and secretly marrying him. In the Floyd household, the issue of inter-class marriage no longer appears romantic and appealing but becomes problematic, threatening the Floyd domesticity and its economic security. The working-class man Aurora marries is nothing like the working-class woman Mr. Floyd marries. While Eliza Floyd is sincere in her feeling for her husband, James Conyers counterfeits his feeling for Aurora because he is interested not in her but in the money she carries in her purse. Without filing for divorce, Aurora returns to her father's home and lives as if nothing has happened to her. Upon receiving word of her husband's death, she marries John Mellish after various twists and turns. While in many Victorian novels marriage indicates a good ending, *Aurora Floyd* and Braddon's other novels reveal that there is always more to tell. In a happy domestic vision of the Mellish household, Aurora Mellish is welcomed and settled. Mr. Mellish, who is ready to satisfy Aurora's wishes and whims, decides to hire a new groom, who looks after the horses Aurora takes a keen interest in. Unexpectedly (save for the reader) James Conyers, Aurora's presumably dead husband, takes a job and lives nearby. While she is shocked at the reappearance of Conyers, which shows that her second marriage is not genuine but fraudulent, Aurora tries to cover up her marital crime by conciliating Conyers with money. Maybe fortunately for her, her first husband wants to be bought out, requesting two thousand pounds in banknotes from Aurora.

As the above summary suggests, *Aurora Floyd* shows that money can be a crucial force to the novelistic narrative. Like a twenty-first-century credit-card



advertisement, this novel indicates that money can buy anything except, possibly, domestic happiness. Thus, whether Aurora will live happily after with all her money is one thread to hold the reader's attention. Whoever approaches her, it is money that attracts these admirers. In the birthday party given for her by her wealthy father, Aurora is on display. One potential suitor, Talbot Bulstrode, evaluates her as "a divinity, with fifty thousand pounds" (73). Taking her fortune into account, Bulstrode thinks that Aurora's money can be well matched with the high value of his proud birth if the girl can prove to be virtuous. Similarly, Aurora's original husband, James Conyers, definitely sees his marriage to Aurora as a source of monetary gain. When he confronts Aurora who demands his disappearance, Conyers ejaculates that he should deserve ten times as much as money that he requests if he decides to stay (268). In the expectation of receiving money from Aurora, Conyers becomes excited, deliriously exclaiming, "Two thousand pounds!" and "a pitiful, paltry two thousand! Not a twelvemonth's interest on the money I ought to have had—the money I should have had, if—" (312). Whatever the cause for the separation of Aurora from Conyers, from his viewpoint and based on legal convention Conyers considers Aurora as the person who has inflicted his monetary loss, and thus he becomes the first enemy of her happiness.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> To understand the primary cause of the marital break-up, Karen Chase and Michael Levenson argue for the husband's physical abuse inflicted upon the wife, suggesting Aurora's right to file for divorce (202). But this reading seems to neglect the general critical perception of Aurora's masculine empowerment, which even becomes physical when she is equipped with a weapon; she leaves a scar on Conyers's body (270) as well as on Softy's shoulders with a whip (194). Aurora can be physically violent, as hard as Conyers. Taking a different approach to the marital break-up, Robert Dingley speculates on the sexual identity of Conyers as a homosexual based on his "stony indifference, [to Aurora's sexual body] and his exclusive preoccupation with Aurora's wealth" (16). Dingley's evidence, however, is inadequate to allow us categorize the sexual identity of Braddon's characters. I would argue that many of Braddon's criminal figures,

While she symbolizes the legitimate money backed by her father's economic authority and represents the unlimited money that attracts "counterfeiters" and "speculators," Aurora happens to make men spend or lose their monetary assets: Aurora makes her father spend money on her and to hush the scandal about her; she does monetary harm to Conyers by marrying another man; and she makes Steeve Hargraves lose a job that has been the main source for his income. Like Conyers who claims a monetary loss, Hargraves also points to Aurora as the author of his loss of money and home. In the case of Hargraves, he became favored by Mellish's father, who takes care of Hargraves when he falls from the horse. Since the incident, Hargraves seems to take up permanent residence at the Mellish mansion, providing a trivial service and yet receiving wages. The narrator describes Hargraves as a forty-year-old stable boy who is slow in his head and whose livelihood is dependent on John Mellish. When Hargraves becomes jobless and homeless due to his violent beating of Aurora's dog, *Aurora Floyd* seems to argue through the narrator's ideological voice that there seems to be a difference in monies, which works as a distinguishing force in class relations. For instance, Mr. Floyd's seemingly unlimited fortune, Aurora's careless spending on horses, and Mellish's spending habits do not raise any suspicion about legitimacy of ownership. But both Conyers's claim on two thousand pounds and Hargraves's greed for "brass" are presented as the illegitimate desire of working-class men.

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including Lady Audley, Jabez North, Henry Dunbar, and Paul Marchmont, tend to concentrate on money instead of sexuality. So fixated are they on finances that sexuality loses its attraction for them.

While nineteenth-century culture allows money to exist in diverse forms, there seems a clear boundary between the valid and invalid value of monies, and the measure for validity is influenced by other factors such as class, gender, or sexual difference. In *The Social Meaning of Money*, Viviana Zelizer argues that “Money can exist outside the sphere of the market. . . there is no single, uniform, generalized money, but multiple monies” (18). Money is a fundamental precondition to the plot structure of Braddon’s novels. As money promises justice, *Aurora Floyd* structures a narrative that offers individual freedom and autonomy to “good” deserving people by taking those rights from the “bad” people Conyers and Hargraves. The “good” Aurora’s moral faults and crime of bigamy are silenced in the narrator’s commentary; instead, her vulnerability to working-class men’s violence and greed is stressed. Even though Conyers and Hargraves share monetary loss with each other due to their twisted acquaintances with Aurora, no one seems to sympathize with their misfortunes in the narrative. The narrator describes the priority of a social rule that “respectable and monied society arrays its inborn strength against them [who do not have] . . . to see that gentility [in association with money] will triumph” over Conyers or Hargraves (Chase and Levenson 210).

As Braddon’s narrator implies, money can reveal its abilities other than serving as the means of exchange, abilities that create asymmetrical human relations by assigning unequal distribution of value to the same sum of money. While the economic domain supersedes others such as sex, gender, class, and race, it influences identity construction as related to the measurement of who we are, what we do, and how we do in relation with others. As money cooperates with other domains, such as class, gender,

and sex, in constructing normative human relations, these domains accompany each other in the interplay for the political benefits of the dominant groups. In other words, money can be more than an exchange means; it is rather a sign of power or domination for the middle class to exercise normative moral rules upon the Other classified as working-class people.

### **The Figure of the Counterfeit**

As many money scholars point out in their analysis of cultural meaning of money in relation to language, the nineteenth-century cultural concern with money is preoccupied with a set of problems organized around the ideas of truth, authenticity, and sincerity in contrast to those of artificiality and theatricality. The nineteenth-century admiration of or obsession with the truth suggests its antipathy to artificiality and theatricality as a copy of the real. Conyers and Hargraves play villain roles based on their association with counterfeit and base coins respectively. While Conyers, whose beautiful face is perfect and his agreeable manners apparently flawless, is a figure of the counterfeit that contrasts with the genuineness of Aurora, Hargraves in his ugliness and disability is a figure of unnaturalness and repulsion that contrasts with Aurora's attraction and popularity. Conyers is introduced to the reader as perfectly handsome and attractive as if an artistic product. As she points out the unnaturalness in things that are more real than the real itself in the opening page of the novel, the narrator describes the flaw to this beautiful picture, the insubstantiality of the beauty, saying that "there is something anomalous in this outward beauty and inward ugliness" (242).

Conyers's easy life is based on his good looks and his ability to exchange his good looks for easy money. Mr. Floyd chooses Conyers "on account of his good looks for Aurora's especial service," not on account of his ability or knowledge as a groom (64). His handsome face is "capital," he instinctively knows "how to trade" his beautiful face to get any free merchandise, and he "took the full amount of interest" on his capital (246). The narrator presents Conyers's body as a commodity to put into circulation within the exchange economy.

He smiled and showed his handsome white teeth with equal liberality to all his acquaintance; and took credit for being a frank, generous-hearted fellow on the strength of that smile. He was skilled in the uses of that gilt gingerbread of generosity, which so often passes current for sterling gold. . . A slap on the back, a hearty shake of the hand, often went as far from him as the loan of a sovereign from another man. (247)

Conyers's perfect presentation of a beauty that is more than real and natural capitalizes on the characteristics of money, acting as a counterfeit coin that can pass. Money as simulacrum of the real always carries a risk in disparity between appearance and being, a disparity that allows counterfeiting to happen. Conyers is able to produce credit whenever he needs it, and others recognize the value of his credit. The problem is not that he capitalizes on or commodifies the beauty of his body, but that his real value is not trustworthy enough to support the credit he earns. In other words, he passes a commodity that is not trustworthy, which tends to threaten the moral relation of the credit economy itself.

Hargraves and Conyers do not receive any sympathy because of their class standing and their perverse affinity with bad money, which is the influential factor in persuading the reader to perceive them as violators instead of victims. Braddon's narrator makes it clear that the intended audience is the middle-class reader, who should sympathize with Aurora's suffering and loss rather than with two working-class "criminals." While Conyers and Hargraves are similarly viewed in their perverse relationships with Aurora, their difference is clear in a monetary metaphor: Conyers is the figure of the spendthrift gambling and speculating for pleasure; on the other hand, Hargraves is the figure of the miser hoarding and hiding coins and banknotes in his own secret place. While the narrator explains Conyers's appearance as resembling that of a counterfeit coin, Hargraves's is presented in association with a base coin. Like a base coin, the knowledge about Hargraves is limited and obscure:

Aurora asked who the man was.

"Why, his name is Hargraves, ma'am," answered the trainer; "but we call him Steeve. He's a little bit touched in the upper story,--a little bit 'fond,' as we call it here; but he's useful about the stables when he pleases; that arnt always though, for he's rather a queer temper, and there's none of us has ever been able to get the upper hand of him, as master knows."

John Mellish laughed.

"No," he said; "Steeve has pretty much his own way in the stables, I fancy. He was a favorite groom of my father's twenty years ago; but he got a fall in the hunting-field, which did him some injury about the head, and he's

never been quite right since. Of course this, with my poor father's regard for him, gives him a claim upon us, and we put up with his queer ways, don't we, Langley?"

"Well, we do, sir," said the trainer; "though, upon my honour, I'm sometimes half afraid of him, and begin to think he'll get up in the middle of the night and murder some of us."

"Not till some of you have won a hatful of money, Langley. Steeve's a little too fond of brass to murder any of you for nothing. You shall see his face light up presently, Aurora," said John, beckoning to the stable-man.

"Come here, Steeve. Mrs. Mellish wishes you to drink her health." He dropped a sovereign into the man's broad muscular palm,--the hand of a gladiator, with horny flesh and sinews of iron. Steeve's red eyes glistened as his fingers closed upon the money.

"Thank you kindly, my lady," he said, touching his cap. (190-191)

The word "queer" is explicitly applied to Hargraves, or "Softy," who appears to embody several sets of contrasts and contradictions. His head is injured but he can be acute at his job around the stables. Even though he is still able to do a good job, his queer temper often interferes with the performance of his work. The narrator uses the adjective "queer" in its association with unmanageable temper to signify the anxiety of indeterminacy about the category of his temper and simultaneously creates a name for the uncategorized by defining it as queer. The indeterminacy manifests in the man's physical appearance as well. He is described as a "squat, broad-shouldered fellow, with a

big head” but with a pale face “as white as a sheet of writing-paper” (191). Brownness or sunburn complexion in his face is what the reader would expect, and thus his whiteness is unexplainable and “unnatural” (189). In connection with his “broad muscular palm—the hand of a gladiator, with horny flesh and sinews of iron” (190), his subdued half-whispering voice is unexpectedly alarming (191). His social identity seems to be analogous with the age-stained and weather-strained local coin that maintains its currency even if not authoritatively standard. Thus, in every way he is different from the others and indicates a difference from what he is expected to be. The difference in his queerness is distinctively illuminated through his perverse obsession with shiny coins.

In light of the information and description from Mellish and the trainer, Hargraves seems to be someone whose presence is tolerable, if not favorable. He experiences an injury serving his master who would naturally take care of his injured servant. As in their half-joking manner Mellish and the trainer talk about Hargraves’s queer temper and queer ways of acting, they seem to accept his queerness without showing any anxiety concerning dangerous acts that Hargraves might commit. Even though it is not clear whether Hargraves gets his queer temper from the accident or not, his queerness gets its own way. Mellish and others seem to think Hargraves’s concentrated desire for money is acceptable or natural considering his mental disability. Yet when it comes to money, he is different. He might be (un)manageable when money becomes a driving force in his behavior. Mellish and his trainer half-humorously comment on Hargraves’s obsessive behavior concerning “brass,” observing that his concentration is excessive enough to cause him to murder anyone in his way for money



(190). And indeed, when he has a chance, Hargraves murders Conyers and frames Aurora as a murderess. He also steals two thousand pounds in banknotes from Conyers and stitches them inside his jacket.

Hargraves is the figure of the miser hoarding something valuable to him because he lacks the ability of spending or consuming. In an article “The Miser’s New Notes and the Victorian Sensation Novel,” Tamara Silvia Wagner argues that “the miser’s crime is, with a similar twist, not so much his overblown evaluation of paper [banknotes], but the miserliness that keeps it out of circulation” (90). Hargraves’s concentration on hoarding, in other words his tendency to non-productivity and non-participation in any economic relation, is reiterated in Wagner’s definition of Hargraves’s queerness as miserliness. Hargraves’s miserly queerness manifests itself in the dress he wears. While his clothes are handed down from various owners and different sources, they cannot express the identity of the dressed person, and simultaneously his clothes become indicative of the hybrid nature of his identity. Because he “hoards” identities of others in what he wears, his clothes have no scent of his authentic self. The narrator points out that Hargraves seems obsessive about collecting clothes that signify the “stamp of a different individuality” (520). Since “a miser loves to accumulate” something, he has made a collection of identities that are embodied upon his self (521). Hargraves’s miserly accumulation creates a queer effect upon his appearance of extreme concentration and diffusion at the same time. Through the configuration of Hargraves’s performativity, Braddon seems to remind us of an absence of authenticity, the emptiness or undecidability expectedly reiterated in the definition of the word “queer.”

### **Queer Affect and Queer Identification**

Hargraves is queer in ways in which his behavior, manner, bodily language, and obsession with money look odd, peculiar, and indeterminate to others. While the social relation between Hargraves and other male residents appears controllable, the encounter between Hargraves and Aurora creates, as the narrator implies, an unbearable feeling in Aurora. Even if he is a servant who is “so very insignificant that his fellow-servants scarcely cared to ascertain his opinion” (189), Aurora responds to him with a “feeling of instinctive dislike” (189), an “involuntary shudder” (190), and a “feeling of repugnance” (191). When she becomes familiar with Hargraves’s story of becoming physically disabled and mentally injured, Aurora examines the moral status of her feelings, but she is still unnerved by the sense of repulsion and terror that seeing Hargraves arouses in her. Aware that disability is supposed to induce sympathy rather than fear, Aurora repeatedly blames herself for her feeling of repulsion in her encounters with Hargraves. Yet categorizing a person, a thing, or an idea as queer and the act of categorization itself are ideological tasks. Aurora’s annoyance and repulsive affectation at Hargraves seem problematic because her emotional response is not reasonable. Rather she appears to lose her emotional stability whenever encountering Hargraves.

As the narrator desires to represent Aurora, who deserves to be the novel’s protagonist in terms of the normative standard of value, the narrator makes sure that Aurora’s emotional response to Hargraves is presented as the norm, emphasizing Hargraves’s physicality and his queerness as the original cause. As difference is crucial as a criterion of discrimination, the narrator who voluntarily takes the middle-class voice

would need to invent a difference, if none were present, and represent it as a counterfeit counterpart of the middle-class norm. The narrator makes the reader (and Aurora) see that Hargraves's physical disability can be a sign of his moral character, which manifests his lack of sympathy for other underprivileged figures such as the lamed dog. As discourses related to Otherness always tend to begin with a scrutiny of the physical body of the Other, categorization must begin with "physiognomy" in the cultural common sense that imagines "the Other as a special kind of childlike, suffering and degraded being, rarely heroic, that became part of the common coinage of popular culture" (Malchow 18). While culturally the figure of the monstrous or freakish Other is usually imagined to encompass sexual, racial, and class marginality, the cultural imagination is reinforced by the middle-class anxiety against the unidentifiable due to its inherent characteristics of crossing the boundary of sexuality, gender, class, and racial categories.<sup>5</sup>

Whereas it seems natural to the reader that Hargraves's Otherness provokes a queer effect, the narrator implies that one individual's response to queerness is a gendered practice. As the narrator suggests that affect and sensual influence lie in the feminine side, affective reaction to queerness is evidently a feminine practice. While the novel's male characters are able to maintain the stability of their emotive subjectivity, Aurora evidently cannot control herself, and she is susceptible to the sensual influence

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<sup>5</sup> The word "monster" or "freak" is often used to metaphorize a social anxiety about variation or deviation from the things considered "common sense," the "norm," or the traditionally accepted. It is also interesting that contemporary dominant criticism often tends to assign a category of an "aberration from serious literature" to Victorian popular fiction including sensation fiction, Newgate novels, and penny-bloods (Loesberg 18). These novels are occasionally called "freakish fiction" for their unconventional modalities.

on her nerves. Hargraves is also able to detect her affective state, which marks her as vulnerable. The accident takes place as the narrator anticipates it to happen. When she witnesses her poor lame dog beaten by the ugly and repulsive Hargraves, Aurora is provoked, losing her position of the mistress of the household and master's wife and physically confronting Hargraves. Unlike Aurora, Mellish and other men such as Conyers and the trainer do not show any sign of being affected or of their nerves being disturbed at Hargraves's queerness. Even when he absorbs the matter related to Hargraves's unmanly behavior to the lamed dog, Mellish does not emotionally respond to the situation. He rather evaluates Aurora's affect through her loose hair and untidy appearance and says to himself that her unnervedness means a "bitter shame" because he, her husband, has been made to witness a scene that may bring "disgrace, or even ridicule" upon Aurora, which is equivalent to the disgrace of her husband (194). In other words, Aurora's loss of her temper and her womanly behavior is problematic because it might threaten Mellish's gender status. While the narrator tries to teach Aurora first how to categorize and then how to deal with this strangely queer figure, she also problematizes Aurora's untamed femininity as something that does not listen to nature's warning. In a way, the narrator reveals her sense of fear about Aurora, who cannot listen to and learn what she is told to do.

As we examine Hargraves's queerness and what makes him stand out as such, it is worth contemplating what others such as Aurora feel about Hargraves as queer. While male characters such as the trainer, Mellish, and Conyers could name it as queer and seem to measure the value of Hargraves economically as essentially a base coin that is

yet useful, Aurora feels terror but cannot know either the nature of her terror or a name for it. If we trust the narrator's construction of Aurora as a victim of working-class men's "financial speculation," it becomes a simple matter to understand and sympathize with Aurora's act of withdrawing from Hargraves. The narrator does not seem confident in her construction, and she is at work establishing an idea that Aurora's feeling is nothing other than a natural response to the indeterminate Otherness.

In her explaining and dequeering of Aurora's affective response, the narrator defines Hargraves as a generally and naturally repulsive man, a "man from whom you [a general 'you' including Aurora] recoil with a feeling of instinctive dislike" (189). Naturalizing Hargraves's repulsion as his inborn nature, the narrator pretends to moralize Aurora's response as "wicked and unjust" (189) even though these affective responses might be generally evoked in anybody who encounters Hargraves. The narrator offers a lesson that Aurora should take her feeling of terror as a warning from nature, which says that she should avoid Hargraves. The narrator's strong message seems problematic because she might reveal the secret that Aurora's instinctive reaction evokes a sexual meaning in Hargraves's queerness. Even though, as Jeni Curtis points out, there is a suggestion that Aurora's repulsion is provoked due to her sexual arousal over a working-class man who is one of her grooms (86), there is still an ambiguity about whether the naturally repulsive Hargraves provokes a sexual threat in Aurora or Aurora feels a sense of terror, which is considered sexual. While she can be terrified at Hargraves who reminds her of her previous marital relation with Conyers, her

unspeakable attraction to the difference from the norm is often associated with her sexuality.

