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Where Are You Mama?: The Role of Motherhood in the Victorian Novel

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Where Are You Mama?: The Role of Motherhood in the Victorian Novel

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Languages and Literature
of Bard College

by
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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this paper to my mother, Marcia Coné, who taught me what it meant to be a strong woman, and a critical thinker.

Acknowledgements

I cannot express enough gratitude for my advisor Daniel Williams for guiding me through this paper. His knowledge of Victorian literature has not only aided in writing this paper, but has also influenced my academic interests within the literature department greatly.

Additionally, I would like to thank Jonathan Enciso, and Billy Pool-Harris: who have been my largest supporters during the course of this project. Thank you for allowing me spaces to write, and to share my triumphs and frustrations. Thank you for also supporting me as an athlete simultaneously. This year of writing has been no small task, and your countless words of encouragement will not be forgotten.

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INTRODUCTION

How This Research Came About

My own work came about entirely by chance. Initially when I started my project, I did not think it would be about the role of motherhood in the Victorian novel. Instead, I thought it would be about female friendships in such novels—a continuation of the argument that had been held in the literature community on the sexual or platonic nature of these friendships. Moreover, the pre-existing discourse, which I read in a tutorial on woman, sex, and gender in the 19th century, such as Sharon Marcus's *Between Women* (whose argument is that female relationships in 19th-century Britain were pivotal as their sexual nature including “female marriages”), was not completely convincing. I had always felt like there was more to these female relationships than just friendship or sex. With this hypothesis initially in mind, I sought after my first novel—which you will hear about in the first chapter—*Desperate Remedies* (1871) written by Thomas Hardy. Although the female friendship I was hoping to find was in fact there, it was different than I had previously imagined. It was, in its own right, initially sexual—or at least more touchy than you would expect from a normal relationship. That being said, the intimate nature of said relationships felt maternal rather than sexual—this is where my Senior Project began.

The discovery of my second novel, *A Mummer's Wife* (1885) by Irish author George Moore, was just as much by chance as the first. At first, I was hoping to find another sensation novel, one perhaps written by Wilkie Collins or Mary Braddon. Therefore, I went to Stevenson Library here at Bard College in the hopes of reading a few of these works to see if they piqued my interest. While wandering through the Victorian literature aisles on the fourth floor, a spine of one novel for some reason caught my eye. It was titled *A Mummer's Wife*. Bringing all six books back to my carrel, the mysterious dark green novel was the only one I felt spoke to my

project, and to what I wanted to accomplish after having written chapter one—examining motherhood as a category of female friendship. Upon further research, I realized that not only was it chance that the novel had been perfectly suited to the topic, it was also perfectly fitted to a second line of comparison with Chapter One. Both works are relatively unheard of in comparison to other novels of the time, and other works written by each author. Although similar in their discussions of motherhood, the novels could not be any more different: Cytherea, the protagonist of *Desperate Remedies*, does not at any point play the mother or become it; it is Ms. Aldclyffe, her employer, who takes on these maternal roles. *A Mummer's Wife*, on the other hand, shows a woman—Kate—who constantly fails as a mother due to her lack of interest in the role. However, these differences allowed for a brand-new argument for my second chapter, which, similarly to the main thread of discourse in my writing for chapter one, was unthought of until having to confront my feeling towards Moore's novel. This new hypothesis was that—being a mother was a role rather than a state of being.

The story of my research and the writing it has produced is one of chance. It is a clear example of when taking a leap of faith pays off, and it is a reminder to never assume what you are arguing before you begin your research. A paper that once was meant to feed into the discourse on the significance of female friendship, has now grown into an exploration of motherhood and its necessity for inclusion within the Victorian novel. My research therefore raises the question, why examine the role of the Victorian mother through the novel? Moreover, why is fulfilling the image or the role of the perfect Victorian mother feel necessary to the women in these two novels?

The Role of Maternal in the 19th-Century Novel

In examining motherhood, the difficulties of the project began. How does one write about something they have not experienced? How does one write about a type of motherhood that no longer exists? Moreover, why examine the role of the Victorian mother through the novel, rather than through a more historical lens? To these questions I respond: a great deal of research has been conducted in an attempt to clarify what was the expectation for mothers at the time.

Primary texts such as Sarah Stickney Ellis's conduct books—including *The Mothers of England*—played a large contribution in creating the image I allude to as “the Victorian mother.”

In addition to considering how the image of a mother was produced in the 19th century, it was essential to the project to recognize that both novels' maternal characters—Ms. Aldclyffe and Kate—are not mothers. They are, in Ms. Aldclyffe's case, a friend who acts like a surrogate, or like Kate, “failed” mothers, as both attempt to play the role of mother although it is never fully acquired. Therefore, I argue, that the image of Victorian motherhood pressured women to become mothers, whether or not they actually had children. These social pressures show how a maternal figure is necessary in the 19th-century novel in order to guide the protagonist, or to provide a cautionary tale on the consequences of not fully realizing the image of the Victorian mother.

The importance of marriage and motherhood, as stated by Kathryn Hughes, was essential to the lives of young women:

a young girl was not expected to focus too obviously on finding a husband. Being ‘forward’ in the company of men suggested a worrying sexual appetite. Women were assumed to desire marriage because it allowed them to become mothers rather than to pursue sexual or emotional satisfaction (Hughes).

Even though the women described in these novels are not the Victorian definition of a mother, they still lived under the same circumstances as any other woman, where becoming a mother was the most important function a woman could have. Strangely, although *Desperate Remedies* and *A Mummer's Wife* show two very different women's attraction to motherhood, their characters still have the need to mother and to nurture those in their life: Ms. Aldclyffe guides Cytherea maternally, and Kate has a child and a husband whom she does not know how to care for properly. This may be their natural maternal instincts, or as I argue, "For a woman not to become a mother meant she was liable to be labelled inadequate, a failure or in some way abnormal" (BBC History Trails). Therefore, these women are trying to find relationships in which they can perform the role that they have been tasked by society to do—be a mother.

Due to great class divides between the two novels (Hardy focusing on the middle and upper-middle classes, and Moore on the working class), each novel provides its own account of motherhood. These class descriptions are far different to what is presented in the writing of Sarah Ellis, as both Ms. Aldclyffe and Kate go through individual struggles that are unique to their social standings. In the working-class context, Kate's knowledge on how to be a mother—although not present—is necessary to the survival of her baby, and for her to keep the role of mother. As expected, given the difficult living and working conditions of the working class in England, "Despite the attention given to the child, life expectancy was low and in the poorer districts, 20% died before the age of one, with 25% deceased by the age of five" (Malheiro). These numbers are largely contributed by the laborious industries of British towns, that forced young children into unsafe conditions. In Kate's case, being from northern England made this outcome quite likely. As historian Carol Dyhouse remarks, "Openings for women's work were plentiful in the pottery," which was "the area distinguished by the higher infant mortality rates"

(Dyhouse 252). Since living and working conditions were atrocious in the factories, many people suffered from asthma and potter's lung. Therefore, for the working class, the role of being a mother was not only in producing the child, but also in keeping the child alive and having to keep herself and her husband alive as well.

Due to high infant mortality rates in Victorian Britain, economic incentives were also given to families with newborn children. Dyhouse remarks that certain towns such as Huddersfield would distribute "promissory notes to newly-delivered women, offering them a one pound reward if their babies should live to see their first birthday. The reverse side of these promissory notes was printed with instructions and advice on infant hygiene and feeding" (249). Motherhood for the working class was, then, not only a form of reproductive labour.¹ It had the ability to contribute to a family's monetary situation as well. These incentives however, did not majorly change the infant mortality rate. It is the creation of these economic incentives that indicate that Victorian women were unable to properly care for their children, as mothers were both expected domestic and public laborers. Due to the necessity of working in order to survive, and the expectation for mothers to be able to spend hours in the potteries and have the time to learn how to properly be a mother and care for their child was unrealistic. As Dyhouse explains, there were schools for mothers that were given grants to teach classes. Considering that their participant mothers were workers it is no surprise that, "This was the kind of activity that many institutions had quickly discovered to be one of the least satisfactory aspects of their work," as women were unable to attend due to the tediousness of a sit-down course. Given the pre-existing constraints of the working-class context, Kate's ability to learn to be a successful mother in *A Mummer's Wife*, is hindered greatly because she does not have the time or feel the responsibility

¹ Reproductive labor, in feminist theory, is the unwaged work woman must undergo in order to have and care for children, as well as maintain her family (Exploring Economics).

to learn how to role-play. The role of mother in the working class is typically not a performative role, but rather a full-time job which requires learning how to role-play in addition to working in order for it to be successful.

Being in the upper class, Ms. Aldclyffe, although only a friend who provides maternal nurturing, has a less hands-on role in motherhood. For her, being a mother is a role she gets to play but does not feel the same responsibilities as someone from the working class. This can be seen specifically when Cytherea is to be married, as Ms. Aldclyffe creates a match that is blinded by her own guilt from her murky past. As elaborated on by Ian Ousby, her interference with the young woman's relationship goes so far as arson:

Miss Aldclyffe threatens Springrove with her power over her father. Some buildings adjacent to the Three Tranters Inn have burnt down and she has the right to require that they be rebuilt at the farmer's expense; if Edward agrees to leave the field clear for Manston's courtship of Cytherea the penalty will not be exacted (221).

This characterization of Ms. Aldclyffe taking on the responsibility of a mother, differs greatly than that of a normal mother of the Victorian era, as their main concern was inheriting property and financial security for their children (Ousby).

As I will later explain, although different, Ms. Aldclyffe does, at times, mirror the absence of a normal mother as she disappears from the novel for quite some time. Unlike *Desperate Remedies*, the absence of the 19th-century mother in the upper class was often due to staff members such as the governess, who fulfilled most of the maternal responsibilities after birth. By looking at other portrayals of motherhood in the upper class through novels such as *Agnes Grey* by Anne Brontë, we can see that a governess was essential to the household as she allowed mothers to play their roles less intensely. This is because it was the governess who was

meant “to educate pupils (usually girls) in a range of ‘accomplishments’ ranging from reading to drawing,” and therefore, “Governesses became increasingly popular through the Victorian era for both the upper and middle-classes” (Tylka).

In the novel *Agnes Grey*, Anne Brontë presents the role of the governess as synonymous with being a mother, because she sees the children more than their actual mother does. She must not only teach them in subjects such as English, but also take care of them throughout the day in different activities, such as going on walks or escorting them to church. This maternal care was expected to continue as the children grew up and developed into adults, as Agnes is still expected to be present as Rosalie, the eldest child, enters into society. Otherwise, men who wished to marry Rosalie could take advantage of her if no adult was around to protect her. The role of the governess as maternal protector is explicitly stated when Agnes explains to Rosalie that “your mama thinks you ought not to go beyond the park or garden without some discreet, matronly person like me to accompany you” (103) in order to keep her safe. In this instance, the role of Agnes is to become a second mother, who in reality performs more of a maternal role than the children’s actual mother. In addition to the protector role that Agnes plays, her role as mother can also be seen in the trust Rosalie has for her. Throughout the novel, Rosalie speaks of her most intimate dreams and romantic feelings towards Mr. Hatfield—emotions that she would not dare to tell her mother as she knows her feelings will not be respected. Agnes, on the other hand, will keep Rosalie’s secrets to herself and not share what Rosalie has told her in confidence, both because she cares for the young girl and also because she could risk losing her employment if her mother found out. It is moments such as these that exemplify the importance of the governess in the upper class: they are not only employees of these families, but also these children’s first and

often closest maternal figure. As the governess fulfills these roles, mothers in this societal position are allowed to be less present and have a more distant role in their child's upbringing.

Similarly to their presence in many literary works, the presence of a governess in the 19th-century household was not rare: "The 1851 Census revealed that 25,000 women earned their living teaching and caring for other women's children" (Hughes). This data reaffirms the notion that the upper-class Victorian mother did not actually have to play the role of a mother in the same way a working-class woman would have. She did not need to focus on teaching the child, caring for the child, or even introducing them into society's standards. Instead, as Hughes states, "The governess was expected to look after her pupils' moral education too. As well as reading the Bible and saying prayers with them, she was to set a good example of modest, moral behavior." In having another woman play the tedious role of mother, their actual mother was able to play the role of woman in the house, who took credit for the governess's work. In considering the role of the governess to how mother and daughters interacted within the upper-class, it is then no surprise that Ms. Aldclyffe and Cytherea are able to have their own maternal surrogate relationship as Cytherea grew up in a middle-class family, and due to her mother's death, would have been used to another woman coming in to play the role of mother.

