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Victorian Christian Gentlemen

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The prevailing sexual morality of British Victorian society was that of Biblical Christianity and this was evident in the everyday lives of most ordinary citizens from the way they spoke, dressed and conducted themselves in public to their adherence to marriage vows and their avoidance of promiscuity, homosexuality, divorce and abortion. That being said Victorian society did have a dark underbelly of sexual immorality and a handful of individuals who were keen to encourage promiscuity from an ideological stance. Thanks to a deliberate and cynical distortion of British history, popular opinion today regards Victorian society as universally hypocritical on the basis of the false claim that the Victorians preached purity but practised promiscuity. This view is rather simplistic and largely untrue (indeed it is really a piece of propaganda). The evidence is clear that in the main Victorian society practised what it preached. Whilst there were undoubtedly some hypocrites – as there always are, not least in our own time – the fact is the majority of Victorians were sincerely faithful in their private lives to their publicly expressed standards. Victorian society was a society of stark contrast between the majority of those who lived ‘the good moral life’ alongside the significant minority of those which didn’t – particularly in the industrial slums of the larger towns and cities. The good and the bad co-existed then as they do today and historians¹ are wrong to blame the bad behaviour of a few on the whole of Victorian society because it’s mud that just won’t stick, the accusation is so patently absurd. Ask yourself “Why would a historian seek to rewrite history?” If presumably it’s not done in ignorance then we can only conclude there must be a hidden agenda, the agenda of attempting to discredit the distinctively Christian nature of Victorian society. This chapter examines a little of the seamier side of the nineteenth century both in terms of immoral ideological thought in the minds of a few intellectuals and the debauched behaviour that was to be found in some expressions of popular culture, however...

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...Before considering the Victorian dark side it is necessary first to take a digression into ancient Greek and Roman culture. Many Victorian university scholars were fascinated and tremendously influenced by the ‘classical world’ of ancient Greece and Rome. Indeed the ‘Greek mindset’ is the rationalist approach which is the foundational philosophy of most Western art, science and academia, from the medieval European ‘Renaissance’ to the eighteenth century humanist ‘Enlightenment’ to our present secular society. Therefore to understand the Victorian dark side it is necessary to hold a basic grasp of the ancient world which provided some of its inspiration. In some respects the Victorian intelligentsia were justified in their admiration of the Graeco-Roman world – for example in regard of Graeco-Roman architecture, technology,

¹ That is to say that handful of recent and contemporary commentators, typically secularists working out of a postmodern mindset, who have wielded great influence over current popular perceptions of history with their so-called ‘revisionist’ stance in which they have sought to reinterpret the history of the Victorians.

mathematics, medicine, political systems, poetry, literature and military achievements – however the more dubious aspects of Graeco-Roman philosophy and popular culture also influenced Victorian sex-radical thinkers who were looking for an alternative sexual ideology to that of the prevailing Christian consensus and, furthermore, Greek and Roman sexual lifestyles and mythology provided a ‘classical excuse’ for pornographically-minded Victorian photographers and painters (and of course the pre-Victorian painters of nudes). Before returning to this chapter’s main subject, what follows is a glance at ancient pornography and also pagan mythology and philosophy as these relate to ‘sex-culture’.

Digression: the ancient Graeco-Roman ‘classical’ world

It has been many times said – indeed I believe it is an English saying – that ‘*prostitution is the world’s oldest profession*’. I fancy this is a fib but it’s reasonable to reckon that from earliest times there has been a trade in female flesh. Similarly pornography is simply prostitution-by-proxy and thus has been a disposition embedded in the human heart as long as has prostitution-in-act. Indeed our English word ‘pornography’ is derived from the ancient Greek words *porne* (meaning ‘prostitute’) and *graphia* (meaning either ‘writing’ or ‘drawing’). Millenia before the advent of photography, men made all manner of female icons and idols to ‘have sex with’ when real women weren’t willing or available (and even when they were). In the millenia Before Christ forms of pornography existed alongside the practice of prostitution and ritual sexual activity in religions throughout most ancient cultures. The worship of phallic models and symbols was commonplace in ancient Greece, Rome, Anatolia, India, Arabia and elsewhere. Representations of feminine sexuality were similarly worshipped such as the topless wasp-waisted statues of women (representing Minoan goddesses) which were a prominent feature of the ancient Minoan society (on Crete about 2000BC). These ancient idols and pictures were the earliest form of pictorial pornography to which was added pornographic writing when the first writing systems developed from pictographs and hieroglyphics. Pornographic literature was well established by the time the Greek lyrical poetess Sappho² (c.610-c.580BC) wrote her erotic poems in worship of the sex goddess Aphrodite. Later Roman poets, such as Ovid and Propertius in the first-century BC, adopted the Greek elegiac format and frequently used it for pornographic poetry. The Romans also followed the Greeks in nude sculpture (the Greek sculptor Praxiteles is credited with introducing the freestanding lifesize female nude into the sculptural repertory with his work *Aphrodite of Cnidus* about 350BC) and lewd murals and paintings. It is worthy of note that the Greeks and Romans both tolerated and even celebrated homo-eroticism and promiscuity as well as practising contraception, abortion and infanticide.

² Sappho lived on the island of Lesbos in the Aegean Sea and wrote poetry which revelled in passionate female eroticism; the behaviour attributed to Sappho and her followers gained such notoriety that it was called ‘lesbianism’ after the name of their island home.

The erotic illustrations and sculptures of India's Hindu temples 2000 years ago were a match for anything in Graeco-Roman pagan culture and it was from this source that probably the most famous pornographic book of all time emerged. The *Kama Sutra* ('aphorisms on love') quite simply is Hindu hardcore. It was first translated into English by F.F. Arbuthnot and Sir Richard Burton for a privately circulated edition published in 1883 but no publisher dared to release an edition to the general public until 1963. Phallic symbolism has always been a part of Hinduism since ancient times, the chief Hindu god Shiva being represented by a phallic *lingam*. Shiva's union with his *sakti*, his goddess lover, is described in the Hindu *Tantras* scriptures; accordingly tantric Hinduism involves men and women in sexual yoga practices in imitation of Shiva with his *sakti*, thus maintaining the harmony of the universe! It is likely that many Victorian sexual revolutionary thinkers were familiar with and furthermore influenced by the *Kama Sutra*; Sigmund Freud would have found the *Kama Sutra* fascinating because of his penis obsession and Edward Carpenter and Annie Besant probably possessed copies of the book because both were devotees of Eastern religious mysticism.