Certainly, the narrator indicates that whether Hargraves provokes queerness or Aurora responds to his queerness, the novel's primary concern is not with Hargraves but with Aurora proving her genuineness in the eyes of the reader. Chase and Levenson argue that "the labor of the novel is to channel the heroine's individual desire into a defense of the union between old family and new money" (120). Braddon's novel also suggests that money will triumph and the middle class will win the game against those who do not have money. The fact that the Floyds and the Mellishes with the aid of Talbot Bulstrode devote their efforts to protecting the security of Aurora's second marriage is telling the reader that class identity and social hierarchy are neither natural nor stable but are maintained by means of constant vigilance for the containment of the money within.

### **Conclusion**

*Aurora Floyd* puts together two figures of queerness, Aurora and Hargraves, whose visible difference and perverse attraction to each other are at the center of the novelistic narrative. They attract the reader's attention because they are provoking something in a readership that demands an explanation for it, which is essential to the narrative progressing. In affective reaction to Aurora and Hargraves respectively, some unnamable fear or terror is involved, as if noticing the difference from the norm works to shock the nerves: either I differ from you all or he differs from us. This categorization is

associated with the articulation of the word “queer.” As language is within the social system that necessitates the disciplinary function in language use, the articulation of the word “queer” thus provokes a power relation between the speaker of the word and the recipient. If queering is to discipline bad subjects like Hargraves, it also aims to discipline Aurora who is a bad subject in her own way. For the novel’s objective in converting Aurora into a proper individual feminine figure to be achieved, her individuality must be sublimated and the source of her affective response must be eliminated. Aurora’s unruly temper must be made docile through encounters with Hargraves for her own benefit and her society’s. At the end of the novel, this grand objective is realized when Aurora becomes docile and learns to submit herself to patriarchal authority.

Nineteenth-century fiction’s investment in money often manifests itself in the representation of various encounters involving the economic, the sexual, or something in between. The nineteenth-century novel often capitalizes on the obscure association of money and sex, obscurity that is imagined as sexually and monetarily illegitimate contrasts to the transparency of the norm. While Victorian fiction is famous for dealing with the inherent linkage of illegitimate money to illegitimate sexuality, Braddon’s novels take an interest in the economic relations that make the sexual secondary. *Aurora Floyd* shows that money is a primary driving force to the novel’s narrative that relies on money’s materiality and on economic metaphor to describe the social relations of human subjects through gender, sex, or class relations. In the intimately interacting relations among the literary, the sexual, and the economic, Victorian popular novelists were

keenly aware of an economic preponderance in representing the cultural response to the changing conception of the body and labor, including novel writing. While the value of the novelists' labor was regarded as not equivalent to the monetary reward that they received, popular novelists internalized a maxim that sex sells, but they were also aware of a pervasive idea that sexuality loses its attraction without money. While the process of industrialization witnessed and bolstered the economic to become the primary measure, suggesting that money can supersede other matters, popular novelists including Braddon reflected the concept of an economic precondition in conceptualizing and categorizing humanness. *Aurora Floyd* is a nineteenth-century literary text that manifests money's priority as a crucial social measurement of the value of various matters as linked with the issues related to perceptions of class, gender, or sexual identities.



### CHAPTER III

#### ECCENTRICITY AND MARGINALITY IN WILKIE COLLINS'S *HIDE AND SEEK*

##### **Wilkie Collins, the Eccentric Novelist**

While Victorian popular writers, including sensation fiction novelists, have sometimes been categorized as eager to write for money by catering to the cheap taste of the public, many tried to occupy a well-balanced position of providing both entertainment and moral lessons for those who bought their words. Collins was one of the Victorian popular novelists who delivered a “moral” message of his own kind to his readers. It is worth mentioning that recent mainstream criticism on Collins has moved away from a focus on his novels’ entertainment value and begun to recognize Collins’s interest in social problems. The Victorian compulsion to enforce conformity was one of his primary targets in questioning and criticizing the social norm in gender, sexuality, and class structure, as many Collins critics point out.

While Pamela Perkins and Mary Donaghy focus on Collins’s exposure of inequalities related to Victorian gender, Stana Nenadic pays attention to Collins’s addressing the economic and moral problems of middle-class society by exploring the ideas of illegitimacy, insanity, and insolvency.<sup>6</sup> Deirdre David also argues that Collins’s

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<sup>6</sup> For instance, illegitimacy was one of the recurring topics in Collins’s literary texts as well as in many Victorian novels. In her article “Representations of Illegitimacy in Wilkie Collins’s Early Novels,” Jessica Cox points out that the concept of illegitimacy is more than a plot or literary topic. She writes that “through his fiction, [Collins] continually questioned society’s condemnation of the unmarried mother and her child, whilst simultaneously portray[ing] illegitimacy as a figure for types of social exclusion and disenfranchisement” (151). Since the matter of illegitimacy involves the forfeiting of legal or economic inheritance, what Sir Percival

sensitivity to gender inequality could be considered a trigger for his “critical thinking for [the human rights of] any minority party” (109). In this light, Collins’s critique of gender or sexual normativity might be expanded to his sympathy for any minority subject who differs from the conventional majority subject. Validating Collins’s writing as a “social mission” and him as the “dissident moralist” (104), Jerome Meckier points out that Collins expresses his “contempt for a society that demanded ‘the proprieties be observed’ whatever the cost” (105). Victorian obsession with the observation of proprieties works as a disciplinary drive that tends to produce vices disguised or illegitimates invisible. Most of the critics who agree with Meckier’s perspective toward Collins’s social role tend to focus their critical approach on a set of social problems, such as gender, race, sexuality, and class, as each topic is represented. Challenging the compulsive desire for conformity, Collins wants to ask what compels us to differentiate one individual from another and how the difference affects the meaning of the human being appropriate for current society. Most critical evaluations of Collins consider him a social critic whose interest lies in challenging given ways of things and simultaneously visualizing alternative ways of living for subjects with differences.

In his book *The Windings of Labyrinth: Quest and Structure in the Major Novels of Wilkie Collins*, Peter Thomas points out that criticism of Collins began to see a

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in *The Woman in White* (1860) and Magdalen in *No Name* (1862) contrive to do is to secure their legal and economic rights to properties that they cannot get hold of by the Victorian legal system and social conventions. In “Representing Illegitimacy in Victorian Culture,” Jenny Bourne Taylor argues that “Collins’s exploration of illegitimacy as a legal fiction which underpins other kinds of fictions of identities investigates the social foundations of difference itself” (139). In other words, illegitimacy for Collins is a sign of social difference that produces an economic and legal disability and exclusion against those concerned, and it also becomes their identity as well.

“conflict in his literary role between a mere storyteller, with his desire to please his audience and be popular, and a more intellectual artist who would challenge social conventions, which may upset his middle-class readers” (3). In contrast to the stereotypical perception of popular novelists as mere entertainers, many critics claim that popular writers including Collins constantly try to hold the position of a moral teacher, yet use extraordinary ways of provoking the emotions of the audience by relying on characters and plots involving bigamy, murder, poisoning, fraud, theft, and forgery. Because of their extraordinary plotting, the literary products of Braddon and Collins sold tremendously widely. While both Braddon and Collins wanted to and did achieve popularity by providing what the reading public would expect, an important distinction between these writers must be noted. As chapter two argues, Braddon seems to accept her novels as categorized as the Other of the mainstream novelistic mode and refashions her authorship as the popular novelist in contrast to the realist novelist. Collins, in a similar sense, understood how to get popularity, but he often shows anxiety about the unstoppable energy of the mass consuming market that consists of the “unknown public.”<sup>7</sup> Collins seems to position his role as “prototypical outsider,” in John Kucich’s term, to the mass literary market sponsored by the bourgeois middle class whose preferences are considered the norm (“Competitive Elites” 75). Kucich claims that Collins “was running against the grain of popular opinion” or the norm in currency (“Competitive Elites” 77). John Sutherland points out Collins’s “drive towards

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<sup>7</sup> Collins’s definition of the unknown public in his article “Unknown Public” is closer to the figure of the general consumer than to that of the genteel reader. Collins says that it is surprising to encounter a group of people whose interests are in “quantity rather than quality” and those who spend their “penny a week on literature” (218).

unrespectability” (ix), and Daniel Martin argues that “[t]o ‘run a risk’ in Collins novels is normal behavior” (184). Even though he must be aware of being part of the social system and marketplace that he criticizes, Collins seems satisfied, according to some critics, with the identity of a cultural dissident, an identity that can be defined as eccentric and attractive.

Whereas the previous chapter takes an interest in the Victorian uses and meanings of the word “queer” in relation to the representation of marginal characters in Braddon’s novels, this chapter continues an exploration in which the word “queer” is used and understood in reference to Collins’s concept of marginality. As most of his critics point out, Collins is an eccentric novelist; he has a tendency toward the unconventional and the unexpected, and he concentrates on the concept of Otherness in his novels. His novels reflect his attitudes toward the social norm as an invisible force in pushing away certain individuals to be described by various terms such as “eccentric,” “odd,” or “queer.” While naming, for minority subjects, plays a crucial role in taking (losing) a position in social relations, the assigning of the differentiated as “queer” enables the individual to gain an identity that could provide some levels of comforts to non-definable and outcast subjects. Individuals with social difference, who are the Other Victorians, gain a new life through the categorization in Collins’s novels, as if a monster would gain its linguistic name by resisting a system of normalization.

The word “queer” appears frequently in popular novels such as Braddon’s and Collins’s, representing differences that are associated with and referred to as queer or its correlatives odd and eccentric. Braddon’s *Aurora Floyd* describes the social meanings of

queer or queerness in the figure of Steeve Hargraves, who embodies various and contradictory characteristics of dictionary definitions and the social currency of the word. Hargraves is a unique individual subject who is hard to describe due to his non-affiliating attitudes, non-productive economic life, and perverse erotic life. As the reference that intends to provoke the meaning of insult, the word “queer” is used to define “Hargraves” due to his utter failure in his economic socialization and denial of sexual desire. In *Aurora Floyd*, Braddon’s use of the word “queer” is used with an accusatory tone, pointing out the representational gap in appearance particularly in reference to working-class men associated with base coin, counterfeited paper money, and stolen checks.

The concept of queerness takes on a different aspect in Collins’s fiction. In *Hide and Seek* (1854) and his other novels, Collins uses the word “queer” in reference to individuals, behaviors, moments, and sensations that are unconventional, seemingly transgressive, and economically problematic: “this queer man” refers to Valentine gazing at Mary at the circus (61); Mrs. Peckover addresses Valentine as “the gentleman that was taken queer at seeing our little Foundling” (63); Mary’s “queer ways” of behavior” are discussed (82, 83); Mat, Mary’s uncle is addressed as “that queer fellow” (199) and a “queer companion” (251). While Braddon uses the word “queer” to define Otherness that is inherently repulsive and also must be contained or killed off, Collins turns the affective meaning of the word inside out: he uses the word “queer” to define Otherness as extraordinariness, yet represents it as tolerable and furthermore legitimated. In reading the “message” of Collins’s *Hide and Seek*, it is necessary to pay close

attention to the word “queer” in its description of the Other, whose queerness should be considered a sign of many meanings that are often in conflict with one another: queer used as an intended insult, queer taken as a marker of pride in the self, queer signified as the act of nonconformity and noncompliance. While he criticizes the social construction of the differentiated as undesirable, hapless, and invisible constantly and continuously appearing in the realm of representation, Collins seems to imagine the viability of the differentiated by defining them as extra-ordinary or extra-abled subjects. In imagining a viability of minority subjects, Collins constantly looks at the sites of affiliations between difference and non-ordinariness, while calling the naturalness and validity of the social norm into question. In a way, the analysis of the meaning of a word uttered involves much more complicated matters because the meanings shift depending on who utters the word, whom it is intended for, how the intended takes the word, and often who the audience is.

This chapter consists of subsections; first I will examine selected nineteenth-century materials that elucidate Victorian senses of eccentricity, which would be relevant to Collins’s notion. Since the word “queer” was taken to mean a sense of eccentricity, it is worth noting how the word “eccentric” was understood and used in the Victorian context. I will look at cultural meanings of English eccentricity represented in periodical publications and John Stuart Mill’s concept of eccentricity in *On Liberty* (1859). Second, I will analyze Collins’s representation of queer marginality in the figure of Valentine Blyth in *Hide and Seek*. As Collins uses “queer” and “eccentric” in *Hide and Seek* to signify a variety of differences in things and people, I will examine how

Collins's narrator defends eccentricities embodied Valentine, eccentricity that is associated with the Victorian "queer."

### **Victorian Eccentricity: The Identity of the Extra-Ordinary**

Given his obsessive concerns with minority positions in society, it is worth paying attention to Collins's use of some words in order to understand the cultural representations that the words can explain. Since Collins's use of "queer" is related to the conceptual use of minority identity and position, the word "queer," in his mind associated with another word, "eccentric," is indicative of uniqueness and individuality. Collins's popularly received novels often employ words such as "queer" and "eccentric," often without any distinction, to define socially different subjects within social contexts in raising the question of how their differences are represented as the sign of the Other. The difference is culturally recognized and highlighted as a problem, which is named as "queer" or "eccentric."

The notion and use of the word "eccentric" was pervasive in nineteenth-century linguistic history, just the word "queer" had been widely used in the nineteenth century. While meanings of eccentricity are often related to the idea of the counterfeit due to characteristics of deceptive appearance, the word "eccentricity" in relation with monetary conception of the word "queer" seems to carry an economic perspective as well. "Eccentricity of a Singular Character Contrasted with the Benevolence of His Executor," published in the *Imperial Magazine* in 1820, enumerates a series of contradictions in appearance, behavior, and habit conducted by a gentleman who has

recently died. He had acted in a miserly way to other people, including his servants. Among a series of singular characteristics, the writer points out that this gentleman leaves a will the contents of which are considered most eccentric (714). Most of his fortune goes to a neighborhood gentleman who is no relation to him, not to his son and four daughters, whose names do not appear in their father's will.

A similar eccentric case is documented in an article "Anecdotes of Eccentricity" in the *Literary Chronicle* (1823). Most of the anecdotes are related to money matters that are strangely dealt with, which I will exemplify here through one anecdote regarding a merchant and his money. A French-born merchant has made an immense fortune in London. After leaving a relatively small amount of money to his wife and children, this merchant leaves a legacy to his male descendents. His legacy is, however, ultimately unfavorable to these heirs because he instructs that all of his money eventually go into the governmental fund. These articles show that the word "eccentric" can be used when a person's economic habits and behavior do not conform to social convention. While the word "eccentric" occasionally is used interchangeably with the word "queer" to describe out-of-way traits in economic matters and the social realm,<sup>8</sup> it is "Victorianized" to represent distinctive Englishness, which provokes social worries. According to James Gregory in his article "Eccentric Biography and the Victorians," the history of the word "eccentric" shows its awkward relation with Englishness as a British national identity,

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<sup>8</sup> Lady Blanche Murphy's article "Eccentric Englishmen" in *Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science* (1872) defines eccentricity as characteristic of Englishmen. Particularly in her reference to Englishmen traveling abroad and living outside England such as in Venice, Murphy uses both words, eccentric and queer, to describe an "out-of-the-way" character (11).



since the word has been pervasively used to describe the notion of abnormality in body, activity, or experience, which is probably compatible with the popular perception of locality (343). While the advocates of Englishness naturally tend to obscure or ignore the presence of local subjects and the meanings of their locality, eccentricity is conceptualized to provoke the sense of Otherness or non-Englishness.

There were skeptical opinions against the idea of eccentricity. For example, “On Eccentricity of Character” (1818) argues that eccentricity in character tends to be overestimated or often mistaken for a sign of genius and claims that eccentricity must be categorized as “an aberration” rather than as distinction in value (“On Eccentricity of Character” 33). As the writer of a review of William Russell’s *Eccentric Personages* (1830) points out, the word “eccentric” is applied to a character who could be a social pioneer but in reality is probably a “simpleton who wears his clothes turned inside out” (492).<sup>9</sup> Because they tend to be eccentric for eccentricity’s sake, these individuals fail people around them and receive ridicule, contempt, or occasional alienation from their companions. Popular usage and understanding of the idea of eccentricity seems ambivalent in the combined reception of fascination with being original and the desire to contain the uncontrollable.

In this Victorian social and cultural climate, Mill’s definition of “eccentricity” is worth our attention as a linguistic context in which Collins uses the word “queer.” In *On Liberty*, Mill defines eccentricity as the crucial feature of a would-be genius because this

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<sup>9</sup> As often eccentric individuals are easily marked by what they wear, the writer in “Difficulties of Eccentricity” says that “clothes, which, as we know, are the outward symbol of the inner man, have been always a favorable vehicle of eccentricity” (759). Lady Murphy also mentions that English costume in a female traveling community can be indicative of eccentricity (10).

eccentricity compels an individual to try newness, even if that means embracing potential failure. In Mill's vision for a better society, a certain number of individuals constantly dare to be different from the majority in terms of attempting to better society, challenging conventional ways of thinking, and trying to do something that anticipates disapproval or failure. In the general public's eyes, these eccentric individuals often are considered non-conforming subjects or sometimes mentally disabled. But a genius or Victorian version of a prophet could be produced through these eccentric attempts. If they do not prove their genius, they are still to be accepted as such because, as Mill points out,

Human beings are not like sheep; and even sheep are not undistinguishably alike. A man cannot get a coat or a pair of boots to fit him, unless they are either made to his measure, or he has a whole ware houseful to choose from: and is it easier to fit him with a life than with a coat, or are human beings more like one another in their whole physical and spiritual conformation than in the shape of their feet? (122)

Mill's concept of eccentricity says something about his notion of the human and individual rights of being human. Human beings are born with their rights to individuality as much as their obligations to a group of other human beings. Yet a society often tends to ignore individuality while valorizing conformity as the primary element for any subject to be accepted. It also tries to deal with the privately personal matter of its subjects with a generalization based on scientific, medical or economic data that reflect the dominant group's ideological policy.

Gill Miranda conceptualizes the nineteenth-century cultural representation of eccentricity as “always defined in relation to something it is not, but the imaginary 'center' (or 'centricity') from which it departs is far from stable” (1). The relation between the norm and eccentricity somewhat reflects the contingent relation between the novelistic authority and an individual considered to be a problem. Without directly negating the presence of the norm, those who are off the center can enjoy their living as such. Miranda writes that

Nineteenth-century representations of eccentricity in many respects conform to Stallybrass and White's theory of bourgeois identity. The ethos of the bourgeoisie was one of discreet, almost invisible mediocrity, in which not being considered eccentric was a key virtue. The middle classes nonetheless came to project onto eccentric figures--such as artists, criminals, the insane, and the deformed--a variety of anxious fantasies which merely served to link them ever more firmly to their own identity. (5)

As Miranda points out, being eccentric can be a choice intentionally made by an individual who understands that human beings cannot conform like sheep that follow. And in spite of a given status of marginality, the notion of eccentricity and eccentric subjects often are attractive and could take attention away from ordinary subjects. Coincident with Collins's or Mill's attitude toward the notion of (eccentric) difference, Miranda argues that by being eccentric an ordinary individual can gain a concrete and distinctive sense of individuality by “standing out” in the crowd (5). This kind of emphasis on individuality is a persistent strand throughout Collins's literary texts in

association with queerness. Collins's use of "queer" could be pertinent to Mill's definition of eccentricity in indicating the conception of nineteenth-century individualism and a minority position as social and political.

### **Valentine Blyth's Eccentricity and Respectability at Risk**

Many Victorian novels employ the narrator as the moral authority that guides a misplaced and misfit protagonist to a rightful path. For instance, Braddon's narrator in *Aurora Floyd* constantly worries about the deviant choice her Aurora has made; she seems to be willing to protect her misfit protagonist from criticism and encourages Aurora to conform to social norms. But while Braddon's narrator sides with the moral authority of "society" or "common sense," Collins's narrator agrees with the Other who is a primary object of criticism on the part of the moral authority in the novel. Mr. Thorpe, assigned the role of the moral voice tends to point out Valentine's differences as harmful to the community's maintenance of moral standards, marginalizing Valentine's way of living. Like Braddon's narrator, Collins's narrator also tries to mitigate criticism of Valentine's eccentricities, yet he appears to justify them rather than to appropriate them.