Stepping away from class, it is certain that a maternal figure is required in the novel as these surrogate friendships and quests for motherhood do exist in two very different literary texts written both in the late 19th century. The image of the maternal figure in Victorian texts raises the question: why are mothers all that important? In *Desperate Remedies* the role of the mother indicates Ms. Aldclyffe is needed to guide Cytherea on the right path, to show her right from wrong, and to have her be married as any proper Victorian woman would have. In the case of *A Mummer's Wife*, however, Moore's novelistic depiction of Kate's lack of motherhood is used as

a cautionary tale. Her slow descent into madness through her failed marriages, and the death of her daughter due to her lack of maternal instincts, indicate that Moore believes in order for woman to have a successful life, they must first be successful wives and mothers.

Both Hardy and Moore's depictions of motherhood are also interesting given that both authors are men. I do not care to argue that male writers are not entitled to create characterizations of woman; I confess Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is one of my favorite novels. However, it is with these male-written female protagonists that we must also be careful when analyzing the texts in terms of their depiction of women and overall meaning as both authors' novels are somewhat experimental for their time. The experimental nature of these novels is attributed to two factors: they are both authors' first books, and both of the novels were examples of new genres of writing.

Desperate Remedies is a sensation novel,² which uses themes such as adultery and the supernatural within the plot. As *Desperate Remedies* was Hardy's first novel, as well as his only novel within the short-lived genre of the sensation novel, his themes border the lines of promiscuous. We will come across many critics, in the 19th century and more recently, who cannot overlook the sexual tension they feel between Cytherea and Ms. Aldclyffe. At the same time, it is when reading Hardy's work that major plot holes are discovered, as certain facts such as people's locations change frequently throughout the novel. Although these gaps can be largely attributed to this being Hardy's first novel and the possibility that it would not get published, one cannot ignore that the sensation genre also allowed for confrontation between social expectations such as monogamy, and the novel that presents adultery.

² The sensation novel is a British genre that can be attributed only to novels written between the 1860s to the 1870s. These novels often contrast realism greatly as they focus on themes, such as madness, that were not acceptable or regarded highly by Victorian standards. Other examples of the sensation novel include *Jane Eyre*, *East Lynne*, and *Armada* (Rubery).

On the other hand, Moore's writing is what some, such as Joellen Masters, call the beginning of British naturalism, a genre that aims to represent life in its most vivid and legitimate form. As previously mentioned, his novel becomes a cautionary tale on what happens when the role of the mother is not fulfilled. Although Moore's novel does not fall within the conventional time frame of the sensation novel, as it was published in 1885, he does incorporate sensationalist themes in to his writing: for example, Kate's adultery towards her first husband, and her madness later in the novel. Additionally, Moore refers to *Jane Eyre*, showing that he is aware of the cross-genre work his novel is doing. In directly referencing the sensation novel, Moore presents his awareness towards the work his own writing is doing as it uses the frightening qualities of the sensation genre in order to enhance his own cautionary tale—to embrace motherhood or succumb to madness.

It is with the acknowledgment of both authors' experimental writing that we must, as this project aims to do, use Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus's idea of "surface reading." Implicit reading or "symptomatic reading asserts that 'what a text means lies in what it does not say, which can then be used to rewrite the text in terms of a master code'" (3). Implicit reading is then problematic as assuming an author's intention allows readers to overlook what is on the page, rather than focusing on the author's writing. It is exactly this that we must stay away from, as it allows readers to be blinded by their own expectations of queer Victorian relationships, for example, rather than noticing the actual dialogue and textual representation that might indicate otherwise. An example of this is critics focusing on the "quasi-sexual" scene between Ms. Aldclyffe and Cythera, rather than recognizing it as the clear maternal moment it is, since the older woman directly asks Cythera to acknowledge her as "mamma" (85). By reading implicitly rather than explicitly (reading what we want to imagine versus what is written on the page)

reading, the reader often misses out on essential themes in hopes of finding something that caters to what we want the book to be about. Therefore, we must push against our instincts to read in between the lines in order to read these texts properly. As Best and Marcus note, “Those who want to continue using some version of symptomatic reading differ from one another in the degree of their willingness to stay inside texts” (6). It is necessary however, that we all understand these novels and further the relationships in them in the most explicit and literal way. By explicitly reading these 19th-century novels, the need for these maternal relationships becomes apparent, as it they are integrated by their authors in dialogue and thematic in order to guide the story for the main protagonist. It is essential to consider Marcus’s method of “just reading” that she uses in Chapter Two of her book *Between Women*—the precursor to Best and Marcus’s “surface reading”—when reading this project as it is the lens through which I have looked at these novels, and will hopefully allow for a clearer understanding of my argument.

**MOTHERHOOD WITHOUT THE MOTHER: SURROGATE FRIENDSHIPS IN
HARDY'S DESPERATE REMEDIES**

Why didn't you tell me there was danger? Why didn't you warn me? Ladies know what to guard against, because they read novels that teach them of these tricks; but I never had the chance of discovering in that way, and you did not help me.

—Thomas Hardy *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, 95

Introduction

In Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), the title character Tess Durbeyfield has just returned home from the D'Urberville estate, where she has attempted to claim kin only to be raped by her cousin Alec D'Urberville. Needing guidance, she confesses to her mother what happened, and the latter simply states she should have been more careful with Alec "if you didn't mean to get him to make you his wife" (95). Tess's confrontational response demonstrates a perplexing relationship between a daughter who desperately needs a motherly figure, and a mother who has blamed her child for making mistakes. Tess essentially claims she is motherless as she has no guidance or maternal figure to support her through life's twists and turns. The lack of a mother raises a question for Tess and readers alike: if one does not have a mother, what does one have to replace it? Tess can either have a mother or novels that might "teach" her "of these tricks," Hardy seems to suggest. If a novel could replace a motherly figure in Tess's life, what novels could she have read to teach her what a supportive mother would have?

In this chapter, I will posit that one prominent category of the female friendship in the Victorian novel involves something close to a motherly bond. In certain cases, characters have what I will call *surrogate friendships*. The surrogate friendship is one in which friends without any familial connection can fill the role of parental, and specifically maternal figures. With this idea of the surrogate friendship in mind, we could include one of Hardy's own novels amongst those Tess could have read to find a sense of guidance in the absence of an effective mother.

Although *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* was first published in 1891 near the end of Hardy's novelistic career, it would perhaps would have been useful for Tess to look at Hardy's first novel, *Desperate Remedies* (1871), which shows a young woman who is actually motherless and enters into a surrogate friendship. The novel takes place in a similar Victorian time frame to *Tess of the D'Urberville's* narrative and would have been able to provide Tess with examples of motherly relationships that keep the same relationship dynamics and social conduct she would have been accustomed to. This novel would additionally be helpful to Tess because the maternal, nurturing relationship is not seen between a mother and a daughter, but between an upper-class woman and her lady's-maid, which would show Tess that she has other options for maternal comfort that are not her own mother. By delving into the maternal relationship within *Desperate Remedies* to explore how far it would have been able to provide Tess with the maternal relationship she longed to have with her own mother, I argue that the novel offers one powerful model of female friendship—the surrogate friendship—that provides a sense of guidance for young developing women in 19th-century Britain. To show the extent to which surrogate friendships provide guidance for the novel's protagonist, I will first present how the characters themselves create and sustain their relationships. Secondly, I will argue that the mode in which the novel is structured—the appearance and disappearance of the maternal character—follows a typical maternal pattern for the era, allowing for a stronger connection between the pair fueling the surrogate friendship.

Surrogate Friendship at the Level of Characters

Having someone in the motherly role is essential to a young female novelistic protagonist in the Victorian era, as they provide guidance through their story and life. The importance of the maternal figure is presented in *Desperate Remedies* through the characters of Cytherea and Ms.

Aldclyffe. *Desperate Remedies* begins with Cytherea and her brother Owen going through financial struggles after her father passes, leading her to find work as a lady's maid. Their mother had passed in recent years as well, leaving both of the children as orphans. Due to the pair's financial struggles, Cytherea puts out advertisements to find work, and accepts a post to be a lady's-maid for Ms. Aldclyffe, a single middle-aged woman living with only her father and servants at their estate, Knapwater House. Although there is hesitation and discomfort at the beginning of their relationship, they quickly grow close and form a friendship in which Ms. Aldclyffe guides Cytherea through her love life and as a young woman stepping into society. Through their early conversations we also learn that Ms. Aldclyffe had an affair with the younger woman's father when she herself was younger. This only reinforces the maternal relationship that the pair share: had things been different, Ms. Aldclyffe could have been Cytherea's actual mother. This strange thought experiment concerning a life manqué recalls what the critic Andrew H. Miller calls the "life unlived" in literature: the life we wanted to have lived but never had the opportunity to, such that one now must accept that this life "is what life is" (106), and that we do not receive a second life or its opportunities. Contrary to Miller's beliefs, Cytherea is actually able to attain the life she has never had, one with a mother and parental guidance. Moreover, in the context of Hardy's novel, both women must realize that, in Miller's terms, they have been "separate together in the place where they've been together, and their past is present all around them" (111), meaning that their presence in each other's lives is not only a way to live the "life unlived," but their relationship seems already created by these preplaced connections. The idea of what could have been only strengthens the need to be a part of each other's lives, as both Mrs. Aldclyffe and Cytherea do not want to continue to live in a childless or motherless life, especially considering Cytherea is an orphan and looking for parental guidance. Their nurturing

relationship further grows as Cytherea begins to have suitors and the conversation of marriage becomes serious. For example, she marries Mr. Manston, a young man from London whom Ms. Aldclyffe finds through a work advertisement posted at the Society of Architecture. Although Mr. Manston and Cytherea both forcefully fall in love through the persistence of Ms. Aldclyffe, he already has a wife, and therefore has placed her in an unlawful, bigamous marriage, “actions,” that “were serious enough affairs to provoke public prosecutions, a rarity for bigamy cases” (Frost 299). Additionally, in the case of Mr. Manston, he would have succumb to “Judges,” that “were unstinting in their criticism of men who wandered about the country, seducing young women either for carnal pleasure or money” (Frost 299). As the mother figure, Ms. Aldclyffe fixes the situation she created by removing Cytherea from the relationship and speaking to Mr. Manston about his failure to uphold the promises of protecting and caring for her that he had given Ms. Aldclyffe prior to their engagement. Sadly at the end of the novel, Ms. Aldclyffe passes away and therefore her surrogate friendships and motherly presence with Cytherea are terminated. In the last few pages of the novel however, Cytherea ends up marrying her main love interest Mr. Springrove after having spent the entire novel in love with him. This union, although having taken the entire novel to reach, does show that maternal assistance is always right: Ms. Aldclyffe tells her “Love’s passions shall rock thee” (84), meaning that true love always imprints itself the deepest.

A motherly relationship can be seen as soon as the pair’s initial meeting when readers are shown Ms. Aldclyffe’s desire for deep connection with Cytherea. Although one might not assume there are motherly and caring aspects to their conversation, it is when Ms. Aldclyffe is alone in this brief moment of Cytherea’s absence during their conversation that we understand the desire she has to be close to her. Hardy reports her thoughts directly:

It is almost worth while to be bored with instructing her in order to have a creature who could glide round my luxurious indolent body in that manner, and look at me in that way—I warrant how light her fingers are upon one's head and neck... What a silly modest young thing she is, to go away so suddenly as that! (Hardy 56)

The direct and rather stark image of the “creature who could glide” (56), and the fingers around one's head and neck seem to present a violent and evil tone to her thoughts. Indeed, these images were usually read as sexual or violent by contemporaneous reviewers who found the novel, “disagreeable, inasmuch as it is full of crimes,” as an anonymous reviewer put it in the *Athenaeum* in 1871, and complained that it included “no display of passion except of the brute kind,” as another reviewer for the *Spectator* put it (Cox 3, 6). The kindling for these unpleasant reviews may have been the suggestion of Cytherea apparently choking Ms. Aldclyffe. The passage's focus on Cytherea's body implies a sexual undertone: it seems that Ms. Aldclyffe is objectifying her. In my explicit reading of this scene, the images carry a different tone, showing she has a longing for closeness and the nurturing she wishes to provide to Cytherea.