As shall be seen the ancient Greek and Roman cultures are particularly important to an understanding of how pornography developed in England from the late Middle Ages onwards. Through the 'Renaissance' classical revival (of the 14th-17th centuries) and the subsequent humanist 'Enlightenment' movement (of the 18th century) – both of which rediscovered and expanded upon the philosophy, knowledge, art and literature of ancient classical culture – Western society has been tremendously influenced by the Graeco-Roman world; nowhere was this influence and 'inspiration' more evident than in the excuse of 'classical precedent' claimed by the pornographically-minded throughout history whether seventeenth century painters of nudes (such as the Flemish master of voluptuous nudes Peter Rubens in the 1630s), eighteenth century bawdy novelists or nineteenth century pioneers of photography. The many Graeco-Roman pagan sex-gods and goddesses and pagan Roman orgy-culture provided a 'legitimate subject matter' and theme for Renaissance painters of nudes and later the first pornographic photographers followed their example in finding a justification for nudity in the pursuit of classical aesthetic idealism. To avoid the charge of pornography Victorian photographers often claimed they merely recreated famous nude paintings of the classical Renaissance and sometimes sidestepped accusations of obscenity by the dubious device of models posed as 'living statues'!

Pagan religion was one of the most useful aspects of Graeco-Roman culture to certain Victorians because it provided a precedent, an inspiration and an excuse for sexual imagery in literary works, for pornographic painting and photography and even suggestive music hall performances. The ancient Greeks had a pantheistic religious mythology in which they celebrated many 'gods' (as did the Romans, Arabs, Hindus and others). Aphrodite was the Greeks' goddess of sexual love and she was much the same as the Romans' goddess Venus, the Babylonians' Ishtar and the Phoenicians' Astarte. In particular many Greek and Roman pagan sex-gods corresponded to each other: the Greek god Eros was the Roman Cupid, the Greek god Dionysus was the Roman Bacchus and the Greek god Pan was the Roman Faunus. According to pagan Greek mythology

Aphrodite was the unfaithful wife of the fire-god Hephaestus and the mother of Eros, the boy-god of sexual love depicted traditionally with a bow and arrows. Another of Aphrodite's sons was the sex-god Priapus, usually represented with a huge phallus, and conceived from Aphrodite's union with the god Dionysus, who was yet another sex god (and also the god of wine). The pagan rites celebrating Dionysus were essentially orgiastic. Dionysus was attended by drunken and lustful woodland creatures called 'satyrs' and portrayed with pointed ears, horns on the forehead and a tail. The Greeks' celebration of Dionysus with drinking and sex was mirrored in their philosophy. The philosopher Aristippus (c.435-356 BC), a pupil of Socrates, founded 'hedonism', the doctrine that pleasure and its pursuit is the highest good in life. Aristippus practised what he preached and lived with a courtesan called Lais.

The Romans honoured their sex-goddess Venus as no less than the guardian of the Roman people. They also celebrated the god Cupid and another Roman sex-god, Faunus, who was depicted as a man with a goat's ears, horns, tail and hind legs (rather like traditional representations of the Devil in Western art). As the Roman Empire declined into decadence the Romans became infamous for their orgies, some of which were linked to pagan festivals celebrating the god Bacchus, the drunken revelry and sex being led by the priests and priestesses of Bacchus. The notorious Emperor Nero, an orgy aficionado, became a byword for sexual depravity; perhaps it was his perversions which drove him to his death by suicide. It is from the ancient Romans' Latin language that we have that most horrid word *masturbation* so it is safe to assume that the Romans were well-acquainted with the practice! Back to the Victorians...

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Victorian Sex-Radicals and their 'New' [anti-] 'Morality'

Victorian Britain was truly a Christian nation but a tiny minority refused to accept the 'Christian consensus' and actively opposed it: radical philosophers (so-called 'free' thinkers), humanists, utilitarians, secularists, Fabian socialists³ and some others. Eventually the efforts of these sex-radicals would influence popular opinion and practice but Christian standards were to remain strong and dominant for some time yet. In 1859 there began a second major evangelical spiritual eruption akin to the eighteenth century Great Awakening and which is known as the Victorian 'Evangelical Revival'. The revival's impact was simply enormous and thus the historical 'high water mark' of Christian influence and endeavour in Britain [to date] lies between the 1860s and the 1880s. The Salvation Army, founded by husband-and-wife team William and Catherine Booth in 1865, is just one good example of the evangelical fervour of this period; this popular Christian movement grew phenomenally in its first twenty years and its message

³ The Fabian Society was founded in London in 1884 to further the cause of socialism by means of a strategy of stealth, that is advocating socio-political change in small, gradual and therefore virtually unnoticeable steps (as opposed to the overthrow of established order by sudden revolution). The name derives from the Roman military leader Fabius Maximus who would seek the final defeat of an enemy in a campaign of war but avoid where possible the open engagement of major pitched battles.

and social works amongst the poor and needy transformed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

By the 1890s however the influence of evangelical Christianity began to slide – particularly amongst the (opinion-forming) so-called ‘intellectual classes’. There had been some limited and insignificant opposition to Christian influence throughout the Victorian era but it was not until the 1890s and the early 1900s that this opposition first gained a foothold in British society and thus started its long march through twentieth century culture, to the extent wherein we live today with an ‘anti-Christian consensus’ in a postmodern, secular-humanist State. The earliest ‘pioneers’ of the Sexual Revolution – which became so evident in the 1960s – are to be found in the Victorian era, a handful of ‘intellectual’ men and women who were in favour of promiscuity (or ‘free love’ as they called it) and who wanted a sexual licence (or ‘liberty’ to their way of thinking) to do whatever they wanted regardless of whether it was right or wrong (and regardless of the consequences) – and for the rest of society to approve and join them. In a sense there are two sides to the ‘family tree’ of the Victorian sex-radicals: there were those who specifically focused on sex itself, with a strong emphasis upon and preoccupation with the physical nature of sexual activity – such as the ‘free love’ advocates, and then there was a smaller group of philosophers who were less obsessed with sex in any direct sense but who were devoted to inventing an ‘alternative morality’ as an ideological basis for the destruction of the prevailing Christian morality. Some of the key people just before and during the Victorian era who formed the foundations of the sexual revolution are hereafter introduced, along with the ideas they used to do so.

‘Birth control’ and ‘population limitation’ The earliest ideological vehicle employed in the long train of developments and events which climaxed with the 1960s sexual revolution was probably the justification of ‘birth control’ and the concept of population limitation. This theory manifested into practice meant making contraception methods popular and respectable public knowledge, or at least that was the belief of those sex-radicals who saw that ‘population limitation’ conveniently afforded them a plausible front behind which to hide whilst they promoted contraception (when their real motive was to facilitate promiscuity).

