

Student Podcast Transcript

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Podcast Transcription: The Masochistic Crossdresser and the Sadistic Governess: Creating
Ladies Under D(u)ress

[MUSIC FADES IN]

USP1: Woman is a complete education. By my own experience, I have reason to respect the
petticoat and chemise, the drawers and long stockings, the high-heeled boots

[SFX: HEELS CLICKING AND ECHOING, FADE IN]

USP1: And tight corsets—and what they contain—and to believe that good may accrue to a
young man by being disciplined by a smart girl.

[SFX: HEELS CLICKING, ENDS]

AV: The Victorian era witnessed an English fixation with racial degeneration through sexual
depravity, flagellation, and social strictures around gender. Two sides of the same
coin—one fought to preserve the sanctity of middle-class English society, and the other
added to the discourse of sex with its celebration of the taboo. Written by Stanislas
Matthew de Rhodès and published in eighteen-ninety-three, a story called *Gynecocracy*
entered the library of English pornography as a three-volume text about a French
governess subjecting Julian Robinson, the young male protagonist, to petticoat-rule.
Through sadistic dominance, Mademoiselle Hortense de Chambonnard forces Julian to
cross dress, to humiliate him and to convince him that he is a girl. Petticoat-rule or
petticoat-government is established as the rule of woman over man, as well as a total
psychosexual experience that Julian insists is beneficial to male development. His
character development hinges on Mademoiselle's dominance and how she creates and
regulates the image of the late-Victorian lady through his mind and body. This leads to
Julian's vacillation between male and female gender ideals as a coming-of-age boy and
girl under female control, due to his transformation under his worship of the petticoat.
Although it may appear that she is subverting gender norms by enforcing a petticoat-

government—which is true—Mademoiselle also reasserts Victorian middle-class standards for femininity and sexuality through Julian’s forced feminization.

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

AV: Prelude, the plot.

[MUSIC FADES IN]

AV: In *Gynecocracy*, de Rhodès creates a pornographic drama that subverts Victorian sexual norms, centering Julian, his cousins, and their sadistic governess, Mademoiselle. She teaches him the ways of the birch under petticoat-government. Mademoiselle emphasizes both the rule of women and the rule of their garments on his body. Her force captivates Julian as he falls in love with her and with many other women that torment him, including his cousin Beatrice who treats him as her slave. Throughout the three-volume series, Julian undergoes a forced psychological gender transformation under Mademoiselle’s education. Mademoiselle recreates him as a late-Victorian lady while Julian grapples with the confusion of his mixed masculine and feminine desires. He realizes himself as alternating between being a male lover and a mistress. De Rhodès establishes the destabilization of normative Victorian sexuality as the rule by standardizing petticoat-government as punishment in *Gynecocracy* and having Julian accept his eternal enslavement by his later wife, Beatrice. Throughout the narrative, the characters use different pronouns, gendered language, and two names—Julian and Julia—to refer to Julian. He ultimately ends the story as Julian, but certain parts require switching pronouns and names to make for an accurate analysis of gender complexities in *Gynecocracy*. This analysis will default to Julian and he pronouns and will switch where necessary.

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

AV: Part one, petticoat-government and the psychosexual power of women’s garments.

[MUSIC]

AV: Petticoat-government displaces male authority in the world of *Gynecocracy*, even beyond London, as women use men for procreative machines and conduits for seats of political power. Men are sexual vassals for women’s pleasure and sadistic amusement, and the people around Julian treat petticoat-government as a casual, if unspoken, common reality. Most vital to the vice-grip these women tighten around men’s waists are the tools they use—the rod, the dildo, or better yet, the corset. The real England operated without such emphasis on female empowerment. Regardless of one’s social standing, what defined masculinity and femininity solidified in the nineteenth century as ideals to aspire to. Medical historians Vern L. Bullough and Bonnie Bullough discuss the separate spheres doctrine in their book *Cross Dressing, Sex, and Gender*. The concept of separate

spheres strive to keep man and woman distinct and categorize women as, quote, “‘little affected by sensuality,’ ‘a species of angel,’ and ‘a purer race.’” By removing men from the home to work in the factory, mine, or office, this drive to segregate men and women gave women dominance in the domestic sphere which revolved around children and the home. The same increasing gender distinction changed men’s attire to more practical, less ornamental clothing—no lace or frills, with an emphasis on trousers. One role model of the new clear-cut, simpler image for the masculine form was George Bryan Brummell, who avoided loud colors, jewelry, and superfluous embellishments. This style took off with men but not without a fight. All this effort to construct men as manly opposites from women led to a greater fascination with what makes the feminine different from the masculine. The Bulloughs argue that the nineteenth-century redefinition of the women’s sphere, even with its limitations, made crossdressing increasingly attractive to men.

[MUSIC PAUSES]

AV: The mid- to late-eighteen-hundreds saw an influx of male correspondence to hobbyist and women’s magazines expressing enthusiasm for women’s garments, including heeled boots and corsets. The *English Mechanic* magazine’s male correspondents discussed

[MUSIC RESUMES]

AV: Quote, “technical minutiae relating to construction, flexibility, strength, manner of lacing, and very little to the psychological aspects” of corseting, all while asserting the supposed health benefits and admitting to, quote, “pleasant internal sensations while wearing corsets.” So many other magazines featured male support for tightlacing, with correspondents rushing to defend the practice as a medical remedy or simply to engage in what the Bulloughs refer to as narcissistic masochism. The masochism stems from the physical constraint of women’s attire—forcing oneself into women’s boots and shaping a tiny waist—while the narcissism completes itself as these nineteenth-century crossdressers marvel at themselves in their writing. *Gynecocracy* shows special care in describing the lacing of corsets, the delicate nature of different women’s garments, and Julian’s interaction with and psychological response to them. The peak representation of Julian’s observation of tightlacing and the petticoat is in his thought process concerning the governess. He worships Mademoiselle in all respects, and he shows this in myriad ways. One is through dressing her at her command. As Julian narrates—

[SFX: LACING CORSET]

JR: Her corset had to be changed, the evening one laced to her satisfaction. The fastening, adjusting, and lacing of a lady’s tight corset is a difficult and ticklish process, and her gown had to be put on and hooked. She then complained that one of her stockings was wrinkled in her shoe, which I had to remove and smooth the delicate fabric. No sooner had I replaced her shoe than she sprang up, and I suddenly and quite unexpectedly

became conscious of the weight of her pretty little foot by the receipt of a sound kick in the rear.

JR: Mademoiselle laughed

MHC: [LAUGHTER, OVERLAPPING NARRATION]

JR: Until I thought she would have had a fit. I, on my part, felt much more disposed to cry more from the ridiculous figure I was made to cut than from anything else. My love laughed at, and I was myself kicked about her dressing room by my adored one.

AV: Multiple verbs are employed—fasten, adjust, lace—to show the laborious process of putting on a corset. Despite being hurt and humiliated, abuse from the woman he worships is worthwhile if it means being close to her and her garments. Her control over him shows the power that feminine charm and women’s garments have over men under petticoat-government. Mademoiselle enjoys dominance over Julian’s life until he marries Beatrice, but her conduct is not the only proof of the exercise of female sexual rule in de Rhodès’s fiction. An omnipresent gynecocracy operates beneath the surface of a political patriarchy in the text. Gertrude Stormont, a woman that pretends to be Julian’s mother, during sex and otherwise, assures Mademoiselle that she, too, is a believer in petticoat-government and practiced it on her own brother. Beyond that, “The Ladies’ Shop” chapter cements the inescapable rule of women. The shopkeeper speaks on the matter—

SK: A very good thing too. We have had several gentlemen to dress as ladies and it does them great good.

GS: Then it is not unusual?

JR: Exclaimed Gertrude.

SK: Oh, dear me, no! Not in London at all events! Many gentlemen do it to please themselves. Others, because they are made to.

