INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6” x 9” black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI
A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700  800/521-0600
RICE UNIVERSITY

TRANSVALUING IMMATURITY: HELLENISM, PRIMITIVISM, AND A REVERSE DISCOURSE OF MALE HOMOSEXUALITY IN LATE-VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN NARRATIVE

by

STEPHEN DA SILVA

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

APPROVED THESIS COMMITTEE

Helena Michie, Professor, Director English

Colleen Lamos, Professor English

Martin Wiener, Professor History

Houston, Texas

May, 1998
Acknowledgments

I am deeply indebted to the members of my dissertation committee: Helena Michie, Colleen Lamos, and Martin Wiener. I am particularly grateful to Helena Michie for giving me suggestions about how to turn what I sometimes thought of as “chunks” of writing into structured essays and to Colleen Lamos for making me polish my prose and for responding so exhaustively and thoughtfully to various drafts.

Other mentors have been very helpful on different parts of the project: Jane Gallop and Scott Derrick richly responded to versions of chapters 3 and 5 respectively. I first encountered Freud’s equation of homosexuality with developmentally arrested “fumbl[ing]” in an independent studies class on psychoanalysis and homosexuality that I took with Jane Gallop, and I have been pleasurably fumbling with developmental accounts of homosexuality and resistance to those accounts ever since. It is one of the anti-essentialist ironies of this project that a dissertation which focuses on the thematics of Hellenic pederasty/pedagogy should be so indebted to several, strong female teachers.

Among my fellow graduate students, I would particularly like to thank Padmaja Challakere, Caroline Field Levander, Martine van Elke, Rebecca Stern, and Peter Norberg for commenting on various chapters. I am indebted to Padmaja Challakere and Margaret Wong for helping me to move from using a typewriter to using a word processor. Contrary to some of the writers I examine, it seems that technological progress occasionally has distinct benefits.
# Table of Contents

I. Introduction .......................................................... 1

Section One: Youthful and Degenerate Homosexualities

II. The Love That Dare Speak Its Name: Paternity, Pederasty, and Wilde’s Reverse Discourse of Male Homosexuality .......... 48

III. Disciplined Perversity: Identification, English Literature, and Intergenerational Erotics in E. F. Benson’s *David Blaize* .... 86

Section Two: Youthful Homosexuality and Corrupted Heterosexual Culture

IV. A Queer Touch and the Bloomian Model of Authorial Influence .................. 118

V. The Intermediate Type and the End of History: Edward Carpenter’s Dialectical Models of History and Homosexuality .... 151

VI. Transvaluing Immaturity in E. M. Forster’s Posthumously Published Fiction 207
Introduction

Since the inception of the hetero/homosexual binarism in Anglo-American culture, same-sex desire has persistently been associated with immaturity or arrested development.¹ In this dissertation, I explore how late-Victorian and Edwardian British male homosexual writers drew on the idioms of Hellenistic pederasty and primitivism both to reinscribe and partially transvalue this association.² Broadly speaking, I explore two strategies that these writers pursued: some authors differentiated between mature and immature strains of homosexuality and by aligning their variety of same-sex desire with the supposedly mature norm attempted to affect an alliance with the male homosocial order. Other writers, or the same writers in different parts of their work, drew on the developmental terms of normative culture but attempted to transvalue their significance. These writers romantically celebrated the association of homosexuality with youthfulness and argued that the youthful homosexual had a vital lesson to teach an aged, corrupt heteronormative order.

The Stereotype of the Immature Homosexual

In Epistemology of the Closet, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick contends that there is an ideological link between the binarism homo/heterosexual and such oppositions as innocence/initiation, ignorance/knowledge, and old/new, all dualities which have connections with the opposition between the adult and child (11). This link is not surprising as there has been a long tradition that has represented the homosexual as being psychically and/or somatically arrested. In this section, I will focus in particular on the ways in which the stereotype of the developmentally arrested homosexual inflects sexological, psychoanalytic, and literary discourses and the extent to which this stereotype served the interests of British male homosocial institutions like the public school which
were meant to prepare middle-class men for their leadship role within Britain's imperial and patriarchal culture.

Several strands of sexological discourse, drawing on the terms of evolutionary biology, saw same-sex desire as a form of atavism. As Sherwood Williams, Lawrence Birken, Marjorie Garber, and others have pointed out, one version of this story represented evolution as a process that involved increasing gender differentiation. According to this narrative, primal organisms were androgynous or bisexual.\(^3\) Inversion models of same-sex desire that conceptualized the homosexual or lesbian as being torn between an internal gendered identity and a physical exterior of the opposite gender, in other words as constituting an aberrant androgynous or bisexual mixture, logically reinforced the equation of the homosexual with an earlier state of evolutionary development.\(^4\) Thus, Max Nordau argued that "hermaphroditism . . . [is] a throwback to the asexuality of rhizopod" (Nordau qtd. in Williams 725-726). Since ontogeny, the developmental history of the individual, was believed to recapitulate phylogeny, the history of the species, James Kiernan was able to extend Ulrichs’s contention that “the supposed lack of gender differentiation in the human embryo [was] evidence that homosexual desire could be traced back to fetal androgyny” to argue that “sexual inversion could be understood in terms of ‘a latent organic bisexuality’ present not only in the individual fetus but the entire race” (Kiernan qtd. in Williams 726).

Another version of this narrative focused less on gender than on the sexual acts, in particular on anal sex. The equation of same-sex desire with a movement back in time was linked by certain sexologists to the homosexual’s predeliction for the supposedly regressive pleasures of the backside. Thus, the sexologist Wilhelm Bolsche argued that while “cloacal love” characterized early species, by the time of the crocodile, anal pleasure was left behind, so to speak, in order that more advanced species could forward to normative genitality (Kiernan qtd. in Williams 726). Given the persistent and wrong-headed association of anal sex with a denial of gender difference, one can see that there is a
continuity between the narrative that links same-sex desire to atavistic, "precrocodillian," anal pleasure and that which associates same-sex desire with a state of primal androgyny.⁵

Williams points out that precariously coexisting with the fiction of the homosexual as regressive aberration was the notion that same-sex desire was a symptom of degeneresence or premature decrepitude (727-728). This seeming contradiction confirms poststructural logic: the deviant is differentially defined by its diacritical relation to an unmarked norm. Both the notion of the homosexual as developmentally arrested and the notion of the homosexual as preternaturally aged, then, are predicated on an unexamined heterosexuality which is complacently assumed to occupy a perfect relationship to temporality.