Jeremy Bentham and utilitarianism The English philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) first put forward the concept of ‘birth control’ in 1797⁴ and this fitted in with the philosophy of utilitarianism which Bentham founded, the humanist notion that the highest ethics of humankind and their application should be centred in the pursuit of the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people.⁵ Bentham developed his philosophy at

⁴ Bentham conceived the concept of ‘birth control’ but the coining of the actual term *birth control* is attributed to Margaret Sanger several decades later.

⁵ Utilitarianism looks good at first glance, doesn’t it? This humanist philosophy stands in contrast to Christian ethics though (which can be summarised as being concerned with ‘the greatest good for everybody’). Consider that utilitarianism provides an (evil) ideological basis to assert that abortion, euthanasia and eugenicide are all perfectly acceptable – just so long as abortionists and eugenicists argue that their actions somehow advance society towards the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

much the same time as Malthus began to argue in favour of ‘population limitation’ as being a good idea. Thomas Malthus (1766-1834) was a professor of modern history and political economy who conceived the notion of ‘population limitation’ – ostensibly as a means by which to eradicate poverty – and advocated its attainment by the encouragement of sexual abstinence amongst the ‘lower classes’.⁶ Bentham undoubtedly thought that Malthus’ principle of ‘population limitation’ fitted within his philosophical framework of pursuing ‘the greatest happiness for the greatest number’. Bentham’s ideas were certainly influential in the thinking of his contemporary Robert Owen (1771-1858), the man often described as the ‘Father of British Socialism’. Owen was amongst the first nineteenth-century thinkers to openly attack the received wisdom (which derived directly from Christianity) that the marriage institution was the only solid foundation upon which a strong, secure and civilised society could be built and maintained.

Francis Place – ‘Father of the British contraception movement’ Though it was Jeremy Bentham who (in 1797) sowed the seed of the ‘birth control’ concept, it was the political Radical Francis Place (1771-1854) who first enthusiastically sought to make it a reality in the 1820s. Indeed Place probably has the best claim of all to the title of ‘Father of the British Contraception Movement’. Francis Place – who counted amongst his political friends John Stuart Mill and Richard Carlile (as well as Bentham) – eagerly embraced Malthus’ theory of ‘population limitation’ and (unlike Malthus) firmly believed that contraception was the way ahead. It is interesting to note that though Place was the original contraception advocate, this man who ostensibly sought for society’s sake to reduce the size of the nation’s families actually had *fifteen* children himself!⁷ In his 1822 treatise *Illustrations and Proofs of the Principle of Population* Place was the first to advocate [‘birth control’ by] contraception and he followed this up with a public campaign to promote his ideas in which he wrote and distributed anonymous pamphlets – popularly referred to as the ‘Diabolical Handbills’ – which described contraception methods. With good reason many accused him of encouraging prostitution. Place supported ‘free love’ promiscuity but was clever enough to keep quiet about it and instead attempted to achieve the radical agenda of getting society to accept promiscuity under the cover of campaigning for contraception in order to achieve population control.

Richard Carlile – friend of Francis It was Francis Place who persuaded his friend and fellow political radical, the noted secularist journalist Richard Carlile (1790-1843), of the usefulness of Malthus’ population theory as a basis for advocating contraception to achieve ‘birth control’ (not to mention a more promiscuous mood in the masses of

⁶ Malthus was not a ‘sex-radical’ himself and he was not in favour of publicly promoting the practice of contraception as a method of attaining ‘population limitation’ – but many of those later labelled as ‘Neo-Malthusians’ were.

⁷ Could it be that Place wasn’t truly interested in ‘birth control’ as much as contraception’s potential to facilitate promiscuity by removing the fear of pregnancy from sexual activity? ‘Birth control’ and ‘family planning’ have long been convenient euphemisms behind which to hide the true nature of contraception’s main purpose on the sex-radical agenda.

course). Following his ‘conversion’ by Place, Richard Carlile became a devoted champion of ‘birth control’. Significantly though both Carlile and Place – supposedly motivated only by ‘population limitation’ – opposed Malthus’ suggestion of encouraging sexual abstinence amongst the ‘lower classes’ but both were in favour of promoting contraception to the public. It is curious that Carlile and Place specifically scorned sexual abstinence despite the fact that its practice would undoubtedly have worked towards achieving their stated aim of ‘birth control’! In addition to the influence of Place the core of Richard Carlile’s radical mindset was rooted in his great admiration for the rabidly anti-Christian sentiments expressed in Thomas Paine’s works such as *The Rights of Man* (1791). The development of Carlile’s radical thoughts came to the boil in 1825 with his essay *What is Love?*, to be followed in 1826 by the publication of *Every Woman’s Book* – arguably the first modern ‘sex manual’. Both the essay and the book openly discussed and actively promoted the physical gratification of participants as the chief purpose of sex in conjunction with the promotion of contraceptive methods, namely withdrawal, or use of a penis sheath, or Carlile’s favourite – a damp sponge vaginal tampon. The core of Carlile’s carnality – his answer to the question ‘What is Love?’ – was his definition of love and lust as being fundamentally the same; to Carlile’s way of thinking there was no difference between human love and animal passion; for Carlile physical sexual acts were utterly confused with love itself. [Taking such a mentality to its obvious conclusion it can be argued that prostitution or rape are acts of love.]

John Stuart Mill – friend of Francis (and Richard and Jeremy) Following in the footsteps of Jeremy Bentham the man who more than any other consolidated and popularised the philosophy of utilitarianism was John Stuart Mill (1806-1873); Mill was a contemporary of Bentham, Place and Carlile and these men were well-acquainted with each other. Mill was heavily influenced in his youth by Francis Place and Richard Carlile and joined them as a passionate advocate of ‘birth control’, indeed as a young man Mill was arrested and imprisoned for distributing ‘Diabolical Handbills’ and Carlile’s essay *What is Love?* to single young women. The philosophy created by Mill on his notion of ‘liberty’ has had a large and lasting influence, helping at once to undermine the Victorian Christian consensus and also to lay the foundation for the present postmodern, secular-humanist orthodoxy which holds that every individual person is ‘at liberty’ to form his own personal set of standards and to do what he feels is okay in his own eyes.