AV: Many men in *Gynecocracy* have bought into the Bulloughs’ notion of narcissistic masochism—crossdressing for the sake of pleasing themselves. Since this form of crossdressing is distinct from self-contained or consensual play, it should be considered forced crossdressing or forced feminization. The masochism presents as an equally salient component in keeping subjects of petticoat-government under control. It does not only indicate the masochism of stuffing oneself into uncomfortable clothes. However, the coercive component does not preclude pleasure for the crossdresser. As a fantasy developed in a fictitious setting, one that can be reproduced in role play, the crossdresser may find erotic pleasure in being overpowered, humiliated, and emasculated. Julian not only appreciates women’s garments while on a woman’s body,

but he takes great masochistic pleasure in wearing them on his own body, to the point of convincing himself that he is embodying the female persona of Julia—

JR: I arranged my skirts and myself comfortably, exactly with the feelings of any other girl, leaving my pretty ankles and shoes sufficiently visible for my own delectation, if for no one else's. I sat down beside my governess under the absolute conviction that I was a girl like herself while I hugged my petticoats about me as friendly things, the exponents of truth regarding my sex. I felt very naughty and very happy.

AV: Here, Julia performs her femininity with conviction in that established truth, that she is a girl rather than a boy. When questions about her anatomy arise, Mademoiselle excuses the state of her genitalia by calling her a hermaphrodite rather than a boy. She finds kinship with Mademoiselle, the woman she loves the most, and Julia takes great care of her own garments and admires how they sit on her own body. In mandating petticoat-rule over Julia's identity, the psychosexual power of women's garments manifests through Mademoiselle's hands and the hands of auxiliary female figures that also dominate her, usually through the governess's influence. If it were not for Mademoiselle's exercise of power, Julia would not exist.

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

AV: Part two, the sadistic French governess's creation and regulation of the lady.

[MUSIC]

AV: Mademoiselle rules Downlands Hall with an iron fist—holding a birch rod. She manages the entire household and governs the girls' sexuality with impunity. However, the real governesses in the nineteenth century contradicted Mademoiselle's representation of female dominance. Their social status and public perception of moral character, and their economic standing and enjoyment of leisure all paled in comparison to what is shown in de Rhodès's work. Throughout the eighteen-thirties and eighteen-forties, governesses had to endure constant regulation of their morality and social standing as their class status was reexamined through the lens of their paid labor. A governess may have worked from different locations, but the women that lived in their employers' homes are most relevant to Mademoiselle's side of the story. These women lacked political pertinence and domestic power in their place of employment beyond whatever influence they might have had over the youth. Mary Poovey's *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* uncovers a liminal space that the governess straddled between middle and lower class, which faded by the eighteen-fifties, but the governess's lack of access to true middle-class status remained a concern if a less salient one. According to historian M. Jeanne Peterson, this liminal space can otherwise be called status incongruence as the governess, quote, "is not a relation, not a guest, not a mistress, not a servant – but something made up of all." The governess lived a contradiction in that she was born and bred a lady in all respects, but she

degraded her public image through employment, being inferior in wealth and status. She expressed, quote, "little power over the servants, and yet she was to be served by them." Poovey demonstrates that the ultimate show of how the governess's employment downgraded her from typical middle-class female status was in the Victorian ideology of motherhood. She states, "the governess was both what a woman who should be a mother might actually become and the woman who had to be paid for doing what the mother should want to do for free." Middle-class women in need took up the position of private teaching as a governess because of the job's similarity to the female norm, the middle-class mother, thus keeping them close to an image of gentility. By accepting payment for what was intended to be the unpaid feminine act of nurturing children, the governess cannot perform genteel womanhood at its prime. The governess as a profession provided little relief for the woman in need of income. The job came with a host of socioeconomic issues that persisted well into the eighteen-eighties when the profession was starting to phase out. Higher expectations for labor performed on the job led to more competition between women, and this coupled with lower salaries exacerbated the plight of the governess through the eighteen-thirties and eighteen-forties. That debilitating formula of high energy spent for low gain remained consistent. Low gain refers to the governess being expected to present as a genteel woman but not being paid enough to afford it. Peterson shows that if one includes the thirty pounds worth of board covered per year, then the governess typically earned between fifty pounds to ninety-five pounds per year—compared to the minimum one-hundred and fifty to two hundred required to maintain a genteel style of life. This must be quite the shock for women entering a profession with subpar pay. As Ellen Jordan finds in her research on women's employment in nineteenth-century Britain, governesses statistically tended to hail from the lower middle-class. These women typically sought out employment as governesses out of desperation because they were adapted to lives of leisure funded by financial sponsors such as their fathers or husbands, a source of support they may have lost. Thrust into needing to establish their independence, women had to choose between more undesirable work and jobs most closely associated with middle-class womanhood. As noted in Jordan's work, demand for governesses would then decrease in the eighteen-eighties. The female secondary school teacher displaced the governess in the late-nineteenth century as efforts to raise the status of the governess failed. Jordan finds that an increased workload on top of fixed hours of work distanced the secondary school teacher from the governess with independence, a dignity, and a sense of professionalism that the governess was missing in her employment. Before the teacher displaced her, the governess fulfilled a duty to instruct the middle-class girl on how to become a genteel woman. As a governess, a paid woman allowed the wife of a middle-class home to live a true life of leisure because the governess seized responsibility of home-education and teaching the standards of housewifery to the girls. Peterson elaborates on the gender distinction in education: Boys were sent to school or a tutor was hired for them, while parents found the governess most suitable in the administration of female education for their daughters. Governesses upheld the conservatism of the Victorian standards of womanhood through this female education in their employment, as curriculum for boys and girls

operated on a distinct gender binary. According to Jordan, girls' education differed from that offered to boys and to the working class. Jordan goes on to argue, it defined status by giving middle-class women artistic expertise which they shared with the aristocracy, but which was unknown in the working class, and defined gender by ensuring that their knowledge and talents would be different from those acquired by boys. Parents were prepared to pay for an education for their daughters, but many cared very little about its content so long as it guaranteed gentility and femininity. This reinforces the separate spheres doctrine and imparts an ideal moral character onto female students as they develop their adult identities. As ladies' academies and private governesses tended to have the same curriculum, various advertisements promised to teach, quote, "all the useful and solid acquirements with the more feminine and ornamental accomplishments" so that one can "form and adorn the female character," or "to impart the Intellectual Faculties and high Moral and Religious Training and those graceful accomplishments proper to ladies." Compare all of this to English public schools, which were catered to forming the English boy's character. These schools were similar in that they trained boys to assume their gender-specific duties in life and taught them discipline, but these duties assumed a masculine tenor. The Bulloughs found that the pedagogy and focus of instruction opposed that of female education, and the boys used sports to build camaraderie and were taught leadership skills, chivalry, and masculine distinction. Each branch of the Victorian education system sought to distinguish men from women as early as possible in the children's development, and the English held the social separation of male and female sacred. Mademoiselle's fictional role in Victorian education may seem perverse as she forces a boy to assume the role of a girl under female education, but she is only enforcing the tenets of her profession over her students. Her unorthodoxy delves further than that as a governess. Mademoiselle seizes total control in her employment as the authoritarian ruler of Downlands Hall, the home of Julian's dead uncle. In fact, no parents or other property holders are present on the premises to challenge her authority, leaving no ambiguity regarding her status and defaulting her to the ultimate authority. This allows Mademoiselle to isolate Julian from his parents, leaving Julian helpless to her possession—

[SFX: LETTER OPENED AND HANDLED]

JR: There were two letters for me, and Mademoiselle actually took them and opened and read them before my eyes, and would not let me look at them, or even tell me from whom they came. She merely remarked that they did not need any reply, and that I was neither to write nor receive any letters without her express permission.