For instance, the gliding abilities of the “creature” would suggest Cytherea is a snake. Initially, our instincts may lead one to assume that the snake alludes to the story of Adam and Eve. Instead, I believe Hardy is trying to highlight the transformative nature that Cytherea and Ms. Aldclyffe's relationship may have. The transformation of their relationship can be seen through many different lenses. Arguably the largest transformation is the discovery of one another. Later on we learn that Ms. Aldclyffe was Cytherea's father's mistress, and their initial meeting as adults is one that begins the shift in both of their lives. In the real world, it is not often that we understand when someone is going to have a significant impact on our lives. However, Hardy uses the snake to show readers the characters' subconscious and ultimately to foreshadow

their emotional connection. The transformative nature of the snake also indicates Ms. Aldclyffe's ability to shift into a motherly role. This shift only further reveals the transformative nature of Cytherea as her presence has the ability to transform others in ways that were previously unknown to them. The snake was an image for a transformative figure in Victorian culture, even if it was often seen as a representation of the evil woman rather than the expected and praised "angel of the house," as Nina Auerbach notes. This is important as Cytherea then becomes transgressive, a sense of evil on the predetermined right and wrong of Victorian society as she does not fall in to the common orphan trope of 19th-century literature. Auerbach writes:

These serpent-women, terrestrial cousins of the hybrid mermaid in their secret self-transformations, their power over social life and its laws, exude a power that withers patriarchs: George Eliot's lamailike Roasmond and Gwendolen, Tennyson's Vivien, Sheridan Leann's Carmilla, all find their greatest triumph in displacing male authorities. (Auerbach 8)

Auerbach further adds to the idea that the snake has the ability to change the social climate around them. In considering that a normal lady's-maid would not have had the ability to get so emotionally close to or cared for by her mistress. Therefore, her power as the serpent creature only becomes more powerful as not only does she have the ability to change Ms. Aldclyffe's emotions, but also to change the social structures around her. This in turn, aids her in having a motherly and tender relationship with the older woman. With Auerbach's reading of the snake in mind, I would argue that in this moment Ms. Aldclyffe is not lusting over or sexualizing Cytherea, but rather uncovers a deeper respect for her ability to be an individual who does not shy away from being true to herself. Ms. Aldclyffe understands the importance this young woman will have on her life as she already has changed after only having spent a few moments

with her. Therefore, Hardy's snake in this instance is not a sexual, lustful creature as in the story of Adam and Eve. Rather, it is empowered, and can change the predetermined confinements of social life which is far more than most women were able to do in the 19th century.

In focusing on the head and neck imagery there are two key texts that will help explain why this imagery is not sexual, but maternal. To begin, let us look at the work of Sappho, specifically due to its popularity in Victorian era which can be seen through books such as *Victorian Sappho* by literary critic Yopie Prins. In her writing, Prins delves into the earliest attempts to reconstruct Sappho's fragments which date back to the 19th century as she argues that the Sappho we know today is much credited to Victorian poets (3).³ Thomas Hardy was an admirer of Sappho's work: as he wrote in a letter to Florence Henniker, "I have just made myself a present of Wharton's Sappho," "How I love her" (Thomas 129). His love and inspiration may come as no surprise as the name Cytherea appears in the translation of Henry Wharton's *Sappho* published in 1885 (Thomas 133). Additionally, many of her poems mention the head and the neck that often emphasize the neck as rather fragile and light:

For many crowns of violets
and roses
] at my side you put on

and many woven garlands
made of flowers
around your soft throat. (Carson 185)

This image creates an entirely separate idea from the violent one that is implied in the initial reading of Ms. Aldclyffe's dialogue. In Sappho's description, one imagines the beauty of the neck, a delicate part of our body that must be adorned with flowers and other beautiful things.

³ Sappho's popularity in literature became its own genre known as Victorian Sapphism, that, in addition to translating and building off Sappho's imagery, also critiqued other nations, such as France's iterations of Sapphism (Marcus 253).

Further on in Hardy's novel, we learn that the neck is sacred: Ms. Aldclyffe wears a necklace that few of her maids have ever been able to see, Hardy's version of Sappho's "braided rosebuds, dill and crocus." When Cytherea discovers this necklace, she replies,

Few of my maids discover that I wear it always. I generally keep it a secret—not that it matters much. But I was careless with you, and seemed to want to tell you. You win me to make confidences. (Hardy 71)

In this moment three things become evident. First, Ms. Aldclyffe's trust is unconscious ("seemed to want"), as if she is even unable to explain her emotional connection with Cytherea. This further proves the transformative nature of Cytherea. Second, the neck is important to her as she keeps one of her most prized possessions on it at all times, and it is not something she lets everyone see. There is an instantaneous bond, similar to one of a mother and a child who has just left the womb. From that first cry of a child (or in their case first conversation) there was a trust and a connection that is both unexplainable and inseparable.

Another moment in *Desperate Remedies* that exposes the bond of surrogate friendship is the notorious night scene where Ms. Aldclyffe enters Cytherea's room, uninvited and unexpected. Once she is allowed into her room, the two lie in bed and discuss her person and Cytherea's romantic interests. Quickly Ms. Aldclyffe demands a physical connection with her, asking for a kiss. Although this may initially seem sexual considering the context we place on kissing in today's society, in the Victorian era, Ms. Aldclyffe asking for a kiss was not unnatural for mothers. As explained in Sarah Ellis's handbook *The Mothers of England*, which outlines the rules and guidelines all Victorian mothers should follow to keep a proper household. In Ellis's account of motherly behavior she advises that a good mother should have her children's utmost respect and love: "happily for the mother, her children love her as she is. Her Kiss could not be

more welcome” (Ellis 68). This is important to mention as similarly with their initial meeting, many readers from both the Victorian Era and today consider this scene to be clearly sexual rather than nurturing and motherly. Richard Sylvia suggests this is a “lesbian love scene” (Sylvia 102), and other critics agree about the “powerful erotic charge in Miss Aldclyffe 's words and behaviour, coarsened by jealousy” (Roberts 53).

Although such accounts read the surface of the scene, I argue that it confirms that Ms. Aldclyffe is fully transitioning into her motherly role. Even though she does ask for a kiss, she is looking for something specific: “Why can’t you kiss me as I can kiss you” (80)? Had she been looking solely for a sexual relationship, she would not have cared about the intention and emotion behind the kiss, and instead would have been glad there was a sexual interaction with Cytherea. Her hope was for a maternal kiss and not a sexual encounter with Cytherea, as she is looking for reciprocity that would be more meaningful and reflect a sense of trust and compassion similar to what a mother would have with her child. Within that conversation as well, Ms. Aldclyffe loosens as she begins to naturally come into her motherly role, providing Cytherea with advice, and wanting to know her feelings. She says, “Don’t you want to tell me who Edward is” (82) and “Do, do tell—O, it makes me so miserable! But tell—come tell me” (84), which demonstrates that she wants to know more about Cytherea and to know her deepest, most innermost feelings. Furthermore, the interest that she has in Cytherea’s love life might be confused as Roberts’s idea of jealousy rather than maternal care. This can be seen as the pair do discuss her relationship with Mr. Springrove, however, it is in an inquisitive manner rather than one of manipulation or anger. Therefore, there is a sense of hesitancy as Cytherea is not confident in Ms. Aldclyffe’s motherly role at this point of the novel. Therefore, her emotional and physical presence is bound to be more closed off than perhaps Ms. Aldclyffe would like it to

be as she has already assumed a motherly role over her. Her hesitation towards Ms. Aldclyffe could also provide reasoning to why readers often see Ms. Aldclyffe as a domineering woman, as Cytherea is more reserved until she fully trusts the guidance given to her.

In this scene it is also important to consider Ms. Aldclyffe's dialogue rather than her seemingly sexual actions. Although it is clear she shares an interest in Cytherea's life, she also has already expressed her bond in other ways than asking to be kissed: "I love you better than any man can. Do, Cythie; don't let any man stand between us" (82). She uses a nickname for Cytherea, which only further demonstrates the closeness that she desires as she skips all the usual formalities one might have with their staff. One might continue to read such a statement along the lines of critics like Catherine Neale, for whom the novel "deliberately lends expression to sexual impulse" (Neale 117), and therefore, feel as if a sexual reading of this passage is necessary in expressing Hardy's intention to push the boundaries of female sexual relations. Contrary to Neale, I suggest that it is necessary to also consider that the female relationship was not always sexual and to assume a sexual tone makes it nearly impossible to assign any other meaning to a scene like this. Without sexual pressures imposed on the scene and more specifically in her dialogue, one can see that the sense of losing Cytherea takes precedence in these lines. The loss Ms. Aldclyffe feels is not that of losing a lover, as they have never been lovers, but that of losing a child. She explicitly takes on a motherly role as she tells Cytherea to "put your hair round your mamma's neck and give me one good long kiss" (85). This is further showcased as she does not state she could pleasure Cytherea more than any man, but instead love her, which is an entirely separate sphere of a relationships as it does not require any physicality. It is also important to consider these lines in the context of Victorian maternal relations, as mothers had to give away their daughters to help manage the property of a man. Ellis believed

that mothers should be “no advocate for mere love-matches, made without any regard to worldly prudence” (Ellis 221). Therefore, as Ms. Aldclyffe and Cytherea consider her relationship to Mr. Springrove, the statement: “don’t let any man stand between us” (82) suggests that even when she is married and belongs to someone else, Ms. Aldclyffe wishes to keep their relationship intact. This clarification on the terms of their relationship to Ms. Aldclyffe is extremely important, as societal norms would separate her and her new-found daughter *manqué*. This moment of dialogue acts as an example of how Ms. Aldclyffe’s words, when separated from the reader’s pre-existing sexual speculations, are actually maternal, and display how deeply she cares for her and Cytherea’s relationship.

In addition to the direct caring nature of Ms. Aldclyffe in this scene, motherhood or at least a familial bond can be seen in the mirroring and attachment between Cytherea and herself. This lineage between the two begins in the scene where Cytherea unveils to the reader that she knows Ms. Aldclyffe was once her late father’s mistress: “She would wait till Ms. Aldclyffe referred to her acquaintanceship and attachment to Cytherea’s father in past times: then she would tell her all she knew” (80).

This moment within the scene is important for a few reasons. The first being that Cytherea acknowledges that Ms. Aldclyffe is by default a maternal figure, and furthermore, the mother figure that she had been longing to have since her own mother passed away. To come to this conclusion, one must consider her interaction with Owen prior to even meeting Ms. Aldclyffe in which she states, “We were told not to try to find out anything about her. Papa never told us her name did he” (16). From this dialogue, it is clear that she has an interest in her late father’s romantic affairs, and that Ms. Aldclyffe could fill the role of the absent mother that she longed to have. This moment is only intensified when considering Owen’s response to her

questions in which he says “But never mind her, she was not our mother” (16). Although Owen declares that Cytherea should not be interested in discovering this woman as she could never be their mother, she still feels this woman’s presence in her life. This presence closely resembles Andrew Miller’s idea of the life out of reach in his analysis of Gwendolyn Brooks’s poem *The Mother*. In this poem, Brooks reckons with the loss of her child and explains that although they are not here in body, they are in spirit: “believe me, I loved you all./ Believe me, I knew you” (Miller 126). In this instance, Brooks becomes what I will call the *mother manqué*, the mother that should have been. Cytherea feels this same motherly presence with Ms. Aldclyffe, as their relationship is foreign and not yet in reach, however still familiar. This is perhaps why she is so shocked when Ms. Aldclyffe assumes the motherly role as she had been told by Owen that their relationship would never exist and therefore, Cytherea would never again have a mother or a motherly presence in her life.

Earlier in the novel, readers are introduced to the relationship of Cytherea’s father and Ms. Aldclyffe, which leads us to see the main similarity between the pair, their Christian names. The novel clearly points out that our protagonist was named after Ms. Aldclyffe intentionally: “Her Christian name was Cytherea, and it is easy to guess why” (10). In having the same name, the pair’s bond is elevated to a new level as they become even more conscious of the interconnectivity of their lives. Therefore, Ms. Aldclyffe’s ability to become intertwined in Cytherea’s life becomes more valid and accessible as she asks Cytherea to be “my companion” (85) rather than her lady’s maid. Within this moment of the scene, the social barriers that the two had are broken down allowing for a motherly relationship to blossom. Ms. Aldclyffe states: “Put your hair round your mamma’s neck and give me one good long kiss” (85). Through the release

of the pair's shared history and similarities, she and Cytherea are allowed to let each other fill the mother/ daughter relationships that they both had always longed to have.

Why would these scenes have been useful for Tess to read? Most importantly, these scenes would have shown Tess that a motherly relationship is possible without the presence of a real mother. This realization perhaps would have allowed her to see that she could have befriended the milkmaids or Mrs. D'Urberville in order to have the support she longed to have. In befriending or confiding in women other than her actual mother, Tess would also be allowed to be her authentic self as a mother manqué does not need to fit the social constraints that a normal mother would within the Victorian era. Taking into account other similarities in the themes of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Desperate Remedies*, such as marital issues and family financial struggles, Tess many have benefitted from seeing a successful example of how a woman can rise from hardship and the manipulation of men. Although their stories are vastly different, I believe in answering the question of what novels should Tess read to fulfill a motherly guidance, *Desperate Remedies* thus far proves to be a worthy choice.