George Drysdale – ‘Mr. FreeLove’ A key Victorian sex-radical was the arch-Neo-Malthusian George Drysdale (1825-1904), a Scottish doctor. Drysdale was an open advocate of ‘free love’ sexual promiscuity and described his sex-radical views (in a manner clearly influenced by the earlier work of Richard Carlile) in his 90,000-selling book *The Elements of Social Science* (1855); Drysdale went further than Carlile in that he openly rejected monogamous marriage preceded by chastity and instead openly encouraged casual promiscuous indulgence. Drysdale did not though dispense with population control as his major justification for contraception and so it was that he stirred a whole ‘movement’ of Drysdale-disciples which chattered for ‘birth control’ in his wake.

Annie Besant – Fabian feminist Queen There can be no doubt that the propaganda-Queen of the Victorian ‘birth control’ movement was the English atheist, Fabian socialist and feminist Annie Besant (1847-1933). Quite simply Annie Besant is the great historical heroine of the sexual revolution because she succeeded more than any other in making contraception a matter of heated public debate in a moral climate in which contraception was widely considered to be immoral, indecent and therefore taboo as a topic for the forum of public discussion – and especially so when advocated for use by the unmarried. As a young woman Annie married the vicar Rev. Frank Besant but several years later she decided that her growing atheism was good enough reason to desert her husband and their two children. After deserting her husband and young family Besant became good friends with the prominent radical atheist socialist Charles Bradlaugh – both were socialists and members of the Secular Society. In 1877 Besant and Bradlaugh set up the Freethought Publishing Company with the specific purpose of publishing in London an obscene book on contraception; this action was motivated by the intention to deliberately provoke an obscenity test case in court. The book, *The Fruits of Philosophy, (or The Private Companion of Young Married People)*, was not their own but was written by the American doctor Charles Knowlton who had been convicted of indecency on first American publication in 1832. Besant and Bradlaugh were motivated to publish the book after their fellow member of the Secular Society, the Bristol publisher Charles Watts, was convicted of publishing obscene literature when he published the book in 1876. When Besant and Bradlaugh republished the book they were duly charged under the Obscene Publications Act and thus they obtained the trial they desired. In a bizarre outcome the jury decided the book was obscene but that the defendants did not have a corrupt motive for publishing it; initially a guilty verdict was given only to be dismissed later on a legal technicality. The defendants were delighted because their trial garnered them enormous publicity for their cause of putting contraception on the public agenda (and the book sold 100,000 copies in the wake of the trial).⁸

Friedrich Nietzsche (and a very cunning plan indeed) The really astute sexual revolutionaries realised that before major social change could take place the fundamental issue of ripping the Christian heart out of society had to be addressed. Some were very upfront about this, such as the American feminist Elizabeth Cady Stanton who in *Free Thought* (September 1896) asserted: “The Bible and the Church have been the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of women’s emancipation.”⁹ An alternative ideology to that of the prevailing Christian orthodoxy was required and the man who did more than any

⁸ Incidentally, twelve years later Annie Besant fell heavily under the influence of the Russian spiritualist Madame Blavatsky and immersed herself in theosophical mysticism.

⁹ A fair comment would’ve been: “*The misinterpretation and abuse of the Bible’s message – in which, to its shame, the Church must admit a certain measure of culpability – has contributed to some of the injustice and inequality which many women have experienced.*” The truth is that every manifestation of the true Church (as opposed to the apostate and/or heretical professing Church) throughout history which has adhered faithfully to authentic Biblical teaching has actually been the great defender of the equality of women. The Bible is clear that Jesus’ teachings and His treatment of women affirmed the honour and dignity of women and their equality with men in the sight of God.

other to provide it was the self-styled ‘original immoralist’ Nietzsche. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) was a German philosopher who in the late Victorian era launched a direct assault on Biblical morality and offered in its place a ‘new morality’. His most significant works were written in the 1880s before he withdrew from public life in 1889 following a nervous breakdown. Nietzsche’s existentialist ideas were influential within his own lifetime (not least upon Sigmund Freud) and he stands today as one of the most important figures of modern philosophy because his ideas form the bedrock upon which is perched precariously the present postmodern ‘relative morality’ of Western societies (as opposed to absolute Biblical morality). Nietzsche’s atheistic ideas came at the same time as Victorian sex-radicals were looking for just such a new philosophical platform from which to attack the Christian consensus.

In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche wrote: “I am the first *immoralist*: I am therewith the destroyer par excellence... At bottom my expression *immoralist* involves two denials. I deny first a type of man who has hitherto counted as the highest, the good, the benevolent, beneficent. I deny, secondly, a kind of morality which has come to be accepted and to dominate as morality in itself ... in more palpable terms *Christian* morality.” Furthermore: “No one has yet felt *Christian* morality as *beneath* him...” In his rather fittingly entitled essay *The Madman* Nietzsche declared the death of God, leading to the inevitable consequence that mankind could dispense with Biblical morality and make up an alternative. As regards sex, Nietzsche not only thought that there was nothing wrong with promiscuity and perversion but even thought immorality to be good! In his essay *Why I write such excellent books* he stated that the: “...preaching of chastity is a public incitement to anti-nature. Every expression of contempt for the sexual life, every befouling of it through the concept ‘impure’, is the crime against life – is the intrinsic sin against the holy spirit of life.”

One of the most significant twists which Nietzsche performed was his successful undertaking of ‘lexical engineering’ in the vocabulary of morality. Nietzsche knew that he had not only to kill off the source of morality but also that he had to destroy the terminology of morality and the traditional implications that were written into certain key words. In the 1880s Nietzsche deliberately started speaking of ‘values’ in the then novel sense of ‘values’ being a synonymous alternative to ‘morals’, a cleverly confusing distortion which is now modern orthodoxy. To Nietzsche’s way of thinking since he had ‘killed off God’ he had also got rid of any notion of good and evil or virtue and vice and therefore all that was left was variable values. Nietzsche’s manipulation of language (and the undergirding assumptions) in the debate of moral matters passed without serious notice at the time and so it was that in the twentieth century virtues and vices ceased and were replaced instead by values. Of course ‘values’ are subjective as opposed to the objective standards of good and evil which ‘values’ were conceived to replace. Nietzsche and those who followed his lead succeeded in persuading society to discard the reality of objective standards of truth and all associated absolute moral standards in favour of a fantasy in which nothing can any longer be judged as evil or wrong. In this fantasy everybody determines what their own truth is, what is ‘right for me’, guided by how they feel and nobody any longer has the right to say anybody else is in the wrong. Sex-radicals

from Nietzsche's time onwards fully understood the implications of his ideas and acted upon them, thus strengthening the movement to 'kill off' marriage and associated moral virtues like chastity and fidelity by promoting instead the rival idea that everybody (including even children) is 'free' to 'do as they please' on the basis of whatever each individual person's sexual 'values' might be.