AV: Her position as teacher and guardian establishes itself through denial of Julian's line of communication to the outside world, his family, ostensibly to a world beyond gynococracy. Because his parents committed this anomaly of condemning him to a female education under a governess, Julian wanted to rebel from the start; however, Mademoiselle is empowered by the lack of oversight, so she has no status incongruence. She is undeniably genteel. Her income rivals her unfettered governance

as Mademoiselle seems to earn well above the average pay grade, making an extra fifty pounds per year for Julian's care alone, dwarfing the average salary of a governess before the worth of board. If she receives around fifty pounds per year per youth, then her unrealistic income makes her an adequate member of gentility by finances alone, unlike real governesses. Mademoiselle's spending habits confirm this—

MHC: I have brought this young gentleman to be fitted with a tight corset and lady's underclothing.

SK: Do you wish for silk underclothing, or ordinary linen?

MHC: Linen and silk too—

JR: Replied Mademoiselle.

MHC: Both.

JR: My head was shaved, and I was furnished with a woman's head of hair. Several wigs were chosen. Another cheque. Then to Rathbone Place, to a bootmaker's.

AV: In the ladies' shop, Mademoiselle purchases a whole new wardrobe for Miss Julia, fit with undergarments, a new dress, boots, and women's wigs. This would be an expensive venture unless she was a married woman of lofty middle-class stature, or an unmarried middle-class lady with a father or guardian of comfortable financial backing. Instead, her occupation sustains her alone. Although it is not impossible for a governess to keep up an image of gentility on her pitiful salary, a real governess would struggle to do this on top of managing her and her charges' laundry as well as other expenses not covered by the family. All these realities melt away in *Gynecocracy* where Mademoiselle reigns supreme and her rule exceeds economic expectations. Financial independence not being enough, Mademoiselle exerts more control over the servants of Downlands Hall than any real governess would have ever expected to have. She commands Elise, her maid, to assist her in punishing the youths with ease. Elise eagerly obeys, after she reports on Julian's misbehavior—

EL: Master Julian spoke to me most rudely when I went to his bedroom to show him the way to the breakfast room.

MHC: Very well, Elise. Out of school hours Master Julian is to be under you tomorrow and the two following days, and by that time I trust you will have made him respect you. And now, Julian, you shall be deprived of your trousers. Take a long leave of them. Elise, make him stand up and take them off.

JR: Oh, Mademoiselle! Oh, please, do not before you and the girls. Oh, don't!

[SFX: SHUFFLING PANTS AND REMOVING BELT]

JR: Elise, however, speedily unfastened the straps which kept me kneeling, but kept my elbows still confined, and busied herself in unfastening my buttons.

AV: Mademoiselle also calls upon Elise for assistance with preparing her toilette, or the washing up and dressing of her appearance. Would a despised governess be even begrudgingly primped and petted by the servants? Mademoiselle behaves like the proper lady of the house as opposed to the governess, in the absence of a wife. The servants oblige to her orders with little resistance, only begging for mercy when she readies corporal punishment for them. While Julian is meant to be under Elise's sadistic care as a temporary gift from Mademoiselle, Elise allows Julian and Maud to see one another unsupervised. Maud loses her virginity to Julian in this time. For what is construed as a moral and sexual transgression, Mademoiselle punishes Elise, forbidding Julian from carnal knowledge that cannot be taken back, and she retaliates against Elise in the most vicious way possible—

JR: She placed herself in position

[SFX: SEVERAL LOUD WHIP CRACKS, OVERLAPPING NARRATION]

JR: And received thirty-six slow, deliberate stripes which Mademoiselle delivered with all her force. Elise writhed and twisted, but took the punishment bravely, not crying out but sobbing quietly. Presently, however, she shrieked. At the close of the punishment with the birch, Mademoiselle bade Elise remain as she was, and went into her room, when I heard her open a drawer. She returned holding a round stick about a foot long and as thick as the butt end of a billiard-cue, in her hand. From its end depended several knotted pieces of whipcord. The moment Elise, who was still lying on the pouf, caught a glimpse of this, she jumped up and danced about the room.

EL: No, no, no, Mademoiselle! Oh, no! Oh, I pray, I do beseech, I do implore—!

JR: She cried aghast with terror. Mademoiselle, for all reply, lifted her arm—

[SFX: HIGH-PITCHED GASP]

JR: And gave her a swish about the buttocks.

[SFX: ONE LOUD WHIP CRACK]

JR: Elise screamed.

MHC: Elise, lie down directly; or I shall give you a dozen instead of half a dozen. And do not scream any more unless you wish to be gagged.

JR: Directed Mademoiselle, quietly, but severely. Elise seemed positively beside herself, positively distraught. I thought she was mad when she lay down on her back.

MHC: Spread out your legs.

JR: Said Mademoiselle. Elise obeyed.

AV: Mademoiselle punished Elise's genitals, the area that Julian and Maud joined in secret, where the boy and girl wronged Mademoiselle by the admission of Julian's semen to enter Maud's body. For this, Elise took responsibility through suffering damage to what are called her generative organs. This demonstrates Mademoiselle's final word on the appropriate expression of female sexuality in Downlands Hall. Mademoiselle conducts her female education through negative reinforcement and inclusion of all four youths, including Julian, in feminine rituals. Her punishments vary in their creativity and severity, from basic though vicious flagellation to psychological humiliation. As a response to Maud's lost virginity, Mademoiselle degraded Maud's status to that of a scullery maid, the lowest rank for a female domestic servant and a confiscation of her middle-class airs. Most of the detail dedicated to punishment in *Gynecocracy* involves Julian, the protagonist, and virtually all his punishments utilize a stranger form of female education to teach him about the inescapability of petticoat-government. Mademoiselle and Elise use a plug to discipline Julian—

MHC: You are not to be whipped this time, Julian. I am going to see if I can really impress upon you, that you are a girl.

JR: Elise nodded acquiescence as she said—

EL: Come, no nonsense—

JR: And drew me down. Elise put her right leg across mine, and her left elbow between my shoulder blades. She opened the drawers behind and drew up my chemise. Then she took something out of her bag which was on the seat beside. Next, I felt her hand on my bottom which she pressed and fingered, advancing gradually towards its center. Horror. She had something cold and hard in her hand, which the motion of the carriage jerked about. But, terrified at her attempts, lying there on my stomach across her knee, I grew more scarlet, more ashamed, than ever.

AV: As Elise and the girls are punished for interfering with Julian's feminine training, disrupting the Downlands Hall petticoat hierarchy, and violating their own female propriety, Julian suffers his own punishment. He forced himself upon Maud by continuing to penetrate her to his own orgasm after she expressed hesitation. Maud struggled in pain against his efforts after initially consenting, and Julian disregarded her pain and resistance for his pleasure and a chance to become a father. Note that Mademoiselle deems them equally

guilty. Now, he faces Maud's fate, anally penetrated by force. Elise's handiwork with the ivory knob makes Julian ejaculate, mirroring Maud's orgasm under Julian's force, a feminizing equalizer to the overtly masculine experience he had in thrusting himself upon a woman who exerted no dominance over him in that moment. Of course, the association between the phallus with the masculine and the orifice with the feminine relies on the Victorian binarist imagination here. It serves well in Mademoiselle's favor, teaching Julian his lesson. Feminine rituals matter just as much as corporal punishment when teaching Julian about performing the rites of womanhood. She introduces Julian to the rigors of feminine beauty in all ways traditional to the Victorian middle-class, subjecting him to rituals such as dress and corset fitting in the ladies' shop. Mademoiselle seeks to transform Julian into Julia, a girl in as many respects as possible. She undergoes a coercive education to learn the ways of the lady and comport herself as such. She must do all this to embody Miss Julia—

JR: Gertrude lent me a dressing gown and Elise conducted me thither. A strange, tall girl was in the room.