In profiling the figure of the supposed moral authority Mr. Thorpe, *Hide and Seek* employs a separate chapter identified as the "opening chapter" before the novel goes into the main narrative. Collins uses this opening chapter to frame the psychological relation between the authority and the "problem." The opening chapter is a fragmentary glimpse of one Sunday afternoon at the Thorpe household. This scene

shows how the privilege of the common sense of the norm authority is framed in the narrative and how it exercises its influence against the eccentric behaviors of other characters including Valentine. On a rainy Sunday, the page is instructed to deliver three different umbrellas to three designated owners. On the way to church, the page happens to hear a child's scream and walks fast toward the site of that sound. The first thing he witnesses, as he expects, is the scene of Mr. Thorpe dragging his resisting son by the hand. The narrator describes how

The page stood stock-still in astonishment for an instant—then pulled the new silk umbrella from under his arm, and turned the corner in a violent hurry. His suspicions had not deceived him. There was Mr. Thorpe himself walking sternly homeward through the rain, before church was over. He led by the hand 'Master Zack,' who was trotting along under protest, with his hat half off his head, hanging as far back from his father's side as he possibly could, and howling all the time at the utmost pitch of a very powerful pair of lungs. (10)

From this scene, Mr. Thorpe is pointed out as the figure of authority exercising his rules upon anyone, including his son, who attempts to transgress. Mr. Thorpe decides to solve the problem by imprisoning his son, the problem of his household, in a bathroom.

Mr. Thorpe, a self-appointed mediator of Education and Religion, constructs his authority as the norm in his household. The patriarchal authority also embodies the figure of social tyranny, as in Mill's term, that oppresses an individual who differs from the majority. In *On Liberty*, Mill generalizes a social structure and its inclination as generally oppressive to minority subjects. He writes that "in the world at large an

increasing inclination to stretch unduly the powers of society over the individual, but by the force of opinion and even by that of legislation . . . [this indication aims] to strengthen society and diminish the power of the individual” (74). Against Mr. Goodworth’s accusation of Mr. Thorpe’s strict and inflexible attitude toward his son, Mr. Thorpe suppresses Mr. Goodworth’s opinion and even accuses Mr. Goodworth, his father-in-law, of religious infidelity when he interferes concerning Zack’s upbringing. In his confrontation with the stubborn, metaphorically deaf son-in-law, Mr. Goodworth speaks up for himself, saying that “I would recommend you not to be too ready in future, lightly and cruelly to accuse a man of infidelity because his religious opinions happen to differ on some subjects from yours” (17). Mr. Goodworth, who may ventriloquize Collins’s attitude, reveals that his position differs from Mr. Thorpe’s and that his being different could be accusable because it is outside the boundary of the norm, a norm that in the matters of social issues and religious aspects is Mr. Thorpe himself.

While questionable in his authority later in the narrative, Mr. Thorpe assumes the narratorial norm in opposition to the novel’s potential transgressors. In this sense, the opening chapter is necessary for the narrative to move into the main story in order to focus on the conflicting relations between the authority and those who do not follow the authority’s lead. For the novel, the narratorial authority is also required in relation to the construction of others who try to go beyond the scope of the norm’s surveillance. Borrowing from Margaret Mead’s notion of a “generalized other” that assumes a normative point of view, William Wilkerson argues that an individual becomes a social person when related to others:

Without the norms, any expression can stand in for any other, and nothing governs the standards that give the expressions the meanings they have. The normative aspect of distinguishing proper from improper regulates language and meaning, and makes possible communication and especially the learning of socially governed significance. This is why there can be no learning without the generalized other. (63)

Since individuality can make meaning when it is related to those who are considered the general public, the function of the “generalized other” or so-called common sense is to elucidate the boundary of the individual by defining his or her identity. The opening chapter shows that Mr. Thorpe functions as the generalized other in validating or invalidating any individual’s desire. Unlike those who seem not to recognize the presence of Mary as a scandal to Valentine’s household, Mr. Thorpe assumes authority in the matter of moral propriety, and his response becomes a norm to measure and marginalize Valentine’s eccentricity.

As part of his experiments in creating a variety of marginal male characters in his novels, Collins introduces an eccentric male figure in the character of Valentine Blyth in *Hide and Seek*. His eccentricity stands out in various ways in which he seems to speak for Collins himself, eccentric novelist. Society marks Valentine as the figure of the eccentric. He should belong to the group of middle-class men whose lives lie in “the dullest, the dreariest, the most oppressively conventional division of the whole suburb,” representing the stability and respectability of its status (30). Yet Valentine’s eccentricity aims at *standing out* from the invisibility of middle-class mediocrity. The narrator

explains how Valentine can stand out, describing him in daily circumstance. Valentine happens to embody various kinds of eccentricities of thought, speech, and action, causing him to be made fun of and simultaneously be liked by his friends: his “interactive oddities of thought, speech, and action, [ . . . ] made all his friends laugh at him and bless him in the same breath” (40). His male body also contains “personal peculiarities” that signal others to act in a certain way toward him. “Everybody shakes hands with [him] but nobody bows [to him]” and he is frequently singled out to be the recipient of a joke (43).

Like many Victorian novelists including Charles Dickens, who takes an interest in the relation between space and identity, Collins relies on space to represent Valentine’s eccentricity. Valentine seems synchronized with the space he inhabits when working on his art. The narrator says that “All the surplus small articles which shelves, tables, and chairs were unable to accommodate, reposed in comfortable confusion on the floor” (42). While the narrator emphasizes an eccentric coordination between disorderly space and disorderly body, Valentine is seen to enjoy his spatial eccentricity. The emplacement of Valentine’s eccentricity contrasts with that of Mr. Thorpe’s status as social norms. In describing Mr. Thorpe’s house in a well-built suburban area of London, the narrator observes that Mr. Thorpe’s house consists of rooms in the same size, “all furnished in much the same manner,” and his parlor is the “average” size, “characteristic of all respectable London parlours of the middle class” (12). As the standard middle-class domestic space, Mr. Thorpe’s home “differs completely in expression” from Valentine’s, the difference mirroring the “various characters of its inhabitants” (12). For



instance, the parlor is “neat, clean, comfortably and sensibly furnished,” reflecting Mr. Thorpe’s attraction to rules, principles, and orderliness (12). While Valentine’s domestic space is described as enjoyably comfortable and “convivial” or “uproarious,” Mr. Thorpe’s parlor is “severe” looking, “sternly comfortable and serenely dull,” and unforgiving “as if it had been a cell in Newgate or a private torturing chamber in the Inquisition” (12). Mr. Thorpe’s parlor is the manifestation of himself.

The narrator observes that Valentine’s art as vocation and the object of his life “could harmonize as perfectly with all his eccentricities as with all the graces of his character, that could mingle happily with every joy, tenderly with every grief, belonging to the quiet, simple, and innocent life, which, employ him anyhow, it was in his original nature to lead” (40). His choice of being eccentric helps him make a new identity that distinguishes him from the anonymous crowd. Eccentricity for Valentine provides a means to overcome the pressure of the public opinion that compels him to conform and it also helps him to enjoy the fact that “his childlike idealism and enthusiasm have prevailed despite the pressures of the masses” (Thomas 35). As eccentricity shapes his identity, it also offers a means to challenge social conformity that is often compulsive in an individual who differs from the norm. If the culture insists on a certain way of living while invalidating others, the culturally acceptable would be oppressive while it produces subjects of identical sameness in spite of its benefits. As the narrator portrays him, Valentine is eccentrically different from the general group of contemporary Victorian men; Valentine differs in the matters of money-gaining and money-spending,

domesticity, and manliness. That Collins's narrator throughout the narrative tries to defend Valentine's eccentricity illustrates Collins's concept of queer marginality.

### **In Defense of Eccentricity I: Victorian Man's Economic Ability**

As *Hide and Seek*'s narrator takes the same side with Valentine in opposition to Mr. Thorpe, the moral authority, the narrator tends to defend Valentine's eccentricity. As the narrator describes the eccentricities Valentine manifests, he focuses on how Valentine is differentiated from ordinary middle-class men in matters of money. For instance, the narrator points out that Valentine has a rather unusual idea about home economics. As he does not acknowledge the conventional system of credit and debt in relation to the trades-people in his household management, Valentine is used to paying his bills right away on purchase, horrified with the idea of debt (150). The narrator's tone indicates that this practice is not common, but singular, for a middle-class household. The interesting thing about the narrator's account of the economic system in Valentine's household is that he shows Valentine's awareness of his difference from others, which he takes a pride in.

Victorian middle-class men, by the general social climate, were expected to succeed financially, which was closely relevant to their maintaining of normative manliness. Mr. Thorpe, who now succeeds in his second career after taking on the family business, can recall the times that he was mocked and bothered by his public school friends due to his eccentric concentration in a non-commercial field, botany. Like Mr. Thorpe, Valentine comes from a middle-class commercial family that entirely devotes its

energy to making money. His life is set: his father prepares a job for his son, expecting him to work in the City; his son will marry a girl from a respectable family and enjoy a domestic life with a comfortable income. Unexpectedly, Valentine chooses a different path and decides to devote his life to a non-commercial vocation, that of gentleman artist. His decision is unthinkable and seems *unnatural* according to the social expectations that would anticipate any middle-class man to choose economic prosperity and worldly rise (32). Valentine throws away the path “predestined by Nature” (32). The narrator even looks up the family’s common traits to find an explanation of Valentine’s eccentric desire, but “no one (including Valentine himself) could ever trace [his inclinations for art] back to any recognizable source” (31). He is revealed to be an oddity in his family. Nevertheless, Valentine is able to keep his dream of being an artist, even though he has to deal with constant negative criticism of his decision.

In the analysis of Collins’s novelistic representation of Valentine becoming an artist, it is meaningful to examine the cultural logic of labor as related to the concept of manliness. The rise of capitalism that brought out conceptual shifts in various realms also influenced the ways in which Victorian men were measured. Victorian men had to work productively to be categorized as normal. Thus the values of hard work and perseverance were required, particularly for middle-class gentlemen who contrasted their gender status with that of aristocratic gentlemen, sometimes considered effeminate and unmanly. In the competition between men for attaining normative masculinity, it may appear that Victorian middle-class men generally felt that their gender status or their manliness depended on manifestations of their industry and financial success.

Nineteenth-century culture seemed to perceive two kinds of occupations for men: one that involved commercial interests and another that involved non-commercial interests. But the values of the two different kinds of occupations were not evenly perceived. Angus McLaren points out that the validation of physical economic labor was socially constructed in the nineteenth-century bourgeois culture that endorsed a Victorian gender divide:

The nineteenth-century bourgeoisie were so concerned that the “naturally” different genders of men and women not be confused that they demarcated as sharply as possible the lines splitting the female from the male world; the home from the workplace, the private from the public. Seen in this context, the bourgeoisie’s stress on the virile nature of work and labor can more easily be understood. (33)

For the sake of the Victorian ideological force that naturalizes gender inequality, men’s labor is privileged as economic, while women’s labor is considered non-economic. “Manly” or “manliness” in a sense that meant the opposite of “boyish” or “childish” was utilized in the nineteenth century as a gender term to evaluate the economic performance of an individual.

The nineteenth-century social and cultural focus of manliness is on uncontrollable male sexual energy, which was seen as causing social and moral problems. The dominant social discourse tends to emphasize Victorian men’s character development and moral training for self-management of sexual energy and then for the habits of transforming sexual energy into work energy “for the proper [male]

performance of the duties” for a society’s benefits (Smiles 21). Behind this progressive idea, there is logic of causality between the input of strenuous work and the outcome of monetary reward as well as social recognition. Even though he acknowledges money’s threatening aspect when an individual makes it the object of his labor, Smiles, the doyen of the concept of self-help, privileges the necessity of money-making through hard and honest labor for fulfilling Victorian men’s manly role of providing and protecting. This is because money represents to hard-working men “the means of physical comfort and social well-being” (Smiles 242).

John Vernon points out that money is both a medium of exchange and a means of making people “equal and unequal” in terms of class and gender identity (20). In particular, for nineteenth-century middle-class men, money could be a sign of power to justify their superiority and domination over people who did not have it. As the moral authority is based on economic superiority, ordinary middle-class men supported the work ethic. According to John Tosh in his article “Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England,” the economic mind was “deeply inscribed in middle-class masculinity. It not only served to keep men at a punishing pitch of self-discipline; it also justified the priority they attached to money-making and personal advancement by elevating work as a good in itself” (466). In other words, Victorian men’s gender status was interlocked with their financial status, which in return guaranteed the social validity of their moral authority and privilege.

The causality logic as associated with the status of manliness could be problematic for certain groups of nineteenth-century men, especially the class of

gentleman artists. If economic advancement is the primary condition of individual duty or happiness, Valentine is eccentric by transgressing the social expectation of a conventionally approved economic choice. In the eyes of common sense, the artist also is not quite manly to the narrator's implied audience because transgression is implicitly associated with his non-producing and non-conforming attitude. As proper productivity also preconditions physical ability and fitness of the male body, the bodies that object to or fail to participate in the system of economic socialization tend to elicit the word "eccentric" from the observer.

Collins's eccentric artist Valentine proves to have the quality of a self-made artist, but not to achieve the outcome of a self-made man's success. Valentine is not to be accepted into the British Academy for his artistic value and will not have fame or reward because he lacks ability. The narrator delivers to the reader a disapproving comment that general public could have made concerning Valentine's vocation, writing that "[i]f he had really possessed genius, there would have been nothing very remarkable in this part of his history, so far; but having nothing of the kind, holding not the smallest spark of the great creative fire in his whole mental composition, surely there was something very discouraging to contemplate" (32). Whereas the artistic community cannot recognize the promising element in his learning in art, Valentine persists in proving to be an artist and still "worked on patiently never losing faith or hope" (34). The narrator sympathizes about the unpromising future of Valentine as an artist but compliments his moral courage in pursuing an honest labor that may or may not return economic reward.

Samuel Smiles also supports Collins's definition of a gentleman artist whose "excellence in art, as in everything else, can only be achieved by dint of painstaking labour" (137). Not as a genius but as a laborer, a gentleman artist labors with "the thaws and muscles of the limbs, the mechanism of the hand, the nerves and lobes of the brain" (Smiles 137). Collins's gentleman artist is similarly described in Anthony Trollope's *An Autobiography* (1883) as a man who works like any other worker with "a habit of industry," which will be monetarily rewarded (121). Trollope argues that since "all material progress has come from man's desire to do the best," the cultural attitude of disregarding money is an "unnatural self-sacrifice" on the part of the laborer whatever job he has (105). Similar to Smiles and Collins, Trollope compares his work of writing to that of shoemaking to encourage a work-ethic of any *working-class* individual, his work-ethic preconditioning his notion of manliness. Trollope says that a man must have physical strength and a healthy body with which he can work day by day, year by year. The interesting thing about Trollope's notion of manliness is that it is not about the physical fitness of the laborer but about the work ability of an individual. As any work regardless of differences in nature, outcome, and reward is meaningful, society, as Trollope asserts, should tolerate a worker's "deficiency [in work performance] caused by sickness or infirmity" (329). Trollope's identification with the working class and his validation of a work ethic and a spirit of craftsmanship display a changing cultural perception of mental labor by writer or artist in economic terms. While it helps mental labor to be reevaluated and revalorized, it also indicates that a group of mental laborers is accepted in the capitalistic system that transforms non-economic labor into economic

labor. Money scholars call this historical transformation “monetization” (Valence) or “economism” (Delany). There is no longer pure labor that is not involved in economic exchange between labor and wage. Any labor must be paid for. The redefinition of labor by artist or writer is possible through self-assertion of manliness and valuation of mental labor.

If the novel’s generalized other suspects Valentine’s social and moral integrity because of his non-productive status of being an artist, which affects his gender identity, Valentine must prove that his artistic vocation is as valuable and productive as any other form of labor. In this regard his eccentric marital status allows him to regain his masculine social status through a realization that he must provide and protect his invalid wife with money he trades for his worldly paintings. He decides to divide the role of his labor and energy between “the production of great unsaleable ‘compositions,’ which were always hung near the ceiling in the Exhibition, and of small marketable commodities, which were as invariably hung near the floor” (39). Valentine’s compromise in life by the bifurcation of his labor and energy shows that his manliness is not to be easily undermined. He throws away a comfortable fortune, not earned, but offered by his family, in order to pursue his vocation. Caught between non-commercial vocation and his manly duty, Valentine finds a way to fulfill his manliness by appropriating his vocational/business labor to be relatively profitable. Yet his compromise eventually allows his artistic life to be realized. The novel’s narrator, in spite of his teasing tone, validates Valentine’s productivity and the utility of his energy, which is realized in his own way.



## **In Defense of Eccentricity II: Queer Domesticity**

Valentine starts his own family life in the middle-class home on the outskirts of Baregrove Square, at the center of which Mr. Thorpe, the figure of the social norm, lives his average middle-class life. Like Mr. Thorpe, Valentine has a family of his own, consisting of his invalid wife and his adopted daughter Mary, living comfortably on his moderate middle-class income. In defending Valentine's eccentric way of establishing domesticity, the narrator describes how manly he acts for his wife and also how gentlemanly he is to take Mary into his home. As he prepares to set up this home, Valentine has a chance to sell one of his paintings and earns a ten-pound banknote (35). Holding this money in his hand, Valentine daydreams about "the most extravagant anticipations of future celebrity and future wealth" and he decides "recklessly enough" to marry a girl to whom he is engaged (35). His decision is opposed by his relations based on the fact that the woman has a "bad spinal malady" that is incurable and worsening (35). Yet despite criticism from his family, relations, and "society," Valentine pursues his decision by marrying Lavinia-Ada and starting their family at a small middle-class house.

As Tosh points out in his book *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*, a Victorian man was often defined by his ability and power in his domesticity to provide and protect the family while maintaining a financially secure household (62). As manliness is an important criterion to measure Victorian men's gender identity and social position, his domestic setting must provide the venue in which he proves normative manliness. In other words, as visible evidence is important,

interior furnishings would get more sumptuous in order to show a “husband’s capacity to keep his wife in leisure and luxury” (Tosh 24). *Hide and Seek*’s narrator hails that Valentine’s industry and capability helps to define him as a man of “noble heart” and “high soul” (40). Valentine seems satisfied with his ability to decorate his wife’s bedroom to be ever brighter and more beautiful, with “the rarest flowers, the prettiest gardens under glass, bowls with the gold and silver fish in them, [and] a small aviary of birds” (39), which corresponds to Tosh’s observation of nineteenth-century cultural perceptions of a proper husband. Even though his labor is slowly rewarded, it is successful in constructing the manly status of a gentleman artist and proper husband for him through a transformation of his labor and energy into art-making that also entails a financial reward.

However, while marriage allows Valentine to redefine his manliness as acceptable to the generalized other in the novel, it also complicates the problem of his social position in relation to his family and society. Even while it helped gender status to be reclaimed, marriage was perceived also to aim at protecting and extending the family’s economic status as well through a “thick alliance” with another family for the “pursuit of profit and maintenance” of the family fortunes (Davidoff and Hall 198). For instance, in *Aurora Floyd*, when Talbot Bulstrode imagines a marital union with Aurora, the idea of a family alliance between his pure blood and her unlimited fortune comes into his mind first. In other words, as Jenni Calder argues, the Victorian conventional idea of marriage is often a “social and economic institution” (44): the establishment of

domesticity by marriage is considered to bring economic advancement of the family as well as to advance masculine status economically in social perception.

Even though he can prove that his labor as an artist is profitable enough to provide and protect his family, Valentine's marital alliance with a penniless woman could be considered a failure in economic advancement. But his marriage could bring a more serious issue, one of cultural fears about the body, to the surface. The anxiety about his marriage lies in one of the Victorian cults: the cultural obsession with physical fitness and mental health. In the roles of mothers and wives, Victorian women must offer an ideal domestic setting that allows men to be revitalized for a fitting performance in their social relations. As Poovey argues in her article "Covered but Not Bound: Caroline Norton and the 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act," nineteenth-century culture viewed women as "not subordinate to the category of men, but the basis of that category" (79). Victorian women in their domestic setting play a crucial symbolic role for men to maintain their manliness since woman is "the guarantor of truth, legitimacy, property and male identity" ("Covered but Not Bound" 80). In a way, woman's health in body and mind becomes a precondition for her family and husband's health and fitness in social relations. If she is not fit for her womanly role, it is more problematic for her husband than for herself because it could compromise her husband's manly social position as well as masculine gender identity.