Structural Surrogacy

Another way in which Tess might be able to feel a motherly connection to *Desperate Remedies* is through what I would call the novel's *structural surrogacy*: the appearance and disappearance of Ms. Aldclyffe's character. Firstly, the novel begins with Ms. Aldclyffe and her relationship to Mr. Graye, Cytherea's father. In her character beginning the novel, she "births" or builds up the novel into fruition, setting the stage for the birth of Cytherea's story. Although one might believe her relationship to Mr. Graye is not as important as the main story, the novel's details suggest otherwise. Hardy begins the section "*October the twelfth, 1863,*" by stating "We pass over two years in order to reach the next cardinal event of the story" (10). Looking directly

at the images that are presented within the opening line of this section, it is clear that these moments are vital and irreplaceable within the context of the story. With that in mind, it is clear Hardy wished to begin the novel with monumental and life changing events. This is interesting, however, as upon initial reading one might not understand that Hardy is setting the reader with the idea that neither woman can live without the other. In other words, although Ms. Aldclyffe is not her real mother but her surrogate mother, she is still essential to the development of Cytherea's character and furthermore, her life. Therefore, the beginning of chapter one in reference to motherhood is the birth of the story which the novel is about to tell. Had Ms. Aldclyffe agreed to marry Mr. Graye, their lives might have been very different and there is a chance Cytherea would not exist or be the same person.

Although the novel does separate from Ms. Aldclyffe for some time, readers are then faced with the two siblings in financial turmoil as their father recently passed, leaving her and her brother broke. This is when the pair need the most parental guidance as not only are they financially destitute, they are also orphans. It is the pair's condition that leads Cytherea into posting for a position as a governess and then a lady's maid. In response, the novel aids the siblings by sending them a woman who could not only solve part of their economic troubles, but could also provide guidance for Cytherea in teaching her how to be a proper woman for the era. This can be seen in other novels of the time such as Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* where the return of the maternal figure, "restores her daughter to health by giving Caroline the reason to live that she has sorely lacked" (Corbett 227). Applying Brontë's motif to Hardy's novel, Ms. Aldclyffe's role as the mother manqué is only further exemplified as she is here to aid Cytherea. It has become her destiny to adopt this young woman into her life and to treat Cytherea as if she was her own daughter. In the text when she offers Cytherea the opportunity to be her companion

rather than one of her employees Ms. Aldclyffe protests: “No, no, no. You shan’t be a lady’s maid. You shall be my companion. I will get another maid” (85). Within the context of this scene it is only Cytherea’s first day working for Ms. Aldclyffe. She most likely wishes, after this interaction, to return back to Owen and forget about her employer. However, Ms. Aldclyffe is determined to keep her by her side in the hope of having her cared for and treated better than she would have been back at home.

In the context of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, this segment of the pair’s relationship would have proved useful for Tess as she too is forced to work for both her families, and her own survival. At the beginning of the book, Tess works for Mrs. D’Urberville so that her family can be able to claim kin. Later on in the novel, Tess works for Angel as a milkmaid after her family in a sense disowns her and leaves her to figure out life on her own. Had Tess read *Desperate Remedies* and furthermore these few opening chapters in particular, she would have been able to see that caring, nurturing, and motherly relationships can form from the very separate beginnings of a worker-employer relationship. This may have aided her even more when considering that she too is in economic destitution, and after forming the right connections she could have been cared for not only financially by Mrs. D’Urberville, but emotionally by the milkmaids as well. Therefore, Hardy’s previous work could be useful to Tess as the novel would be able to guide her and help her to create beneficial relationships like a mother would.

The next segment of the text that showcases the structure of the novel as maternal through Ms. Aldclyffe’s presence is when Cytherea is looking for a suitor. During this time, Ms. Aldclyffe takes a prominent role in deciding who Cytherea can match with and what qualifications and intentions they have. Although this may not seem like a structural point, the love plot is the primary focus during the second half of the novel. Ms. Aldclyffe’s presence

within the love plot is constant as she invites herself in to every conversation with or about Cytherea's possible husband. This, however, was nothing new for the Victorians as the mother's job was to make their daughters presentable to society and more importantly attract the attention of good men and the approval of their mothers. "The mother instructs her daughters how to do everything with good sense, expertness, and scrupulous nicety" (Ellis 338). Cytherea has her own entrance in to society under the supervision of Ms. Aldclyffe, as she joins a small get-together of the town's young women in which they discuss their engagements, and their experiences finding a suitor. This moment, although relatively brief in relation to other moments and themes within the novel, is important as it places Ms. Aldclyffe in a conventional motherly role. This further exemplifies her position as the mother manqué, as she has fully taken on the societal role of mother past what might be expected of an older female friend.

Her role as the conventional mother in terms of Cytherea's relationships only increases when Mr. Manston enters the text. As mentioned in the summary of the novel Mr. Manston and Cytherea do end up being married for a short period of time until it is found out that their marriage is unlawful and bigamous. When we first meet Mr. Manston however, he, similarly to Cytherea, is replying to an advertisement for a land steward for Lincoln's-Inn-Fields who must be "A gentleman of integrity," and must have "professional skill" (101). This may seem like a normal advertisement, but it is not. It continues to read: "He must be a man of superior education, unmarried, and not more than thirty years of age" (101). Many gentleman of course apply for this position, but Ms. Aldclyffe hand selects the ones she is interested in as the novel explains that she steals his name with his address from the Society of Architects during an art exhibition. One might assume that this does not matter as Messrs. Nyttleton and Tayling will choose who works for them, but Ms. Aldclyffe once again reinserts herself in to the decision:

“Now then. Mr. Nyttleton, will you make a selection, and I will add one or two” (106). Ms. Aldclyffe already has convinced herself that Mr. Manston is a perfect match for Cytherea as he comes from a good background and fits all the qualities that Ms. Aldclyffe finds admirable. Even though at this point in the novel we have not yet entered the love plot between the couple, one can already see how curated the relationship was from the beginning. This further showcases not only Ms. Aldclyffe as the mother figure as she tries to find the best match for her daughter *manqué*, but also the importance of class in finding a match for Cytherea.

Class in this particular moment in *Desperate Remedies* is a key factor in analyzing the importance of the beginning of Mr. Manston and Cytherea’s relationship. Stepping away from the structure and the plot of the novel, the motherly position of Ms. Aldclyffe is ingrained in her fixation on Cytherea’s partner being someone of a higher class. Her fixation begins prior to Mr. Manston entering the novel as she had the same intensity with Mr. Springrove when he and Cytherea were in love. In terms of class, contemporary critics believe that “Hardy cannot subdue his social criticism even when writing within an established genre which would normally require him to do so” (Taylor 183). Therefore, it may come as no surprise that class in their relationship and in the novel is always a background theme. When thinking about the novel, one could consider it to be a sensation novel, a popular genre among the Victorians. The sensation novel has a consuming interest in property, especially landed property, and often treats the country house with uncritical admiration (Taylor 183). In agreement with Taylor’s writing, another contemporary critic Lawrence Jones argues that the love plot does not follow the traditional sensation novel as Cytherea does not force either man to love her. This is surprising to Jones given the fact that Hardy, “could not totally suppress his personal mode of regard” towards women and their affections (Jones 37). She does state however, that from the outside in terms of

Cytherea and Mr. Manston's relationship, "Miss Aldclyffe," plays the role of "the evil manipulating outsider suggests a melodramatic stereotype, the tyrannical, scheming virago" (Jones 39). I believe both Taylor and Jones's ideas prove to be correct, as the manipulative role of Ms. Aldclyffe is essential in creating the class divide in Cytherea and Mr. Manston's relationship as she (the upper class) are controlling the middle class (Cytherea and Mr. Manston). The characteristics of the sensation novel within the relationship can also be seen through the ending of their marriage as Mr. Manston is discovered to have a wife even though a few chapters earlier, she was presumed to be dead. It is within Ms. Aldclyffe's creation of this forced relationship that the role of mother manqué becomes complicated. As she becomes blinded by her role in the surrogate friendship by trying to find Cytherea a suitable match that fits her own standards, she forgets that she and Cytherea are not the same—that she is the mother manqué and not the mother réelle.⁴

Another instance in which Ms. Aldclyffe's motherly presence reflects the structure of the novel is in her disappearance. After Mr. Manston and Cytherea's relations are fully terminated as a result of Ms. Aldclyffe insisting that Manston return to his wife and leaves Cytherea alone. After their separation, he attempts to kidnap her, as he realizes he has already ruined Cytherea's reputation. During Cytherea's attempted kidnapping, she is saved by Mr. Springrove, her former love interest. It is in this moment that the pair reunite, and Ms. Aldclyffe, knowing the pain and distress she has caused Cytherea, disappears completely for a few chapters. She is, however, briefly reintroduced when Cytherea and Mr. Springrove become engaged. This short encounter mirrors the real-life scenario of asking for one's hand in marriage, as Cytherea requests that she return back to the life she had with Ms. Aldclyffe as she is in her final days and has forgiven her

⁴ Mother réelle: real mother

for all the meddling that led to Cytherea's marriage. In response, Ms. Aldclyffe asks her to return tomorrow as she promises not to die overnight. As a response, "Cytherea promised to go home, and come the next morning to stay continuously" (375). One might argue that Ms. Aldclyffe's exclusion from the next chapters is a result of the end of their surrogate friendship, however this reading of her disappearance is far too shallow.

In examining why Hardy excluded Ms. Aldclyffe from the text, it is essential to investigate the role of a Victorian mother after their child has been wed. When a daughter was married off, her original family would disappear as she is now placed in and quite frankly owned by another family. As Molly Vatuna states in "Marriage in the Victorian Era," "At the time women didn't really work so they would go from living at their house with her father," as he "was the person that financially supported her," therefore once she was wed, a young woman was expected to leave the family and the household to be dependent on her husband as she was for her father. Of course, this varies from class to class as those of a higher stature remained in contact with their families, while those of a lower did not. Referring back to Hardy's later writing in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, this can be seen both when she marries Angel and then Alec near the end of the novel, as she only returns to see her family when her marriage is practically terminated. In relation to *Desperate Remedies*, Ms. Aldclyffe's exclusion from the story is not surprising as Cytherea is a part of a lower class, suggesting that she too must abandon her previous life prior to marriage. This is exemplified within the text as Ms. Aldclyffe tells Cytherea that if she chooses to return she must return to the estate tomorrow. On Cytherea's arrival the next day, she and readers alike learn that Ms. Aldclyffe has passed away overnight. Therefore, her death at the end of the novel suggests that Cytherea must move on from childhood and enter society as a woman—the role of the mother has been completed.

The structural surrogacy that the novel provides would aid Tess as it exemplifies the surrogate friendships that could replace her own missing relationship with her mother. The structure of *Desperate Remedies* also provides an answer to Hardy's question of mother versus novel, as it illustrates directly how a novel can become a mother through the disappearance of characters that follows a typical social model of motherhood. Perhaps the novel would also provide Tess with an understanding of her real mother's actions, and why she has done what she has done that has left Tess feeling abandoned and uncared for. As Ms. Aldclyffe's actions may also reflect similar choices to that of her mother's, showing that even the mother manqué preforms the same actions and traits as a real Victorian mother would have.

Conclusion

Motherhood is an essential theme within *Desperate Remedies*, as the relationship between Ms. Aldclyffe and Cytherea is one that cannot be described as anything but familial. Considering Ms. Aldclyffe is much older than Cytherea, the relationship follows a pattern that is most similar to a mother and daughter—creating a surrogate friendship between the pair. This friendship blossoms as the novel progresses considering the once strangers become very close, especially as they establish a connection that reaches far beyond what would have been appropriate for a lady's maid and her mistress. Of course, the pair agree that Cytherea can no longer hold this position and therefore, she becomes a companion instead. These maternal moments throughout the pair's relationship are exemplified through their one-on-one interactions. An example of these interactions is their initial meeting in which Ms. Aldclyffe already suggests a desire to get closer to the young woman and wanting her within her home. Another scene in which we can see the pair's closeness is through the night scene in which the pair discloses personal information and spend the night soothing each other from the ill feeling

of Ms. Aldclyffe's father's death, and the less permanent loss of Mr. Springrove and Owen. Although traditionally reviews both of the Victorian era and today have stated that their reading of these scenes is one of a sexual and perverse nature, the novel directly points to the pair's relationship being maternal as Ms. Aldclyffe assumes the role of Cytherea's "mamma" (85).