Sigmund Freud (and his penis obsession) One of the most successful preachers of the new Nietzschean world-view was the Austrian founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). Freud's thinking was deeply embedded in the principles of both Nietzsche and the evolutionist Charles Darwin and his prolific writing career produced a massive effect upon modern Western thought. Freud held a low view of mankind which dehumanised people to the level of animals; Freud believed humans were evolved from animals and thus were without any special dignity, purpose or status. Underlying all Freud's thinking was a deep hostility to the Christian faith which he hated. Despite being married Freud was predominantly a homosexual: he had a homosexual 'love' for Wilhelm Fliess which dominated his life in the 1890s and 1900s, a fact which was suppressed by his early biographers. Freud did not consider homosexuality to be a perversion because he viewed it as just one aspect of an innate human bisexuality. In addition to his belief that humans are innately bisexual Freud believed that children are mature sexual beings; the central theoretical principle of Freud's 'Oedipus complex' (which suggests that young children harbour strong sexual yearnings towards their parents) was seen by Freud as his single most important belief. Furthermore Freud was obsessed with genitalia, particularly penises, and believed even young children were aware of their genitalia and sought genital gratification. Freud's notion of 'penis envy' – that girls are envious of boys and grow up feeling inferior and inadequate because they do not have a penis – was based in his penis obsession; to Freud's way of thinking the penis was nothing less than the meaning of life itself and the totem-pole around which humanity continuously circles. We might fairly refer to Freud as a willie worshipper!

Certainly Freud was a fraud who knew full well that under the guise of pseudo-scientific language – terms like 'penis envy' which he coined himself – and cloaked in the mysteries of psychoanalysis (nonsense interpretations of speculated unconscious mental processes) he was subverting traditional morality to redefine and redesign human sexuality in his own image. In a *Sunday Times* (08.04.01) article Roger Scruton wrote: "Freud's theory has contributed substantially to the corruption of sexual morals in the modern world... it is now orthodoxy to think that children are sexual beings, that their sexual feelings are malleable and can flow in any direction, that what we mean by chastity is merely repression, and that innocence is another name for unconscious desire. These assumptions underlie the repulsive lessons in sex education that the national curriculum is now forcing on children – lessons designed to facilitate sexual activity long before personal love is possible..."

Freud's influence was quickly far-reaching because he purposely set out to gather to himself disciples who on acceptance of his ideas committed themselves to spreading the Freudian message through the practice of psychoanalysis. In consequence in the 1900s

Freud's small gathering of friends known as the Wednesday Society quickly grew into a globally influential movement; Freudianism did not take long to penetrate into British academia. One of Freud's more talented younger disciples was the author of *The Sexual Revolution* Wilhelm Reich. Another was Freud's authorised biographer and devoted disciple Ernest Jones who began actively promoting Freud's ideas in England in 1908. After the First World War Freud was quick to exploit contacts with the 'Bloomsbury Set' [of which more in Chapter Four] in order to better disseminate his ideas throughout the English-speaking world, by means of the publishing vehicle of Virginia and Leonard Woolf's Hogarth Press. Freud set out to 'conquer the world' and he met with tremendous success in convincing the world that life revolves around sex, that children are sexually mature, that humans are bisexual and that we have no control over our sexual desires. Freud comprehensively divorced sex from the marriage context and from any notions of morality or consequences or even love. It is not hard to see that Freud's accomplishment of removing morality entirely from the consideration of sex – his literally *demoralising* sex – did much to usher in the spirit of permissiveness and made him a pillar of the sexual revolution.

Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis The English writer Edward Carpenter (1844-1929) was one of the earliest advocates of homosexual rights and a strong opponent of traditional marriage morality; accordingly he is an icon of the sexual revolution. In particular he wanted homosexuality to become socially acceptable and to be considered as 'normal'. Interestingly Carpenter rejected Christianity early in life and practised Eastern religious mysticism from his late twenties. In his book *The Intermediate Sex* (1908) Carpenter offered his vision of a homosexual and promiscuous utopia based upon the orgiastic worship of humanity and sex itself. His earlier book *Love's Coming-of-Age* (1896) demonstrated his hatred of traditional marriage which Carpenter asserted was akin to slavery; this book was a tremendous influence upon the mother of the 1920s 'family planning' movement, Marie Stopes [of whom more in Chapter Four]. Another British writer and intellectual who booked his place in the Sexual Revolution's 'Hall of Fame' was Havelock Ellis (1859-1939); Ellis and Carpenter were friendly contemporaries. Havelock Ellis strongly influenced Margaret Sanger [of whom more in Chapter Four] who was a devoted disciple and also the 'new woman' author Olive Schreiner. Ellis was sexually impotent much of his life and had a perverted fetish for observing urination; Ellis married a lesbian and endorsed his wife's relationship with another woman concurrent to the marriage.

In 1897 Ellis published the first of seven volumes in *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*; this first book *Sexual Inversion* – in which Ellis advocated homosexuality as normal and acceptable – was published first in Germany to avoid prosecution under British obscenity law. Indeed when the bookseller George Bedborough sold a copy in England he was convicted of distributing obscene literature. Havelock Ellis and Sigmund Freud were both acquainted with and admired each other's written work and both idolised Friedrich Nietzsche as the philosophical god of 'new morality'. Consider this extract from a 1930s essay that Ellis wrote on Nietzsche: "In renewing our moral ideas we need also to renew

our whole conception of the function and value of morals. Nietzsche advised moralists to change their tactics: ‘Deny moral values, deprive them of the applause of the crowd, create obstacles to their free circulation; let them be the ... secrets of a few solitary souls: *forbid morality!*’”