While he transgresses the rule of middle-class marriage for extended family connections and business affiliations, Valentine also shocks his friends and relations with his intrepid act of marrying a woman in incurable disability. Victorian social response in

reality, however, is complicated as disability is associated with female sexuality and reproductive practices. According to Helen Deutsch and Felicity Nussbaum, disability is gendered in its social configuration because male disability is associated with generative power in a man's imagination and female disability is often accused of monstrous reproduction (11). Collins also shows in his novels that the assignment of marriage and sexuality to disabled women brings out cultural anxiety and fear, while he is aware of the "very clinical contexts in which 'dysgenic' births were theorized" (Holmes 62). But his experiment is very engaging as well as risky. In her book *Fictions of Afflictions: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture*, Martha Stoddard Holmes points out that "*Poor Miss Finch's* combination of female sexuality, disability, and clinical detail . . . inspired in several Victorian critics a vigorous irritation with Collins's works, contributing to the long-term marginalization of both novel and author" (72). Collins can be viewed as an advocate for the sexual rights of the disabled. According to Holmes, Collins shows that disability can be sexually attractive, not defective, since he is "[t]he creator of numerous characters with a range of physical, psychological, and social disabilities" (61). As also shown in *Poor Miss Finch* (1872), a female figure with disabilities in Collins's novels, including Mary in *Hide and Seek*, is always active in displaying her desire. Moreover, the male counterparts seem attracted to the novels' heroines because of their disabilities not in spite of them. If Collins seems, as Kate Flint states, "fascinated not so much by the difference of the disabled, but by their similarity to the able-bodied" (154), he wants to show, by creating a viable space for non-disabled and disabled beings, how an individual develops his will power in order to cope with adversity and how a minority

figure does not necessarily overcome his misfortune as in a life-success story but finds a way to live with it.

Just as the criticizing tone of the public voice with regard to his marriage and livelihood is about to diminish, Valentine places himself at the center of society's attention. During the business trip to a remote place, Valentine becomes familiar with a story about the helplessness of a girl in the circus, and he decides to adopt the girl as his daughter. Mary, Valentine's unidentifiable girl, becomes the embodied focus of a public attack on Valentine's eccentric morality. When public opinion spreads "whispered calumnies" (34) against Valentine, it uses Mary as an obscuring reference to his moral failure, expressed through grimaces, sighs, or trivial bodily movements such as the raising of a shoulder. The narrator describes the circumstances in which Mary is placed, writing that

she happens to be the only person in Mr. Blyth's household at whom prying glances are directed, whenever she walks out; whose very existence is referred to by the painter's neighbours with an invariable accompaniment of shrugs, sighs, and lamenting looks; and whose 'case' is always compassionately designated as 'a sad one,' whenever it is brought forward, in the course of conversation, at dinner-tables and tea-tables in the new suburb. (48)

Although Valentine's act of taking a girl into his household and adopting her as his daughter is not sinful or criminal, his eccentric decision allows this anonymous public to suspect the existence of a sexual secret inside Valentine's household. In society's opinion, Mary is the embodied evidence of Valentine's violation of social and moral proprieties.

Valentine's eccentricity is marked and also puts the respectability of his moral character at risk.

For the maintenance of authority, there must be the Other who is to be marginalized for his or her difference, a difference that entails some non-conforming acts. In the construction of Mr. Thorpe as patriarchal authority, Valentine's transgression is necessary to validate Mr. Thorpe's disciplinary power. Yet there is, as always, an inherent problem in the construction of a binary relation between authority and the problem, the norm and the non-normal subjects. The problem is that Valentine's transgression is a ruse to cover his personal fear that Mary might be taken away from him by her biological father—in a sense, her rightful "owner." If his impropriety is not real, the accusation made against him by the patriarchal authority is not true, which can undermine the authority's privilege in marginalization. Valentine's lack of social communicativeness is blamable, but his moral values are not. In a way, the relation between the authority and the problem cannot be constituted given that both Valentine's transgression and Thorpe's accusation are not valid. Furthermore, the one who recognizes and responds to a transgression often is the one who knows it. Thorpe's recognition comes from his knowledge, self-knowledge of his own transgression through Valentine's, that entails the revelation that Mary is his own illegitimate production.

Mary is an orphan girl with disabilities who is part of the circus performance. She is raised by Mrs. Peckover who is given a baby from a dying mother and from then on acts a surrogate mother for Mary. When Valentine discovers that Mary has been abused and is vulnerable to the potential violence by male performers in the circus, he

becomes adamant in adopting Mary as his daughter, providing her a home and protecting her from danger. With Mrs. Peckover's consent, Valentine is able to bring Mary home and make her Mrs. Blyth's loving daughter. In her book *Queer Dickens: Erotics, Families, Masculinities*, Holly Furneaux points out the excessiveness of Valentine's anxiety to protect Mary and his "compulsive desire to make her his own child" (59). The excessive feeling is usually associated with maternal parenting, but Valentine's excessiveness can be viewed as "manly," "a product of his extreme but chaste desire to have a daughter" (Furneaux 60).<sup>10</sup> Compared to Mr. Thorpe's domesticity at the center of the middle-class residence, Valentine's domesticity seems fragmented, unstable, and "counterfeit" of the real but offers, as the narrator validates it, an alternative way of making a Victorian family.

### **In Defense of Eccentricity III: Moral Manliness**

Whatever changes occur in the gender or the sexual realm, the nineteenth century seems to go through a process that gradually emphasizes the body over the mind, the body that is a direct source for identity in class, gender, sexuality and race as well. In his

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<sup>10</sup> Unlike Furneaux who reads Valentine as a fatherly figure for Mary, other critics would argue that Valentine's taking into his household is telling Collins's perception about the institution of Victorian marriage and his way of challenging the conventions of Victorian family composition. In his article "Wilkie Collins and Risk," Martin points out that recent Collins biographies and his personal correspondence reveal Collins's personal life, which was known in the circle of Collins's coterie (188). In 1859 Collins began to live with a widow, Caroline Graves, and her child from her previous marriage. While he did not marry Caroline, Collins took another woman, Martha Rudd, as his living companion, whom Collins also did not marry as well. Critics see the pattern of establishing a domestic environment in which a man cohabits with two women in *The Woman in White* and *Hide and Seek*. Walter reveals his sexual interest both in Laura, his bride, and more covertly in Marian, his sister-in-law (Sutherland x). In his introduction to *The Woman in White*, John Sutherland states that Collins can never be satisfied with "the unadventurous routines of Victorian monogamy" (x).

letter dedicating *Poor Miss Finch* to Mrs. Elliot, Collins clarifies his ideas regarding the contemporary debate about the construction of normative masculinity. He writes that “the conditions of human happiness are independent of bodily affliction, and it is even possible for bodily affliction itself to take its place among the ingredients of happiness” (xxxiv). By emphasizing morality and mind over the body and also clearly asserting his position that the body is not the sole sign of identity, Collins fundamentally states that bodily defects as in illness or disability do not determine an individual’s moral or mental problems. In *Hide and Seek*, the narrator indicates the sincerity of Valentine’s affection for his wife. When the real nature of his wife’s illness is disclosed to his family, Valentine does not flinch but shows sincerity in his decision to care for her with “a perfect firmness of manner” (36). Valentine’s confrontation with the social convention of ideal domesticity that works for the benefit of men tells something about his notion of gender relations. His assertion that physical disability does not tell the defect of mental health and moral ability appears quite manly in his father’s eyes, which closes the case. Traditionally the emotional response of sympathy to an idea of disability and individuals with afflictions is cultivated as a proper sign of the moral value and duty that an individual should feel for another.

By defining manliness as moral and intellectual superiority, Collins criticizes a “group of middle-class men whose obsession with physical perfection and neglect of mental faculties has left them morally bankrupt and therefore incapable of controlling their behavior” (Waters 74). As he examines elsewhere the degrading status of a literary reading portrayed as shiny and alluring goods in a display window (“The Unknown



Public” 217), I would say, Collins objects to the objectification of the male body that reduces male essence to only physical fitness and muscular display. Or Collins might refuse to authorize certain forms of male physicality that marginalize variants of the male body that deviate from the standard. Whether his challenge is to the commercialization or the standardization of the male body, many Collins critics concur that he distances himself from the contemporary preference for the trend of muscular Christianity endorsed by Charles Kingsley. Among the debates and contentions about normative Victorian men, Collins seems to take for his heroic male characters an old-fashioned idea of manliness that allows for physical delicacy but emphasizes moral strength. Donald Hall points out that muscular Christian manliness for Victorian men works as a hegemonic ideology in perceiving and constructing their male identity in relation to it (3). In contrast to a model of hegemonic masculinity such as that of Kingsley’s muscular manliness, Valentine’s gender and sexuality can be easily queered. Collins’s critical distance from the Victorian cult of athleticism or physical superiority aims to criticize muscular Christian manliness (Crawford 87) and its ideological effect to erect a normative gender system in which only a few good men have agency to make meanings and rules for the boundary of male citizenship. According to Robert William Connell, hegemonic masculinity is associated with the notions of economic success, racial superiority, heterosexual virility, and normative masculinity and “constructed as a mechanism of marginalization and authorization” (81).

Manliness has been a contested term as its definitions and meanings constantly have changed along with its usage. Critics of Victorian literature such as Claudia Nelson

and James Eli Adams concur that Victorian notions of manliness were transformed significantly during the course of the century. If the conceptual transformation of manliness can be generalized, the mid-nineteenth century tends to encourage womanliness in manhood to produce androgynous manifestations and ascetic masculine selfhood in boys and men, while keeping social supervision over the matter of problematic male sexual energy (Nelson 37). Studies of Victorian masculinity show that manliness as the definition of what men should do is the solution to what they find out about Victorian men's gender status and sexual practices as cultural anxiety. Victorian society responds to this anxiety, launching a cultural movement to clean up men's overpowering sexuality as a result of emphasizing physical manliness by employing the moral concept of character development and the ideological space of domesticity.

Mid-nineteenth-century attitudes toward physical manliness as a potential threat tended to encourage the conflation of masculine and feminine qualities in male behavior, manner, or speech. The idealization of asexual manifestations in Victorian men is produced and reproduced in various forms of literary materials such as poetry, novels, pamphlets, newspaper columns, medical documents, and self-help books. As Herbert Sussman and Adams point out, many Victorian literary writers and artists tried to accommodate the cultural demand in the figure of ascetic manliness. Self-help books such as Smiles's *Self-Help* inform Victorian men how to behave like a gentleman through the management of the body and male sexuality. William Landels's "How Men Are Made" (1859) also claims that moral and mental training is necessary to become a manly man. As depicted in Thomas Hughes's novel *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857),

Thomas Arnold's Rugby School is a representative space where early Victorian men learned to transform boyish exuberance into moral manliness through character development.

Toward the end of the Victorian period, the cultural perception of manliness, looking down on the earlier asexual representation of Victorian men, changed to validate a masculine manliness of muscular fitness and aggressive vitality. In other words, the gender mixture of feminine and masculine traits and the sexual constraints of mid-nineteenth-century culture gradually disappeared while stricter gender distinction and freer display of sexual prowess and physical virility were visibly noticeable in the late nineteenth century. The general discourse of the later nineteenth century began to emphasize a more masculine stereotype of manliness, de-feminized and de-emotionalized, while validating the logic of (masculine sexual) liberation. The stereotypical man of late nineteenth-century culture manifested the traits of muscular Christian masculinity,<sup>11</sup> which validated physical fitness and masculine power based on

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<sup>11</sup> Differences in the definitions of manliness and masculinity must be noted. Mid-Victorian culture tends to rely on the word "manliness," which seems to be replaced with the word "masculinity." It could be presumed that manliness is associated with the mind rather than the body, while masculinity is used to emphasize the corporeality in man instead of moral, intellectual, or spiritual aspects. According to Norman Vance in his book *The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought*, manliness and womanliness in Victorian traditional conceptions were not contrasted as gender terms. Manliness is not always and not exactly a counter-notion to womanliness or effeminacy. It rather tends to mean the opposite of childishness or beastliness, while validating "vigorous maturity" in the physical and moral aspects of an individual (8). Vance argues that nineteenth-century novelists such as Trollope and Dickens perceive manliness as a practical ethic for everyone to improve his individual self by excluding the "extremes of moral heroism and depravity" (9). Even though Vance's definition of manliness is criticized for its focus on "Christian" rather than "manliness" (Hall 1994, 9), it is worth noting that Victorian manliness has been invested with various meanings, sometimes even contradictory ones, in the nineteenth-century culture. See also Sussman's *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in*

sexual virility. Arnold's public school was mocked as the factory of Victorian gentlemen and criticized as part of an English public school system that tended to discourage individuality in its emphasis on character formation rather than intellectual development in an individual (Waters 18). Late nineteenth-century culture began to see the need to reassert masculine masculinity that was required by patriarchal authority and imperialistic ideology. Kingsley's notion of muscular Christian manliness with the rejection of feminine qualities is perceived by some critics as a useful means to reassert British male control and privilege over working-class men or non-Western subjects whose demands for legal recognition were on the rise (Waters 47). The conceptual change in normative masculinity helps to emphasize the male body as a spectacle that appears as representative of the British social and national identity.

The nineteenth-century norm of manliness could be a manifestation of choices economically and sexually well-made according to an individual's correct reading of what society wants. The individual Victorian man is expected to take a path that leads to a future happiness instead of to current pleasure, which is fundamental to self-help logic. The self-help logic contains a fantasy, implanted in the nineteenth-century "working" class, that the economic security that decides a social position and citizenship is gained through economic conformity, through working and participating in a capitalistic system of labor-wage exchange. In other words, an individual is led to concentrate on a means of transforming pleasure-seeking tendencies into work energy and economic labor. Yet

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*Early Victorian Literature and Art* (1995) for definitions of manhood, maleness, masculine, and manliness.

for economic security and conformity an individual first must appropriate sexual energy, habits, and bodies for “good” productivity. In this sense the nineteenth century was preoccupied with documentation of the things considered “bad”: non-normal behaviors that are produced by the medical, religious, moral commentators of sexual ways of living. As the writing of bodily manner, a rhetoric that Victorian scientists and religious leaders use internalizes the concept of self-control and self-constraint of an individual about bodily desire. To control sexual bodies, it analyzes bodily signs that tell the moral and healthy status of the body.

In contrast to dominant discourse of masculinity associated with muscular Christianity, Collins endeavors to construct a masculinity based on Victorian middle-class men’s mental strength and moral behavior. While Collins’s concept of manliness is often criticized for its antiquated element, as it recalls the sentimental heroes with delicate physicality of the late eighteenth century (Wagner 47), it is clear that Collins tries to “establish an image of the laborious, gentlemanly artist as a manly ideal” in the characters of Valentine in *Hide and Seek* and Walter Hartright in *The Woman in White* (Denisoff 51), where Collins’s heroes are eligible to be named as queer or eccentric. While manliness is ambiguous in its reference as well as versatile in its functionality, it is also a key term in understanding Valentine’s eccentric behavior. Valentine’s behavior toward women and his moral standard illustrates Collins’s definition of an ideal masculine feature in manliness which does not obviously comply with a mainstream concept of manliness. For example, the Victorian cult of manliness, whether for androgynous manhood or muscular masculinity, cannot be workable for every man.

What does Collins imply by showing that his literary figures do not participate in the cult or by not representing athletic muscular characters as heroes in his novels? Collins's essential attitude toward manliness seems to criticize a certain idea of manliness such as Kingsley's, but his bigger concern is the compulsory culture produced by the fever of the commoditization of manliness, which threatens one's distinctive identity and individual character. In this sense, eccentricity as a metaphor<sup>12</sup> allows Collins to challenge a cultural compulsion in which manliness is used as a social technology to marginalize those who do not conform. Collins's construction of eccentric/queer individuality tells how difference, in spite of a social threat to erase it, can prevail and produce meanings in

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<sup>12</sup> For the self-construction of individuality, Victorian men adopted various tactics to fashion their selfhood. Whether eccentricity, melancholia, or illness, it implicates a distinctive individuality rescued from the anonymous. Jeffrey Meyer points out that physical and mental suffering is considered as an effective metaphor to represent extraordinary psychic knowledge and power of a literary man, given the representational meanings of illness in Greek culture or the mad poet in the Renaissance as the distinction of the power to access truth (2). In his analysis of the function of the illness of Victorian men such as Charles Darwin, Clinton Machann also supports Meyer's statement that the sacrifice of physical and mental health is required in self-formation as the representation of a distinctive individuality (31). In his analysis of Collins's male figures, Kucich relies on the idea of male melancholia associated with narcissism as another means to distinguish oneself from the mediocrity of middle-class sameness ("Collins and Victorian Masculinity" 127). Similar to these ways of constructing individuality, disability studies also focus on identity-formation through the self-assertion that disability is a human condition and also an identity. In her analysis of the nineteenth-century assumption about the relation between bodily wholeness and amputation, Erin O'Connor argues that "artificial limbs implanted an otherwise dislocated amputee in 'reality' -- home, street, market, work -- by supplying him with a functional technology of manhood, a support system whose levers, cogs, pulleys, and springs operated, paradoxically, to sustain the fiction of a unified, integrated self" (761). O'Connor's observation is supported by Kathleen Patterson in her analysis of the meanings of disability in Flannery O'Connor's short stories, the characters of which are considered the "totality of their [disabled] conditions as human being" and individual identity (97). As also represented in *Hide and Seek*, Mary's disabilities are intimately involved in the construction of her distinctive individuality. In particular, Mary's slate, which is carried close to her body literally helps make her a whole person and also is the part of her body that Mary takes the most pride in.

the figures of minority subjects. From the viewpoints of Collins and Mill, eccentricity can help to bring about a better state of society.

### **Suffocating Sensation on the Male Body**

Given that Victorian culture reflects the ways in which an individual's participation in economic relations and productivity is categorized and controlled through sexual regulation, Collins's eccentric individuality cannot be explained without considering how the sexual is entangled with the economic. In her study of monstrosity in Gothic fiction, Judith Halberstam argues that cultural fear directed at a monster figure tends to capitalize on sexual terrorism since "sexuality becomes the dominant mark of otherness" (7). Since non-ordinary subjects are marked with difference inscribed on the body and the body is always sexually interpreted, the minority subject's affinity for the sexual margin is understandable. While money is one of the crucial determinants in classifying an individual's social identity and assigning him either an authority or subjected position, sexuality, as many critics argue, must be considered both a more obvious marker of individual identity and a methodology to analyze identity formation in a specific historical climate.

Positioned as economically non-normal and marginal, Valentine's eccentricity is associated with the sexual otherness of minority subjects that do not intend to conform to the discourse of normative masculinity and male sexuality, which reflects the assumed reader's social expectation. While Valentine's economic eccentricity can be categorized due to his distinctive individuality, his erotic eccentricity refuses classification, which is

itself provoking. His eccentricity lies not primarily in his adoption of a girl with disabilities and his efforts to endure a scandalous attack on his moral value, but in the excessiveness of his affective reaction when he encounters Mary in a strange place. One day during a business trip, Valentine happens to stray away from the main street. He comes to read a poster describing a circus performance and enters the circus tent to attend the performance advertised. Among a series of acts is Mary's performance, and upon seeing the young girl, who is completely deaf and dumb, Valentine is severely disturbed. During her performance, Valentine is not even his usual eccentric self, and he seems to be too excited to be reasonable. Valentine's incoherent muttering becomes a spectacle itself by provoking an uncategorizable emotion of fascination and repulsion combined in the imagination of the audience. The audience at the circus, not to mention the reader of the novel, immediately desires an explanation of this seemingly sane gentleman's insane behavior. Because Valentine does not try to hide his unnerved feelings and is too focused on Mary to be aware of the effect his response is having on others, people imagine that he could be the girl's father, presumed to be long lost and finally returned from somewhere. Whoever he is, Valentine is imagined to be someone who must know the girl or in some way have reason to care for her, which sounds feasible in understanding the symptoms of the gentleman's lost sense and excessive excitability in seeing the girl.

As *Hide and Seek's* narrator reiterates in detail the circus audience's affective reaction to Valentine as a spectacle, his descriptions tend to naturalize Valentine's erotic eccentricity and contain it within an asexual father-daughter relationship. Valentine,



queered in the audience's eyes, is preoccupied with Mary and seeks her in a private tent where Mary has been brutalized by a circus manager. Disconnected from reality, Valentine becomes concentrated on taking Mary to his friend's residence. The word "queer" is uttered to designate the manifestations of Valentine's acts. Valentine is referred to by Mrs. Peckover as a queer gentleman with queer interests in a poor girl with afflictions. His real intentions are immediately revealed to Doctor Joyce, his close friend: that he would adopt Mary as his and his wife's daughter. Valentine's desire to keep Mary close is justified by Mrs. Peckover's description of an unseen scene that happens right before Valentine's entrance into the private tent. In front of her audience at the Doctor's drawing room, Mrs. Peckover vividly narrates the incident of Mary being beaten by a circus manager due to an imperfect performance. Given Valentine's shaken nerve against the imagined violence inflicted upon a girl and other audience members' disturbed affective response, it is easier for the narrator to naturalize the idea that Mary is poorly and dangerously situated and in need of a male protector, a father figure like Valentine.