Structurally, the novel also becomes a mother as Ms. Aldclyffe follows a similar progression to a natural mother in terms of when she is a part and not a part of Cytherea's life. This progression begins with the "birth" of her and Cytherea's relationship in which Ms. Aldclyffe decides to take the young woman under her wing. This includes teaching her etiquette of the higher class, finding suitors, and also introducing her to other young women in society. Ms. Aldclyffe then leaves the spotlight of the novel when she is no longer needed as Cytherea is a married woman. She does however, reemerge when Cytherea is in trouble and needs help. Once Mr. Manston has died and Mr. Springrove has professed his love, the novel returns back to its joyful tone in which once again a mother is not needed as Cytherea is protected. This is when Ms. Aldclyffe passes away from a strange illness that readers were never aware of. This mysterious illness, I believe, is symbolic of Cytherea being grown as Ms. Aldclyffe would have become a hindrance or an "illness" to Cytherea's adult life.

The clarity of motherhood in this novel I believe would have been best suited for Tess, as she would have been able to see how one who had no mother was able to thrive and find not only someone to fill this role, but love along the way. This is pertinent to Tess as she struggles in both of these areas considering her marriage with Angel similarly to that of Cytherea and Mr. Manston is short lived and in different respects unlawful. Therefore, *Desperate Remedies* would have been able to speak to her most directly as Cytherea faces similar emotions within the same era of British history. With this in mind, I raise the question, now that Tess has her novel, does

she listen to the motherly advice it provides, or does the novel leave her just as lonely as she previously felt?

CURTAIN-UP: MATERNAL ROLE-PLAYING IN MOORE'S *A MUMMER'S WIFE*

The grotesque mixture of prose and poetry both equally false, used to enchant Kate, and she always fancied that had she been the heroine of the book she would have acted in the same way.

—George Moore, *A Mummer's Wife*, 42

Introduction

In George Moore's novel *A Mummer's Wife* (1885), the protagonist Kate Ede expresses, like Tess Durbeyfield in Hardy's novel, a passion for sentimental literature, especially chivalric romances and sensation novels, and the possible relationships they provide. Kate is in some sense worse off than Tess: her mother was constantly absent in order to provide for her family, working in the difficult conditions of the potteries; her father was never in the picture. Kate's mother's profession indicates to us that she too was a part of the English working class, a category of society not represented in the novels Kate reads; in this reality, survival rather than courtship and romantic love is the main concern. Unlike Tess, who claims that novels could be a surrogate for an ineffective (or absent) maternal figure, Kate uses novels as an escape from the conditions of her childhood, and later on from her unhappy marriage and challenging economic conditions. She uses the novels that she reads in order to imagine a world beyond herself in which the mystical, as well as the chivalric hero exists. Kate's deep love for these novels leaves her feeling as if she too is entitled to love, a savior, and a magical relationship.

However, these works leave Kate unprepared for the reality she actually lives: they fail to provide examples of familial or maternal relationships and rather prioritize the love plot versus what happens post "Happily Ever After." With the Victorian expectation that young women will become mothers as Sarah Ellis's handbooks suggest, the expectation for Kate and all other young women at the time was for her to be interested in the maternal, to want to be a mother. Her lack

of interest in maternal qualities and relationships as well as her motherless upbringing suggests that once she become a wife, and further a mother, she must create her own example of motherhood to guide her. Without any good example of a familial or maternal structure, either in the real world or in her reading, how does Kate understand what being a mother entails? To what extent does being a maternal figure for Kate involve playing a role, that is, performing motherhood and its expectations without any meaningful role model? The lack of maternal representation in the novel she reads, and subsequently Kate's lack of knowledge on the expectations of a motherly role raises the question: if the novels she reads do not feature maternal figures, can we expect her to be a good mother or understand what role she must play? Further, does her interest in the role of lover rather than mother make her character, and her presentation of motherhood, *performative*, given that she must make up her own expectations and definitions of motherhood?

In the previous chapter, I explored the idea of the *surrogate friendship* and the *mother manqué* in Thomas Hardy's *Desperate Remedies*. Cytherea needed a motherly figure, I argued, and Ms. Aldclyffe played the role by guiding the younger woman through the novel. In Hardy, the performance of motherhood was a comfort to both characters. But such role-playing does not produce the same effects for everyone. In this chapter, I will explore how Moore's protagonist, although at one point briefly a mother, never fully reaches complete motherhood or any type of formal surrogacy. By delving into Kate's attempts at creating maternal relationships within *A Mummer's Wife* to explore how much her behavior was authentic, I argue she attempts to *play the role of mother* in her two marriages, with various repercussions. In her first marriage to asthmatic invalid Ralph Ede, which is described as miserable and unhappy, we see a double casting of Kate as both wife and mother: she can interchangeably play one or other role, but not

both. Her relationship towards being the mother or being a maternal figure can be described by what I call *communal surrogacy*—having one of multiple individuals play the role of the mother. Unlike in Hardy’s novel, none of the women in this section of the plot, mainly Kate and her mother-in-law, actually want to be the woman of the house. Mrs. Ede, whom we could describe as Kate’s maternal understudy, constantly tries to bring her religious values into her daughter-in-law’s home, without realizing she is overstepping and taking on the motherly role. On the other hand, Kate also has to be frequently reminded that she is the woman of the household—neglecting her obligations to their home, business, and most importantly her husband, who suffers from illness the entirety of the novel. During her second relationship, however, Kate takes on another role, that of a lover to a traveling mummer who becomes her second husband.⁵ She also becomes literally a mother. This arguably leads to Kate becoming a *one-woman show*, playing the roles of lover, mother, and mummer. However, this situation is shown to be untenable: her child passes away very shortly after her birth and Kate is expected to once again be the composed, nurturing wife she once was prior to this extreme loss. Her multiple character role-playing collapses into fits of drunkenness and madness, to the point where she can’t play any role at all, in reality or in the theater (where she suffers from stage fright).

In *A Mummer’s Wife*, Moore provides a depiction of Kate that shows how her behavior is related to her social class and the demands of the family. She lives in the sphere of a demi-monde where her social position reflects the necessity for regulation, and the inference that her society will be one that indulges in rule breaking and immoral conduct. According to critic D.A. Miller, she experiences the family as an “institutional space in which power is violently exercised on collectivized subjects.” Therefore, she tries to break out of this space in order to have a family

⁵ Mummer: An actor

that is “a space of ‘liberal society,’ generally determined as a free, private, and individual domain,” as she does not want a marriage of entrapment (Miller 58). The double casting of marriage provides a more accurate narrative of the Ede household, and of Kate’s social and external influences, as she too is double cast into her societal roles. Moreover, Miller’s definition of the family shows that her character must be held back or restrained as she is forced into being a wife, and a mother, positions she is not content in. The novel captures these different perspectives of Kate in such a manner that one can fully understand what it meant to be a woman in this era and what challenges an expecting mother might have. Kate’s depiction only gains clarity through pursuing a multitude of roles not only in her professional life—seamstress, and mummer—but through her personal life as a mother as well. Through the taking up of these roles, the expectations that were placed upon women and Kate specifically, raises the question whether motherhood by Victorian expectations can be naturally acquired, or if it requires women such as Kate to be learned and knowledgeable about the expectations of motherhood in order to be able to perform the role of a mother?

A Wife or a Lover?

The expectations required for young women in the 19th century to engage with the maternal, and the roles that they must play to achieve them are clearly demonstrated in Kate’s first marriage as she is forced to fully commit to the composite role of wives and mothers. Ralph and his illness, require Kate to be double cast as both wife/mother then lover, as she must separate her desires in order to care for him and their business leaving her unhappy, and unfulfilled. Kate—having been forced into these roles—is discontented as she would rather have love than be in a loveless marriage. Her marriage, however, is far from the idyllic love matches of the chivalric romance and sensation novels that Kate so often reads. Rather, their relationship

is loveless: “he often rendered her life miserable, wellnigh unbearable, by small vices, faults that defy definition, unending selfishness and unceasing irritability” (Moore 8). This type of union, according to Victorian conduct-book author Sarah Stickney Ellis, was the worst-case scenario in which the pair “enter into a heartless, joyless alliance” (219). For these reasons, I argue that Kate must already play the role of the wife and mother as her emotions and continuation in this union are performative.

The necessity for Kate to play the mother, whether that be effectively or not, only intensifies through what I will describe as section one of the novel, which spans from the beginning of the text up until she leaves her spouse. The maternal nature of Kate’s relationships in section one is constructed in two ways. The first is a short-lived *surrogate friendship* between her and two of her young employees, Lizzie and Annie. The second is the nursing required for her husband as he is constantly ill and wheezing due to his asthma. To begin, the two ladies Lizzie and Annie are only seen a few times. Through their minor appearances it may come as no surprise that the reader learns relatively little about these women personally except for their ages. Moore only refers to them as “children” (19), which reveals much about the maternal relationship Kate has with them. The reader is introduced to the idea that these two girls and Kate have what I refer to in Chapter One as a *surrogate friendship*. Unlike the friendship in *Desperate Remedies*, partly due to the young ages of these girls, their relationship with Kate functions slightly differently and may best reflect one that a governess might have with her pupils. Although short lived, the relationship makes clear that Kate cares for these two young women in a fashion that is compassionate and loving, as a mother would, as she engages with both Annie and Lizzie on a very personal note. An example of this is knowing their personal likings and showing them the opera posters on their walks past Mr. Lennox’s theater in which

“Lizzie preferred exciting scenes of murder and arson, while Annie was moved more by leavetakings and declarations of unalterable affection,” both of which Kate enjoys in her own reading (19). Instead of letting the two bicker or sit in silence, Kate engages with their interests and their conversation: “Well, dears, is it a robber or a sweetheart” (19)? It is moments such as these that present the reader with the idea that Kate longs for the maternal, but is not in the position to be an actual mother due to her relationship with her husband.

The reprise of the maternal role is present, second, through Kate’s nurturing and caretaker responsibilities towards Ralph, which are seen right at the beginning in Moore’s initial labeling of his character as “the patient” (1). By calling him the patient rather than using his name, Moore ensures that our first encounter with the character is one of hostility and coldness: “the patient” feels sterile and reinforces that Ralph cannot take care of himself or his family. Moore not only creates the scene of this sickly man, but also fills the reader’s mind with questions regarding Kate’s well-being, and that of her marriage. This raises the question, can she be a mother or the mother of the house, when her focus must be spent on filling in for her partner? In short, the answer is perhaps. If we take the position that Ralph himself is playing the role of the child, then she must take on the role of the mother as she must nurture him to health. In this instance in which Kate must take care of Ralph, referring to the advice of Sarah Ellis is helpful as she examines the role of illness in motherhood as she explains:

Occasionally, with such children the excessive excitement under which they labour, assumes the character of fever, and illness. The doctor is then sent for. Medicines disguised in every possible way, and powders wrapped up in every imaginable confection, are administered; and as the patient recovers, the old habits by degrees are resumed (228).

In Ellis's popular handbook, the word "patient" is only ever used to refer to children. In assuming Ralph plays the role of the child, Kate must provide for him and tend to him as a mother would. As seen in both Moore's work and in the *Mothers of England*, Kate must spend all of her available time nursing her husband back to health so he can continue with his old habits. However, his health never returns to a state of stability. Even in his final mention in the text, he is described as still "coughing violently" (444) and "wheezing," that continuously "grew thicker in sound" (451). Not only does his constant illness throughout the book demonstrate both why Kate must play the role of mother temporarily, but it also prevents her from being a mother as she is occupied with his care and filling in his place for their business.

Kate works both day and night sewing and hemming and tending to Mr. Lennox, the mummer lodging in her home. The lack of help or personal attention from her husband draws her further away from wanting to be married to Ralph. Her feeling becomes so strong that she felt "longing to get out of her husband's sight" (58), as she no longer is attracted to him, nor can she bear the burden of his illness. In providing for the family physically and economically (she runs their business), Kate takes on the role not only of the mother, but also of the father. In Julie-Marie Strange's work on fatherhood and providing for family in working-class families in the late Victorian period, she explains that "the task of parenting, that is, feeding, nurturing and training, fell to women and were associated with 'mothering,'" whereas "father practices were grounded in earning sufficient wages to support the family economy" (1008). It is clear that Kate is acting in both roles throughout the entirety of section one. Although I would not make the claim that Victorian women were expected to fulfill every role within the home (such as tending to domestic economy), I will argue that it is not the typical description we receive through novels as many include a male dominant character that takes charge of all finances such as Mr. Darcy in

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Moore makes it clear that Kate is doing everything by herself, including keeping their livelihoods intact, and therefore cannot be a traditional "mother" as she must focus on much more than just nurturing her husband.