‘Art for art’s sake’ (or – a convenient excuse for pornography) As well as the Victorian sex-radicalism emerging in the fields of philosophy, psychology and social science another area in which it found expression was the arts. The ‘Aesthetic Movement’ was an English artistic movement of the late Victorian era which was devoted to the doctrine of aestheticism or ‘art for art’s sake’. Aestheticism asserted that art is a freestanding concept preoccupied with its own interpretation and expression of ‘beauty’ and answerable only to itself thus divorcing the arts from any wider moral, social or indeed any external obligations. The most famous figure associated with aestheticism was Oscar Wilde. The idea of ‘art for art’s sake’ was rooted in the eighteenth century philosophy of Immanuel Kant, was popularised in the 1830s by the French writer Theophile Gautier and adopted by French poets and painters in the 1850s and 1860s from where it spread across the English Channel. Of course once you say ‘art for art’s sake’ you remove any moral obligation upon the artist and place art in an amoral vacuum, which in practice usually means a convenient excuse for the artist to be less amoral than immoral! The Irish homosexual playwright Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) drew inspiration from the earlier French poet Charles Pierre Baudelaire (1821-1867) whose influential work comprised the expression of dark and deathly themes of eroticism which found ‘beauty’ in decadence and evil; Baudelaire’s first and most famous book of poetry was *Les Fleurs du Mal* (The Flowers of Evil, 1857). It was Wilde, speaking of his scandalous novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), who claimed: “There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all.” How incredibly convenient that artists henceforth had a licence to do as they pleased and were incapable of any wrong (including those pornographers who preferred the title of ‘artist’)! Consider *Truth* (1870), the full-frontal nude painting by Jules Joseph Lefebvre. Or how about Gustave Coubert’s 1866 painting *L’Origine Du Monde* (The Origin Of The World)¹⁰ which depicts a woman lying on her back viewed as from her feet upwards between her splayed open legs thus showing naked thighs, torso, breasts and focusing upon the vulva. It was highly controversial when it was first displayed in the nineteenth century and was a good example of the fact that though nude paintings may require genuine artistic ability to paint them, nevertheless their appeal and motivation is essentially pornographic and no amount of pretentious artworld waffle about ‘erotic art’ or the ‘celebration of beauty’ can hide that. Historically artists’ nude models were invariably prostitutes. The ‘erotic art’ of nude painting is and always has been inseparable from pornography, it’s just convenient to excuse the indecency of ‘pornography’ by dismissing the term and the truth behind it entirely, in favour of the fantasy of ‘art’.

¹⁰ Currently displayed in the Musee d’Orsay.

The dark side of Victorian popular culture

The Victorian age was defined both in theory and in practice by the Christian consensus which lay at the heart of British life, however, like any other period of history it was not without a 'dark side' which refused to adhere to the common standard. The important thing to remember about the Victorian era is that traditional marriage morality and its practice was the mainstream 'norm' whilst promiscuity and expressions of it were the fringe. That is not to say that there weren't a lot of Victorians involved in immorality – for as we are about to see many were – but it is to say that these people were a significant minority in British society during the Victorian era, which was on balance by far the 'most moral' period of any throughout British history. Indeed many of these immoral Victorians would readily have acknowledged the Christian consensus as the standard by which they ought to live, even though they did not – they at least recognised that their conduct was wrong (compared to today in which many promiscuous people see nothing wrong with promiscuity). We will commence our tour of the Victorian dark side in the capital city.

Victorian London's whores and the 'white slave trade' There were an estimated eighty thousand prostitutes in London by the 1830s, a huge body of desperate destitutes literally decimated by disease every year. These women and girls frequently suffered from gonorrhoea and syphilis, indeed the city's hospitals saw about three thousand cases of syphilis a year in girls under sixteen. Young girls were sold into prostitution by their own families and the brothel-keepers and whoremongers were eager to profit from sexual slavery. Even outside of the sex-trade, in poor areas such as those of the East End it was not uncommon for girls as young as twelve to be 'married' and therefore sexually active. This state of affairs stretched back centuries; medieval London had more than its fair share of common whores, courtesans, bawds and whoremongers. 1200 years ago the capital had markets which traded in young women, literally selling women like any other produce. This business continued down the centuries and secret auctions of women took place into Victorian times (and probably go on to this day). London has always been the capital of promiscuity. In thirteenth century London there was actually a place called 'Gropescuntlane' in the parish of St Pancras (no explanation necessary!), and the aptly-named Cock Lane was a notorious prostitutes' haunt the public toleration of which rendered it a prototypical 'red light zone' of 800 years ago.

In the mid-Victorian period¹¹ 'the white slave trade' was prevalent, which involved the luring of thousands of young women into prostitution and sexual slavery.¹² In 1885 social reformer Josephine Butler and Salvation Army co-founder Catherine Booth persuaded the newspaper editor William Thomas Stead to publish a series of articles on the white slave trade and child prostitution in particular. They were partly motivated by a desire for legal reform and advocated raising the age of sexual consent from thirteen to

¹¹ Queen Victoria reigned from 1837 until her death in 1901.

¹² It's interesting to note that the white slave trade is again a problem, or still a problem, 120 years later.

sixteen; in 1885 the Criminal Law Amendment Bill was proposed legislation which purposed to do just that and so after years of parliamentary obstruction the campaigners were determined to use the publicity from W.T. Stead's articles to force Parliament finally to accept the Bill into statute law. The Salvation Army launched a 'national purity campaign'; 4000 signed a petition supporting the Criminal Law Amendment Bill and following a public meeting the National Vigilance Association was formed in 1885 "for the enforcement and improvement of the laws for the repression of criminal vice and public immorality." W.T. Stead and the Salvation Army's Bramwell Booth were members of the newly formed NVA's committee; many Victorians in polite society were in denial of the white slave trade so these two men arranged to procure a girl themselves (albeit with her mother's knowledge) to prove what was happening and how easy it was. Their good intentions backfired dramatically when they were prosecuted at the Old Bailey on a charge of abduction. Booth was acquitted but W.T. Stead¹³ was convicted and sentenced to three months' imprisonment. However the campaigners finally won the victory they had so long sought because Parliament did increase the age of consent to sixteen (and also criminalised homosexual activity in 1885, a law which was not abolished until 1967).

Victorian music halls W.T. Stead was a zealous opponent of the vaudevillian music hall tradition which enjoyed its long heyday throughout the Victorian and Edwardian eras and survived until the Second World War. From 1883 as the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* he consistently attacked music hall's degrading low culture. There was much to criticise. The music halls were a popular form of cheap theatrical entertainment patronised mainly by the working-class masses. Vulgar and suggestive songs, banter and dances were the stock in trade of the actresses, singers, dancers and comedians who paraded music hall stages before unruly, alcohol-fuelled audiences. In his book *London the Biography* (2000) Peter Ackroyd informed that: "By the mid-nineteenth century, the area roughly inclusive of the present borough of Tower Hamlets harboured some 150 music halls." The venues were a magnet for vice; prostitutes frequently plied their trade amongst audiences and more than a few of the women on stage were also prostitutes or nude models. Female performers were often as revealingly dressed and as sexually suggestive as possible for the time. In everyday Victorian life it was improper for a woman to expose even her ankles and any public display of bare limbs – such as the legs below the knee – risked arrest for offending public decency. Exposing the shoulders was risky let alone any breast cleavage; a topless woman would've been imprisoned and photographs of a naked woman (or man) were illegal to produce or distribute. Contrast that with today when the same type of pornography, that of topless nude portraiture, is a daily feature of several newspapers.