While Sigmund Freud was deeply critical of the biologism of sexology and arguably in certain places in his work far more radically denaturalized the norm than any sexologist, he too persistently associated same-sex desire with developmental arrest and regression.⁶ For Freud, different homosexualities had different etiologies:

What is for practical reasons called homosexuality may arise from a whole variety of psychosexual inhibitory processes; the particular process we have singled out is perhaps only one among many, and is perhaps related to only one type of "homosexuality" (Leonardo 101)

However, note that while Freud concedes a "whole variety" of possible etiological causes for homosexuality, they are all "inhibitory processes"(my emphasis), and indeed, all the variations that he rings on the origins of same-sex desire are linked to developmental arrest or regression.

In Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality, a text written prior to theorizing the Oedipus complex, Freud constructs an elaborate developmental narrative. From an anti-homophobic viewpoint, the text is simultaneously deeply radical and conservative: in the first essay, Freud uses homosexuality to call into question the link between the sexual drive and object, a move that allows him to question the ideological privileging of
heterosexuality and implicitly to call the whole hetero/homosexual system into question. However, in the third essay, Freud insists on a teleological account of sexuality, associating closure with heterosexual union and reproduction:

With the arrival of puberty, changes set in which are destined to give infantile sexual life its final, normal shape... The sexual instinct is now subordinated to the reproductive function; it becomes, so to say, altruistic. (73)

One has to work to achieve this altruistic ending, though, and the homosexual is one who is unable to make it to the end of the journey. Heterosexuals may experience same-sex desire along the way, but these feelings amount to an ineffectual "fumbling" prior to achieving normative adulthood: thus the section on "Prevention of Inversion" begins

One of the tasks implicit in object choice is that it should find its way to the opposite sex. This... is not accomplished without a certain amount of fumbling. Often enough the first impulses after puberty go astray though without any permanent harm resulting. (95)

"Permanent harm results" when the pervert refuses to move beyond this adolescent stage to accept the adult responsibilities of reproductive altruism, choosing instead to indulge in the pleasures of fumbling permanently.

In Oedipal terms, Freud constructs several etiological scenarios for different male homosexualities. Most of them hinge on the supposed inability of the homosexual to achieve the proper developmental distance from his mother. Kenneth Lewes usefully summarizes Freud's various etiological accounts of homosexuality: one narrative holds that the mother has an excessive tenderness for the young male child. When the child discovers that his mother does not have a penis, he is "horrified and disgusted. His loved mother becomes an object of loathing to him... He therefore severs the erotic bond with his now despised mother and henceforth chooses a compromise figure for his sexual object: a 'woman with a penis,' a boy with a feminine appearance" (Lewes 36). If in this variety of same-sex desire, the male homosexual disidentifies with the mother, in another
strain of homosexuality, the male homosexual too completely identifies with his mother: To avoid relinquishing his maternal bond, he "introjects" his mother and "selects love objects who resemble himself. In loving them, he can reexperience the erotic bond that once united him to his mother" (Lewes 38).

In the case of the Wolf Man, Freud theorized developmental arrest in paternal-filial rather than maternal-filial terms: "the Wolf Man's identification with his father was undone when his sister seduced him. . . Rather than be like the father, the boy chose to be loved by him" (Lewes 40). As Williams points out, the continuity of Freudian psychoanalysis and sexology is marked in this case because Freud associates the Wolf Man's desire to be analyly penetrated by his father both with a regression to phylogenetically archaic desires (recall the sexologocial association of sodomy with evolutionary regressive practices) and with feminization (several sexologists, as you will recall, associated sodomy with a denial of gender differentiation or regression to a state prior to gender differentiation).

The Anglo-American psychoanalytic community committed to ego psychology and a more rigid sense of the division between deviance and the norm than that held by Freud pathologized homosexuality in Britain and the United States prior to the 1960s. Martin Duberman, among others, has both powerfully and comically described the condescending ease with which 1950s American "psychiatry" dismissed his homoerotic "libidinal impulses" as "arrested at a stage of early adolescence" and the series of therapists who went to work to convert him to heterosexuality (14-15).

Even more damagingly, a vulgarized version of these etiological narratives of homosexuality has become a part of contemporary ideology, so that parents and educators, who may have never read a word of Freud, with knowing authority, often discount the desire of young people coming out of the closet as "a passing phase." Sedgwick has suggested that the notion that immature homosexual desire must die in order for the normal adolescent to progress to maturity has been translated with unhappy ease into the ideological fantasy that homosexuals themselves must die for the health of the culture. This
genocidal and homophobic fantasy has gained a particularly overdetermined power with the advent of AIDS (Epistemology 129). In many conservative accounts of AIDS, the origin of the disease is linked to the immature hedonism of a generation of post-Stonewall gay men. Some of these accounts see this pandemic as having the fortunate side effect of forcing gay men to recognize mature responsibility, read conform more with heterosexual norms. Underlying some of these accounts is the desire that society move beyond homosexuality altogether to a universal heterosexual order.