While Kate loses interest in her familial duties and those she takes on in her husband's absence, she takes on a new role and is double cast as the lover. The double casting of Kate as the lover and as the mother provides a starkly contrasting look at the desires of women versus their realities. As previously mentioned, Kate is a reader specifically of the chivalric romance genre in which there is no story past the 'happily ever after.' This, however, is in its own way problematic. Catherine M. Roach explains that,

Prior to the late eighteenth century, notions of marriage tended to be pragmatically based on economic and political considerations of money, resources, power, and alliances. The sentimental and passionate love-based-marriage stood in radical contrast to this older sense. Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the romantic love match came to dominate as the ideal for marriage in Western culture (3).

Roach's work elaborates that marriage was once primarily an economic endeavor. Referring back to the writing of Ellis, however, it is clear that marriages based solely in economic prosperity, although not what many wanted out of their marriage, still existed in the 19th century, especially among the lower and working classes. Kate and Ralph's marriage is a clear example of this as marrying Ralph provided economic stability through his business. Therefore, I would qualify Roach's point: I would argue that although the "love match" was the ideal type of union in the Victorian era, it was mainly attained by those who could afford it, unlike Moore's protagonist and her (two) love interests.

A pivotal moment in which readers see the importance of the love match to Kate is in her excursion to the pottery with Mr. Lennox. This setting, in the greater context of England, was one of hardship as the potteries became a place of experimentation especially when Chinese blue and white china became popular. As Paul and Brenda Cohen explain, the process of creating glazes and other materials was still relatively unknown in the 19th century. Additionally, they explain that large amounts of coal were used in the production process. They estimate the number was close to “15 tons per over for each firing,” meaning that “the air was very polluted. A local saying went, “it was a fine day if you could see the other side of the road.” (142). The text itself continues this saying with its own description of the town surrounding Stoke’s potteries: “All was red brick blazing under a blue sky without a cloud in it; the red brick that turns to purple; and all the roofs were scarletred brick and scarlet tiles, and not a tree anywhere” (34). The setting of this rather intimate scene is, then, one of hard labor and unpleasant memories, as Kate’s mother would have had to subject herself to these conditions every single day. The scene itself however, needs to be broken up into three parts: the first starting when Mr. Lennox initially approaches Kate alone, the second when he approaches her, and the third beginning after the plate drops and Kate is forced to reckon with their actions.

To begin, the first scene can be interpreted as Kate feeling desirable and wanting Mr. Lennox’s attention. As the pair strayed away from their tour group, Lennox took advantage of the occasion to whisper into her ears that she was far too pretty a woman for an asthmatic husband; and, encouraged by her blushes, he even hazarded a few coarse jokes anent the poor husband's deficiencies. How could a man kiss if he couldn't breathe, for if there was a time when breath was essential, according to him, it was when four lips meet. No one had ever spoken to her in this way before, and had she

known how to do so she would have resented his familiarities. Once their hands met. The contact caused her a thrill; she put aside the unbaked plate they were examining and said: “We'd better make haste or we shall lose them.” (39).

Although whether this sexual tension is consensual is up for interpretation, in these moments it is clear through her reflections of her unhappiness with Ralph that Kate is inviting the attention of Mr. Lennox with open arms. She does however have her reservations about getting so close to a man she barely knows as she quickly makes sure the pair exits the scene in order for the new one to start. In beginning the declaration of his love that will span across all three scenes of the potteries act, Lennox carefully mentions Ralph and Kate's marriage, further alluding to the pair's cold, patient-like relationship as he states that breath is necessary, and Kate was “far too pretty a woman for an asthmatic husband” (73). Lennox's commentary on asthma, however, does not showcase a romantic connotation, but rather separates the pair even further as their upbringings are distinctly different. Although Lennox's remarks may be accurate, asthma for those of Kate's social class was almost impossible to avoid due to industrial labor such as working in the potteries that resulted in mass inhalation of fumes, smoke, and coal particles that often resulted in asthma. By stating that Kate is too pretty to be with an asthmatic, Lennox suggests that she is too pretty to be within her social class, to work as her mother did, her husband does, and his family did. This, in turn, requires Ralph to become the chivalric character who will lead her into a different social class than the one she is currently stuck in—he will no longer face the fear of incapacitating illness.

The second scene of the potteries act is one that is explicitly forceful as Lennox pressures Kate into romantic acts without her consent. This pressure is seen as Moore states Kate was “summoning up all her strength she strove to get away, but that moment, happening to tread on

her skirt, her feet slipped. He made a desperate effort to sustain her” (39). The roles have changed rather quickly as Lennox is no longer the lover but the controller, and Kate is also no longer the lover but the victim of his desires. This scene presents an interesting dynamic between the pair in which Lennox will constantly control Kate and her autonomy and freedom. She is no longer an individual but a prop. Although she tries numerous times to avoid his advances by “twisting her face away” (39), the necessity for the scene to be a romantic one pressures Kate into fully committing to these roles of the oppressor and the oppressed.

Prior to the pair exiting from the potteries, it is mandatory as in all romance novels for the pair to make up, or rather for Kate to once again desire his affection. After Lennox forces himself on Kate without success, a dinner set began to break as shards of ceramic filled the room as if they were rose petals scattered along the floor. In this moment of catastrophe, “taking Kate's arm, he hobbled out of the place. The suddenness and excitement of the accident had for the moment quenched her angry feelings, and, overwhelmed with pity for the poor wounded hand, she thought of nothing but getting him to a doctor” (40). Even after having been forcibly pressed up against, Kate has already dispelled her feelings of anger or belittlement and focuses once again on playing the best lover imaginable as she cares for Lennox prior to thinking about herself. Although the previous scene seemed non-consensual, the actions and reactions of Kate after the incident perhaps indicate otherwise as the shattering glass is a direct reference to the breaking of the walls between them, allowing the pair to get closer both on a consensual emotional level and unconsensually in physical way. It is once the plates shatter that Kate distinctly leaves behind the life of the wife and fully commits herself to the role of a lover: “He was, in a word, human, and this attracted all that was human in her” (40).

One cannot deny Kate's yearning for a love match—Mr. Lennox, whom she is in love with, and therefore believes she will have a better relationship than with her current undesirable spouse. In the role of the lover Kate is swept away from her home, work, and duties by indulging in her fantasies, leaving her responsibilities mainly to her mother-in-law and abandoning her maternal role. This is best demonstrated as the maternal character at the beginning of the novel—Kate—has shifted to her mother-in-law, as Kate is in the role of the lover often out of the house. When she returns to the house, she would find that “Her husband wheezed on the sofa, her mother-in-law read the Bible” (143). Her disappearance from the role of the mother also occurs in an internal, mental field: Kate is pre-occupied thinking about her unhappiness and her desire for a love match with Mr. Lennox that would leave her, “awake for hours, tossing restlessly, her brain whirling” (142). The state of entrancement she is in shows her commitment to the role of lover, and not to that of the mother, as the “value of,” the chivalric, love match “story lies in the extent to which it is held to be true by people who shape their lives around that story, whether consciously or unconsciously” (Roach 4). This entrancement is a danger to Kate as she completely believes the truth of these stories, and proves to be further detrimental to Kate's position as the mother in section one as they take up the space that maternal values such as religion—a very important subject to Mrs. Ede—should hold. In Kate's eyes these novels have taught her everything she needs to know while “religion taught her nothing, inspired her with nothing, could influence her in little,” however unlike playing the role of the lover, “she was not strong nor great, nor was she conscious of any deep feeling that if she acted otherwise than she would be living an unworthy life” (40). In terms of Kate's commitment to motherhood, if religion, tales of marriage, or her husband's well-being no longer interest her, could she be considered a good mother or a mother at all? Her double casting as wife/mother and lover in

section one only prove to show that these two characters are not doppelgangers as we would perhaps believe. Rather they show the duality of a woman—her desires versus her duty, her happiness versus her commitment, her naiveté versus her current situation—a woman in the 19th century.

A Lover or a Mummer?

Section two of this novel, unlike that of section one, is far less complicated emotionally for Kate as she has retired momentarily from the role of mother in order to follow her lover Mr. Lennox and embark on to new roles such as becoming a mummer herself. Section two can be defined as the moments in which Kate only plays the part of the lover and is not one of the many understudies for the role of mother as she was earlier. This era starts when Kate chooses to leave her husband completely and run away with Mr. Lennox up until his proposal. In these moments, Kate is able to play the part she had been wanting to play since her childhood when she first started reading her novels of knights, princesses, and romance. She is now able to fully indulge in not only the role but the feelings she had been longing for throughout her first marriage.

Kate's transition into her new role—the lover of Mr. Lennox—although liberating does require her to play a role with two personas, for example, Shakespeare's *Richard III*. In the play, the audience is allowed to see both his inner cruelty and manipulation, as well as his outer performance in which he manifests compassion from other characters, and from the audience as well. In having both internal and external performances presented, the audience is allowed to see all parts of his character, similarly to how Kate's role-playing allow us to see all of the facets of her character. The role of the lover is her outer performance, as she receives the attention and love she believes she is entitled to as both a woman and an actress. Internally, however, we see a very different narrative as she becomes cognizant that she is falling into the role of a fallen

woman. As Nina Auerbach explains, these women in the Victorian period were considered “outcast” and came “to embody everything in womanhood that was dangerously, tragically, and triumphantly beyond social boundaries” (150), such as single mothers, prostitutes, and all those who did not follow social conventions traditionally placed on women. Kate, although not a single mother or a sex worker, still falls within the definition of a fallen woman: becoming a mummer makes her an outcast as mumming was considered to be an immoral, unholy profession (as seen by Ms. Ede’s commentary and distaste for Mr. Lennox). It is in this section that Kate fully indulges in the demi-monde, as she has no desire to conform to social normality or be viewed through the lens of the traditional maternal Victorian woman.

Her ability to leave her spouse, even though he did not qualify for any of the reasons that the Victorians considered viable for separation or divorce such as adultery, also shows Kate’s indulgence of the demi-monde and the rejection of the *monde régulier*.⁶ It however is still interesting that Kate does not try to engage in the divorce process or try to love Ralph especially as Moore states that “She had always complied with the ordinances of the marriage state” (89).⁷ Therefore, her quick decision to leave Ralph can be seen as a continuation of her love of fantasy, to be swept away by a knight in shining armor—Mr. Lennox—rather than confront her actual marriage. Kate’s immorality towards her husband is the reason that, as Margret Wood remarks, the economic costs of divorce were high and unattainable to the poor. She further explains that the economic limiters of divorce were purposefully put in place in order to secure marriages among the lower classes as she elaborates that it was a “considerable concern that making

⁶ *Monde régulier*: the normal world.

⁷ As law and human rights scholar M.D.A Freeman explains, “When Victoria came to the throne, there were very few divorces” (549); Margret Wood notes that “it was essentially impossible to obtain a divorce, no matter how bad the marriage or how cruel one’s husband. A couple could only be divorced by the passage of a private act through Parliament—remedy available only to the very wealthy.”

divorce easy for the lower classes would lead to unbridled immorality.” Therefore, not only does Kate not attain a divorce, and thereby participate in the perception of immorality among the lower classes, but she abandons a real (and legally sanctioned) relationship. In abandoning her marriage she lost everything, not only metaphorically in terms of a stable relationship, but literally as well as she was not entitled to any of her possessions that she had left in order to be a part of a performative relationship that followed the chivalric romances she grew up reading.

While Kate plays the role of the lover, she simultaneously becomes a real mummer as she joins Mr. Lennox’s theater company. Due to her role as the lover that required a larger amount of performance than the role of wife, her performative nature is exemplified by becoming a mummer as it allows her to further indulge in the deviancy of the demi-monde. As Michael R. Booth explains,

The Victorian stage provided economic opportunities for women not available elsewhere, especially in the period before they began in large numbers to enter vocations previously reserved for men, such as office work and retail trades (112).

The female mummer then was allowed not only a social freedom of living within the shadows of the demi-monde, but also the economic freedom in which she has autonomy of her finances. As the lover, Kate has this ability to have her own pay, create her own rules, and not be legally and financially bound to any man. It is important to note, however, that we must not confuse her financial freedom with identifying Mr. Lennox as transgressive or feminist. Booth continues: “An actress did not compete with an actor for the same job, so was no threat to him economically” (112). The lack of competition within this world, and the clear distinction between lover and partner is perhaps what allows Kate the freedom of becoming a mummer as Mr. Lennox suggests “it would be as well for her to learn a little music” (200), therefore

allowing her to explore life outside the domestic sphere. Mr. Lennox making this choice for Kate becomes a pivotal moment within not only her life, but in the relationship they share as she is able to transform into what Mr. Lennox calls “A quick-change artist” (203), and therefore Kate’s shapeshifting abilities are directly pointed out to readers. Although encouraged by Mr. Lennox to begin learning music and joining the theater, it is made clear that Kate wasn’t interested in supporting Mr. Lennox, but in supporting herself, her freedom, and her defiance towards being a typical mother of England.