Given such high standards of modesty, when exposing bare limbs in public was quite simply taboo, it is evident the female performers pushed the prevailing moral boundaries

¹³ A brief aside... In 1912 W.T. Stead embarked on the ill-fated *Titanic* for a New York peace conference; he was last seen helping women and children to escape into the lifeboats.

to the limit, for they scandalously wore flesh-coloured hip-length tights on their legs, sometimes bared arms and shoulders and even on occasion gave a glimpse of cleavage. Though many would now consider it laughable that such costumes were thought indecent, it must be stressed that daring to bare even be-tighted legs was the borderline of toleration then; an actress so dressed risked the attention of the police and the music hall managers who booked them invited the wrath of licensing magistrates. Because to see a woman's legs was such a novelty it is fair to say the 'performances' of some actresses were little more than literally 'leg shows'. French *can-can* dancers epitomised the leg phenomenon.

Music hall promoters knew the safest way to titillate audiences with nudity was for the performers to 'appear' naked, so long as it was just an illusory nudity. *Tableau Vivant* acts were 'performances' in which actresses posed on stage as 'living statues', clad head to foot in body-hugging white or flesh-coloured tights. This gave the deliberate impression of naked women frolicking on the stage but none could take offence because women wearing body-tights weren't actually naked! Music hall audiences got to see every contour and curve of the *tableaux vivants*, hidden behind the fig leaf that they were not actually uncovered and that there was artistic merit in the poses adopted as they resembled serious works of art! That line didn't fool the authorities in Manchester though when in 1876 a man and five young women were fined for a 'ballet scene' judged an offence against public decency. The suggestion of nudity was also employed to entice the punters to attend the music halls. In 1890 a poster for the Aquarium music hall in London's Westminster district advertised the forthcoming appearance of the famous female gymnast Zaeo with an image in which she seemed almost naked; the poster was condemned as "indecent" by the National Vigilance Association. Goodness knows what the NVA would've made of 'Page 3 Girls'! The editor of their *Vigilance Record* magazine Mrs. Laura Ormiston Chant would certainly not have approved; this contemporary of W.T. Stead was the Mary Whitehouse of her day and shared Stead's opinion that the music halls were dens of iniquity.

Winston Churchill's teenage bad behaviour In the 1890s London's West End had become a mecca for street prostitutes and many of them also touted for business inside the music halls and theatres. The promenade of the Empire Theatre in Leicester Square became notorious as a haunt of courtesans and in 1894 Mrs. Chant launched a crusade opposing the renewal of the Empire's licence. She was mocked mercilessly by the music hall establishment, became the butt of the comedians' jokes and was caricatured as 'Prowlina Pry' in *Punch* magazine. Further criticism came from a future Prime Minister; in 1894 Winston Churchill was a nineteen-year-old army officer cadet and he regularly visited the Empire, which was a popular venue for young gentlemen. We can only speculate as to whether he indulged teenage passion with the 'Ladies of the Empire', as the courtesans were known, but we can be certain that he strongly disapproved of Mrs. Chant's campaign to close the Empire on account of their presence. In a letter published in the *Westminster Gazette* on the 18th October 1894 the young Churchill fulminated against "the prowling of the prudes" and displayed his early libertarian credentials thus: "State intervention, whether in the form of a Statute or by the decision of licensing

committees, will never eradicate the evil...” and furthermore, “...the Vigilante Societies wish to abolish sin by Act of Parliament, and are willing to sacrifice much of the liberty of the subject into the bargain...”, an approach which was “...a dangerous method, usually leading to reaction.” This early Churchillian outburst is fascinating and it was not the end of his “anti-prude” campaign. On the 3rd November, a Saturday night, Churchill incited a minor riot at the Empire which involved a two-hundred strong crowd in the destruction of newly-erected canvas screens which were blocking the view of courtesans in the foyer by young men in the main auditorium – the observation of the courtesans being part of the Empire’s special appeal. Churchill made an impromptu speech to the crowd including the declaration “Ladies of the Empire, I stand for Liberty!”; it is astonishing to think that his first foray into public speaking was an impassioned defence of prostitution! The cruel irony is that his father Lord Randolph Churchill would die less than three months later from syphilis, a disease which he contracted from one of the courtesans he’d consorted with several years before, quite possibly a ‘Lady of the Empire’.

Marie Lloyd – the sex-Queen of music hall Music hall’s most famous female was the cockney singer Marie Lloyd (1870-1922). Her controversial stage act was based on sexual innuendo and suggestive movements and expressions which thrilled some and horrified others. With an eventful private life rarely out of the press she was one of the first ‘celebrities’ in the modern sense. Such was her success that in the early 1890s whilst still in her early twenties she was earning £100 a week (about £6000 today). In 1896 she entertained British troops in South Africa before the Boer War. Provocatively wiggling her hips a long time before Elvis Presley and uttering comments such as “She’d never had her ticket punched before!” and “Should the sexes bathe together?” she sailed close to the wind of moral disapproval. In response to growing condemnation of her lewdness she told the press “They don’t pay their sixpences and shillings to hear the Salvation Army.”¹⁴ Marie’s attitude to life was summed up in a 1915 song written for her *A little of what you fancy does you good*, a phrase which has survived until the present day.¹⁵ A little of what Marie fancied was men and there were many throughout her adulterous life including three husbands. Her last husband Bernard Dillon was eighteen years her junior; before they were married they were arrested and charged with ‘moral turpitude’ [an archaic term for depravity] in New York as they disembarked from a ship before Marie’s final American tour. In October 1922 a lifetime of scandal and debauchery caught up with her on stage in Edmonton in north London when she collapsed in the middle of her act. Like Tommy Cooper many years later the audience thought it was part of the act but Marie fell into a coma and died soon after of a stomach cancer aged just fifty-two. During the reign (1901-1910) of King Edward VII another outrageous figure of the

¹⁴ Though that was true it missed the point that the Salvation Army didn’t charge money as it wasn’t out to profit from the poor but rather to help the poor.

¹⁵ For a recent example of this enduring phrase refer to page 11 in Chapter One. The first sentence of the first paragraph demonstrates a slight variation of the phrase as used in *Company* magazine in 2007. It is interesting to note that ninety-two years later the context and implication of the phrase remains unchanged!

vaudevillian scene was the lesbian dancer Maud Allan; wearing little but beads she was the talk of the town when in London in 1908 she performed her production *The Vision Of Salome* (based on Oscar Wilde's *Salome*) at the Palace Theatre. So famous did she become that statuettes of her were sold in Bond Street and the Prime Minister's wife Margot Asquith was one of her patrons. She also gave obscene performances of *Salome* to selected private audiences. Her reputation was such that Manchester's Palace Theatre refused to book her, fearing her dancing would jeopardise the theatre's licence. Many years after her Edwardian celebrity Maud died in poverty and obscurity in 1956.