Apart from sexological and psychoanalytic theories, the post-Thomas Arnoldian British public school was also shaped by the notion that same-sex desire was a phase that was left behind on the way to adulthood. As Sedgwick points out, middle-class Englishmen were expected to form intense homoerotic bonds in school and, as I will explain at greater length in the second chapter of this dissertation, those bonds played a productive role in preparing young men to exercise national and imperial functions. But on leaving school, these young men were expected to relinquish these bonds and move on to occupy their rightful place in society as adult heterosexual patriarchs. In such a system, the homosexual was understood as one who remained frozen at the boyhood stage of school friendships. Cyril Connolly, in a much quoted passage from The Enemies of Promise economically articulates this mythology:

the experiences undergone by boys at the great public schools . . . arrest their development . . . [Thus] a greater part of the ruling class remains adolescent, school-minded, self-conscious, cowardly, sentimental, and in the last analysis homosexual. (253)

The list above shows that for Connolly “in the last analysis” the inability emotionally to graduate from school and move on to adult pursuits is the same as being homosexual. While Connolly usefully recognizes the disavowed homoeroticism that lies at the heart of the British male patriarchy, his analysis ignores the heterosexist aims of the institution. For even though public school boys had homoerotic experiences, they often did not self-
identify as homosexual, and the whole point of the process was ultimately to channel their desires into serving heterosexual patriarchy. Thus, Sedgwick recounts how a former public schoolboy on being asked whether he “ever had any homosexual inclinations since leaving Eton,” responded with some energy, “Steady on . . . it’s all right for fellows to mess one another about a bit at school. But when we grow up we put aside childish things” (Michael Nelson qtd. in Between 176). Conversely, many self-identified gay men, like John Addington Symonds and Robin Maugham, were extremely unhappy in their public schools and sharply disassociated their desire for men from the homoeroticism they witnessed and were sometimes coerced into at school.

Commenting on his public school experience at Charterhouse, Robert Graves has distinguished between “pseudo homo-sexuals” created by public school and “real” homosexuals, and I think it is important to clarify how my amendment of Connolly’s formulation differs from that articulated by Graves and many other traditional commentators on public school erotics. In the 1927 edition of his memoir Goodbye to All That, Graves writes, “For everyone born homo-sexual there are at least ten . . . pseudo-homo-sexuals made by the public school system . . . Many boys never recover from this perversion. I only recovered . . . by the age of twenty one” (Graves qtd. in Garber 311). Graves’s formulation is predicated on a belief in immutable, essential sexual categories, “hetero” and “homosexuality,” which assumption allows him to draw a distinct line between “pseudo” and “real” homosexualities. This distinguishing line proves particularly helpful to him in discriminating between his idealized, “pseudo” love for Dick, the name he gives the boyhood friend on whom he had a Platonic crush at Charterhouse, and that friend’s “truly” homosexual, carnal desire for other men (his love of “dick,” one might say), which revolts Graves.⁹

Although Connolly and Graves’s positions might seem to be diametrically opposite (for Connolly the public school ethos produces homosexuals; for Graves the public school ethos fosters the illusion of homosexuality), both their formulations are based on the
epistemological certainty that homosexuality constitutes a discrete entity which can be securely differentiated from heterosexuality. My argument, by contrast, does not assume that the continuum of desire can be broken into reified categories like “homo” and “heterosexuality.” I take it as axiomatic that queer desire is not other to the norm but is, in fact, a difference which inhabits the norm. Consistent with this position, my emphasis would be on unconcealing the queerness that inhabits the norm. Rather than seeing the truth of the public school to be a repressed homoeroticism, as Connolly does, I would want to examine how an institution that is designed to promote compulsory heterosexuality and male homosocial power is structurally inhabited by the male homoeroticism that it would disavow.

Finally, the association of homosexuality with a mere developmental phase also informs literary discourse, both the temporal conventions of realist narrative and the aesthetic evaluation of gay-identified writers. To begin with narrative conventions: the temporal philosophy that undergirds the machinery of realist narrative is isomorphic to that of heterosexist ideology. Heterosexist developmental ideology has complete confidence in what constitutes a good ending and is deeply invested in formal closure. It also depends on a linear model of time. Realist narrative conventions are predicated on similar commitments. Thus, Paul Morrison has made the rather hyperbolic claim that “the temporal art of narrative... is both heterosexual and heterosexalizing” (54).

The ideological predisposition of realist narrative machinery to heterosexism is reflected in the ways in which same-sex desire figures in realist plots. Marriage or heterosexual union usually closes most nineteenth- and realist twentieth-century narratives. One of the common topoi in these narratives which allows homosexual desire to enter representation yet contains that desire within heterosexist confines is the death of potential male objects of desire. One might consult Sedgwick’s instructive readings of the role that the deaths of George Osborn and Steerforth in Vanity Fair and David Copperfield play in advancing the homosocial marriage plot (Between Men chapter 9). The death bed scene in
realist narrative often permits the expression of passionate affect between two men while clearing a space for one of them to move on to the marriage or heterosexual union, which most often provides closure for realist narrative. Even if the male object of desire does not literally die, he symbolically slips out of the narrative, giving way to a female object of desire who will allow the narrative to achieve closure: in Evelyn Waugh’s Brideshead Revisited, for instance, from the moment one encounters Julia, Sebastian’s sister who uncannily resembles him, as a reader familiar with the conventions of realist narrative, one knows that the story of the narrator’s passionate undergraduate infatuation with Sebastian will give way to the story of his desire for Julia. Indeed, the plot machinery finally removes Sebastian from England altogether arguably to facilitate the movement of Julia and Charles Ryder’s relationship center stage.

Conversely, the ways in which certain modernist and postmodernist writers deform realist narrative conventions have distinct implications for reading their sexual politics. For instance, Morrison reads the conclusion of Walter Pater’s Renaissance as scandalously repudiating the heterosexist logic that undergirds realist narrative. For Pater, the intensely rich experiential moment perversely gains precedence over the closure which is so central to realism and heterosexist ideology. In a similar vein, one can see how the challenges that Virginia Woolf poses to the realist narrative conventions of literature and historiography in a text like Orlando are intimately linked to the ways in which she subverts the assumptions of heterosexist ideology within that text.