Disregarding any explanation about the meanings of Valentine's "suffocating sensation" in seeing Mary (62), the narrator seems to hurry to authorize Doctor Joyce to guarantee Valentine's fitness and trustworthiness as a father figure. During a closeted conference with Mrs. Peckover concerning the adoption of Mary, the Doctor testifies to her about the genuineness of Valentine's good intentions. He tells her that "[i]f ever man was in love with a child at first sight, he was that man. As an artist, a gentleman of refined tastes, and as the softest-hearted of male human beings, in all three capacities,

Valentine was enslaved by that little innocent, sad face” (64). As far as his friend knows, Valentine is a “little cracked” and used to “go on in this way about children before” (64). Thus, Valentine is to be trusted with Mary. Like the narrator, Doctor Joyce appears to be an insider of Valentine’s circle, who obviously knows *something* about Valentine, which we, the reader, cannot access. They understand something specific about Valentine, something that is viewed as a source of his queerness, which rather appears to be extraordinary. The shared attitudes of the narrator and Doctor Joyce in favor of Valentine’s character persuade Mrs. Peckover and the reader that he is not in any way harmful or dangerous to the girl. Doctor Joyce and the narrator naturalize Valentine’s interest in Mary as fatherly and humanistic rather than perversely erotic. Instead they emphasize Valentine’s economic fitness. In the process of bringing about Mrs. Peckover’s consent to the adoption, Valentine’s financial security and his home status play a crucial role. Valentine’s home is validated as a space of safety and protection in contrast with the circus, a space where the act of an unmanly and un-English man beating a little girl is customary. Valentine’s home can provide financial support enabling Mary to live as a middle-class woman and secure shelter to protect her, particularly her sexuality.

Yet in spite of a series of favorable testimonies about Valentine’s character, the question of the genuineness of Valentine’s actions still remains unanswered. Unlike his economic eccentricity, the part of his eccentricity related to the erotic seems to defy conjecture and categorization. What is the cause of Valentine’s affective response besides the fact that he is a little cracked or inherently a child-lover? What does it mean

that he has a “suffocating sensation” (62)? Valentine and Mary become a spectacle when they stand facing each other, eye to eye, their gazes penetrating into each other. While we are uninformed of Mary’s affective status, Valentine’s affectation is described in detail as his nerves are shaken accompanying his outburst of excitement. It is worth noting that even though the affective phenomenon is apparently reciprocal between the two entities, the emotional impact on only one side is delivered to us as it is often influenced by gender (of the masculine subject) or class (of the middle-class subject). In *Aurora Floyd*, Braddon’s narrator tries to focus in her description only on what Aurora feels or how she emotionally reacts to Hargraves, her counterpart, disregarding what Hargraves feels and how he responds. The narrator in *Hide and Seek* also appears to be interested only in what or how Valentine feels in the presence of Mary. From the ways in which the information is delivered, it is the narrator who assigns the positions of either the feeler or provoker, determining a degree of value and meaning. As affective response of the feeler is the only considered value and meaning in the representation, Aurora and Valentine as the feelers are privileged to express their emotive status even as it is related to erotic desire. Once the reader is persuaded to lose interest in the spectacle, Mary, that provokes sensation, the narrator leads the reader to concentrate on understanding the real nature of Valentine’s nerve-shaking experience.

As much as his eccentric behavior has something to do with his affection for a woman with disabilities and his ensuing act of marital union, Valentine’s *suffocating sensation* must be related to his eccentric interest in the fragility and poorness of the human subject and human body that indicate a difference. While Doctor Joyce and the

narrator explain his sensation as one of an artist, a gentleman with refined tastes, and a warm-hearted male human being, is there any other way that we could try to read his suffocating sensation? If the heightened emotion of sympathy and empathy for a poor girl is a proof of his moral sense, Valentine's interest is quite naturally humanistic. Thanks to his gentleman status, Valentine is easily legitimated to show his sincere interest in Mary. Yet Valentine's eccentricity both in the economic and erotic realms tends to defy all conjecture and proves to be uncategorized. His queerness is very demanding. It requires some interpretation. He has his own way of doing things that does not accommodate or assimilate the social standard of values, manners, and behavior. The reader is left to imagine a plausible explanation for Valentine's anxiety.

On the one hand Valentine establishes his role as an ideal hero in a rescue tale and, on the other hand, Mary is the object of Valentine's "suffocating sensation," pity, and sympathy; her body, including the fact of her being deaf and dumb, is constantly evaluated and dissected by a group of artists. Mary is welcomed into his household as a new family member, yet she appears to be Valentine's love offering to his invalid wife, the human version of one of the treasures in the luxurious drawing room. Yet his vested interest is quite the queerest on the border between eccentricity and perversion, because his desire could be considered an obsession with or an addiction to the very idea of disability. Whether his intent is sexual or not, and whether sexual abuse actively occurs or not, Valentine's excessive interest prompts the audience to wonder about this possibility. The issue of some men sexually responding to women with disabilities has been debated within disability studies. Some scholars, including Raymond Aguilera,

argue that desire for disability must be considered in terms of individuals with disabilities living in normal social relations based on the substantial existence of the devotee community (256). Others such as Richard Bruno warn of the possible and sexual harassment of helpless women with disabilities and the objectification of the disabled body by the pathologizing devotee phenomenon (245). Collins's experiment with disability in sexual terms cannot escape Bruno's critique of a devotee's desire that tends to objectify the disabled body with a sexual colonizer's gaze. Valentine's erotic eccentricity must be situated between sexual harassment and erotic choice (and between criminal intent and normative attraction), which reveals that the boundary between eccentricity and perversion is not clearly drawn.

Although Valentine's economic queerness becomes understandable if not acceptable as the norm, and tolerated by the narrator, the manifesting queerness of his erotic desire is provoking and demands a plausible explanation. It provokes the erotic imagination of the observer, regardless of Valentine's real intent or a lack of clear textual evidence. Valentine's queerness, which displays his interest in Otherness, is associated with the sexual. Along with Foucault's notion of sexuality as a fundamental of a modern individual identity, sex or sexuality in Victorian novels works as the fundamental definition of an individual social identity.

### **Conclusion: Standing Out in the Middle**

Popular novelists, especially sensation writers, know how to translate the identity issues of non-ordinary people into the visibility and viability of the bodies of characters

such as “hulking idiots, hunchbacks, and deformed villains as well as doll-like murderers and preternaturally beautiful adventuresses” (Hughes 26). Casey A. Cothran points out that Collins also constantly pays attention to the idea of anomalies visible in his “extraordinary gallery of bizarre figures in his fiction, which is also peopled by more blind, deaf, mute or lame characters than that of any Victorian writer” (194). As many Collins critics agree, Collins has concentrated on an idea of social marginalization that involves the inventing, casting, and “othering” of certain individuals who happen to show visible difference from the general public and the process of being “relegated to the margins of society” (Backman 179). As Catherine Peters points out, Collins’s “apparent obsession with varied forms of physical and psychological handicap or deformity, often mistakenly seen as perverse, is one of the ways in which he articulates this concern” about Otherness or difference that is continually marginalized (ix). Therefore, the visibility of bodily difference works effectively and efficiently for his objective to carefully illustrate the Victorian generalizing cultural prejudice that is countered in his fiction.

A product of Collins’s concern about changing the Victorian popular fiction market, Valentine as Collins’s protagonist that stands out as unique among countless literary characters rushed into the market daily. Collins’s preoccupation with the idea of eccentricity as a way of standing out is understandable given his anxious observation that the nineteenth-century popular writers become writing machines for producing “extraordinary sameness” instructed by popular publishers’ demands based on the popular readership (“The Unknown Public” 221). As this transition of the

democratization of literary consumption produces a discounting effect of the literary value of Victorian novels, literature is taken out to the public realm to be looked at by the masses. The material condition of the literary realm changes the subject position of a literary writer who must respond to a new mode of expression in the commercialization of the literary. Also, his efforts to be distinctive in his response to the demanding literary market explain Collins's insecurity in relation to Dickens, who was considered the superior novelist by contemporary critics and reviewers as well as by recent critics.<sup>13</sup> Until the publication of *The Woman in White* and its popular reception, Collins was in Dickens's literary shadow. Even though the popular acclaim for and financial success of both *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone* was considerable, Collins never was able to become a Dickens. Eccentricity for Collins could have been an effective way of standing out, and it also tells of Collins's urgent need to prove his artistic ability as equal to or better than Dickens in his social and literary position.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that Collins successfully constructs an eccentric individual subject of his own, eligible for the role of the Victorian heroes represented in nineteenth-century novels. In his novels and others by many Victorian novelists, the word "eccentric" is used interchangeably with the word "queer" to describe the ways in which individuals with differences are ridiculed, undervalued, and marginalized and how these Others can overcome social prejudices in order to assert their differences as extraordinarily valuable. While Braddon's bodily mark of "queer" is inscribed on Hargraves's counterfeited desire for money and his renunciation of sexuality, Collins's

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<sup>13</sup> See Alfred Austin's "The Sensation School" (410), H.L. Mansel's "Sensation Novels" (255), and Margaret Oliphant's "Sensation Novels" (565).

“queer” takes out bodily invisibility, an unmarked body, nonetheless demonstrating distinctive difference. “Queer” in Collins is attached to figures who are not characters with disabilities but rather characters who happen to be erotically interested in disabled characters. But there seems to be a presupposition of “queer” whether difference is read as repulsive (in Braddon’s novels) or attractive (in Collins’s novels), showing queer’s relationality to the economic and the sexual aspect of Victorian culture.

Given Collins’s complex vision of his vocation, as novelist, it is understandable that his interest is concentrated on the norm by which certain people must be pushed away from access to ownership of identity, family relations, and social inclusion. Yet Collins seems to understand that the norm is unstable and contingent, requiring a constructed and continued Other to be contrasted with the norm. While the norm is about corporeal material fitness, *Hide and Seek* shows that the Other on the other side of the border must coexist to constantly construct the norm as the *norm*. In most of his novels, but especially in *Hide and Seek*, Collins wants to criticize Victorian bourgeois society for deafness to the voices that ask for help and insensibility to the adversities of the Other and bodies with difference. These non-ordinary subjects located outside the boundary of the norm represent people who differ or are not “us” in the majority population’s view. Similar to the construction of a social monster, the making of the Other Victorians is constantly in process in efforts to extend the category of otherness into differences unmarkable, invisible, and uncontrollable, according to social and political norms, as in differences in faith, conviction, opinion, perception, and taste, which would represent Collins’s concern about the social oppression of individuality.



Collins's novels try to replace the vertical conception of difference as deviation with the horizontal conception of difference as variation. In defying a degrading experience of being categorized, Collins validates the difference signified on the Other and furthermore celebrates variation by pointing out to the reader the moments and ways in which compulsive categorization fails to meet its mission

CHAPTER IV  
ARCHITECTURAL MARGINALITY AND SPATIAL QUEERNESS IN  
CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S *JANE EYRE*

**The Spatialization of Queer Marginality**

The word “queer” was popularly and pervasively used during the Victorian period, but its uses were diverse, slippery, and indeterminate. Appreciating the word’s indeterminate signification, Victorian people tended to understand the meaning of the word “queer” as “unexpected,” “unconventional,” “non-average” and “non-normal” in reference to character, behavior, habit, appearance, and things. In chapter two, I emphasize the word’s metaphorical linkage to the sense of “counterfeit” among diverse usages in order to argue that the Victorian “queer” can be useful as a sign for marginal economic Otherness. Braddon’s narrator tends to criminalize a queer character, Steeve Hargraves, because the narrator views him as a person of “counterfeit” that provokes a feeling of repulsion. But Braddon’s narrator’s overtly exclusive attitude against Hargraves’s queerness raises a question concerning the validity and legitimacy of the ideological authority that categorizes certain characters as counterfeit. Focusing on another particular use of the word, the sense of “eccentricity,” chapter three argues that the Victorian “queer” may be taken as a viable identity with which marginalized people deal with the social pressure of conformity while enriching and preserving their own individuality. In Braddon’s and Collins’s novels, the notion of queer marginality helps

dismantle the boundary of the normal by demonstrating that the oppositional relation between the normal and the queer is not stable or fixed.

The idea of queerness makes it possible to interpret the social and cultural categorization of marginality. The meaning of the word “queer” in the context of Otherness is not stable but slippery and indeterminate. In other words, both the categories of the norm and the queer are contingently decided based on one’s stance or “where” one stands when the word “queer” is uttered. If a word carries categorizing impulse and judgmental value, “where” she/he utters the word can determine the meaning of a speaker’s social identity. As one speaks the word “queer” oriented toward the other, she/he articulates her/his knowledge that she/he differs from the other and she/he is not what the word signifies. This knowledge helps to create a physical and emotional distance between two subjects, a distance that is spatialized as a barrier of security. The word “queer” and the notion of marginality can be spatially categorized and individual subjects are marginalized in their relations to space. Space is crucial in helping to create the values and meanings that marginalize individual subjects, depending on the place the subject is positioned and on the place the categorizer stands.

In her examination of the spatial phenomenology of relations between the self and objects, Sara Ahmed states that “perception [of a self and the self’s perception of others] hence involves orientation [and] what is perceived depends on where we are located” (27). In other words, the self is a spatial concept, and the self’s relations with others are also spatially recognized. Space is crucial to the formation of an individual identity, which must be perceived only in social relations. Ahmed also argues that an

individual acquires an identity that expresses an embodied self, which is already gendered, sexualized, and racialized according to the spatial orientation of the body in relations with the bodies of others (5). If we follow her perception of the spatial construction of the self, it may be said that space is vital to recognize the sexually, gender, and racially normative and, also, that space has the power to influence the drawing of the lines that protect those within the so-called right place. Spatial recognition involves a categorizing process in which those in the right place and those out of place are visibly distinguished. Minority subjects are queered because they do not follow the “straight” line, or they are not willing to stay in line. They are considered to block the “straight” bodily movement that is already always supposed to go straight in the line (Ahmed 66).

Marginal subjects are queered in the space of the normative. However, as Ahmed suggests, these supposedly queer minorities can look “right,” “straight,” and even “normal” when we view them from the right angle of their own sense (67). Suggesting that queer reading can be at work in a new way by bringing what is behind to the front, Ahmed points out that a position that can produce meanings and values in reading (4). Since certain positions of reading are often normalized and naturalized, it is necessary to come up with a new angle, which helps produce interpretations of meanings and values of marginalization that are hidden and silenced by the dominant group ideology.

The new angle I take in this chapter on Victorian novels involves examining spaces that may be considered natural and neutral but that, in fact, express knowledge of

power and desire in social relations. This queer reading aims to question the naturalized nature of space called normative space. As Victorian novelists show a keen interest in the relation between space and identity, they explore in their literary representations an idea that any individual subject cannot not be independent of social meanings of the space he or she interacts with because the social identity of an individual reflects the social status of the space the individual inhabits. Victorian novels, including Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), explore the relation of minority social identities to the space that conceals social outcasts from exposure and that contains them for the sake of the relief and comfort of the dominant class. I want to argue that the spatial characterization of marginality is useful in understanding the Victorian idea of queerness explicitly represented in Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Brontë characterizes individual subjects and plot development, relying on the spatial configuration of the norm in relation to the counter-norm as she does so. Most criticism on *Jane Eyre* has claimed that Jane's progress is a transition from counter-family to family member, from margin to center, and from counter-normal status to normative status. My reading, however, will show that, as a narrator, Jane does not take an interest in the progress, development, or maturity of female character; she rather aims to explain her own unique self and to defend her own individuality, which is incomprehensible, non-conventional, and then marginalized by the normative authority. Jane's Otherness is distinguished according to the ways she occupies a space or is ejected from a space. The spatialization of Jane's Otherness is also useful to my argument that her architectural marginality elucidates the nature of her queerness because it shows that Jane can take comfort, maintain an identity, and

preserve her own self in liminal spaces. In other words, the concept of taking comfort in and of the comfort of marginalized space is crucial to understanding Jane's queer marginality.

This chapter is divided into two sections: first focuses on the normalization of space that entails the production of marginal spaces. The building of the normative space is necessary to maintain the sense of safety and relief on the part of the insiders, to produce conforming subjects, and to preserve the ideology of the dominant norm. The maintenance of the normative space requires a space with a specific function that confines unruly, non-conforming and non-complying, subjects. This section examines the way in which an unexpectedly spatial "elsewhere" provides for confined subjects a sense of comfort and even an identity or is embraced by these subjects as a resource for survival. In the second section, defining Jane's individuality as architectural marginality, I examine Brontë's use of domestic spaces in her explanation of how Jane responds to the social marginalization and defends her queerness. Focusing on the insider's affective reaction to the reality of a closeting space, I also take an inside position in understanding the perversity of the Jane Eyre figure who finds "comfort" in being closeted. I make an effort to map out how subjects inside the closet have prevailed through marginalization.

### **Comfort in/of Space: The Spatial Normative vs. the Spatial Elsewhere**

Many theorists and scholars pay close attention to space as a critical term in analyzing social meanings of an individual identity. Michel Foucault takes a continuous interest in space as a disciplinary device while elaborating on time and history in

explaining the formation of a self. In “Of Other Spaces,” Foucault observes that the historical perception underwent a transition about spatial construction of an individual self. Before nineteenth-century social representation of a self was considered oppositional and hierarchical influenced by social perception of spaces (“Of Other Spaces” 22). But later, specifically nineteenth-century space was concerned with a perception of the self in relation to others as if a person was a point in a social network of points. Space is, by seeing an individual as a point among many, more concerned with its capability of mobilizing, extending, and connecting an individual on one point to the other individual on next point. Consequently, social perception of an individual self is also more concerned with a spatial self in relation to others and with “knowing what relations of propinquity, what type of storage, circulation, marking and classification of human elements should be adopted in a given situation” (“Of Other Spaces” 23). As space is a network of sites and places, it is at work building a network of humans, which are connected, mobilized, concentrated, and dispersed by the construction of streets and transportation systems.

While space is identified as a social identity of an individual self, it is employed to remind an inhabitant of the reality that she/he must be fit, useful, and docile to the interests of dominant authority in order to stay in a place that shelters her/him. Spatial discipline is efficient, but occasionally fails. If disciplinary tactics fail, the dominant group may adopt a containment tactic to deal with what it has failed to discipline. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault defines a space of this containment as “elsewhere” that houses subjects of non-normative productivity (4). Those outside the disciplinary system

of timing and spacing can be found in an “elsewhere” to which a society of docile subjects requests non-complying and non-utilizing subjects to disappear. Foucault’s “elsewhere” also manifests a double meaning between disciplinary intent and containment effect. From a position with/of disciplinary intent, confining certain subjects in “elsewhere” is to recognize the validity of those who conform to the social norm by punishing non-conforming and non-compliant subjects. Given the part that punishment plays in accompanying classification, containment, and non-recognition of an individual as such, the sense of relief of a disciplining position is doubled in seeing the removal of the Other and in knowing what/how they are categorized.

While space constantly reflects and shapes social, economic, and politics practices in representing meanings of an individual subjectivity, an individual with socially marked differences tries to prevail in the space assigned. While the construction of queer space is used as the containment of the Other with various Otherness, it can be perceived on the other hand as the chance for those who have tried to find a way in which they can escape from social stigma and marginalization, from the constant exploitation of their exposed identity, and from non-being. In *Epistemology of the Closet*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick describes the hopeless circumstances of the confined subjects who try to come out of from the closet and blend into social relations. Instead of finding a way to escape from their marginality, the confined subjects confront a fact that they cannot be independent of the closet space. The closet, once it is built, is not easily removed. Whether an individual ignores the existence of the closet or accepts it as it is, whether his closet identity is recognized by a society and is already “dealt” with, he will



find new walls continually erecting in front of him whenever he starts a new social relation (Sedgwick 68). Somehow the closet is inescapable and inevitable and it also becomes crucial to the identity formation of non-normal individual. If the individual cannot escape from a space that marginalizes the difference she or he manifests, the individual can take a view of the closet that it offers a way in which an individual constructs an identity of a confined self.