The performative nature of the theater and Kate, however, do not manifest themselves in a typical way, as even in her success as a mummer she is only focused on the opinion of Mr. Lennox. This suggests that she does not become a mummer merely to defy society or her old position but to please Mr. Lennox. When beginning her career, there is a small scene in which Kate asks him if he is satisfied with her performance and implicitly her company to which he replies:

“Satisfied with you? replied the big man, turning towards her in his kind unctuous way, ‘I should think so: you looked lovely, and your voice was heard above everybody’s. I wish you’d heard what Montgomery said. I’ll give you a line to speak when you’ve got a bit of confidence. You’re a bit timid, that’s all.’ And delighted Kate listened to Dick who had begun to sketch out a career for her. Her voice, he said, would improve” (225).

This scene, although at the very beginning of Kate’s short-lived career as a mummer, is the most indicative part of section two as we are allowed to see the relationship she has with Mr. Lennox past their sexual chemistry. In Kate asking for a review of her acting, the only recently created commonality within the pair’s relationship, wanting to please Mr. Lennox seems to be the only thing she cares about. His response is one that she sees through rose-colored glasses, as she is

thrilled he sees a future for her career and subsequently for her. Through explicit reading, however, the tone and reaction of Mr. Lennox is rather sub-par as he says “I should think so” (225) rather than yes implying that he was, in fact, not sure of his satisfaction. Secondly, he insults her abilities as he calls her timid rather than complimenting her, and states not that her voice was beautiful, but that it was merely “heard above everybody’s” (225). This indicates that she is not the best but the loudest, and with practice would “improve” (225). Additionally, the freedom that Kate believed she was receiving through running away into the demi-monde, is squashed as her career is controlled by his view of her success. Through this dialogue, the reader develops a level of intimacy with Kate that allows us to understand that the patriarchy still exists in the demi-monde and is an essential part of their relationship as she wants to please Mr. Lennox. Moreover, she wishes to be enough, to be desirable, to have a long-lasting relationship in which she satisfies him completely. In short, Kate wants to be the woman of his life and his dreams, she wants to be his love match—the mother to his home.

One may ask, why does Kate wish to reprise the role she just left? The answer requires us to reflect upon the romantic scene between the pair at the pottery. As previously said, this location was key in her early life as her mother was a potter. This twists Kate’s perception of the world and of Mr. Lennox as she realizes he will be her “prince charming.” He gives her companionship and in a way comfort in the location of her childhood trauma. By doing so, he rewrites the scene filled with his forcible actions into a display of heroism as saves her from the harshness of the pottery and vows his love to her. Although to modern audiences this scene can be read as violent and non-consensual, it is important to consider that Kate wanted a man like those in her novels who often were forceful and on a mission to save their damsel in distress. Moreover, she states that she would, “had she been the heroine of the book,” “have acted in the

same way” (42) as those damsels who simply expect the actions of the man who has saved them, without questioning their actions or moral compass. In having a direct comparison to the themes and scenes of the novels she grew up with the stark and alarming actions of Mr. Lennox become overshadowed by her desire to be a love-matched heroine. Therefore, Kate sees Mr. Lennox not only as a lover, but in these moments as her soulmate which is only intensified by discussions of her future career (225), that suggest a longevity within their relationship—something that she desires greatly.

As their romance continues, the question of marriage begins to loom over both of their heads, as Kate makes it clear she is ready for this commitment to Mr. Lennox. Even though marriage is what Kate desires, Mr. Lennox does not. This quickly leads Kate to anger, as she becomes gradually more upset that she has uprooted her life for a man who does not care to be legally bound to her. This frustration is seen best when the pair discusses marriage and the religious connotations it provides. Kate yells, “If you did seduce me, if you did drag me away from my peaceful home, if you did make a travelling actress of me, you might at least refrain from insulting my religion” (268). The argument Kate poses of religion is an important one to marriage as God is the facilitator of all unions in the Victorian mindset. As Sarah Ellis explains:

It is the religion of Christ Jesus—a religion which bind by gratitude and love: and are not gratitude and love two of the great elements of her spiritual existence? It is a religion which invites her to believe and trust: and is it not her nature to do both? It is a religion which proposes to her a firm support upon which she may lean with safety (343).

Ellis here provides the argument that religion allows women to see what is needed for their lives and for their marriages, such as love, gratitude, trust, and support. These key elements that Ellis states, I argue, are the same that Kate intends to share with Mr. Lennox. As he insults her

religion, he insults the things that religion provides—the same things that are necessary in marriage. It is the religious qualities of marriage that Ellis examines that are what Kate wants and are what Mr. Lennox is afraid of. His fears of these qualities manifest themselves a few lines earlier as Mr. Lennox suggests they be married in London which was months away—which evidently irritates Kate as she is ready to be married. Nonetheless, Mr. Lennox proposes soon after, as he apologizes by stating: “ Oh, my darling, I’m so sorry; you will forgive me, won’t you,” as he understands how he has indirectly stated his oppositions to marriage and further to marrying her.

A Mum or a Mummer?

In the third and shortest section of the novel—what I will explain as the conflict between Mum versus Mummer—Kate goes through a variety of changes (such as becoming a literal mother) that change her life greatly. Prior to her child’s birth, however, the newly married couple—Mr. Lennox and Kate—go through economic destitution as the theater company they both worked for becomes bankrupt and therefore the actors separate. In an attempt to keep themselves afloat, the couple creates their own theater company, The Constellation Company, that would begin in Lancashire. This business venture sadly did not last, and all existing theater companies in the area were already filled. Therefore, Kate and Lennox sell all their things and head to Manchester in hopes of a better life, or at least work.

Not even in the first few hours in Manchester does the first major event in this section begin—Kate gives birth. It is unclear whether the couple knew Kate was pregnant, as they both seemed surprised by the child’s arrival, and Kate’s pregnancy had not been mentioned until their baby’s delivery. Even given their seeming lack of knowledge, the pair’s unreadiness is astounding. Moore remarks: “There were a thousand things that would have to be paid for—the

baby's clothes, the cradle...the thought struck him that there might be a funeral to pay for as well as a birth" (319). As Mr. Lennox's shares his own mental unpreparedness as well as the lack actual preparedness of the pair, it raises the question whether either of them were ready to have a baby? Further, whether the pair wanted a baby without understanding what it requires in economic cost, and in love and attention. As Kate heals, her attachment for her child grows as it is explained: "These days were the best of her life. She felt more at peace with the world, she placed more confidence in her husband than she had ever done before" (327). Although Kate is undoubtedly happier and more maternal than before, she still struggles with taking care of the child which is perhaps due to the incapability of the novels she reads to teach her these things.

The novels that Kate read during her childhood once again play a large role within the issues she has being a mother. These chivalric romances or even the sensation novel would not have taught Kate how to be a mother. Of course, the love she has towards her baby is a natural instinct which comes on its own, however knowing how to take care of a child is something that must be learned hence the reason for conduct books such as Sarah Ellis's *Mothers of England*. Kate's issues with caring for the baby girl start relatively early in her life, as Kate "insisted on suckling her infant although expressly forbidden to do so by the doctor" (327). Additionally, Kate was given a multitude of instructions by the nurse on how to care for the child to ensure its survival such as when to bathe her and feed her. Kate although devoted constantly failed to keep to the schedule and regimen the nurse provided as when feeding the child "Sometimes she put too much water in the milk, sometimes too little" (330). Even when given direct instructions, she failed to follow them and made the healthy baby a sickly one. Her lack of knowledge for what a healthy baby even was also made her caring for it more difficult as she once "did not hear it for hours; she did not know she had forgotten to warm its milk, and the poor little thing was

shivering with cold pain. And when at last she awoke, and went over to the cot trying to collect her drink-laden thoughts, the little legs were drawn up, the face was like ivory, and a long thin wail issued from the colorless lips” (330). It is with these frequent occurrences of neglect that the child slowly dies, and Kate no longer has the maternal love she previously had. It is with the lack of regard, care, and understanding for her child and how to raise her that Kate takes away the only thing that was making her happy—actual motherhood.

Kate’s role as the mother in this section is also contrasted with her role as the mummer, as she acts not only as the mother, but also reminisces on her career as a mummer. As Kate indulges in her new role as a mother, she and Mr. Lennox discuss her return to the stage several times as he pushes Kate to begin working as well. In response, Kate urges that in her current state, having given birth a few weeks prior, that the roles she would be offered would not compare to the leading roles she once had—alluding to her failure as an actress, something she believes has not yet happened. As she remarks that “she would like to return to the stage in a leading part, but not in any of the parts she had already played in, but something new” (329), she alludes to her self-image of being successful. In other words, her previous success as a mummer shapes her idea that she is successfully playing the mother, and further could return to the stage in lead roles straight away. This false confidence not only affects her return to the stage once her child dies, but also affects the way she cares for her child begging the question how can she improve as a mother when she is clouded by a success that does not currently exist?

Kate’s commitment to being a mummer continues after her child’s death as she quickly desires to return to the stage. It has not even been a full day after her child’s funeral that she and Mr. Lennox discuss her returning to work as she says “Oh tomorrow night! It would be dreadful to act so soon after my poor baby’s death, wouldn’t it” (339). However, when at the theater the

next day, Moore remarks that: “the engagement relieved the Lennoxes for the time being of their embarrassments” (340), and that they both took roles in respective theater pieces. Although it is undeniable that Kate was previously a mummer and was returning to work as many contemporary mothers would do after their maternity leave, her necessity to return to the stage so quickly after she child’s death indicates that she has gone from one role to another without any thought. This suggests that she was not as deeply attached to being a mother contrary to her descriptions. Without the ability to play the role of the mother, Kate desires to return to the stage to play another role, as she has been casted the entire play.

Soon after her return to the stage however, Kate grows tired of working when she cannot see her husband, and as a result, their quarrels begin to increase exponentially. In addition to their arguments, a new issues arises—Kate becomes dependent on alcohol to make herself happy. As it was originally prescribed to her as a healing substance after the birth of her daughter, being left alone day after day, she begins to drink sherry, brandy, and gin on a more frequent basis with a heavier dosage. Her increased alcohol intake reaches a point to which she could be considered an alcoholic as she becomes not only dependent on the substance, but also violent, emotionally abusive, and unable to function on her own. Unable to be the mother, a mummer, or a wife, Kate’s dependence on alcohol becomes a cry for help, as she can no longer keep up with the pressure of the many roles she has been required to fill.

A Woman or a Madwomen?

In the last section of the novel, Kate undergoes a transformation: she no longer plays any of the characters that she has been cast as, but as one she casts herself in—the madwoman. Kate having undergone loss, has become an alcoholic who can no longer be contained as she is left alone most of the day while Dick is working. Kate’s struggle is one that is heartbreaking as she is

trapped both mentally and physically as she is compared to Bertha Mason when she is seen at the theater: “By Jove! We ought to put up *Jane Eyre*,” said Mortimer. “If she were to play the mad woman like that, we’d be sure to draw full houses” (394). This comparison however, proves to be difficult as men once again are attempting to place her in the role of Bertha Mason, rather than realizing that she is just a woman as Bertha was, who is tired of playing the roles of a Victorian woman under the conditions of someone else. She is not playing the role, yet has become the character as her performance of the madwoman is in fact no performance at all but rather the result of Kate’s life. Instead of the distraught image of Kate whose “long black hair hung in disordered masses; her brown eyes were shot with golden lights; the green tints in her face became, in her excessive pallor, dirty and abominable in colour” being of concern to her peers, she is idolized for a performance that she is not attempting to play (394). This contrast raises questions of why her former castmates do not take her and her physical dishevelment to be a sign of instability and loss, but rather are admiring her theatricality, an attribute she in this state, is unable to control? Furthermore, why has none of her peers attempted to help or heal her after the loss of her child and Dick’s disinterest in Kate after the baby’s death?

Moore’s description of Kate as a madwoman stems primarily from the loss she has felt in the previous section and the alcoholism she has developed in order to numb the pain of her loss. To a woman in the Victorian era, being a mother was the purpose of marriage and ultimately a woman’s life, without children, a woman’s life is empty. As, “They,” (mothers) “wish, in fact, that their children should look to them as the sole fountain of indulgence and pleasure” (Ellis 266), meaning that Kate’s desire is to have a child to amuse and to love as she has been left on her own while Dick is out. This importance of the child and its ability to fulfill the role Kate desired is explicitly stated as she remarks “if the baby had not died, there would have been

something to live for,' she murmured to herself a thousand times during the day" (341). It is these thoughts that create the "demonic" (394) side of Kate as the subsequent "burden of remorse grew quite unbearable, and she thought of the brandy the doctor had ordered for her" (341). Kate drinks not because she enjoys the occasional glass of brandy, but because it takes away her pain and makes her a bit more lighthearted than she was before making alcohol a necessity to Kate's happiness.