However, the writers I have chosen to focus on in this dissertation all work squarely within the temporal conventions of realism, while partially resisting its terms. Significantly, for instance, my chapter on Wilde does not focus on a text like The Picture of Dorian Gray, which has a recognizable continuity with Pater’s celebration of perverse, anti-narrative temporality (the picture may be subject to the temporal conventions of realism but Dorian Gray himself experientially flouts those temporal constraints) but focuses instead on De Profundis, which does not call into question the temporal logic of realism. Similarly,
while in my reading of E. M. Forster’s posthumously published texts, I will suggest that the endings of his stories violently register his discontent with the limitations of developmental ideology, those texts recognizably fit the conventions of realist temporality or merely invert those conventions: rather than move forward in time to closure, in many of the stories there is a nostalgic movement back in time to a pastoral homoerotic intimacy and formal closure.

There are two reasons for my choice not to deal with formally experimental writers in this dissertation: first, the focus of this project is the ways in which normative ideology can be strategically appropriated by anti-homophobic discourse. Realist conventions remain central to normative ideology, and so reading homophilic writers who work within those conventions is more helpful in thinking about how the norm can be partially appropriated or productive of limited resistance. Of course, I recognize that experimental, avant garde writers deploy normative discourses in all sorts of ways, but those appropriations often have to be subtly teased out since, at least on the face of it, these writers are more interested in denaturalizing, rather than strategically appropriating, dominant ideology by deforming some of its literary conventions.

A less scholarly respectable but perhaps more compelling reason for my choice springs from my identification with the ambivalence the writers I examine bear toward realist temporal conventions. Like these writers, I am suspicious of the political effects of these conventions, but I do not want to reject them out of hand because they both energize and shape my understanding of my desires. For instance, like Forster or Edward Carpenter, I have an affective, if more ironic, investment in nostalgia. I still recall the end of the valedictory address that I gave as a schoolboy graduating from an Anglicized boys’ school in India, which bore recognizable continuities with the British public schools I discuss in the second chapter. In that coda, I rather melodramatically quoted the following lines from Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, “For ever and for ever farewell. . . / If we do meet again, why we shall smile; / If not, why then this parting was well made” (5.1.116-
while gazing significantly at the classmate on whom I had had a crush for several years. On the one hand, there was a campiness to the gesture, a self-conscious relish in its sentimentality (sonically underlined by the ostentatious alliteration of the lines). At the same time, I also associate this exhibitionistic moment with intense erotic pleasure. Indeed, rather than reading the power of this hammy moment as an indication of how strong my bond with my classmate had been, I now see the strong bond with my classmate as having been proleptically energized by the moment when I would stage my nostalgic "farewell." And indeed, when this classmate, now middle-aged and married, contacted me recently, I felt a certain resentment that in inopportuneely returning, he was disrupting the sentimental closure of the nostalgic narrative I had created.

In addition to my investment in nostalgia, I have a certain investment in stories of father and sons or pederasts and their ephebes. Peter Brooks has suggested that the Oedipal and the family romance stories are salient to the conventions of realist narrative (63). In challenging the conventions of realism, then, experimental modernist and postmodernist writers implicitly challenge the centrality of the Oedipal story line. Even when these texts thematize paternal-filial relations - - I am thinking in particular of James Joyce's Ulysses - - their deformation of the temporal conventions that sustain realist fiction have the potential to denaturalize stories revolving around origins and stable destinations, stories revolving around fathers and sons.

The authors who interest me in this project, however, have a more ambivalent relationship to the paternal-filial story line. On the one hand, the pederast or the gay "daddy," to use a particularly germane piece of contemporary gay slang, does not want to do away with the story of fathers and sons altogether because that story energizes his desire, even if he stands in an ironic relation to it. On the other hand, this same figure has the potential at least partially to undermine the Oedipal story line by revealing the disavowed desire that lies at the heart of paternal-filial relations - - in chapter 1, for instance, I examine how the continuity among Wilde's melodramatic story of his young
lover’s betrayal, Queensberry’s story of his concern for his son’s honor, and the state’s representation of its paternal concern for its young working-class “sons”’ virtue reveals the homoeroticism that lies at the heart of the patriarchal system. In similar vein, in chapter 3, by juxtaposing Forster’s fantasy regarding the inspirational genesis of Maurice with Harold Bloom’s theory of the anxiety of influence, I show the disavowed homoeroticism that undergirds Bloom’s Oedipal paradigm of canon formation.

Apart from inflecting narrative conventions, developmental heterosexist ideology also inflects literary axiological discourses. Critical dismissals of writers who are known to be gay and lesbian are often overdeterminedly influenced by the psychosexual terms of a heterosexist developmental narrative. Consider, for instance, Wyndham Lewis’s treatment of Gertrude Stein in Time and Western Man. In that polemic, after linking “the Child-cult” to “contemporary inverted sex-fashions,” Lewis goes on to dismiss Stein as “a child . . . almost overshadowed by the imbécile” (60–61) and her art as “dead” (61). The association of a deathly art with the “child cult” of the invert clearly has resonances with the larger cultural association of homosexuality with immaturity and death that we have already traced.

Since, as Thomas Yingling has pointed out, the values of the Anglo-American canon have been powerfully aligned with the metaphories of maturity and heterosexual reproduction, the “immature” homosexual writer has often been seen as not truly belonging within the national fold (“Wittgenstein”97). As I explore at greater length in the final chapter of the dissertation, a reading of Forster’s posthumously published fiction, Yingling’s analysis is born out by the ways in which F. R. Leavis’s supposedly aesthetic exclusion of writers belonging to the Bloomsbury circle from the national canon conjoined a rejection of what he saw as their callowly perverse sexuality with their alienation from organic English values. Conversely, Leavis was able to ignore the intense homoeroticism of D. H. Lawrence’s work because from the critic’s point of view, the writer’s allegiance to romantic, organic English values could not be reconciled with sexual deviance.
Of course, as Sedgwick as has pointed out in *Epistemology of the Closet*, many gay and lesbian writers are central, rather than marginal, to the canon. But, as my reading of the critical reception of Forster's posthumously published fiction demonstrates, even critical accounts of these writers are often inflected by the developmental terms of heterosexist ideology. Specifically, in constructing the *oeuvre* of writers like Forster, critics often quarantine those works that explicitly thematize same-sex desire as immature distractions from the truly mature, universal, read heterosexual, writings of the artist.