Foucault's elsewhere is useful to elucidate the intimate relation between discipline and space and Sedgwick's closet reveals the intricate relation between disciplined space and the confined self. Similarly Christopher Reed observes a close connection between (queer) space and (queer) identity. Dealing with social norms, an individual must find ways in which he can justify the validity of his difference. Taking an example of gay men's struggle for survival, Reed argues that social marginal subjects such as gay men already know that taking spaces and territorializing them are one way for them to assert the viability of their gayness (64). In perceiving queer space as their comfort zones rather than a space of punishment and exclusion, the social Other may see queer space as available for their differences. Also, working on the interwoven influence between space and sexual identity, Gill Valentine argues that since there has been the Other who refuses to play by the codes of sexual normalcy, certain spaces that can contain the Other must be built in places such as the "margins of the 'ghetto' and the back street bar and preferably, the closet or private space of the 'home'" (147). Against the containment tactic of the dominant authority, the confined Other is willing to

produce her/his “own relational spaces,” “experiencing it [the space of confinement] differently” from the norm’s intent (150).

Critical analysis of spatial subjectivity have taken an interest usually in sexual Others and illegitimate sexualities, employing “queer” as sexual signification. Just as “queer” has extensive uses beyond the sexual in the Victorian context, analysis of Victorian spatial subjectivity also must take an extensive view about queerness; any subject with a sign of queerness is an aberration from the norm from the dominant group’s perspective and one variation among many from the viewpoint of subjects with differences. In Victorian fiction, queer individuals are social Others, imaginary monsters, outcasts with social vice and disease, and political enemies whose presences threaten representative Victorian values such as respectability, domesticity, class stability, gender division, morality, progress and Englishness. Their queerness must be marked and contained within or channeled into “elsewhere” or a space of “closet,” the counterpart of a space of the norm.

Spatial imprisonment for those who do not conform to, or comply with, the dictates of a spatialized ideology indicates a movement from the outside to the inside of space, which would give the non-conforming a space of their own. I would argue that the space of elsewhere can provide the confined subject with a sense of comfort or the confined subject seeks a sense of comfort out of despair. This space on the part of the confined can be a relief because it is something for subjects to lean on in understanding why they are there. At some level, confining or pushing others into elsewhere unintentionally enables marginal subjects to lean on something that provides comfort.

Rather than giving up their lives and abandoning themselves to despair, they try to live through and start nesting in the confined space of a society called “elsewhere.”

Foucault’s, Sedgwick’s, Reed’s, and Valentine’s critical attitudes toward the space of discipline and containment help me to define the space of elsewhere as comfort zones, a definition that is important to my argument in understand the mechanism of queer marginality represented in Victorian novels, particularly in Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. It would be incomprehensible and even appalling to dominant society that there are certain individuals who never wish or desire or make an effort to change their way of life in order to gain rewards in economic and sexual matters. Like a base coin, dialect or slang, or disabled body, these non-complying queer individuals referred to as counterfeit or eccentric, as shown in previous chapters, are constantly categorized as non-fitting, out of use, and occasionally antisocial entities. They are queer minorities who know and are taught to know the benefits of conformity, but are not interested in these benefits or in staying within the lines that are drawn by society; they are comfortable with being there within the assigned space and assigned category. In tracing the spatial articulation of queer, in the next section, I would use spatial queerness ambiguously and spatially to capture the sense of a comfort zone, specific moments in which an individual can attain a sort of “comfort” from the space that is willing to contain, oppress, deny or ignore his rights as citizen.

## **Jane Eyre: The Making of Architectural Marginality**

*Jane Eyre* has been the representative Victorian figure of marginality and her Otherness has been analyzed with respect to the formation and meaning of the psychological self, gender and class status, and social and economic situations. Most criticism views the novel as the representation of a successful movement of the protagonist from margin to center, the outside to the inside, “from the counter-family set to the set of the family-in-law” (Spivak 248), and from the figure of an outcast to that of “confirmed membership of the gentry” (Shuttleworth 148). Scholars also point out a progressive aspect of an autobiographical narrative in which the narrator Jane presents a process of development, progress, education and cultivation, and the maturing of a female character. For instance, Stevie Davis argues that *Jane Eyre* is a story of a rebel’s economic progress, embodying “a parable of self-help” in Victoria culture and society (xvii).

Jane’s movement is explicitly represented from the marginal category of a dependent, child, charity-student, and governess to the normative category of a wife and mother in a gentry household with a considerable inheritance. However, my reading will show that the novel is preoccupied with the narrator Jane’s explanation of how her difference results in marginalization and with the narrator Jane’s aim of defending queerness as an assertive identity. In *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology*, Sally Shuttleworth argues that Jane’s personal history does not consist of “the characteristics of progression, but rather the endless reiteration of the same” (159). Jane retains her adulthood singularly even as she has entered her adulthood. Having a singular self that is

unchangeable and non-conformist, Jane needs to explicate the nature of her difference. In Jane's narrative, the act of explication is evidently a defending act in a way that Jane tells her side of the story. In *Charlotte Brontë and Defensive Conduct*, Janet Gezari points out that Brontë has taken an interest in the marginal positions of people "in the difficulties of conducting an unimpugnable defense of ourselves" (3) and she argues that a defensive conduct is necessary as not just a self-protecting device but "an engaging enterprise of intelligent and imaginative counter-moves," which are, for Brontë, her novel-writing (4). Following Gezari's notion of Brontë's defensiveness, I would argue that *Jane Eyre* is not about the successful transformation that entails the denial and erasure of the pre-transformed self, but about Brontë's efforts to comprehend the incomprehensible and to represent the unrepresentable by employing a retrospective narrative of Jane Eyre.

In explicating the nature of her own marginality and defending its meaning and value, the narrator presents a piece of conversation between Bessie and little Jane, a conversation that reveals part of her marginality is relevant to the meaning of the word "queer." In the novel, Brontë uses the word "queer" five times: Bessie describes Jane as a "queer, frightened, shy, little thing" (47); the narrator Jane uses it to address Rochester's "queer questions" (155) and "his queer looks" (284); Rochester uses it in his speech to Jane, saying "I have a queer feeling with regard to you" (291); and Jane hears the word from the inn owner who tells a gossip about "a very queer thing" regarding the ruin of Thornfield Hall and its owner Rochester (491). Brontë understood and used the word "queer" (like any other Victorian) to mean "odd," "strange," or "unconventional."

But one case is worth noting to explicate this chapter's main point. The word is used by Bessie to address Jane's eccentric character. In her confusing performance, Jane's queer self may appear as deceitful (to Mrs. Reed), as frightened and shy (to Bessie), and as accepting of being put upon (to John Reed and his sisters). In Bessie's evaluation of Jane's everyday behavior, Jane "should be bolder" in her response to people around her (47). In her response to Mrs. Reed and her children, and servants, Jane has been queer, frightened, and shy; she has been "rather put upon" (47). Strangely this evaluation is made later after Jane's outburst at John Reed and the red-room incident and it must be deduced by Bessie's observation of something underneath Jane's external self, a something that is incomprehensible and uncategorizable.

Scholars point out that Bronte endows Jane with an in depth psychological interiority in which Jane's queer individuality is concealed. Shuttleworth states that "a retreat to a physiologically suggestive interiority" is her strategy dealing with oppression (154). Jane also needs a psychological space to contain her passionate desire, which is occasionally uncontrollable and dangerous and sometimes understood as a sign of madness (Shuttleworth 148). If something underneath is about the repression of Jane's passionate desire, Bessie's advice would be the release of the confined desire by asking explicitly and straightforwardly what she desires. But Bessie's advice that Jane should be bolder in seeking what she wants seems a difficult task for Jane to accomplish because Jane is keenly aware of the nature of her desire but has a tendency to be easily terrified at a possibility of the fulfillment of that desire. In "Passionate Reserve and Reserved Passion in the Works of Charlotte Brontë," John Kucich defines Jane's

*something* underneath as the “oppositional psychic tensions” that aim not to contain and control her passionate desire but to “intensify desire and the subjectivity within which desire circulates” (913). Under the appearance of reserve, Jane’s internal self has more psychic freedom that can produce “more pleasurably undefined and indefinable” individuality (“Passionate Reserve” 914).

Jane’s *something* incomprehensible and uncategorizable, in other words her queerness, is produced by the complexity of her recognizing the incompatibility between individual desire and social expectations. As if trapped in an in-between space, Jane’s queer self is constantly and repetitively moving three steps forward and two steps backward in making intimate relationship with others. While her internal self in movement of oppositional directions gains psychological freedom (no need to transform her singular individuality), Jane’s external body also moves repetitively forward and backward; this forward and backward movement can create a crevice. If the space of the crevice is required to preserve her psychological self, a space of the periphery, including window-seats, stairs, banisters, nurseries, closets, and attics, is also needed to shelter Jane’s external body. I would define spaces of the crevice and the periphery as the space of queer marginality in which Jane’s singular self lies, gaining relatively achievable freedom. Thus, reading *Jane Eyre* includes visualizing Jane Eyre in/of space through analyzing how Jane understands the implicit meanings and functions of each space and how she responds to the spatial norm.

Brontë uses spaces in her characterization, spaces that elucidate Jane’s queer marginality. Explicitly, *Jane Eyre* is spatially structured. Jane is placed at first at

Gateshead, transferred to Lowood, moved into Thornfield Hall, found at the door of Moor House, and finally travels to Ferndean. W. A. Craik in “The Shape of the Novel” views Gateshead as “a place of torment” for Jane (7), Lowood as a “physically hard and aesthetically repulsive” place (8), Thornfield Hall as a place of “freedom and happiness” (9), Moor House as an “antithesis” of Gateshead and Thornfield Hall, and as “the building of security and family unity” (10). Brontë’s literary representations of spaces are worthy analyzing because spaces are the sites in which the dominant ideology is embedded and architectural domination and oppression are represented.

In the novel, for instance, the window scene is useful to illustrate how an individual self is spatially determined as marginal. Jane is the dependent child who is constantly and continually told to leave the central space. When she is ordered to disappear from the “happy” domestic group for the sake of their comfort, Jane leaves the drawing-room and slips into the breakfast-room with a bookcase. Taking a book, Bewick’s *History of British Birds*, Jane takes a seat on the window-seat spot, screening her place by the red moreen curtain. While “queer, frightened, shy, little” Jane is positioned inside between the red curtain and the “clear pane of [window] glass,” she can feel her alienation like the birds in her book, which inhabit the “bleak shores” of somewhere or the “forlorn regions of dreary space” (21). Yet Jane feels, in spite of extreme coldness and loneliness, that she is “happy at least in [her] way” in her hiding-place (22). Jane’s perverse sense of freedom and comfort does not last long. As soon as the bully John Reed tries to find Jane’s whereabouts, she “wished fervently he might not discover my hiding place” (22), but she knows what will happen to her because her fear



is realized immediately. John will punish her because his abuse is endlessly done to her. At this time, daily John hits Jane with a book, making her burst out her repressed anger at him and Mrs. Reed. As a consequence, Jane is confined in the red-room.

While Jane taking a window-seat as a refuge and taking a blow from John for no reason are part of her everyday lived experience at Gateshead, the narrator Jane describes a particular day when John's bullying and punishment includes striking at Jane and throwing a book at her, leading to the incarceration of Jane in the red-room. A space of a refuge for Jane is nowhere to be found as if she is a moving object. The need for a space seems a pressing problem for her. Only a window-seat allows Jane to rest herself temporarily and it also provides an explicit vision of her social position in which Jane embodies the liminal space that is created as the inside and the outside are intersected. In "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak observes that Jane's withdrawing into a window-seat is fitting for her unique marginality; in an "off-center place" like a window-seat, Jane still can preserve her odd self (246). Taking a window-seat becomes Bronte's habitual way of presenting Jane's self in the novel's narrative. As Spivak points out, the window-seat reflects Jane's marginality that is spatialized in a luminal place where she belongs but is alienated, punished but comforted. The marginal space of a window-seat also occasionally provides her with comforting moments that help her endure and survive the present adversity.

Jane's taking a window-seat appears throughout the narrative and becomes her habit. As the narrative progresses, Jane territorializes other spaces that do not belong to a

space of the center or the norm. The next section of my argument focuses on the spatialization of Jane's queer marginality and consists of three sub-units: first, the drawing-room as the spatial normative is examined; the red-room at Gateshead and the third story at Thornfield Hall as domestic "elsewhere" are compared; then, the concept of comfort taken from peripheral spaces is elaborated, focusing on Ferndean as the space of a shelter that contains marginal selves.

### **Everywhere of the Spatial Normative**

Bronte's *Jane Eyre* begins with Jane's comment on daily walks. She said that she "never liked long walks, especially on chilly afternoons" (9). In the outside walk, Jane is exposed to coldness and moreover day by day has to endure humiliation by recognizing her physical ugliness compared with the loveliness and attraction of her cousins. Also, daily Jane is chided by Bessie, the nurse, coming home from the winter. She may think that her lovely cousins never have done anything wrong to be chided by the nurse. Jane who is not favorable in the outside comes inside the home and faces a hard fact that she is not welcomed in the inside as well. At home, Mrs. Reed and her children gather at their hearth, warming themselves by the fireside, the image of conventional domestic happiness. To preserve the image of domestic happiness, the little girl Jane, who wants to be accepted, must be removed from the space of the center. Home means to her a domestic happiness in which she is not included; home also means a place where she suffers from domestic violence. Jane narrates the dreadful circumstances, in which John Reed has "bullied and punished me, not twice or three

times in the week, nor once or twice in the day, but continually” (22). Home to Jane is a place of continual violence upon her body and her suffering is inescapable and continuing.

For Jane, a marginal figure, there seems no difference between the outside and the inside of a home. Everywhere, Jane is placed under constant surveillance and marginalized by the figure of surveillance. Space that is imagined natural and neutral is in fact at work appropriating subjects residing inside and outside of its boundaries according to the dominant norm. Spaces one inhabits are made by her/his living and simultaneously spaces “produce us precisely because we so often do what we are supposed to do—what is ‘common sense’ in a given place” (Browne et, 4). The “common sense” or socio-spatial norm tends to appropriate public behavior for the sake of the space’s appearance. If you do not play along or do not do what you are supposed to do in a given place, you are gazed at or gawked at according to common sense that must be appreciated even in public spaces. In other words, spatial common sense determines the normative behavior in a given place. Based on a social web of assumptions and beliefs, common sense in space indicates social meanings of what we are and how we are related to the space we inhabit, as well as to others who recognize us and are recognized by us.

Architecturally the Victorian domestic space is segregated according to the gender norms. The drawing-room is architecturally situated at the heart of the house and can be the central normative space of the Victorian home. The drawing-room was “the status indicator, the mark of gentility, and the room from where the woman governed her

domain” (Flanders 168). While it is the privately sanctioned space, the drawing-room must play an exemplary role in displaying the social norms and enforcing moral standard to the inhabitants and the visitors (Spain 111). Victorian culture that emphasizes woman’s moral superiority tends to consider the female figure as the domestic spiritual authority particularly in the drawing-room.

The drawing-room at Gateshead consists of the female authority, Mrs. Reed. She “lay reclined on a sofa by the fireside” and “looked perfectly happy” with her children (9). When she is in the drawing-room, Mrs. Reed sews sitting in her arm-chair, takes a visitor, or talks to her servants about something about house-keeping. Andrea Kaston Tange in *Architectural Identities* argues that “the drawing-room is central to this definition of respectable femininity” because it must display women’s accomplishments and their actions as proper housekeepers (63). Women in the drawing-room must perform their moral, economic, social, and cultural roles successfully to maintain the respectability of their home. As she likes to watch others, Jane examines Mrs. Reed sewing in the drawing-room; she evaluates Mrs. Reed as fit as an “exact, clever manager” of her household and tenantry (43).

While the drawing-room is feminized and other spaces such as the smoking-room and the study are assigned to male authority, the womanly space still is influenced by male authority: Mrs. Reed’s drawing-room is contrasted with Mr. Reed’s master bedroom, the red-room; the Rivers sisters’ parlor seeks Mr. St. John Rivers’s gaze; Mrs. Fairfax constantly cleans up the drawing-room expecting the return of Mr. Rochester. Women in the drawing-room seem to be privileged but also are confined to perform

what male authority desires them to do. Yet women in the drawing-room still are in relative authority in domestic matters. The inhabitants know how to use “cultural norms attached to those space as a means of creating an identity for themselves or locating themselves within a family, a social network, or domestic ideology more broadly” (Tange 177). Mrs. Reed’s drawing-room, embodying the norm, can distinguish the acceptable from the unacceptable in another person on the basis of whether each person conforms to the spatial norms or not. The norm is pervasive in its influence on the everyday matters of an individual subject, because it is a system of assumptions and beliefs based on which everyday matters are made intelligible to us. If common sense is supported by dominant ideological interests and is at work privileging these interests as the norm, it needs to construct and naturalize the oppositional relation between the self and the Other whose relation is always spatially conceived.

While Jane’s taking of her space in a window-seat defines the boundary of her marginal identity, Jane’s response to the drawing-room, the space of the domestic center, reveals the truth of her social identity. While space is a sign of our belonging, it also tells how we relate to another in social relations that are unevenly formed based on measurements such as class, gender, sexuality, and race. The drawing-room that Mrs. Reed stays in becomes the central space where Jane, marginal figure, does not have. Jane is continually told to leave the drawing-room. When Jane is summoned by Mrs. Reed to the drawing-room for an interview with Mr. Brocklehurst, she is dismayed at the fact that she needs to go into the drawing-room, the space of restriction. After the red-room incident, Jane has been restricted for three months to the nursery, sleeping in the closet.

She feels oppressive forces of the “breakfast, dining and drawing-rooms” that are “awful regions” for her (38). Jane descends the stair and stands “in the empty hall” facing the breakfast-room door that is led to the drawing-room (38). As if trapped in the in-between space, Jane “fears to return to the nursery, and fears to go forward to the parlour” (38). As the narrator Jane recognizes it, Jane’s fear tends to be realized. At this time, Jane is accused for a deceitful character in front of her future authority. When she is alone with Mrs. Reed in the drawing-room, Jane accuses Mrs. Reed for her cruelty in incarcerating a little girl in the red-room and for her unkindness that is blind to her son’s abusive behavior (44). It is her first act of defending herself, an act toward which Jane feels a sense of regret. From the episode, Jane’s relation to the drawing-room reveals that Jane cannot be placed in the space of the center and be comfortable with it.

Also, as much as her dispossession of the drawing-room is desired, Jane’s possession of the drawing-room is at the heart of her desire. After the red-room incident, Jane recognizes a “more marked line of separation” between her cousins in the drawing-room and her in the closet (33). In the holiday seasons, the drawing-room opens to the family’s guests, inviting her cousins who are nicely attired (35). Throughout the days of festivities, the drawing-room doors open and close constantly but do not ask Jane to come in. Jane can only watch the family enjoyment from a distance, traveling from the “solitary and silent nursery” to the stair-head (35). Similar to the moment that Jane is excluded from the drawing-room but tries to find comfort taking a window-seat, she, restricted to the nursery, consoles herself by caring a doll, feeling a sense of pleasure (35). The narrator Jane’s descriptions implies that little Jane acknowledges the drawing-

room as the space of violence and exclusion, but cannot relinquish the desire to belong to the drawing-room. As she moves forward and backward in taking space, Jane produces desire that moves in oppositional directions, characterized as queer marginality of her own.

The desire to possess the drawing-room of her own appears in the narrator Jane's description of various drawing-rooms in different places. Leaving Gateshead and arriving at Lowood Institution, Jane first notices the parlor inside, which does not impress her. It is not "spacious or splendid as the drawing-room at Gateshead, but comfortable enough" (51). Maybe the parlor at Lowood is not desirable to Jane like the one in the domestic environment. When Jane is invited to enter Miss Temple's private apartment through passages and a staircase, she feels welcomed and accepted by another mother figure that gathers her children near on side of the hearth and listens to childish talks (83). But as Miss Temple's care and affection are oriented more toward Helen, her loving space might not be intended to accommodate Jane's desire.