MHC: This is the young lady who has the superfluous hairs on her face.

JR: Explained Mademoiselle.

USP2: Will you not try electrolysis?

JR: Asked the stranger.

MHC: No, shave him— her, I mean.

JR: Directed Mademoiselle. So I had to sit down and was lathered and held by the nose while the strange girl shaved me clean.

USP2: There are very few hairs—

JR: She remarked.

USP2: She will not need shaving very often.

AV: The third act consists of Julia realizing that she cannot be a complete woman, by Victorian standards. This setback in Mademoiselle's plans would eventually manifest into a disaster foiling her deep psychological scheme, but she manages to use this to her advantage regardless. To address Julia's slipping belief in herself as Julia, Mademoiselle tries to keep up the ruse by insisting that she is capable of being pregnant—

MHC: What is the matter? Why are you so distraught? What do you want? Whom are you dreaming of? Perhaps, perhaps you will reply that as a woman I should know, that your

attention, your thoughts, are all of them concentrated inwardly upon the material he has supplied you with to enable you to make and reproduce an exact image of himself. Is it so? I can excuse you, if my conjecture is correct, and, indeed, shall feel bound to apologize for attempting to disturb your cogitations. A maiden suddenly converted into a woman, suddenly confronted with the necessity of answering the requirements of love by producing a child, may well desire to be left alone in order to collect and direct her whole energies to the work.

AV: Julia knows that she cannot become pregnant in this scene, but Mademoiselle tells a blatant lie by insisting that she can. Having played the game of convincing Julia for this long and now lying to assure her, Mademoiselle employs emotional manipulation to bewilder and further ensnare Julia in the sphere of femininity. Julia's dedication to a feminine identity allows Mademoiselle to amuse herself in unique ways. This female education serves a sadistic purpose. These contradictions elevate Mademoiselle from resented nanny to respected tyrant as she enjoys the charms of a Victorian middle-class woman's life without the social and financial ills expected of the governess's work, all while performing the work in a way that suits her sexual desires. Her curriculum enters the realm of the erotic and focuses on the protagonist's psychosexual journey rather than on the literature learned in the schoolroom. Without splitting hairs, Mademoiselle's approach is calculating, brutal, and inventive—almost as if her punishments were written to titillate the masochistic or submissive reader! Her abuses come not without careful planning and poise. Mademoiselle orchestrates it all with a plot in mind for Julia, or Julian, who vacillates between the two identities in a haze of confusion.

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

AV: Part three, Julian's gender troubles and transformation under the worship of the petticoat.

[MUSIC]

AV: Julian's internal conflicts throughout the text include an overwhelming desire to procreate; a struggle for freedom, tied to a paradoxical desire for bondage; and worship of women, connected to their garments and to a dualistic sense of self. His goal to procreate persists no matter what gender identity he assumes, so that reproductive desire is a heteronormative one and both a masculine and feminine desire. That dualistic gender theme shows throughout his character, with the characterization of freedom as masculine and bondage as feminine; these opposing sides define his submission, his identity. It follows that gender presentation and sex—both the act and the anatomy—counteract, flirt with, and confuse one another in Julian's character development. Julian acts on curiosities, transgressive desires, and shame, calling to mind sexual discourses that circulated in Europe around real individuals like him. Christianity consumed the question of sex for a long time in Europe, but economic and political concerns entered the discourse as new moral explanations for the correct way to conduct one's sexuality.

In "Victorian Sexualities," James E. Adams argues that Victorians emphasized self-control. In an economic view of sexuality, the sex act constituted, quote, "a loss of self-possession, the lapse of traditionally masculine mastery over oneself and the world." Victorian men answered this dilemma by refining their control over sexual economy, or reserving the, quote, "vital force to be carefully regulated and conserved." One profited from abstinence as a capitalist might in more literal terms, and the Victorians took the new ground claimed with the Industrial Revolution to mean that rigorous discipline was key to avoiding moral depravity. Should the Victorian man conserve his sexuality as a good sex-baron must, he may marry a woman. A license to have sex without contraceptives, as the marriage is the only allowance and greatest encouragement for normative Victorian sex. Sex had to be a procreative event between a married couple, a man and a woman, so any religious or economic discourses constructed to regulate Victorian sexuality predicated themselves on that idea. To speak of the discourse at the time, Mademoiselle and Julian deviate in a number of ways. Mademoiselle, for one, does not resemble the tranquil and subservient angel in the house that selflessly dispenses love and moral guidance to her family, an ideal archetype Adams outlines in his work, but she is also not the fallen woman that is presented as irredeemable, degraded, or unkempt. She dispenses some sort of love and perhaps unorthodox moral guidance, but she is no pillar of innocent domesticity. On the other hand, if we are only looking at medical and psychiatric literature, Julian being male grants him a completely different characterization and context as far as how researchers of the time, and thereafter, contemplated gender variance and what the field of psychology now calls paraphilias.

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

AV: An abridged psychiatric and medical historiography.

[MUSIC FADES IN]

AV: The late-nineteenth century contemplated gender variance in the form of what they considered to be racial degeneration, and the concept of sadism and masochism subverted gender norms no matter what gender performed which sexual role. However, the masochistic man and the sadistic woman distinguished themselves from the other supposed extreme in that they inverted the normative gender patterns, rather than expressing the norm to excess. Alison Moore wrote the following on this discourse in "Rethinking Gendered Perversion and Degeneration in Visions of Sadism and Masochism, 1886-1930." The sadistic man and masochistic woman troubled late-nineteenth-century writers because, quote, "these were perversions of excess and not of deviation from gender norms," as a backwards march in civilized society to what Late Modern Europeans considered barbarism. On the other hand, the masochistic man and sadistic woman perverted gender norms by declining society forward into decadence. The male masochist, quote, "was imagined as perverting normative masculinity by abdicating his penetrative agency and relocating his pleasure in bodily zones other than

the penis, which was considered the only legitimate organ of male pleasure.” Discourses surrounding masochism centered on flagellation, which focused on the buttocks and thus associated with themes of humiliation, shame, infantilism, and femininity. Multiple theories surfaced about the male masochist at the turn of the century, including Jean de Villiot’s nineteen-oh-seven essay in the front matter of *Les délices du fouet*, or *The Delights of the Whip*, speculating that, quote, “the passive flagellant may possess a female brain in a male body, but this brain would be organized such that it resembles that of Sappho who so liked her sisters. In other words, the masochist may be a lesbian with the attributes of a man.” Mainstream scholarly opinions appeared to agree that the presence of the sadist and masochist was connected to the morally declining state of modern civilization. This led to essentialist hypotheses in an effort to study and treat them. Forensic psychiatrist Émile Laurent believed that whether because of atavism or heredity, the sadist is born as such, so the sadist belonged in the psychiatric system rather than the prison. This and the belief in the male masochist possessing feminine characteristics meant constructing the so-called sadist and masochist subjects as abnormal, immoral, and contemptible. No matter what the pathologized subjects of early sexologists and psychiatrists said about their masculinity, experts of the time insisted upon interpreting some psychological or physiological evidence for the male masochist’s femininity. German psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing published *Psychopathia Sexualis* in eighteen-eighty-six, a wealth of research on the lives of those who experienced gender variance as erotic—among other sexual experiences—but through a clinical lens aimed at getting to the bottom of individual perversion and societal degeneration. Krafft-Ebing argued, “Periods of moral decadence in the life of a people are always contemporaneous with times of effeminacy, sensuality, and luxury. As a result of increase of nervousness, there is increase of sensuality, and, since this leads to excesses among the masses, it undermines the foundation of society,—the morality and purity of family life.” With this ideological foundation to Krafft-Ebing’s work in mind, a pattern emerges in the numerous case notes outlined in the text. He angered the Church with his discussion of religious flagellation in reference to sensuality, connecting the sexual excitement of being whipped to nervous conditions, impure urges, and bacchanalian madness. Mademoiselle favors flagellation as a method of punishment, and it brings her immense pleasure to exact upon others, but Krafft-Ebing only managed to study two women who met his criteria for female sadism. One of which exhibited no sign of wanting to harm her husband for her own pleasure—just a lack of interest in genital contact. Grasping at straws, Richard? His contribution to research on male sadists is extensive, but the section on masochism concerns this topic more. Krafft-Ebing covers a wide array of male masochist cases, some of which resemble the fictitious Julian in certain aspects, many of which do not. The insistence upon categorizing thoughts and behavior into a taxonomy of perversion, predicated on the assumption that these men are passive and effeminate, forces all these subjects into a common pathology. That common ground includes the idea that heredity could explain these behaviors. Although these cases vary wildly from each other, Krafft-Ebing interprets similarities to tie male masochists to his broader thesis on degeneracy. He cherry-picks data and uses individual cases as examples for generalizations. For