Having adumbrated the ways in which heterosexist developmental fictions inflected a wide range of discourses, I will briefly articulate in the next section the model of resistance which informs my reading of the anti-homophobic discourses that both reinscribed and attempted to counter these insidious fictions.

Model of Resistance

As the term “reverse discourse” in my dissertation’s title suggests the most salient theoretical influence on this project is Michel Foucault. In volume 1 of the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault suggests that the same lexicon that was used to discipline deviant sexualities provided the terms for a reverse discourse that could partially challenge the norm:

There is no question that the appearance in nineteenth century psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature of a whole series of discourses on the species and subspecies of homosexuality, inversion, pederasty, and “psychic hermaphroditism” made possible a strong advance of social controls into this area of “perversity”; but it also made possible the formation of a “reverse” discourse: homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf... often using the same vocabulary by which it was medically disqualified. (101)
In this project, I attempt to defend and complicate this claim by exploring in greater detail the specific reverse discourses constructed by a set of late-Victorian and Edwardian homophilic writers. Projects that explore Foucault’s claim with some specificity are of importance because while the philosopher historian was theoretically committed to the importance of the local and contingent, the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* infamously depends on richly insightful but sweepingly global assertions.

Not only does Foucault’s provocative claim centrally inform my argument, several of the tropes that he deploys in framing that assertion are resonant with the idioms deployed by the writers I examine. For instance, the spacial metaphor of reversing that Foucault uses to describe homophilic discourse both invokes and is distinct from the metaphors of turning over (inversion) and turning away from (perversion) that, as Jonathan Dollimore has shown, so powerfully inform normative culture’s figuring of same-sex desire and some of the anti-homophobic discourses that responded to it (103-108). The difference between the idioms of inversion and Foucauldian concept of reverse discourse is that sexology assumed that it knew what constituted the proper spacial relation to desire; the invert’s desire was freakishly upside down. But in Foucault’s formulation, power produces desire, and so it is impossible to differentiate strictly between reversed discourses and the norm. In the fourth chapter, in particular, I focus on the ways in which Carpenter’s spacial language of the intermediate type and the continuum partially attempts to reverse, so to speak, the implications the trope of inversion.

Despite its slightly odd ascription of agency to a personified entity called “homosexuality,” Foucault’s metaphor of speech in his formulation - - “homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf” - - is also particularly useful to my reading of the Wilde trials in the first chapter. In that essay, I juxtapose Oscar Wilde’s eloquent defence of the love that dare not speak its name with the judge’s silencing of the writer after passing sentence. Rather than thinking of the two moments as standing at opposite ends of the expressive spectrum, I examine the lexicon that was available to Wilde to speak the
supposedly unspeakable, as well as the silences that structurally cannot be articulated within its terms (I argue that cross-class relations could not be narrativized in terms of the language of pederastic tutelage which were available for Wilde to speak about the love that supposedly dare not speak its name).

As Dollimore points out, Foucault has been attacked for supposedly positing a totalizing model of power which does not allow resistance(84). Ironically, these misreadings bemoan Foucault’s infatuation with power while simultaneously ascribing a mastery to power that his position does not necessarily imply. Judith Butler’s more precise reading of Foucault reveals that a limited model of agency is distinctly compatible with his paradigm of power:

what is enacted by the subject is enabled but not finally constrained by the prior working of power. Agency exceeds the power by which it is enabled. . . agency is the assumption of a purpose unintended by power, one that could not have been derived logically or historically [from], that operates in a relation of contingency . . . to the power which makes it possible. (Psychic 11, emphasis in the original)

While there are problems with Butler’s formulation -- the ascription of intention to power, for instance, seems very un-Foucauldian given Foucault’s suspicion of juridical models of control -- it usefully drives home the point that power does not have control over the effects it engenders. I would suggest that misreadings of Foucault’s model are symptomatic of progressive critics’ unease with the radically contingent implications of that paradigm. The real scandal of Foucault’s position is not that it disallows agency but that that agency is so unpredictable and local. As Alan Sinfield rightly points out,

when in any instance, either incorporation or resistance turns out to be more successful, that’s not in the nature of things. It is because of their relative strengths in that situation . . . Either outcome depends on the specific balance of historical forces. (48, Sinfield’s emphasis)
The radically anti-teleological nature of Foucault’s model of resistance may be anxiety inducing for the progressive critic, but it has a powerful resonance with the whole ethos of my project: while the heterosexist developmental model of same-sex desire has complete confidence in the correct endings of stories (the correct ending to the story of psychosexual development involves heterosexual union and reproduction), Foucault offers a far more perverse and unpredictable narrative of resistance whose multiple and contradictory endings are unpredictable and radically contingent.

In that the governing idiom of Butler’s reading of Foucault is temporal, it is particularly useful to my project. For Butler, it is the repetition or reciting of power’s dictates that opens the possibility of resistance: “Power rearticulated is ‘re-’articulated in the sense of already done and ‘re-’articulated in the sense of done over, done again, done anew” (Psychic 18). While the heterosexist developmental model is contemptuous of repetition and condemns the pervert for repeating what should merely be a phase on the way to maturity, in Butler’s model of resistance the way to reverse the norm, to resist the disciplinary injunctions of power is precisely to repeat those terms with a difference. Just as the writers I examine attempt to transvalue the significance of immaturity, Butler can be read to be transvalue the significance of repeating the norm. I return to the question of repetition in the final chapter of this dissertation when I examine how Forster deploys empty repetition to try and undermine the norm: unlike Butler’s model of resistance, Forster’s strategy is to reaffirm normative culture’s contempt for repetition but to align that repetition with normative culture’s endless punitive enforcement of its heterosexist and racist dictates.