After spending considerable time on one place, Jane decides to move on with her life because her external self appears "a discipline and subdued character" but her internal self feels a sense of restlessness (100). Jane's restless self compels her to seek a new position in a new place and as a governess, she enters Thornfield Hall. Unexpectedly she is welcomed and favored by Mrs. Fairfax, the housekeeper. Fascinated by the external appearance of Thornfield Hall, Jane has a chance to view the drawing-room that, along with the dinning-room, is impressively furnished and decorated. As at Gateshead, Jane does not belong to the drawing-room, a space of the center, that is

compatible rather with the society of the Ingrams and Eshtons. As Mr. Rochester's guests, the Ingrams and Eshtons occupy the grand rooms, the dining-room, and the drawing-room, enjoying the refreshments that Jane might prepare. Jane seems agreeable with those who prepare the reception. She watches the furniture, the carpet, and the mirror cleaned up in each room and moreover is asked to help Mrs. Fairfax in making "custards and cheese-cakes and French pastry" and in "truss[ing] game and garnish[ing] dessert-dishes" (191). Jane also knows that her movable space is restricted to stairs for the servants, window-seats, and stair-head. Even when she is invited to enter the drawing-room by Mr. Rochester, Jane is still dismayed about going in but decides to enter it without being seen. Through a vacant room, not through the dining-room, she with her student Adele, enters it and "retire[s] to a window-seat," taking a book (198). From her screened spot, Jane can watch a whole landscape of the drawing-room into which people enter and "disperse about the room" (199). Jane points out that Thornfield Hall's drawing-room also contains a Mrs. Reed figure, that is Dowager Lady Ingram with "a fierce and a hard eye," who treats Jane as an invisible and insignificant person, degrades her status as a governess, and accuses Jane of sharing diverse faults with the class of governess (200). While she realizes that a kind of sameness exists between Mr. Rochester and her and she also has a chance to listen to his song in the drawing-room, Jane seems to perceive that she cannot be comfortable in that place and cannot occupy beyond a chair screened with a curtain.

Jane is still inaccessible to and uncomfortable with the drawing-room even when she is not anymore in the Gateshead's drawing-room. However, Jane is given to possess



her own drawing-room and refurnishing it with her taste. The revelation of Mr. Rochester's secret that the confined person is his insane wife forces Jane to take a flight from Thornfield Hall, a flight during which she is exposed to starvation and loneliness in an open field. Just as the moon guides her in distress to a rightful path at Thornfield Hall, Mother Nature, as Jane feels it, embraces her when she would be mistrusted, rejected, and insulted (372). Yet Jane must be within the domestic inside. Jane is settled at Moor House and learns to occupy a space of the drawing-room and be comfortable with it by those who turn out to be her cousins. Jane's housekeeping ability is proven in her management of a local school and her own cottage, which are made spotless and bright by Jane's domestic labor. With the financial aid from her unexpected inheritance, Jane feels a sense of ownership over the drawing-room through making a complete model of the parlor by cleaning down, refurnishing, and bring in new modern furniture (452). In fact, Jane never has to enter Gateshead's drawing-room or Thornfield's after she completes making a drawing-room out of her ideal at Moor House. Gateshead is probably closed down and Thornfield is burned down. Jane's drawing-room is different from both places that confine and oppress the inhabitant. As she keenly observes the relation between the drawing-room as a space of the norm and the status of the occupant, Jane desires to possess the drawing-room that is similar, not to the one of Gateshead and Thornfield, but to the ones at Moor House and Ferndean Manor.

### **Domestic “Elsewhere”: the Red-Room and the Third Story**

In the novel, Gateshead and Thornfield Hall have diverse spaces that are architecturally organized to accommodate the needs of the inhabitant. According to Judith Flanders, the Victorian perception about the home changed influencing the ways architectural arrangements were made to maximize the function and utility of each compartmental space within a home and accommodate the ideology of segregation, the “physical demarcation” of gender, class, and age of the occupants (9). Spatial segregation aims to produce comfort to the inhabitant but also is used to enforce the domestic rule and family value, often in terms of confinement. As Foucault points out, the construction of elsewhere is necessary to contain the incorrigible subject or to discipline the promising ones (*The History of Sexuality* 4). Both Gateshead and Thornfield Hall are presented as domestic spaces that contain a space of confinement. In contrast to the drawing-room as a space of the norm, spaces of elsewhere are used to discipline an unruly subject, Jane Eyre, and to contain a problem subject, Bertha Rochester.

When she strikes back at John Reed, Jane is incarcerated in the red-room. As the master bedroom, the red-room is well furnished and expensively carpeted. But no one wants to enter it because the red-room belongs to the dead Mr. Reed. While crying aloud, Jane observes the inside of the red-room. There is no light and windows are curtained. She can see the mirror reflecting something unrecognizable, which is in fact Jane’s reflection. Inside the red room, between rebelling against the unjust circumstances and blaming herself for some faults, Jane attempts to rationalize her situation and comes up

with the resolution that she will find “some strange expedient to achieve escape from insupportable oppression” or let herself die (27). Instead, Jane comes up with a way to retaliate for a false accusation on Mrs. Reed. Her resolution in death leads her to think of the death of Mr. Reed and his dead body; if the dead are said to revisit the “earth to punish the perjured and avenge the oppressed” (29), kind Mr. Reed’s spirit might return to exercise justice for her. She understands that the probability would be comforting, as if meeting a light in the darkness. But, as a little girl who finds herself both frightened and delighted by supernatural belief, Jane becomes terrified at a mere thought of Mr. Reed’s spirit coming back.

The red-room signifies to Jane that Mrs. Reed is the authority of domestic spaces and she can punish Jane by using spaces. Mrs. Reed continually requests that Jane leaves the drawing room, which is her space, orders Jane confined in the closet to sleep, and restricts her to the nursery to eat alone. While the norm of the dominant authority is at work categorizing the Other who disrupts the observer’s world view, it concentrates on stereotyping the Otherness of unruly subjects, a stereotype that is useful in constructing oppositional relations of the self and the Other. Mrs. Reed evidently dislikes Jane and spatially abuses her. In *Charlotte Brontë and Sexuality*, John Maynard argues that Jane’s relation with Mrs. Reed is in the nature of competition motivated by Mrs. Reed’s sexual jealousy of her sister-in-law (101). Mrs. Reed confesses at her deathbed that she cannot tolerate the existence of Jane in her house because she never likes Jane’s mother, her husband’s loved sister. The red-room experience also allows Jane access to the knowledge of what others think of her. Mrs. Reed and servants view

her deceitful, unattractive, and unlovable. They point out something in her that makes Jane unlikable.

According to Mrs. Reed's wish, Jane is moved to another place, Lowood Institution, a charity school for orphaned girls. Lowood Institution seems the exact place of discipline that Foucault describes in *Discipline and Punish* (145). Lowood School, which is defined as "Institution," maximizes its educational system and environment to produce "useful" subjects. Against the system Jane feels "discontent," but gradually "internalizes her frustrations" (Leggatt and Parkes 171). Jane's time is managed in her everyday life by bell's sound and her efforts are rewarded as the upward spatial movement from a work-table of a lower rank to that of a higher rank. Through six years' education and training and two years' practice in teaching, Jane is considered a docile and subjected subject. Mrs. Reed wants Jane to be educated as useful and fitting for her dependent status, and Jane becomes self-sufficient and self-reliant enough to take a paid position. But in spite of the eight years of confinement at Lowood Institution, Jane recognizes that, while she appears disciplined, she retains her individuality (100). Jane's individuality that is different from other children does not seem to be corrected or reformed. The confinement tactic of the dominant authority is successful in transforming external appearance and social behavior but cannot influence the change of the internal self. In relation to a space of the confinement, Jane strengthens her psychical self to preserve her marginal individuality, attaching her body to spaces of the margins of domestic spaces. She still seeks a window-seat as a space of comfort that shelters her restless self (100).

Adult Jane comprehends the relation between the red-room and her marginal individuality but does not forget the lived experience of one terrible day. The redness in the bedroom is reiterated in the form of fire and blood. At Thornfield Hall, Jane witnesses her master's bedroom on fire and saves Mr. Rochester from flames. In the guest bedroom, she sees blood when she is asked to help Mr. Rochester in treating a knife wound on Mr. Mason. But for a significant restaging of the red-room, Jane dreams of returning to the red-room at Gateshead, when she knows about Mr. Rochester's secret and the real identity of the confined person in the third story. In her dream, Jane is "transported in thought to the scenes of childhood" (367). Similarly terrified and stimulated, Jane confronts the light or spirit that terrifies little Jane but she comprehends a change that the light is not a fatherly spirit of Mr. Reed but a motherly spirit, "a white human form shone in the azure, inkling a glorious brow earthward" (367). Rosemarie Bodenheimer in "Jane Eyre in Search of Her Story" argues that Jane's terror in the red-room results from an unrealized "passage from 'theory' to 'realization,'" but Jane's terror takes on new meaning through the realization of her desire (124). Jane desires that someone, either fatherly or motherly, comes to her and saves her from a distress of the incomprehensible and the irresolvable. Her desire is realized as the motherly spirit comes and speaks to Jane's spirit that Jane must avoid temptation to "sweetness." At this time she does not withdraw from her desire or terror at the realization of her desire. The spirit of a motherly form in her dream may be regarded as Jane's expressed desire that indicates her wish to remedy conflicts with Mrs. Reed. The restaging of her experience

in the red-room endows Jane with a chance to review her past dreadful experience with a perspective that may allow her to gain strength in relation to space of the marginal.

Thornfield Hall also contains a space of confinement, the third story. On her way to mapping the domestic spaces at Thornfield Hall, Jane is informed that in the third story a female servant named Grace Poole resides. But the fire in the master bedroom and Mr. Mason's wound indicates a different story-- that Grace might be some kind of a monster or a psychologically unstable person or an alcoholic who becomes violent. Contemplating the secretive presence of Grace in the house, Jane tends to compare herself to Grace in relation to Mr. Rochester, a comparison that Jane draws with any woman near Mr. Rochester. While she feels insecure about women near Mr. Rochester, about Grace and Miss Ingram, Jane is able to identify with any subject at the margins, sympathizing with her/his alienated status. When she knows the real identity of the inhabitant at the third story, Jane, even though it is momentary, seems to identify with Bertha Rochester who is forced to live at a closet due to her insanity. In the mechanism of his confinement of Bertha, Jane seems to feel Mr. Rochester's punishing cruelty (like Mrs. Reed's hardened heart) and Bertha's helplessness (like little Jane's) that is punished. Recalling her lived experience at Gateshead in which she is ordered to stay at the nursery and to sleep at a closet, Jane compares little Jane, who cannot help being an unlovable child, with Bertha who also "cannot help being mad" (347). Sympathetic to Helen and infuriated at the harsh treatment Helen receives, Jane sided with Helen's position within Lowood School. It is natural for Jane to defend Bertha who, like Helen, is not given to defend her story.

Scholars point out the parallel between Jane and Bertha regarding a matter of control and manipulation of female energy. In comparing Jane and Bertha as the figure of a passionate child and a mad woman, Jane is a “figure in the process of self-legitimation” against an occasion in which her body and sexuality become uncontrollable and then she is categorized as a mad woman, a Bertha (Shuttleworth 153). As scholars point out, Jane must learn something from a figure of social outcast, Bertha Rochester. Bertha signifies a “monster of excess” to teach the dangers of passionate outburst (Maynard 106) and also is an “example of how not to act” in order not to be confined (Gilbert and Gubar 361). Maurianne Adams in “*Jane Eyre: Women’s Estate*” argues that the revelation of Bertha “confirms and verifies what Jane had already feared,” which is that Jane would be rejected and alienated and become a “kept woman” (138).

But the appearance of Bertha also presents a glimpse of Jane’s complex individuality in identifying with, defending, and differentiating herself from a social outcast. When she meets Helen Burns at Lowood, Jane feels close to Helen, who is the object of constant reproach, and tries to defend her. But Jane recognizes that she cannot be a Helen who preaches self-denial and disregards desire to belonging. At Lowood, Jane clears the accusation, works hard, and is rewarded a promotion to a higher class while learning how to be agreeable and be accepted in space she inhabits (88). In the case of Bertha, Jane’s sympathy is interactive with her desire to put a distance from Bertha. During her stays, even though she is not conscious of the fact, Jane shares spaces with Bertha, who is able to slip out of her confinement to roam the hall, the stairs, and

the corridors to enter Mr. Rochester's master bedroom and invade Jane's private space. According to Tange, the corridor spaces in which Jane and Bertha can be found are a space of the indefinable obscuring the difference between "governesses, madwomen, and middle-class women" in the Victorian home (197). Jane and Bertha are both marginal women whose spatial positions confirm their likeness. To avoid a danger that is produced by her spatial proximity to Bertha, Jane must leave Thornfield Hall.

### **Architectural Marginality and Comfort on the Liminal Space:**

#### **Ferndean Manor**

Jane is a figure at margin, who can observe the architectural segregation between normative and disciplinary spaces, and between the drawing-room and the red-room. She is also comfortable with roaming about these spaces, including hallways, stairs, banisters, attics, and also window-seats, operating on the liminal line between a space of the normative and a space of the discipline. At Victorian home, segregated spaces are supposed to determine the identity of the occupant, but these spaces are unstable and slippery in connecting space and identity (Tange 177). These liminal spaces also create "potential slippage between ostensibly fixed identities" (Tange 178). As she takes these spaces, they in return define the identity of Jane in the house: she is dependent as a child and a paid governess, territorializing only liminal spaces. For middle- and upper-class mothers, including Mrs. Reed and Lady Ingram, and their "innocent" daughters, liminal figures such as Jane, a governess, may be threatening to the maintenance of family morals and respectability; since the liminal figure is



conceptually associated with servants and fallen women she tends to reveal the fear that middle-class daughters can become governesses (Tange 178).

Yet in spite of the spatial categorization of her identity, Jane is able to assign the liminal space a meaning of her own. From the point of view of a domestic authority who desires to see nonconforming subjects removed and contained in an assigned space, it would be a relief if the containment takes place. In order to complete the image of domestic happiness, the dependent and queer nobody Jane must be contained elsewhere. In other words, Jane understands being pushed away as a punishment for the differences that separate her from the family. Jane takes a space of her own at a window-seat at Gateshead. While Jane experiences a sense of comfort, however briefly, she gains access with a sense of emotional intimacy to the space that contains her, and she is also able to fantasize her (temporal) ownership of that space.

Jane's taking a window-seat has been examined by many scholars. Seating at her hiding place, Jane watches pictures in a book, which involves a reading practice: her reading of meanings in a picture, in a face of another person, in people's characters and emotions in the drawing-room. Jane's reading is an "act of interpretation" that offers pleasure and articulates her desire (Armstrong 107). Jane's ability to observe people and draw her own conclusion about them is understood to have developed from her reading of meanings in a picture and from her telling her side of the story (Shuttleworth 152). There are critical analyses focusing on the meanings of "where" she sits and why she chooses it. A space of Jane's window-seat is the spot where inside and outside meet. Jane at window-seat "convert[s] a boundary line into a new interior space" and

transforms the external into the internal (Bellis 640), a transformation that is considered an “assertion of feminine” empowerment (Bellis 642). For a female character like Jane, space, including the space of the window-seat, can be an “element of definition, meaning, possibility” to express a self of her own (Phiehler 8). Her habit of taking a window-seat reveals her alienation from the family members at Gateshead and from the drawing-room society of the Ingrams and Eshtons. Yet Jane is able to “through an apparent paradox, associate her inner resources with her defense against the humiliations of social and estrangement from family life” (Adams 141). Jane’s alienation protects her from oppressive and violent “domestic interiors” (Adams 142).

In a spatial conception of discipline, D. A. Miller describes the counter-middle-class world as an enclosed space, not separated but built within a space of the normative (6). A containment tactic that segregates non-conforming and non-complying subjects in a space of “elsewhere” from disciplined and docile subjects, “help[s] secure a proper (relieved, grateful) appreciation” on the part of the dominant group in society (Miller 6). While a dominant group’s relief at the invisibility of the Other is legitimated and a dominant group can claim the legitimate agency to feel such relief, the meaning and value of the comfort taken by the Other inside the forced containment is commonly ignored. But the important point is that a moment of feeling comfort, even if it is temporary, can be claimed by the Other, in contrast to the perspective that this kind of comfort is unexpectedly perverse and degrading. As space helps shape the identity of an individual subject, queer space is crucial to the making of the identity of queer subjects and also as something that queer subjects take comfort from. Miller points out the

complex meanings of the space of confinement and the double meanings of comfort in/of space. On the part of subjects who are confined, a space of the confinement manifests oppression and alienation and produces the reality that they cannot escape from it. But occasionally this enclosed space becomes the refuge-like space from which he or she “never want[s] to” leave, or sometimes is “appallingly comfortable” with being confined, justifying their settlement (Miller 5). Miller’s observation explains something about the multiple meanings of space to the degree which individual subjects may, with relative relief, adapt to space and spatial social relations.

Jane’s protective alienation, in other words, her self-marginalization, is realized through taking liminal spaces, including window-seats. Taking a space of a window-seat at Gateshead is to seek a kind of feeling of belonging but ends with the incident in which Jane is physically abused and confined in the red-room. When she takes a window-seat later at Lowood Institution, Jane begins to show more confidence in her ownership of a space she takes; Jane says that “I went my window [of my room], opened it, and looked out” (101). Jane’s attachment to a space of marginality is more materialized in the form of Ferndean Manor. When she returns to the ruined and emptied Thornfield Hall, Jane listens to the story about the fire, Bertha’s death, and blinded and crippled Mr. Rochester (494). She finds out the whereabouts of Mr. Rochester: the manor-house of Ferndean. The house is “a building of considerable antiquity, moderate size, and no architectural pretensions, deep buried in a wood” (498). As Mr. Rochester’s property, Ferndean has been “inhabited and unfurnished” because the place is evaluated as “ineligible and insalubrious” (496). In contrast to Gateshead and Thornfield Hall, Ferndean seems

unattractive to common people but offers a sense of shelter to Mr. Rochester who desires to escape from common people's gaze and their interference. The physical building stands "amidst a space of inclosed ground" circled by the wood (497). The front door is narrow in its entrance and windows are narrow and latticed, which seems to deliver a message that Ferndean is inaccessible and also uninviting (497). Into Ferndean, a space of refuge, Jane returns to be with Mr. Rochester as his life companion. According to Adams, with Mr. Rochester, Jane tends to withdraw her physical self "into a 'placeless' or status and space-free spiritual and moral identity" (143). But returning to Mr. Rochester by taking space at Ferndean indicates that Jane's spiritual and moral self demands materialized spaces at which Jane interacts with Mr. Rochester.

Brontë's novel ends with Ferndean where Jane and Mr. Rochester live happily after in their own way. Jane takes care of blind and crippled Mr. Rochester, acting as a household manager in her own drawing-room at Ferndean that is neither Gateshead nor Thornfield, spaces of punishment and discipline. Ferndean Manor seems to be fit as a space that embraces subjects at margin. Jane and Mr. Rochester may resemble each other in terms of physical inferiority, irregular character, and susceptibility to concealment. They also display identifiable selves that are demonstrated through their relations to a space of the drawing-room. Being uncomfortable with the drawing-room, Jane observes that in the genteel society of the drawing-room, Mr. Rochester is not sincere in showing his affection to Miss Ingram and he is polite to her for his interests (216). Mr. Rochester's discomfort in and absence from the drawing-room is different from Jane's disappearance. As Victorian domestic spaces are architecturally arranged according to

gender norms, Mr. Rochester as male authority occupies such places as the study and the library. He cannot easily enter the drawing-room that is a space of feminine authority. Thornfield Hall that does not have feminine authority only opens the drawing-room for special occasions. But Mr. Rochester seems to prefer being on the periphery as he has travelled around the world, not to stay at Thornfield Hall and to be away from his home. After the introductory conference at the library, Jane does not see Mr. Rochester as often as she expects her to do. But Jane is not beyond the reach of Mr. Rochester. She encounters him for a moment only “in the hall, on the stairs, or in the gallery” (151). Like Jane, Mr. Rochester tends to occupy the liminal spaces at Thornfield Hall.