instance, Krafft-Ebing argues that, quote, “the impulse to passive flagellation exists ab origine in the masochist. The desire is felt before there has been any experience of the reflex effect, often first in dreams; as, for example, in Case 48.” Apparently incapable of satisfying his same-sex desires, Case Forty-eight would occasionally obtain a prostitute, undress himself completely, while she was not to take off a thing, and have her tread upon him, whip, and beat him. Krafft-Ebing reported that “then disgust at the morally-debasing situation occurred, and he retired as quickly as possible,” demonstrating the anti-degenerationist lens through which he viewed his patient. This method of simplifying the intricacies of the human thoughts and behaviors that stray from patterns defined as normal resembles how the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* typifies mental disorders to this day. Having a diagnostic criteria allowed psychiatrists to determine whether patients were masochists, if they had a fetish for female attire, if they had acquired homosexuality, or if the patient’s homosexuality had begun a transition to metamorphosis sexualis paranoica, Krafft-Ebing’s third stage of homosexuality. Krafft-Ebing describes metamorphosis sexualis paranoica as a man who feels himself to be bodily female and experiences, quote, “a complete transformation of his former masculine feeling, thought, and will; in fact, of his whole vita sexualis, in the sense of eviration.” Eviration refers to emasculation, or a demasculinizing process with the added medical connotation of a feminine delusion. Krafft-Ebing did not believe in the self-assumed identity of his metamorphosed patients. Instead, he referred to one as badly tainted. This patient advocates for a better understanding of women in the medical field by living through their experiences and identifying with them, even temporarily, but Krafft-Ebing frames this empathetic approach with horror. This characterization of feminine identification by male-assigned bodies evolved with later works by other professionals expanding on the matter of gender variance. Although the book was not accessible to the average layman, Krafft-Ebing’s research method and psychiatric interpretation show a turn in the late-nineteenth century’s consideration of sexuality and a more complex construction of perversion. In addition, the text shows confessions of unorthodox desire and sexual acts, albeit through the clinical third-party. Krafft-Ebing contributed to an on-going dialogue that evolved with some more sympathetic works in the early-twentieth century. This included the work of German physician Magnus Hirschfeld, who published *Die Transvestiten* in nineteen-ten, its full English title reading *The Transvestites: An Investigation of the Erotic Drive to Cross Dress; With Extensive Casuistic and Historical Material*. Hirschfeld strayed from Krafft-Ebing’s approach in that he not only advocated for the betterment of the lives of so-called sexual deviants, but he also insisted upon differentiating transvestism from other diagnoses that his professional peers, like Krafft-Ebing, would have grouped together. According to Hirschfeld, a transvestite is someone who cross dresses, and he used this term with both male- and female-assigned bodies. Assignment of different sexual orientations to patients diagnosed as transvestites shows the separation of object of desire from the urge to cross dress. Krafft-Ebing’s acquired homosexuality thesis holds no ground here. Where Krafft-Ebing argued that the metamorphosed patient must desire a man, Hirschfeld identified heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and auto-erotic transvestites. The specificity of the different orientations does not matter, but the fact that they are

all different does. Hirschfeld's research marks an early shift in an understanding of gender and sexuality. Hirschfeld speaks on eroticism and masochistic excitation with regards to transvestism, considering masochism as a potential part of a transvestic diagnosis. He reported that his adult transvestite patients often, quote, "mention the penetration of earrings or the tight lacing of corsets as especially pleasurable. Also, the wish of some of them to take the position with the greatest service possible as chambermaids and housemaids. They preferred very energetic and manly women. They said as Number 13 did, I expect the woman to take the initiative. Particularly the universal urge to be the supine partner during intercourse points to sexual passivity. To some of them, however, the woman's role itself was felt to be, in the main sexually humiliating." Although he moved away from Krafft-Ebing's degeneracy argument, Hirschfeld believed there to be a connection between passivity and femininity. This indicates that physicians envisioned gender difference between men and women—whether biological, social, or both—and deviations from the norm made these conventions more obvious. For a man, or a transvestite, to prefer an energetic woman would be to undermine one's potential to dominate one's sexual encounters with one's own masculine energy. According to these studies, they feminize themselves by giving a woman more control. Hirschfeld examined sixteen male-assigned transvestite patients and revealed that thirteen of them cross dressed for erotic pleasure, six of which experienced homosexual fantasies, and three desired the role of a woman. English physician Havelock Ellis would contribute to the discourse by disagreeing with the focus on garments and the term transvestism, instead calling a particular patient's case sexo-aesthetic inversion, later renaming the phenomenon eonism. He wanted a designation for a condition that concerned the affective and emotional sphere, as he called it, where cross dressing was not a significant part of one's life. Otherwise, Ellis and Hirschfeld agreed on the harmlessness of gender variance. Hirschfeld's work would later be vindicated by the countless number of people who would cross dress for erotic pleasure up to the present day, as well as the growing body of anthropological and medical literature now produced concerning transgender people.

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

AV: Julian's gender dualism and other conflicts and pleasures.

[MUSIC FADES IN]

AV: How do these medical discourses surrounding *Gynecocracy's* publication measure up to the text itself? One could attempt to diagnose Julian based on Krafft-Ebing or Hirschfeld's criteria, but there is little to gain from psychoanalyzing a fictional character. Julian manifested as a literary figment of de Rhodès's fantasies. Whether he wrote the entire text as a parody or not—which is doubtful—the prospect of diagnosing the author through the protagonist of his novel is even more ridiculous. Instead, this calls for a return to the major theme—Mademoiselle's enforcement of Victorian middle-class femininity by the birch. Because Mademoiselle employs forced feminization, or

eviration, to accomplish this, Julian thinks and behaves like virtually no real patient. Mademoiselle puppeteers the arcs of his internal conflicts for her amusement, and these conflicts mimic social pressures that combat one another. In essence, Julian embodies different social, moral, and sexual binaries. From Julian's perspective, the narrative pours exquisite detail into his attire and emphasizes the eroticization of crossdressing. This calls back to the psychosexual power of the petticoat, now as a tool to influence Julian's relationship with his own identity. Even the earliest instance of his feminizing punishment hints at excitation—

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

JR: I blushed like a girl as I felt the feminine garments against my legs and saw the drawers about my arms. The delicate, minute, ladylike handkerchief, all laced and of no practical use whatever which I had to hold in my hand, made me feel really girlish.