Having begun this section by indicating how deeply indebted my understanding of resistance is to Foucault, I would like to end by indicating some of the misgivings I have about his model, misgivings which link him in some ways to many of the writers I examine. These misgivings do not vitiate his utility to my reading, for as Foucault himself
has pointed out, in one way or another, one is always complicit with the power that one challenges.

While Foucault theoretically is suspicious both of nostalgia and presentist models of history, many of his accounts resemble the historical paradigms he bemoans. Even more troubling those methodological lacunae get implicated with fairly traditional Eurocentric and Orientalist ethnic/racial views. Like many of the writers I examine, Foucault valorizes Greece, and in the second and third volumes of The History of Sexuality, he posits an idealized account of a Hellenistic “aesthetics of existence” against the disciplinary mechanisms of a post-Enlightenment world. David Cohen and Richard Saller have argued that not only are the particulars of Foucault’s account of Greco-Roman culture in volumes 2 and 3 of The History of Sexuality questionable in conventional historical terms, the rather voluntarist, idealized account of agency that undergirds these texts runs counter to the model of power articulated in Discipline and Punish and the first volume of the History of Sexuality (58-60).

Less obviously than in his treatment of Greece, in waging his polemic against post-Enlightenment disciplinary mechanisms, Foucault sometimes lapses into a nostalgic pastoralism which bears discernable continuities with some of the writers I examine, like Carpenter and Forster. The most symptomatic moment of this nostalgia can be seen in the first volume of the History of Sexuality where Foucault contrasts the “inconsequential bucolic pleasures” of a farm-hand called Jouy who “had obtained a few caresses from a little village girl” in 1876 with the intense “medical” and judicial “intervention” that those pleasures provoked from a society that was driven to produce and exhaustively explore perversity. As Butler points out, Foucault wilfully ignores the relations of power between Jouy and the nameless “little village girl,” in order to insulate the world of “bucolic pleasures” from the disciplinary society to which it gives way, a position that contradicts the radical skepticism that he displays towards a site prior to, or uninformed by power elsewhere in the text (Gender 97). Similarly, as Butler convincingly argues, in the
foreword to *Herculine Barbine* Foucault romantically associates the lesbian community of the convent with a utopian "unregulated field of pleasures prior to the imposition of the law of univocal sex" *(Gender* 98). While Butler does not raise the issue of gender in discussing the romantic nostalgia that Foucault displays in his reading of the convent community, choosing instead to link that nostalgia with his privileging of homosexuality as the site of subversion, one might see a certain sexist overdetermination in the association of a female space, the convent, with a world of undifferentiation prior to the imposition of power. Similar sexist stereotypes are drawn on by many of the male homosexual writers I examine in my dissertation: for instance, Carpenter links the return to a space prior to history with a return to alienated feminine qualities and a maternal nature; and Forster both figures the maternal as that which thwarts male homoerotic desires and that which in the form of an uncorrupted nature provides a space outside of and prior to the law enabling those forbidden desires.

Foucault paradoxically both ignores and overvalues the non-Western world, and in this regard too strong parallels can be drawn between the writers I examine and the theoretician through whose model of resistance I read them. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has pointed out how Foucault ignores the colonies and imperialism in general in constructing his paradigms of power and sexuality: "what remains useful in Foucault is the mechanics of disciplinarization and institutionalization . . . of the colonizer. Foucault does not relate it to any version, early or late, proto- or post-, of imperialism" *(294). At the same time, in the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault opposes a liberatory *ars erotica* of a rather unspecified East to the disciplinary regimes of sexuality in an equally unspecified West, a division that Radhika Mohanram rightly suggests is an Orientalist cliche *(57). Foucault’s double gesture is similar to that of writers like Carpenter: as I will show in chapter 4 of the dissertation, Carpenter both romanticizes sexual practices from the non-Western world in his critique of the hetero/homosexual system (the intermediate type, he claims, is far more highly valued in non-Western and "primitive" cultures who are not alienated from feminine
qualities) and imperialistically ignores their complexities or the differences among them in his sweeping catalogs of radically decontextualized ethnographic data. Foucault’s orientalism can also be seen in his romantic celebration of the Iranian fundamentalist revolution against the Shah. Biographers of Foucault like James Miller have pointed out how the thinker magisterially ignored uncomfortable facts about the Iranian revolution in order to construct the Ayatollah Khomeni as a figure who stood outside and opposed to the disciplinary technologies engendered by the Western enlightenment.

David Halperin, half jokingly, positions himself as a devotee of Foucault when he labels the philosopher “Saint Foucault” in his pro-Foucauldian polemic. I do not think of Foucault as the patron saint, but as the queer “daddy,” of this project. As my third chapter shows, I think that Bloom’s model of authorial influence has its uses for gay male literary theory. Consonant with the Bloomian model, I am both deeply influenced by Foucault as an intellectual daddy and want to maintain a certain revisory distance from him. One of the limits to Bloom’s model is its resolute refusal to consider issues of history and politics. I would contend that while my desire to distance myself from Foucault does fit the anxiety of influence model, the intellectual and political stakes involved in that distancing go beyond the intersubjective, familial drama which monopolizes the Bloomian story line.

Reverse Discourses of Male Homosexuality: An Outline of the Argumentative Plot of this Project

In this section, I will summarize the argumentative plot of my dissertation. The dissertation is organized more or less chronologically - - beginning with a reading of late-Victorian Wilde’s De Profundis and the rhetoric he employed at his trials, and ending with a consideration of the posthumously published fiction of modernist Forster. However, the seemingly conservative nature of the project’s temporal organization is perversely upset by the recurrence of critical gestures, thematic concerns, and argumentative moves. Thus, for
instance, the enabling tension between literature and homoerotic desire that I consider in chapter 2, in my reading of E. F. Benson’s public school romance David Blaize, returns in a modified form in my final chapter, in my reading of the opposition that Forster sets up in works like Aspects of the Novel between the timeless nature of great literature and homoerotic pleasure associated with temporal regression. Or, my consideration in chapter 3 of the ways in which the intertextual relations among Walt Whitman, Carpenter, and Forster illuminate the homoerotics of Bloom’s Oedipal model of literary influence both draws on and helps retrospectively illuminate my reading in chapter 1 of the strategic uses that Wilde made use of canonical fathers like Shakespeare in constructing his reverse discourse of male homosexuality. Rather than considering chapters as passing phases leading up to a definite conclusion, I attempt to make them intertextually respond to each other. Indeed, my final chapter on Forster concludes with a consideration of how the tone of that writer’s posthumously published fiction complicates the Foucauldian formulation which has framed the entire dissertation.