Even prior to the death of her child, Kate undergoes the realization that she has lost Dick's love and the meaningfulness of her marriage as Moore states, "She had lost Dick's love" after she had lied to him about her drinking, and pushed him away. Later on in the novel Mr. Lennox writes to Kate explaining that after her multiple violent outbursts that he finds it "quite impossible," for the pair "to go on living together" (419), as Kate's loss permeates her ability to go on sober. Her unhappiness and the lack of love within their marriage is also seen as she mistakes Mr. Lennox for Ralph after her initial altercation with him as while they were asleep a few chapters prior as,

the noise she heard was Dick's breathing, and she wished that Ralph would breathe more easily. Ralph, Ralph! No, she was with Dick. Dick, not Ralph, was her husband (333).

This confusion shows that Kate is disoriented in her marriage, and the irritations that led to her unhappiness in her first marriage such as neglect, have now shown themselves in her new relationship. Her inability to decipher the two gentleman also indicates that Kate is truly miserable and is looking for an escape from her marriage and from the loneliness she has continuously faced. The loss of her relationship and the loss of her child only further the notion that Kate has nothing to live for as she has no claim to motherhood or to being the woman of the house. Therefore, Kate's desire to drink and to play the madwoman indicates that she is

attempting to take control over her shortcomings as she states “if she were to lose her baby she must go mad” (333). By playing the role of madwoman, Kate still has control, and she must choose between Auerbach’s Victorian angel of the house or the Demon, two characters that both hold “a violent paradox with overtones of benediction and captivity” (72) until her death.

Conclusion

Contrary to what we may perceive, motherhood is not a natural role for all woman that live in the Victorian novel. Rather, examples such as *A Mummer’s Wife* present the idea that becoming a mother or creating surrogate relationships is never that easy. These relationships become even harder when, like Kate she never grew up with a strong maternal figure as she is in the working class, meaning that her mother was consistently working in the tough conditions of the potteries, and, as Moore states, Kate grew up without a father, and therefore had no parental guidance at all. Additionally, the novels that she reads throughout her life Moore alludes to being chivalric romances or sensation novels that often do not hold prominent maternal figure that is able to teach readers how to be a good mother. In terms of Kate’s own maternal journey, she begins the novel in a communal surrogate role as she played the role of mother when it was convenient, or in the case of Lizzie and Annie not permanent. These instances of her taking on a more lackadaisical maternal role shows that she is not prepared to be a mother for an extended period of time, and that she too is looking to have the ability to have fun as the two girls do. This is exemplified through her first marriage as Kate’s unhappiness increases through the arrival of Mr. Lennox, as she realizes that he provides her with a romance that enables her to play a new role—the lover. Their relationship is quickly solidified as it resembles the romance she has always wanted, one that is fun, lustful, and exciting—a parallel of her favorite novels. It is not

long after their initial meeting that Kate decides to run away with him as she hopes that their new life will be one of joy and love.

This idyllic romance however quickly fades as Kate realizes her societal instincts to reprise the role of wife and mother as well as continue her passion pursuits by being a mummer. It is in part of Kate's life that the balance between what she wants and what society recommends becomes an essential contemplation. Although she has the man she loves, she runs away in hopes that she will not remain the lover even though she was unable to play the mother in her previous relationship due to romantic incompatibility. This suggests that perhaps Kate longed to play the mother and yet did not know how to properly, or just did not care to waste her potential on a man whose asthma controlled their relationship. Nonetheless, after having great success on the stage, and a great relationship, Kate once again questions Mr. Lennox on when they are to be married, the which he had not considered or thought of. This enrages Kate, and ultimately against his initial wants, the pair get married.

Motherhood and playing the role of a mother come into question once again as Kate gives birth to a baby neither of the pair were prepared to have. This is evident as there are no clothes purchased, and the pair seem very surprised that Kate was not just sick. Even though Kate is ecstatic that she has a child after the end of her mumming career, her lack of knowledge becomes apparent as she forgets to warm the baby girl's milk which gives the child a cold, and ultimately kills her. It is these small parenting techniques that are learned and passed down through mothers and conduct books such as the work of Sarah Ellis, which Kate needed to know, and yet did not have the opportunity to learn and did not find important enough to read. The death of her child, and the loss of her marriage result in her playing the role of madwoman as her wavering sobriety indicates a loss of all control and an admit to defeat.

The role-playing required of Kate in the novel, I believe, shows the pressures that were put on 19th-century women to be mothers and good ones at that. In Kate's situation being a part of the working class does not aid in learning how to be a mother as the pair, unlike many depictions of mothers in Victorian novels, do not have the ability to have a governess or nurse look after their child. Rather, Kate's inability to be a mother both symbolically through surrogacy and literally, proves to be her demise as she has nothing left to live for. With this in mind, I raise the question, would reading more maternal novels have aided Kate, or is she is her failure as a mother based on her own desires to play roles such as wife, mother, lover, and mummer when she deems them enjoyable?

CONCLUSION

As argued in the previous chapters, the image of Victorian motherhood pressures women into becoming a maternal figure. This figure was necessary in the 19th-century novel in order to guide the protagonist, or to provide a cautionary tale on the consequences of not fully realizing the image of the Victorian mother. Motherhood, unlike anything else, becomes a full time role in which woman like Ms. Aldclyffe and Cytherea are often double cast as they are required to fulfill many different roles all at once. In different ways, both Hardy and Moore showcase the difficulties of women who undergo double casting as both maternal figures struggle greatly at the end of their respective novels. For Ms. Aldclyffe, the pressure of raising Cytherea perfectly allows for the worst possible outcome of marriage—adultery—to occur. For Kate, the pressure of motherhood manifests in to madness as she no longer cares to play the roles that society has cast her in. It is with these women's individual paths to and through motherhood in mind, that we must examine the necessity of motherhood in the Victorian novel and the pressure it places on women.

Even though these maternal relationships are in some cases not performed by a biological maternal figure, their relevance in the novel remains the same as often these surrogate friendships provide more guidance than a normal mother would be expected to provide. In *Desperate Remedies*, the main protagonist does not have a mother as she passed away very early on in Cytherea's childhood. Searching for employment after the death of her father, she is desperate to find guidance, and stability both economically and morally as she no longer has a parental figure. It is on this search that she meets Ms. Aldclyffe—an older mistress of a house who is looking for a ladies maid and companion—a position that Cytherea applies for. The connection between the pair is instantaneous and explicitly described as Ms. Aldclyffe thinks:

It is almost worth while to be bored with instructing her in order to have a creature who could glide round my luxurious indolent body in that manner, and look at me in that way—I warrant how light her fingers are upon one's head and neck... What a silly modest young thing she is, to go away so suddenly as that! (Hardy 56)

It is in scenes such as these that we must read explicitly, as stated in Chapter One, the reading of this passage can be seen as sexual. It is with explicit reading that we are able to see the longing that Ms. Aldclyffe has for Cytherea to be close to her—to be her mother *réal* instead of the mother *manqué*. The snake-like description of the young woman indicates she possesses a transformative power over Ms. Aldclyffe—as her character shifts from an old woman in to a maternal figure. The maternal transformation of her character can be seen as she thinks “What a silly modest young thing she is, to go away so suddenly as that!” (Hardy 56), as it shows she cares about the way Cytherea carries herself as a young woman. As stated by handbook writer Sarah Ellis, a mother may “lay down for them,” (the child) “a system of the purest morals, or even preach to them a holier law derived from the Bible itself” (53). Which indicates that, Cytherea presents herself to Ms. Aldclyffe in a way that must be corrected, as she must, like a child, learn how to hold herself properly.

Similarly, in the evening scene between Cytherea and Ms. Aldclyffe, for example, is also a key passage where explicit reading is needed, as it is often read as sexual, rather than seeing the direct verbiage that indicate that the older woman is looking to be a maternal figure rather than a lover. These readings of the passage by contemporaneous and modern day critics alike, refuse to see the maternal qualities of the scene and the bond created by the pair. It is once again in moments such as these that we must look past the implicit reading in which many misinterpret these maternal moments for sexual and perverse interactions.

The necessity to be a maternal figure, however, is not a desire that is confined only to childless women, like Ms. Aldclyffe, but also to young woman who are beginning their families. In George Moore's *A Mummer's Wife*, Kate although unlearned on how to be a mother, continuously tries to fulfill the societal role and expectations of a wife and mother. Kate tries to play the role of wife and mother not only in her two marriages to Ralph Ede and Dick Lennox, but also in her interactions with two young employees, and even in having her own child. From these interactions, the same conclusion can be drawn, as it seems Kate although attempting to play the mother, has no real desire to learn how to be a successful one. Instead of reading a contemporaneous handbook such as *Mothers of England*, she instead reads novels in genres that do not showcase good maternal figures, such as chivalric romances, or like Hardy's work, the sensation novel. It is with this lack of knowledge that once Kate becomes an actual mother, she ends up killing the newborn as she does not know that the milk needs to be warmed or that the child needs to be swaddled in blankets. Additionally, the young mum's lack of maternal instinct is explicitly stated as she is insistent on "suckling her infant although expressly forbidden to do so by the doctor" (327), making her child's ability to survive even more difficult. After having proven that she cannot fulfill the role of mother, Kate becomes a madwoman who has the ability to be lawless, and no longer adhere to the constraints that societal roles have placed on her. In what I consider to be the most pure, and truthful moments in the novel (Kate's "madness"), her disgruntled character showcases the societal pressure put on woman to not only be a mother, but to perform the role of a mother without missing a line or having any stage fright.

Although the role of the mother is a difficult one to perform, the Victorian novel requires a maternal character in order to guide the protagonist, or to provide a cautionary tale on the consequences of failed motherhood. These novels, similarly to the work of Ellis, provide detailed

accounts of what is expected from women even those who biologically, do not have any children. It is through these depictions that we are able to see a transformation of both Ms. Aldclyffe and Kate, as they become mothers and have their own separate maternal instincts. Within these depictions of motherhood, however, it is pertinent to consider the role of class and its ability to make the role of mother much easier. In the case of Ms. Aldclyffe, her main objective is to teach Cytherea how to be a proper young woman, and for her to eventually get married to someone who will be able to take care of her as she raises a family. On the other hand, as Kate represents the Northern working class, she must first be able to survive in order to raise her child who, due to the conditions of these areas (smoke, pollution, and subsequent asthma), had a low chance for survival. These contrasts are essential to recognize as they shape the way we are able to explicitly read the novel, as context helps us understand the writing on the page, rather than the writing in our minds.

Having focused on motherhood and the extent to which it is necessary in the 19th-century novel, I now wonder: where is the father? Throughout my research, little to no emphasis is placed on Cytherea's dad, or where Mr. Ede and Mr. Lennox respectively, failed as a partner and father figure. In regard to 19th-century novelist George Eliot, author Tahira Jabeen states that,

Home was the place where they could enjoy their masculinity without pressure, as opposed to the pressure they faced in the workplace. Home was a place of peace and tranquility for them. This peace and relaxation was provided for by the mother, who was expected to maintain the home, nurture the children, and make home life a type of haven for the father (3).

Jabeen therefore states that the home to a father was a place of comfort, while the mother would see it as a place of domestic economics. With that being said, how is the home a place of comfort

from the outside world when in Kate's situation her first husband never left home, and her second husband never came home. In Hardy's novel unlike Kate, Ms. Aldclyffe was never married, as we learn she was in love with Cytherea's father. As both *Desperate Remedies* and *A Mummer's Wife* present the "home" without a true father figure, I question, whether men are truly needed for the maternal to take place. Additionally, if the paternal figure is required in the Victorian family, then why is he not presented in many other Victorian novels such as *Agnes Grey*?

Regardless of a paternal presence in 19th-century novels, the maternal presence is still necessary. Although stemming from the societal pressure for women to be the perfect image of Victorian motherhood, the female characters in these novels still explicitly attempt to fulfill these roles. For Ms. Aldclyffe, playing the role of the maternal figure is quite distinct as she performs a *surrogate friendship*. This type of surrogacy allows Cytherea the guidance she needs in order to become a successful woman in the middle class. In Kate's instance—being an actual mother through her marriages and her child—it is her lack of maternal instincts and knowledge on how to play the maternal figure properly that lead to her failure, and subsequent madness. It is with these two individual literary examples in mind, that we cannot ignore the pressure of being a mother, and performing the image of Victorian motherhood perfectly. Moreover, we should not ignore the performance required to be an actual mother or to provide a sense of a motherhood for another woman.

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