[MUSIC FADES IN]

AV: After some defiance from Julian, Mademoiselle not only succeeds in forcing him to dress as a girl, but also to wear her used drawers as sleeves. The humiliation divests him of his right to perform masculinity, yet these negative feelings become associated more with titillation over time. The women in his life problematize his gender presentation by flipping between forcing femininity upon him and insisting upon his masculinity as though it were essential to his being. In numerous cases, dominant women like Mademoiselle explain away that forced feminization by arguing that Julian's femininity is, in fact, essential—not his supposed maleness. One example of this manifests in a conflict of interest between Mademoiselle's desire to feminize Julian and the cousins' rebellion from these plans. After Beatrice commands Julian to remove his nightdress—

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

[SFX: SHUFFLING CLOTHES DROP TO THE FLOOR]

JR: I had to divest myself of my sole garment and stand stark naked. She gazed at me from head to foot, whilst I covered my face with my hands. A woman, I suppose, would have adopted the attitude of the Venus de Medici.

BT: A fine girl you are, Julian, with a big thing in front of you.

[MUSIC FADES IN]

AV: Julian compares his mannerisms to a female statue as a gendered measure of his response to shame. Judging by Beatrice's actions throughout the narrative, she only humors the notion of Julian as a girl here as she applies a layer of sarcasm and humiliation. Beatrice reminds Julian of his genitalia while Julian agrees that because of his behavior, he

cannot be a woman. Behavior and thought processes can be altered, a truth that Mademoiselle proves and uses to manipulate Julian with. However, Julian's anatomy does not physically change, so him and his female rulers grapple with this point of contention for the remainder of the narrative. Julian finds it difficult to worship women, particularly those he is not in love with, when they are not wearing their garments. He reveals this tendency with Maud when he is punished for having vaginal sex with her. Julian is strapped to Maud after they both receive whippings—

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

JR: But now I was back-to-back with her, absolutely naked. It was the fact that she was a girl, that she was feminine and I male, which gave such piquancy. But she had possessed me while she had on her petticoats, and they certainly emphasized the difference of sex. I distinctly recollect that when she was undressed a vague sense of disappointment stole over me to find that after all she had a body and two legs like myself. Wherein does the charm, the esoteric feminine magnetism, lie? In petticoats. Verily petticoats, drawers, corsets, long silk stockings, have a powerful and mysterious influence. Maud, naked, did not possess the same power over me as Maud in her petticoats.

[MUSIC FADES IN]

AV: A psychoanalysis might insist that Julian portrays a man with a female attire fetish, as Krafft-Ebing would put it, but his desire is best connected to his dualistic nature—love and hate of submission to women. Julian finds minimal gender distinction—thus, no power asymmetry—between a woman and himself when her clothes are off, so the attraction dissipates. His erotic association with women involves their clothing—the authoritarian and sensual power of petticoat-rule. Julian wants women to rule, even though he often fights against them. In the epilogue, Julian speaks at thirty years of age, declaring, “A woman can make a man”—

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

[SFX: RAPIDLY TIGHTLACING A CORSET]

JR: I confess—whether I shall be pitied for it or not—that I love my bondage and I love my tyrant. She has developed me intellectually and physically. Still there is something in me which assures me that man was made for more than the petticoat. This world is woman's earth, and it is petticoated all over. Theirs is the dominion, turn and twist the matter as you will. Therefore, I conclude there must be some other world where men will have a ruling part to play.

[MUSIC FADES IN]

AV: Married to Beatrice who keeps him as her slave, Julian simultaneously acknowledges what he views as the worth of his relationship to petticoat-government and his wife, his current ruler, while expressing his defiance. The entire story shows the different ways in which women overcome Julian's resistance, and this continues into his marriage. This may seem like a failure of petticoat-government in practice. However, the crux of sexual excitation for the women in *Gynecocracy* stems from Julian's insubordination and finding ways to correct his behavior. Pleasure is derived from seeing their corrections stick, and of course their methods work in that they keep Julian disempowered and adopting certain behaviors to gain favor, but these women would have little to be excited about if Julian always behaved himself to their improbable standards. Julian constitutes an opposite and dualist desire as well. Being receptive to domination, Julian seeks respite from his childhood traditional masculinity and sense of self-possession, giving that responsibility up to a woman who can overpower his rebellion. That is where his struggle for freedom comes from—an invitation to control his mind and body. Julian wishes to possess his own body in one way, though, and that is through procreation. He refers to his primary goal as incarnation, or to be embodied in flesh, referring to a more spiritual connotation of conception. Julian longs to legitimize his love for Mademoiselle by inseminating her. Instead, he despairs at having only been allowed to ejaculate onto her dress—

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

MHC: So I am to love you all in all or not at all, eh?

JR: It is such waste!

MHC: Waste?

JR: Yes! All the ideas with which you inspire me, all my conceptions of the loveliest forms suggested by your own beauty, all worked up into the most perfect expression, to be absolutely wasted on your nightdress. What can your nightdress do with it? It cannot incarnate the creature of my soul. You wish me to acquiesce in this—in your being cheated of conceiving, in my being cheated of—of conception by you!

MHC: Julian, on the subject of incarnation and conception you are mad—stark staring mad! It is a perfect mania with you! I expressly wish to avoid incarnation and conception. You selfish animal—!

JR: She burst out—

MHC: In plain language you want me to have a baby!

JR: Of course I do; I answered imperturbably. Of course I do. It is my right. You have given me the right. You have created, fostered, and inspired the idea. You have made me perform

my part, and received it in the front of this; scornfully exclaimed I, holding up the front of her garment wet with my spermatozoa. Of course I do; I indignantly continued. Imagine, with my devotion to you and your kindness and goodness to me, which develop that devotion to its fullest extent—imagine Hortense, my own, what a love, what—

MHC: Julian, Julian—

JR: She cried, grief in her voice—

MHC: Stop! It would be illegitimate.

JR: Illegitimate; I retorted. What does that matter? To whom, except to hypocrites, is that of importance? Label it what you please, it would be our—our—child.

[MUSIC FADES IN]

AV: Julian's tryst with his cousin Maud discussed before ended with Mademoiselle and Elise flushing his semen out of her vaginal canal, negating any potential for impregnation. Much of the depression he suffers stems from his reproductive desires being overruled. The determination to procreate continues with the presentation of Miss Julia as she courts Lord Alfred Ridlington, a female crossdresser in disguise who worked with Mademoiselle to convince Julia that there was no crossdressing element. As a girl in her mind and her behavior, Julia convinces herself that her body is just as female—

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

JR: He pressed his hands round my waist, got them beneath my clothes, and played with what I understood was an unnaturally overgrown clitoris. He removed one hand to insert something behind. It felt like the tube Mademoiselle had pushed in there. It burnt me, but delightfully. In a few minutes it throbbed with violence and I felt deluged with warm moisture. My clitoris also responded.

[MUSIC FADES IN]

AV: Instead of referring to her penis as mons Priapus, which she does throughout the text, Julia calls the penis her clitoris, feminizing what she would also previously refer to as her male organ since the word clitoris is associated with what is often called, quote, female anatomy. This is gender-affirming behavior in a sexual context. The language shift occurs in part due to Lord Alfred asserting that, "that thing in front is abnormally large," unquote, instead of reacting negatively or ever calling it a penis, corroborating Mademoiselle's hermaphrodite narrative that she invented for Julia's female persona. Since Lord Alfred is in on the scheme, it should be noted that his own phallus is an artificial one. Julia expresses her post-coital sadness to Mademoiselle—

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

MHC: Do you like being a girl?

JR: No, I do not.

MHC: And pray, why?

JR: Because I feel I can be more.

MHC: More?

JR: Yes. I was the wrong side up. Lord Alfred Ridlington may have enjoyed possession of me, but I never seemed to possess him, and I do not think I shall have a baby. I had to run away almost directly. My womb retained nothing. There is nothing to germinate.