My dissertation is divided into two sections. In the first section, I examine those writers who distinguish between a corrupted form of homosexuality and a privileged youthful form of same-sex desire. In the second section, I examine writers like Carpenter and Forster who distinguish a youthful, innocent homosexuality from a corrupted, aged heterosexual culture. For these writers, the intermediate type or the homosexual has a valuable lesson to teach an enervated heterosexual culture.

The first section consists of two chapters. In the first chapter, I examine the distinction articulated by Oscar Wilde both at his trial and in De Profundis between a productive, nurturant pederasty and a sterile, sensual perversity. This distinction allows Wilde to align his strain of pederasty with paternity, a strategically useful alignment in countering the Marquess of Queensberry’s patriarchal claims to be protecting his son’s, Lord Alfred Douglas’s, honor from the predations of a would be “sodomite”[sic]. In De Profundis, Wilde again links paternity and pederasty by setting Douglas’s unnatural hatred
of his father and mercenary exploitation of Wilde himself in pointed distinction both to the affection of Wilde’s sons and the loyalty of his other eromenoi like Robert Ross. The distinction between homosexualities in De Profundis allows Wilde to challenge the official story of his downfall: rather than being a hapless deviant punished for committing “gross indecencies,” he becomes a heroic erastes betrayed by his feckless eromenos. Wilde’s strategy also has the potential to un concealing the disavowed eroticism that informs paternal-filial relations. The ease with which the conventions of paternal-filial narratives can be appropriated by a pederastic tradition suggests that these stories belong on a continuum.

However, Wilde’s strategic distinctions are unable to accommodate cross-class relations. In contrast to its detailed account of Wilde’s relationship with Douglas, De Profundis dispenses with his working-class lovers in a single sentence. I argue that the absence of working-class men in De Profundis is more than an act of bad faith on Wilde’s part; it is symptomatic of the intrinsically middle-class inflection of his pederastic mythology. And it is precisely the class inflection of Wilde’s reverse discourse that ultimately makes it impossible for him to counter the state’s representation of itself as a protector of its working-class “sons” from the corruption of a degenerate gentleman.

In the second chapter, I examine the distinctions that E. F. Benson, a member of the Wilde circle who energetically distanced himself from that group in the wake of the scandal, draws in his public school fiction between youthful and corrupted forms of homosexuality in his public school fiction and the role that the category “English literature” plays in sustaining those distinctions. In David Blaize (1916), Benson celebrates the tutelary, intensely charged but supposedly chaste relationship between Frank Maddox, an older schoolboy, and young David, as well as the erotically charged bonds between David and the headmasters of both his prep and his public school. Maddox and David’s Platonic relationship is distinguished sharply from the perverse, carnal pleasures of some of the other corrupt schoolboys. The function of these identificatory bonds, I argue, was to
produce imperial, middle-class male subjects who were affectively committed to the project of advancing the imperial interests of Britain's ruling class. However, since identification and desire cannot be strictly quarantined from each other, there was always an unstable relation between the sanctioned, indeed encouraged, homoerotic identification of public school discourse and prohibited, carnally realized male homosexual desire.

In this chapter, I also examine the shift in the medium through which Hellenistic pederastic conventions were articulated in the British public school. In Victorian public school novels like Dean Farrar's St. Winifred's Christianity mediates between Greece and contemporary British culture. By contrast, in Benson's novel, English literature plays the role that Christianity once did, allowing the writer to Anglicize Hellenic pederasty and to link intergenerational erotic relations to Britain's imperial interests. However, consonant with Foucault's insight regarding the multiple effects of disciplinary power, literature also provides the medium through which the writer is able to represent autoerotic and sadomasochistic pleasures, pleasures that arguably since the instantiation of the hetero/homosexual divide have been irresistibly linked to the physically realized male homosexuality, which the book so ostentatiously disavows elsewhere. Rather than seeing the perverse desires articulated through literature as being the repressed subtext of Frank and David's sublimatedly erotic literature lessons, I see them both being produced by a disciplinary mechanism which simultaneously produced and contained male intergenerational erotic relations in British public schools at the turn of the century.

The second section consists of three chapters. The first chapter in this section, chapter 3 of the dissertation, uses Forster's fantasy regarding the genesis of Maurice to consider the uses and limitations of a Bloomian model of influence for gay male literary theory. In a "Terminal Note" to Maurice, Forster writes that the germ for Maurice was born when he was touched on the behind by Carpenter's working-class lover George Merrill. Although Carpenter does not literally touch Forster, he is figuratively implicated in the touch. Further, the tactile metaphor also invokes the figure of Walt Whitman, who
deeply affected both Carpenter and Forster and whose poetry is saturated with tactile metaphors. While in these homophilic writers’ work, sharp distinctions are often drawn between democratizing, nurturant intergenerational homoerotic bonds and authoritarian and repressive paternal-filial ones, I show how much of the aggression and revisionary impulse that animates paternal-filial relations in Bloom’s Oedipal model of literary influence can be seen in the relations of influence among these gay writers. My stakes in this argument are not to construct a gay male literary canon to counterpose against Bloom’s Oedipal one; rather, I try to use the continuity between pederastic and Oedipal relations of influence to unconceal the disavowed homoeroticism that informs the paternal-filial model of literary influence.