I want to argue that the meanings of these spaces for Jane and Mr. Rochester should not be read progressively. The transformation and assimilation of unruly subjects and marginal spaces entail the denial and erasure of queerness, a queerness that helps mark a subject’s individuality. Jane’s interaction with space shows that there is a possibility of dealing with social punishment through embracing the marginality as a tolerable identity. While they are closeted in a space as punishment in the law-enforcer’s view, queer individuals are not always alienated from the majority, internalized with a negative description of their difference, or in despair. While the human as an individual exists in relation to another, the queer individual even in a closeted space socializes by relating, as shown in Jane’s effort to reach out even to a ghost or in her interaction with the space around her. Closeting as a mark of social status does not reveal a sense of disconnectedness but a different way of relating one’s self to another and to society. Any space that is obscure to the outsider’s view, small or big, cannot be obscured to subjects

who reside there: they eat, sleep, chat with their neighbors, or do business with customers. They *do* some labor, they *earn* money, and they *spend* it. Their daily activities might appear relatively obscure or strange to the outsider. These subjects could really bend the law to get something. The materiality of this space also serves as a metaphorically useful tool to analyze the mechanism of containment that both “enable[s] and constrain[s] social relations” (Brown 3). In accepting their difference and distance from the majority, queer individuals such as Jane and Valentine in Collins’s novel try to find a way of negotiating through connecting with other minority subjects and demanding their human rights by claiming their living space.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, the spatial representations of queer marginality are examined in the liminal figure of Jane Eyre. Between a space of discipline, the drawing-room and a space of punishment, the red-room, Jane shows a tendency to attach herself to the third space, a space of liminality like the window-seat, and endeavors to find comforted in such space. Whether marginal subjects manifest inherent queerness or they affectively provoke a sense of queerness in the audience and reader, Victorian literary and cultural representations show the affective reaction of combined repulsion and attraction to these queer individuals regarding their attitudes, behaviors, and tastes in economic and sexual (anti)socialization. The narrator in Victorian novels tends to rely on common sense that compulsively desires to categorize the nature and the origin of queerness and then to take comfort in containing it within certain spaces.

With the assumption that a sense of relief and comfort is experienced only by it, society tends to ignore the possibility that the confined themselves take comfort in their confinement and further dismisses this comfort as a measurement of their morally perverse and mentally abnormal status. Society is perverse in its assumption that the legitimacy of its hegemonic rank can be maintained through the exclusion of the non-conforming Other, and a confined individual appears perverse in taking comfort in being confined. Taking comfort in being closeted does not work well as a tactic of resistance to the power of containment, but it can be what is available to have in order to prevail by accepting the inescapable, negotiating with reality, and nesting in a comfort zone inside the closet. Nonetheless, it is probable and possible for the enclosed subjects to feel relieved by the fact that they are categorized and given an identity as such, even if they are still degraded, stigmatized or seen as offensive.

Whether queer space is gradually made according to the needs of the Other or urgently built according to the authority's interest, it embodies the social oppression and marginalization of those who cannot and do not conform to the spatial rules of the dominant ideology of the times. Spatial normalcy often produces sexual and commercial exploitation due to the vulnerability of the Other's social status (Brown 56). Yet, not because of, but in spite of, these bleak realities, queer minority subjects perceive queer space as a place of escape from unending abuse and violent oppression, making contact with one another and maintaining their own social and economic relations, which can be comforting. What queer marginal subjects show in taking their own space is that they do not quit and instead they try to find a way to amuse themselves, to survive and get

through troubles, even if the means are illegitimate, illegal, or “inappropriate.” It is very interesting and comforting that nineteenth-century British novels include these queer spaces that offer the Other a viable zone in which they may live and even flourish.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION: VICTORIAN QUEER AND ITS BEYOND

#### **Victorian Queer**

As the history of the word shows, “queer” has been used variously and diversely from the sixteenth century up to the present, although it is consistently associated with manifestations of the social and cultural non-normal. The philological history of the word “queer” is interesting to me because it shows that a word can gain a new meaning at a particular time and as a consequence of developing this new meaning, the word may become the site or the evidence that describes how marginalized people have lived through in the face of adversity. Currently the word is both popularly and academically recognized as a reference to sexual matters.

At the beginning of this project, I was fascinated with many queer theorists’ assessments about the successful transformation of the word “queer” in signification from being abusive to being assertively proud. The word’s versatile force made me look closely at the uses and meanings of the word “queer” in Victorian context, which is a topic in my dissertation. As I continue to examine nineteenth-century texts using the word “queer,” my interest shifted to Victorian uses of the word that address not only sexual matters, but broader and larger ways of being marginal in society and culture. As previous chapters show, my arguments on Victorian queer do not reflect current understandings and uses of the word “queer,” which emphasize sexual references, a cultural category, and the social and political identities of sexually non-normal subjects.

My approach instead intends to claim that the uses and meanings of the word “queer” have been unstable and indeterminate, particularly insisting that the Victorian “queer” was pervasively and diversely used, but not meaning the same idea, and Victorian understandings and uses of the word can shed light on queer scholarship in terms of the definitions of queer subjects, marginality, and viable identities. .

In my dissertation, I focus on how the word was used in nineteenth-century discourse, particularly in Victorian novels, before that period when the word was sexualized, to register the categorization of marginality. Victorian writers of various literary and non-fiction genres used the word extensively, and in diverse ways. Most Victorian novelists used the word in their novels in order to refer to diverse kinds of Otherness, invoking the senses of “counterfeit,” “odd,” “peculiar,” and “eccentric.” In analyzing the meanings of Victorian queerness represented in Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s, Wilkie Collins’s, and Charlotte Brontë’s novels, I select only two senses among various and diverse uses of the word “queer,” which are “counterfeit,” and “eccentric,” because these two senses may also serve as keywords, I would argue, in examining the meanings of marginality in Victorian society and culture. They are also useful to Victorian novelists who represent the social response to non-conforming and non-complying marginal subjects.

Keeping in mind that the word “queer” was commonly understood as a monetary metaphor in “queer money,” “queer coins,” “queer bill,” and “queer will,” chapter two examines how Braddon’s novels, particularly *Aurora Floyd*, represent queer Otherness in a way that draws a line between the dominant norm and the repulsive Other,

a line that is imbued with an economic value. The word “queer” is used to accuse, pathologize, and marginalize, economically non-normal subjects in Braddon’s novels. But Braddon’s novels show that the counterfeit culture that can forge the real and the genuine in money and social identity is also part of the Victorian society that allows queer Otherness to circulate elsewhere. *Aurora Floyd*, relying on a monetary metaphor, represents Hargraves as the figure of marginality and as a counterpart of Aurora, who is the figure of the genuine. As queer coins can pass in exchange, Hargraves is able to inhabit his society and makes a living on his own. But his disabilities that provoke a feeling of repulsion, his tendency not to conform to and comply with proper socially expected manners and behaviors, and his obsession with money make others uncomfortable with his presence in society. The narrator insists that his queerness and his criminal act are linked, but Hargraves and his queerness seem to be tolerated within the society in which he lives daily until he commits a crime.

As stated before, the word “queer” also carries a sense of “eccentric,” and it was popularly used in this way in most Victorian novels. The word “queer” as “counterfeit” provokes an explicit feeling of repulsion, while the word used as “eccentric” provokes an implicit resentment that is easily changed to an estimable feeling. Chapter three focuses on Collins’s notion of queerness in association with a sense of eccentricity. Braddon seems fascinated by marginal subjects and their queer Otherness but her narrators tend to criminalize them in their aims to protect the social status of seemingly normal protagonists. On the other hand, Collins is comfortable with queerness and eccentricity that subjects can use to build a social space that preserves their own

individuality; these subjects may take marginality as a viable identity in resisting the pressure of social conformity. In *Aurora Floyd*, Braddon shows an ambivalent attitude toward the queerness of marginal subjects, but in *Hide and Seek*, Collins demonstrates ways in which queerness may be tolerated and accepted and furthermore can dismantle the stability of the social norm. For Collins, queerness as a sense of eccentricity is indicative of his social status as a novelist and social commentator who can, from the inside, criticize structural and conceptual problems that oppress individuality.

The observation that the word “queer” had been pervasively and diversely used in the nineteenth-century discourse would indicate that the word has not had a definite meaning consented to Victorian users. In other words, the word could mean “counterfeit” or “eccentric” but it could address the speaker’s verbal response to what is incomprehensible. In chapter four, I try to emphasize the word’s lack of specificity in reading meanings of queer marginality in Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. Jane Eyre is marginalized due to her uncategorizable and incomprehensible queerness but she is internally empowered by that same queerness. The articulation of the word “queer” always requires a spatial distance between the speaker who affectively responds to someone or something and the object of the word that provokes that affect. While Collins’s narrator tries to close the spatial distance between social norms and Valentine by gentrifying his queerness, Brontë’s narrator-- adult Jane-- describes how little Jane recognizes spatial distance and tends not to approach a space of social norm in order to preserve her queer individuality. Jane’s queerness is indescribable and incomprehensible to those with

social authority, but it provides Jane with strength and a sense of comfort, similar to Valentine's eccentricity.

Most Victorian novelists used the word "queer" in their representations of differences, Othernesses, and marginality from the conventional, the familiar, the expected, and the normal. Braddon, Collins, and Brontë's novels are selected to show queer's diverse utility and vitality, which are useful to understanding the Victorian notion of marginality. Victorian marginal subjects are represented by categories of class, gender, sexuality, money, race, and bodily fitness. The word "queer" may be understood as a keyword that describes the way marginality is made into a category, and it is also a concept that encompasses diverse marginal categories. The utility and vitality of the Victorian word "queer" is helpful in understanding how social norms segregate the acceptable from the unacceptable by assigning the unacceptable a name, that is "queer," and how marginal subjects comprehend the resourcefulness of their queerness, a queerness that offers them a refuge, an excuse, and an identity for being different.

### **Its Beyond**

One of my objectives in this dissertation has been to show that the utility of the word "queer" as a reference to the social and cultural Other has been continuously attractive to those who define a social and political position out of their individuality as the Other and to those who intend to broaden their affiliations to minority subjects of

other kinds.<sup>14</sup> My interests in the uses and meanings of the word “queer” in Victorian literature have been concerned with developing the social identity of marginal subjects in queer scholarship. Victorian understandings and uses of the word “queer,” as a reference to marginality of various kinds, I would argue, will be helpful to strengthen the strategies that participants in queer scholarship can take in dismantling the validity of the norm. Appreciating the word’s affinity to a sense of indeterminacy rather than to a specific meaning, I would argue, queer scholarship can be extensive and inclusive -- if affiliations are made possible across differences among social minority subjects. Among the theoretical and critical texts in queer theory and studies, it is worth examining the texts that assign space to elaborate the intended uses and meanings of the word “queer.”

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<sup>14</sup> Queer theories and queer studies that were influenced by feminist scholarship and gay and lesbian studies have been in turn related to theories and studies of marginality of various kinds including class, gender, race, and bodily fitness. For instance, a field of disability studies claims the utility of queer theory and queer studies in developing the empowering affiliation of marginality. Simi Linton’s *Claiming Disability* (1997) views disability as political category as much as “color” for African American women or “sexuality” for lesbian and gay people, diagnosing the possibility of a political affiliation with others minority positions. Carrie Sandahl’s “Queering the Crip or Crippling the Queer?” (2003), published in *GLQ*, talks about queer theory and disability studies as “academic corollaries of the minority civil rights movement, borrowing from various sources, especially queer studies” (26). Sharon L. Synder and David T. Mitchell’s *Cultural Locations of Disability* (2006) explores an identity crossing between disability, race, class, gender and queer identities in terms of passing as “sites of resistance to cultural demands for normalization” (17). Robert McRuer’s *Crip Theory* (2006) tries to theorize the construction of able-bodiedness and heterosexuality that has been neglected “despite the fact that homosexuality and disability clearly share a pathologized past, and despite a growing awareness of the intersection between queer theory and disability studies” in terms of political meaning of visibility (1). Each of these intellectual contemplations seems to agree in creating a likely affiliation with each other to counter-argue against the interests of the “norm.” For instance, Lennard L. Davis’s *Enforcing Normalcy* (1995) relies on racial categories of black and white to explain an unstable relation between “disabled” and “normal” people (24). Rosemarie Garland Thompson’s *Extraordinary Bodies* (1997) also focuses on “how disability operates in culture and on how the discourses of disability, race, gender, and sexuality intermingle to create figures of Otherness from the raw materials of bodily variation, specifically at sites of representation such as the freak show, sentimental fiction, and black women’s libratory novels” (6).

These texts describe a current history of the word and observe how the senses and utility of the word within the queer community are continually changing, unstable, and indeterminate. Appreciating the indeterminate signification and category-crashing tendency of the word, theorists and critics foster a strategically efficient affiliation beyond essentialism.

While queer theorists, in their understanding and defining of the meaning of the word “queer,” show critical interest in using the idea of “queer” as a piece of social and political language, they observe the necessity of a terminological shift from gay to queer. In 1991, the word “queer” as a theoretical term first appeared in Teresa de Lauretis’s article “Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities.” Concerned with the uneven development in theoretical and critical attention to lesbian and gay sexualities and with the term “lesbian and gay” becoming normalized and exclusive, de Lauretis proposed to recast the term of sexualities by adopting the word “queer” attached to the word “theory.” For her, if lesbian and gay sexualities that once resisted cultural homogenization, became the standard currency that lesbian and gay movement tried to dismantle, it would be inevitably necessary to replace lesbian and gay with the word “queer.” She claimed that the word “queer” could be a more inclusive term avoiding “all of these fine distinctions in our discursive protocols, not to adhere to any one of the given terms, not to assume their ideological liabilities” and encompassing multiple differences of the sexual or problematizing them (v).

The terminological adoption of the word “queer” in referring to the overall struggle of the sexually marginal has been debated partly due to the word’s non-specific

and desexualizing orientation. Leo Bersani in *Homo* (1995) warns against a terminological use of the word “queer” because the word is used as a referent without sexual specificity (5). From Bersani’s position, it is lamentable that “queer” begins to “unload the term’s homosexual referent” and fails to “specify the sexual distinctiveness of the resistance” (71). Adam Isaiah Green in his article “Gay but not Queer: Toward a Post-Queer Study of Sexuality” (2002) also takes a critical position against queer theory’s “vulgar anti-identity politics” that tend to pull out “lesbian” and “gay” from lesbian and gay studies (523). He argues that queer “represent[s] not an actual subject but a theoretical location” (526) and the lived experience of homosexual subjects would be neglected in the uses of the word “queer” (533). Bersani and Green seem anxious about the unnecessary displacement of “gay” with “queer” and about the newly adoptive term becoming desexualized and despecified to the extent that “gay” and “lesbian” would lose their place in queer theorization.

As if responding to Bersani and Green’s concerns and worries, David Halperin in *Saint Foucault* (1995) also makes a precise diagnosis of the use of the word “queer” as a political term. Halperin enumerates the riskiness and evasiveness of relying on the term “queer”: “queer” is an identity emptying out homosexual essence because it is considered to be “constituted not substantially but oppositionally, not by what it is but where it is and how it operates” (61). While Bersani points out that “queer” would not represent real gayness, Halperin argues that in spite of these serious liabilities, the word must be appreciated for its strategic uses and benefits. “Queer” is employed to convey the idea that the ultimate goal in the queer struggle is not a change in society’s behavior



and attitude toward homosexual subjects but a change in society itself and its oppressive structure. In this light, Halperin emphasizes that queer is to be defined as “whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, [and] the dominant” (62). Therefore, queer must carry “a positionality that is not restricted to lesbians and gay men but is in fact available to anyone who is or who feels marginalized because of her or his sexual practices: it could include some married couples without children, for example, or even (who knows?) some married couples with children—with, perhaps, very naughty children” (Halperin 62).

Even though he endeavors to validate the adaptation of the word “queer,” Halperin in his 2003 article “The Normalization of Queer Theory” criticizes the effects of the terminological change in the fields of queer studies and queer theory. As the word “queer” connotes adaptability and permeability, queer theory “becomes more widely diffused throughout the disciplines, [and] it becomes harder to figure out what’s so very queer about it” (Halperin 342). The word “queer” that empowers the sexual minority struggle with its deessentializing aptitude becomes a subjectless signifier that is exploited by those who take for their benefit. Halperin argues that the institutionalization of queer theory as an academic analytic tool takes place when queer theory is no longer involved in exploring the lived experience of sexual minority subjects and the materiality of sexuality (341).

Bersani, Green, and Halperin’s anxieties are understandable. The outsider’s concerns and efforts can be often limited, short-sighted, and unhelpful because the outsider cannot access the “real” inside, completely comprehend the correct depth of

pain, and sincerely work for the interests of the insider. While acknowledging these concerns and worries about who is more eligibly queer, queer scholars try to look at the ways of raising a more fundamental question about the meanings of the human and society in terms of power and its oppression, often in affiliation with the Other with disability, class, gender, and racial Otherness. These scholars, including Judith Butler, Michael Warner, and Calvin Thomas, using the word “queer” as a political metaphor to mean the inclusive affiliation among minority subjects, argue that the ultimate objective is a critique of existing social and economic structures and society itself because “queer struggles aim not just at toleration or equal status but at challenging those institutions and accounts” that participate oppressing non-normal subjects (Warner xiii). In other words, “queer” is employed to acknowledge the mutual relations among marginalized and minority positions and identities.

Just as some queer scholars are concern about whether or not non-queer theorists and activists are eligible to represent queer subjects’ voices, Victorian novelists, who intend to foster a positively desirable image toward marginal figures in society, face a similar criticism. For instance, Collins, who was interested in the distress of women with disabilities, tries to represent the figure of disability, including Mrs. Blyth and Mary, in *Hide and Seek*, who are attractively and ably in their own ways. Collins’s disabled women are sexual subjects, which means that they can be wives and mothers and can manage their own household. While Collins is credited for the representations of disability as socially acceptable and functional, he reveals his limits in terms of gender, abledness, and class difference in affiliating his eccentric status with the social,

economic, and legal statuses of Victorian women, particularly women of lower class, women without financial security or family protection, and women with disabilities. In spite of these limits and faults, however, Collins's efforts are meaningful in showing how Victorian women were socially placed, how they must comprehend each other even in the face of their own adversity, and how they must be connected in order to make a difference in their lives. Collins's taking of queerness as a social identity also offers him a way to affiliate with the Other Victorians of various Othernesses, including disability, gender, sexuality, class, and race.

Not just Victorian novelists reflect in their novels the social and cultural uses of the word that refer to a number of marginalized and minority identities, but also they, including Collins and Brontë, represent how marginal subjects prevail through daily adversity. As shown in the previous chapters, queer individuals such as Valentine, Mat, and Mary in Collins's *Hide and Seek* and Jane in Brontë's *Jane Eyre* have to face daily accusation and discrimination for being different and being queer, even though there is a difference in degree. Against the social authority, Mr. Thorpe, Valentine is compared and contrasted with and his daily living aims to prove that his choice is not a "wrong" one. By the moral authority, Mrs. Reed, Jane is accused of being queer and punished for her difference. Her life in becoming an adult is geared toward survival from a probable accusation and punishment and defense of her difference. As the narrative progresses, these queer subjects, who confront individually the social pressure of conformity, are able to achieve a likely bonding with other individuals at margin. In making Valentine's idea of family, Mrs. Blyth and Mary contribute to the composition of a desirable

household and Mat and Zack join Valentine's company. Valentine's making of family sheds light on the ways in which marginal subjects assert their own social viability, resisting the oppression of the social norm. As Valentine gathers companions of his same, Jane also recognizes sameness in Mr. Rochester and achieves a union with him in the end. Bronte's marginal subjects also choose to resist the social pressure of assimilation into the regime of the normal and successfully preserve their queer individuality by deciding to live at Ferndean, a house that is placed at margin.

The meanings and uses of the word "queer" in Victorian context, particularly in association with non-normal Otherness, may be the answer to the contemporary debate about social and political positions and identities of marginalized and sexual minority subjects. By showing how Victorian fiction used the word to describe various and diverse Otherness that can encompass Otherness in the sexual matters, I mean to help expand our sense of what the word has represented and what it can be used to represent. Victorian "queer" can shed light on contemporary concerns and worries about queer marginality that are often limited to the hetero/homosexual binary oppositions and sexual marginalization, but expanded to encompass a variety of underprivileged positions in the matters of class, gender, sexuality, economics, and bodily ability.

### **Queer for Tomorrow**

As shown in my dissertation, studying the word "queer" is helpful in analyzing the Victorian idea of marginality represented in Victorian novels and can encourage a critical thinking about nineteenth-century British cultural and social life. The word

“queer” is an unexpected and unanticipated referent in the context of Victorian fiction; it has continually been shaped by the social, cultural and political relations of human subjects while the word, in turn, influences human relations as they are lived. As my dissertation shows, the word “queer” is more than a word that has been used to address a specific meaning at a particular moment. Instead of referring to a singular sense, the word “queer,” embodying indeterminate signification, has crossed over, flipped over, and turned inside out without staying in the center and becoming dominant; the word is useful for the effect it generates, its temporality and relationality, and its inclusiveness in terms of a broader social and political movement; and the word and its uses play a crucial role in creating a plenary network of social minorities beyond the sexual.

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