[MUSIC FADES IN]

AV: Even though Lord Alfred appears to have ejaculated inside of her womb, Julia's dissatisfaction comes from her realization that she is incapable of conceiving a child. She cannot retain fluids injected into her rectum which is evidence to her of her true anatomical sex, so she despairs that she cannot incarnate as a woman. The only reason she dislikes being a girl now is because of her incomplete fulfillment of the duties of traditional womanhood—that is, motherhood. Therefore, Julia must incarnate as a man. Julia embraces gender variance to the end in some capacity, however; the petticoat is not a lost cause to her. Whether embodying Julian or Julia, she finds sexual pleasure in being sexually satisfied both as a woman and as a man, either sometimes a mistress or sometimes a male lover, as Mademoiselle would put it. Reflecting upon her encounter with Lord Alfred, Julia states—

JR: But, of course, having all this done by a man to me in the character of a girl, had a queer, perplexing, and very exciting effect on my temperament. He had wooed me in the most approved fashion and had sought and obtained all that as a girl I had to give.

AV: Without the promise of procreation, this is still gender variance as erotic to the letter. Julia moves to Julian and back again between sexual experiences and punishments day by day, hour by hour, with flipping name and pronoun usage between different girls and women. As Julian, he does have sex as a man, but not as a dominant one or one with any autonomy in the situation. He is always some form of subordinate. The confusion feeds his thrill because, by the end of the story, his dualism settles into his character as he accepts his fate in his subservient husband status under petticoat-rule. A petticoat-slave and a petticoated-male at that, Julian could never forget Julia, the girl that Mademoiselle created out of him.

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

AV: A new queer theory for the Victorian crossdresser.

[MUSIC FADES IN]

AV: If Mademoiselle's job is to teach middle-class girls, how could her conduct toward Julian and his cousins be considered normative? By no means are her punitive measures or her creation of a girl through forced feminization normative, but Julian cannot be said to be subverting gender norms by crossdressing. Trans identities—transvestite or transgender—are often said to be subverting gender norms by virtue of existing. Since Julian suits the loose criteria of critical theory on transvestism by being a crossdresser, his gender does not defy the gender binary, and instead attempts to cross between the two sides depending on which circumstance he is in and what suits him at what time. Julian conforms to gender to the best of his ability no matter which gender he is presenting as. In fact, it is Mademoiselle or Beatrice who always have the last word on this. Since it pertains most to his female persona, Julia is the focus here. Twenty-first-century writer Samantha Allen considers the male-to-female transvestite while criticizing previous foundational works of feminist and queer theory—Gayle Rubin's "Thinking Sex" from nineteen-eighty-four, Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* from nineteen-ninety, and Marjorie Garber's *Vested Interests* from nineteen-ninety-two. She dissects how these writers speak on transvestism and proposes her own theory. Allen argues that "many male-to-female transvestites are earnestly invested in the believability of their imitation," shown by their efforts to pass as women. When posing as a girl, Julia makes her best effort to pass. She does not indulge in her female persona as a, quote, "mockery of [her] own aspirations." Mademoiselle recreates Julian as Julia to humiliate her, but her female or hermaphroditic self is not a parody of womanhood. The governess molded Julian like clay into a copy of female grace and dignity, watching him turn into her with self-indulgence and a sense of growing power over the new girl. She performs similar rituals with Julia's cousins, though under a different light as they were already assigned female. Meanwhile, the once-Julian had begun a foray into being Miss Julia as a charade, only to grow into her new identity. She embraces being a girl, if only for as long as she can be convinced that she can bear a child. As discussed earlier, Julia's only desire in life is not just procreation, but also sexual pleasure, and she finds that through crossdressing. Allen speaks on the erotic drive to cross dress in a less clinical way than the psychiatrists and physicians before her. She states that male-to-female transvestites do not care to subvert or expose what she calls the ficticity of gender. They only want to enjoy the show. Julia conforms to girlhood to the best of her ability, and her persona also brings her sexual excitation, just like her worship of Mademoiselle does. If that is true, then Allen argues that, quote, "conscripting the male-to-female transvestite into a universal fight against binarism then may be counter to his erotic interests," unquote, because the female norms integral to that gender binary are ones the transvestite uses to indulge in erotic pleasure. Julia finds pleasure in wearing

petticoats, and being called Julia triggers sexual arousal in her. To elaborate on her theory of the transvestite's investiture in gender norms, Allen utilizes a new take on Alan Turing's Imitation Game test; the public valley, or Allen's version of the uncanny valley; and affect theory. These methods of assessing the transvestite's relationship with gender apply to Julia's fictional representation of Victorian crossdressing. The Imitation Game and affect theory work the best for analyzing Julia's gender eroticism. In her queering of Turing's Imitation Game, Allen, quote, "replaces the ontological question of whether or not a man is, in fact, a woman with the interactional question of whether he can fool an audience into believing that he is a woman." This is done by examining the act of passing by the male-to-female transvestite. Albeit under female control, Julia engages in this behavior at dinner with potential male suitors around. Lord Alfred knows Julia's anatomical sex but still treats her as Miss Julia, completing Julia's successful imitation as she comports herself with middle-class ladylike language and poise.

[MUSIC ENDS]

AV: Events like these incorporate passing, and that "involves moment-to-moment social interactions in which gender, whether felt or perceived, is at stake." The scene at dinner leads to Lord Alfred taking Julia away from the carpet dance to a secluded spot in the conservatory, where he begins to make sexual advances on Julia, causing her distress in this internal monologue—

JR: I had never been in such a fix before. I liked being made love to; but when he discovered that I was a fraud! Confound Mademoiselle and all her ways! What on earth to do—whether to confess what I was, say I could not help it, and rely on his honor not to tell—I did not know. The idea of running away occurred, but what a fool I should look, and, besides, it very soon became impossible, and I was obliged to abandon all thought of it, for he put his arm round my waist and held my thighs pressed closely to him. How a girl would have enjoyed it, but me! I could only behave as I conceived a maiden would have done. To add to my confusion, and to hasten the catastrophe, his other hand, in some inexplicable way, got up one of my legs underneath my petticoats. Then I felt there was no hope left! The murder would soon be out, and he would indignantly expose me to Mademoiselle, and she! But between my real and imaginary sensations, I was in such a state of tremor and excitement that I could only rest gasping against him, be the consequences what they might. After several minutes of the most deliciously exciting but yet most embarrassing dalliance with my legs and undergarments, and after many whispered soft nothings in my ear

[SFX: RUSTLING FABRIC]

JR: He slipped his hand right up to my waist and got a firm hold of what was fastened there between my limbs.

[MUSIC FADES IN]

AV: Lord Alfred's hand on Julia's penis horrifies her because she is trying to pass. The discovery of her genitalia in their first encounter exposes her anatomical sex, thus jeopardizing her imitation in a moment of intimacy. Even later attempts by Lord Alfred to touch Julia embarrasses her because the reminder of her so-called male organ is incongruent with her feminine dress and behavior. So, if Julia is trying to pass, how does she accomplish this? As a governess, Mademoiselle teaches the girls how to behave, and Julia is no different. She learns the framework for portraying femininity, thus embodying it to the point of believability—not just others believing her, but her believing her own portrayal. This layer is absent in Allen's theoretical analysis, but it is crucial to Mademoiselle's manipulation of Julia's perception of reality and the extent of control that petticoat-rule has over her mind and body. Julia uses pre-programmed behaviors or scripts learned from Mademoiselle's teachings whenever she indulges in being a girl. As Allen finds in contemporary male-to-female crossdressers, Julia's attempts to portray convincing femininity "involve a minimisation and/or routinisation of movement," unquote, including the tucking of her penis with a bandage, the restraint of a corset, and the fixing of a serrated steel ring around the base of her penis—

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

JR: By means of a watch spring attached to it, it was fixed on to mons Priapus, and it was evident to me that if he enlarged himself in the least, the teeth would be into him and the more he grew, the further they would penetrate.

MHC: There—

JR: Said Mademoiselle, having daintily fixed the instrument.

