



The Secret Vice: Masturbation in Victorian Fiction and Medical Culture

Diane Mason is a freelance writer and occasional lecturer in English literature

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The secret vice: Masturbation in Victorian fiction and medical culture provides a unique consideration of writings on self-abuse in the long nineteenth century. The book examines the discourse on masturbation in medical works by English, Continental and American practitioners and demonstrates the influence and impact of these writings, not only on Victorian pornography but also in the creation of fictional characters by canonical authors such as Bram Stoker, J. S. Le Fanu, Charles Dickens and Oscar Wilde.

The book also features the first detailed and balanced study of the largely overlooked literature on masturbation as it pertains to women in clinical and popular medical works aimed at the female reader. Mason concludes with a consideration of the way the distinctly Victorian discourse on masturbation has persisted into the late-twentieth and twenty-first centuries with particular reference to Willy Russell's tragic-comic novel, *The Wrong Boy* (2000) and to the construction of 'Victorian Dad', a character featured in the adult comic, *Viz*.

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