Victorian pornography The actresses and dancers who trod the Victorian music hall boards provided a ready supply of pornographic models for the new and rapidly developing technology of photography, along with artists' models and prostitutes. The mere fact that the same women who were already painters' nude models then also posed for photographs more obviously acknowledgeable as pornographic is a clear indication that nude paintings were the visual pornography that preceded the photographic era and were more about naked women than art. Crude photographic processes were invented by 1840 from which time the early daguerreotypists started to take nude portraits. Prior to photography's advent a popular format for pornography (in addition to painted works) had been lithographic prints such as those of the notable Austrian lithographic pornographer Peter Fendi (1796-1842) but with photography began modern pornography. Throughout the Victorian era and into the twentieth century nude photography was illegal in Britain and also in the USA and France. The sort of portraits which a few generations later would appear in national newspapers were illegal even to make but that didn't discourage the many early photographers with a pornographic bent nor the women willing to pose for them. At a time when attitudes of public moral decency were formed and nurtured by the Church, which meant nudity in public was taboo and even a woman's bare ankle was frowned upon, to see a photographic portrait of a naked woman must've been quite a novelty. Whereas now the sight of lots of bare flesh in ordinary young women's dress is commonplace, the powerful impact upon Victorian men of photographs revealing a woman's breasts and buttocks cannot be underestimated. In the earliest pornographic photography the pornographic-prostitutes were often posed sitting or reclining in a classical manner reminiscent of painted nude portraiture; this was partly due to long exposure times which necessitated the model remaining absolutely still for a minute. Early daguerreotype originals could not be copied without considerable loss of quality thus precluding mass circulation however the invention of the wet collodion process in 1851 meant that for the first time unlimited paper prints could be made from a glass plate negative. This sparked a pornographic boom¹⁶ and despite the illegality of the

¹⁶ The scale of Victorian pornography production was demonstrated when in 1874 the Metropolitan Police raided a photographer's premises in Pimlico and found an illegal collection of over 130,000 obscene photographs and 5000 stereoscopic slides. If you thought the furtive hoarding of vast pornographic collections is a recent phenomenon, typically brought to our attention by the press in their reports of police searches of the homes of rapists and paedophiles, you stand corrected!

material hundreds of prints of naked or semi-dressed women were sold, often during the intermissions of music hall performances. Needless to say it made sound business sense to sell photographs of female vaudevillian performers, not only for the direct profit but also as a means of publicity which could increase future attendance. Similarly courtesans saw the sense of having pornographic photographs taken for self promotion and for use as visiting cards.

It is important to emphasise that all Victorian photographic pornography was thoroughly illegal and the authorities dealt severely with pornographic offenders. Victorian Britain was the first country in the world to legislate specifically to criminalise pornography with the passing of the Obscene Publications Act in 1857. The Obscene Publications Act 1857 had a historical precedent in King George III's 1787 Royal Proclamation "For the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, and for the Preventing and Punishing of Vice, Profaneness and Immorality" which included the suppression of all "...loose and licentious Prints, Books, and Publications, dispensing Poison to the minds of the Young and Unwary and to Punish the Publishers and Vendors thereof" but it was the 1857 Act which really enshrined the law-of-the-land's objection to pornographic offence. The movement to institute a law against pornography, such as the 1857 Act constituted, had been brewing for some time and was just one of many social and political expressions of the prevailing Christian consensus. The Society for the Suppression of Vice began in 1802 to: "...check the spread of open vice and immorality, and more especially to preserve the minds of the young from contamination by exposure to the corrupting influence of impure and licentious books, prints, and other publications..."

The Obscene Publications Act clamped down hard on the proliferation of pornography which preceded it. Consider the example of London's Holywell Street (now Aldwych) which in 1834 was known as 'Booksellers' Row' and contained fifty-seven print and bookshops which sold pornographic novels and also lithographic prints, etchings and prostitutes' information pamphlets. In the mid-nineteenth century the word *pornography* became common currency in the English language to describe the prints and publications typical of Booksellers' Row and the 1857 Act was the response of society to the sale of such material. The Bill which became the 1857 Act was presented to Parliament by Lord Campbell, the Lord Chief Justice at the time. Lord Campbell stated that the Bill if enacted was: "...intended to apply exclusively to works written for the single purpose of corrupting the morals of youth, and of a nature calculated to shock the common feelings of decency in any well-regulated mind." Furthermore he asserted that the Bill if enacted would stop the: "...sale of poison more deadly than prussic acid, strychnine or arsenic..." and protect "...women, children and the feeble-minded." Immediately after the Bill was enacted Lord Campbell used the new Obscene Publications Act to prosecute and convict William Dugdale, a criminal noted for forgery and blackmail and quite possibly the most prolific pornographer of the time. Prior to his conviction William Dugdale had published guidebooks such as *Yokel's Preceptor* which advised on the 'best' places to encounter homosexuals in London.

Just as with still photography the primitive forerunner of motion pictures featured naked women. In 1887 the American Eadweard Muybridge published *Animal Locomotion*, a work of sequential motion collotypography which comprised naked girls frolicking together in a variety of physical activities such as running and jumping about – it was ostensibly produced for the benefit of serious artists. The art establishment provided the first excuse to tentatively ignore moral objections to photography of nude women in the public domain; after all if it was acceptable for serious artists to paint nude models and to publicly exhibit such works, as was the tradition of two-hundred years past, then why should artists not work from nude photographs rather than viewing models in the flesh, and why should not a photograph be considered equal with a painting as a serious work of art? Even the lady whose name defined the age, no less a person than Queen Victoria herself, bought a copy of the Wolverhampton photographer Oscar Rejlander's work *The Two Ways Of Life* for her husband Prince Albert which he duly placed upon his study wall; though the work had some minor artistic merit it was beyond question erotic and comprised photography of several naked women, their breasts displayed prominently. So there it was, the ideals of 'art' the lever of excuse which first prised open just an inch the door of moral objection to a future in which pornography in public would be tolerated and the business of producing and selling pornography would become legal. It was the thin end of a very long wedge.

Post Scriptum: *And finally...* it was the Victorian era's Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (1836-1895) who lent his name to the practice of 'masochism'. So now you know.