MHC: I think this will cure you, but in the drawing room, I must direct Elise to replace that bandage you wore when Lord Alfred Ridlington dined with us. And now, Miss Julia, of course you know you must be birched. Beatrice, flog your cousin's bottom for her?

JR: Beatrice brightened up at the notion of whipping me. Mons Priapus grew. I got fearfully pricked.

[MUSIC FADES IN]

AV: Although there is no chance of passing in the conventional sense with Mademoiselle and Beatrice, the pain to Julia's penis conditions into her a form of self-restraint to help her pass. This extreme form of minimization of movement helps with the portrayal of traditional femininity and is designed to dissuade her from having more erections in the future. Of course, considering *Gynecocracy* is porn, Julia never stops having erections. A kinetic force shows itself in just how much movement Julia accomplishes despite often being restricted by verbal command or bound by physical restraints. To return to the

realm of psychology, Allen introduces affect theory, a theory attributed to Silvan Tomkins, who describes affect as primarily facial behavior and secondarily bodily behavior. Tomkins elaborates on affective states as not, quote, “preced[ing] this behaviour; rather, we only become ‘aware of our affects’ as we likewise become cognisant of the movement of our faces and bodies.” Julia’s penis is one indicator of her affect throughout the narrative. The text equates her erections to her erotic desires, often contradictory to what she says. Her erections and her affect are also, quote, “inextricably intertwined in a constant feedback loop,” meaning the erections are her desire—they are her affect—not just physiological reactions beyond her control. The reader can use Julia’s bodily behavior to assess her feelings in different situations, as well as what gendered behavior she indulges in at different times, in her female persona, or as Julian instead. Think back to the psychosexual power of the petticoat again, and remember how it influenced her—

JR: I arranged my skirts and myself comfortably, leaving my pretty ankles and shoes sufficiently visible for my own delectation.

[PAUSE]

JR: I hugged my petticoats about me as friendly things. I felt very naughty and very happy.

AV: The act of hugging her petticoats and her joy feed one another in a loop of indulgent naughtiness. Her purposeful arrangement of her skirts and the way she positions her legs to show her ankles, a routinization and restriction of movement as well, influences her delectation, her pleasure. Mademoiselle taught Julia the power of women’s garments. That power captivates Julia, and she capitalizes on it by playing into the role she was given. By all stretches of the imagination, her pursuit of fulfilling a female role seeks to conform to feminine gender norms defined by Mademoiselle, not to subvert any.

[SIGNIFICANT PAUSE, MUSIC CHANGE]

AV: Even the inescapability of petticoat-government gives Miss Julia the chance to try out the fantasy of female rule under Mademoiselle’s supervision. When Beatrice disrespects the governess in the schoolroom, Mademoiselle orders Julia to birch her cousin—

JR: I contemplated with rapture the plump, white thighs, the private parts, the curving back of my future wife now exposed to me for punishment.

MHC: Now, Julia!

JR: Cried Mademoiselle. I recollected how Mademoiselle had birched me, and how I had often been birched since, and resolved to better the instruction. Maud and Agnes looked on with blanched faces and heaving bosoms.

[SFX: CREAKING WOOD]

JR: Mademoiselle moved in her chair in a way I understood. Mary was scarlet. I felt a strange kind of fire, a lust for flesh, thrill and bound in my veins, and I thirsted for blood. Slowly and deliberately as Mary counted, with all my force I flogged Beatrice's bottom soundly.

[SFX: SEVERAL LOUD WHIP CRACKS]

JR: She yelled and screamed, and writhed, and twisted, but Mary held her fast. Before long she was reduced to the most abject submission. No obstinacy can withstand the birch.

AV: In a fury of sexual arousal, Mademoiselle rewards Julia with sex, affirming her girlhood throughout and after by calling her a—

MHC: Naughty girl.

AV: And using the name—

MHC: Julia!

AV: The circle of petticoat-government has been closed, and Julia has tasted the fine fruits of embodying femininity and being captivated by femininity. Of course, she would eventually resurface as Julian, and he would no longer entrench himself that deep in his female persona moving into his marriage with Beatrice, but that experience changed him forever as a crossdressing slave in a woman's world.

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

AV: Parting words.

[PAUSE]

AV: In the end, Mademoiselle may have renounced the real England's standards of female propriety through her socioeconomic poise and sadistic conduct as a governess, but she exercised her power in cruel and unusual ways to achieve results that any Victorian governess or mother would want—to teach, to raise, to create the perfect girls. Well, sort of. A subject of petticoat-government, Julian reads as both a victim and a beneficiary. He loves his subjugation and thanks his rulers for giving him everything he knows now. The story reverses patriarchal rule to an extreme, using women's sexual power, and uses Julian as an example to demonstrate the futility of male self-possession. He cannot possess himself if he belongs to someone else. Good thing, too, since Julian now prefers to be owned and controlled. Julian never forgot his desire to incarnate, though. Before he married Beatrice, he convinced one of the two loves of his

life, Mademoiselle, to allow him to impregnate her. In fact, he begged for permission and pronounced his love as he always did.

[TRIUMPHANT MUSIC SWELLS SLOWLY]

AV: Mademoiselle invited Julian to get on top of her, an unusual allowance, and penetrate her; she yielded to his affections—

MHC: With all my heart!

AV: And called him both—

MHC: Julia!

AV: And—

MHC: Lord Ladywood.

AV: Feminine and masculine, in the throes of their passion. After Beatrice and Julian married, Mademoiselle gave birth, and Julian reflects on the loving creation of his child—

JR: My majority was approaching, and I was already the father of a beautiful girl, able in its infantine prattle to say, “Mam, mam, mam,” to its own dear mamma, my Hortense. I confided to her the secret between Beatrice and myself. She had wished to be the mother of a child of love, not of marriage.

[SIGNIFICANT PAUSE, MUSIC QUIETS DOWN AND STARTS TO SWELL AGAIN]

JR: I saw Mademoiselle and Julia, my daughter, shortly after our return. I am very proud of Julia, and so is her mother. She is a beautiful and as fine a child as children of love usually are, and I have settled ten thousand pounds upon her, which I did with huge satisfaction, feeling that I thereby gave society and its hypocrisies a nice slap in the face.

[SILENCE]

AV: Thank you for listening to this podcast episode of the *CSUN Queer Studies Capstone Podcast of Spring 2021*. “The Masochistic Crossdresser and the Sadistic Governess: Creating Ladies Under D(u)ress” was created by Arkaz Vardanyan, the narrator, writer, and researcher of this project. The part of Julian-slash-Julia was played by an anonymous voice actor. Another CSUN Queer Studies Podcaster, Skate Courduff, played the role of Mademoiselle. All Other Roles were played by Cyrus Shafii. This podcast uses a recording of Frédéric Chopin’s Nocturne Number 20 C Sharp Minor by Progression Labs licensed under CC BYNC 3.0, found at ccmixter.org/files/ProgressionLabs/40155. This podcast also uses recordings by Paul Cantrell licensed under CC BYNC 3.0, including

Chopin's Nocturne Opus 15 Number 3 in G Minor; his Prelude Opus 28 Number 4 and 9; Franz Schubert's Piano Piece D946 Number 1 in E Flat; Robert Schumann's Bunte Blätter Number 6; Johannes Brahms's Ballade Opus 10 Number 4; and Brahms's Intermezzo Opus 117 Number 2. All recordings were performed by Cantrell except for Schubert's Piano Piece, which was performed by Donald Betts. You can find these on Cantrell's website at innig.net/music.

[SFX: HEELS CLICKING AND ECHOING, FADE IN]

AV: For those who listened to the end, how convincing was Mademoiselle's creation? Can a woman change a man like that, beyond fantasy? How good does a modern-day petticoated world sound, as opposed to one fitted with a stiff pair of trousers?

[SFX: HEELS CLICKING, FADE OUT]