In the next chapter, chapter 4 of the dissertation, I examine the relationship between Carpenter’s dialectical models of history and homosexuality. Socialist-feminist Carpenter indicts middle-class patriarchal Victorian culture for its alienation from feminine qualities that he associates with working-class and non-Western men, as well as women. Drawing on a wide range of pseudo-ethnographic data, he suggests that “primitive” cultures were more androgynous and more harmoniously linked to a maternal nature. Carpenter eschews a simple nostalgic return to these values, for “primitive” cultures lacked the self-consciousness that characterizes modern man. Rather, he wants dialectically to combine the qualities of primitive culture and those of modern man, in order to move beyond history altogether. Strategically drawing on sexological discourse, Carpenter argues that the homosexual, or “intermediate type” is positioned between the poles of a gendered continuum and belongs to an earlier phase of history. It is precisely by virtue of being positioned between the genders, of belonging to an earlier stage of history, and of reconciling self-consciousness with a harmonious relation to the body that the intermediate type has a valuable lesson to offer his culture in recovering and sublating the feminine, working-class, and primitive values from which it has been alienated.
While Carpenter’s models of history and same-sex desire emphasize reconciliation, they are rift by contradictions. Carpenter often seems unable to decide whether the intermediate type should be associated with a gender separatist or integrative model of homosexuality or to decide whether the intermediate type should be associated with a new evolutionary type or an earlier evolutionary phase of history. Rather than seeing these contradictions as simply indications of Carpenter’s weak thinking, I see them as symptomatic of the incoherent models of same-sex desire upon which he is strategically relying. I suggest that paradoxically the ultimate utility of Carpenter’s reverse discourse might not lie in its prescriptive political agenda but in its ability to reveal the conceptual incoherence of the historical accounts of same-sex desire on which he relies.

The final chapter traces Forster’s complicity with and reversal of developmental heterosexist logic in his posthumously published texts - - The Life to Come and Maurice. Specifically, I suggest that Forster uses three related but different strategies in reinscribing and calling into question the developmental story which so strongly influenced critical receptions of those of his texts which explicitly thematize same-sex desire: at some places, he draws a sharp distinction between great literature and the immature pleasures of homoeroticism. At other places, he inverts the terms of the developmental narrative, celebrating a return to a period prior in history, either associated with the classical past, or non-Western spaces, or pastoral England. Finally, he uses both repetition and violent endings to disturb heterosexist temporal logic: sterile, pointless repetition is associated in these texts not with homosexual desire but with the vengeful enforcement of heterosexist prohibition. Further, I read the violent endings of many of the stories in The Life to Come as registering Forster’s reflexive comment on the deadly limitations of the developmental narrative on which he simultaneously relies.

My dissertation ends with Forster’s endings because their ambivalence is important to my project. The endings of many of these stories are angry and disturbing but also intense and, for this reader at least, even pornographically pleasurable. I argue that while
they confirm Foucault’s claims in *The History of Sexuality* about the appropriability of the norm, they tonally complicate those claims: the endings of these stories more powerfully capture the psychic complexity of working within and calling into question the norm than Foucault’s cool, self-assured tone does. In reading temporally later Foucault through earlier Forster, I am reversing the teleological logic of realist narrative which has simultaneously partially structured my dissertation. Such a perverse move, of course, is entirely consonant with the content of my project.

**Hellenism and Primitivism**

In this section, I will briefly contextualize and historicize the discursive idioms which the writers I examine deployed in challenging developmental accounts of same-sex desire. The conventions of grammar and syntax that dictate the title of my dissertation may be unavoidably misleading: the three items — “Hellenism,” “Primitivism,” and “the reverse discourse of male homosexuality” — separated by commas and a final conjunction seem to suggest that there are a trio of discrete entities. In fact, those seemingly distinct terms are complicatedly imbricated. When one discusses Forster’s idealization of a sensual, chthonic, pre-Platonic Greece, for instance, is one discussing “primitivism” or “Hellenism”? Further, terms like “Hellenism” and “primitivism” were often diacritically linked: in public school discourse, for instance, the idealized world of Hellenic values was defined by its difference from an abject, non-Western set of primitive values which both repelled and fascinated British culture. Most importantly, I want to insist that “sexuality” is not a discrete entity that can be added to discussions of “Hellenism” and “primitivism.” “Sexuality” constitutively inhabits these discursive terms and is shaped by them.

Greece did not always occupy the central position it held in the national imaginary of Victorian and Edwardian Britain. Frank Turner points out that even though
Greek philosophy had influenced some Renaissance writers...[] until the late eighteenth century most educated Europeans regarded their culture as Roman and Christian in origin, with merely peripheral roots in Greece (2)

In contrast to the “visible, tangible, and pervasive influence” of Rome, “the Greeks had simply not directly touched the life of Western Europe” (Turner 2). Ironically, it may have been precisely the distance of Greece from nineteenth-century and Edwardian Britain that allowed it to become such a ready screen on which to project contemporary concerns. As W. H. Auden acutely puts it,10

The historical discontinuity between Greek culture and our own, the disappearance for so many centuries of any direct influence, made it all the easier, when it was rediscovered, for each nation to fashion a classical Greece in its own image. (4)

There were two main historiographical strategies that intellectuals deployed to justify drawing analogies between Greece and Britain. The humanist model of history appealed to a timeless Greece which could be reached if one possessed the requisite sensibility to apprehend its timeless values. “We are all Greeks,” Percy Shelley expansively declares (Shelley qtd. in Jenkyns 15). And several decades later, J. P. Mahaffy, Wilde’s tutor at Trinity College, writes:

Every thinking man who becomes acquainted with the masterpieces of Greek writing must see plainly that...they are the writings of men of like culture with ourselves. If one of us were transported to Periclean Athens, provided he were a man of high culture, he would find life and manners...like our own...The thoughts and feelings of modern life would be there without the appliances. (2-3)

From a materialist standpoint, one can see a glaring contradiction to Mahaffy’s claims: on the one hand, he wants to insist that mere “appliances” don’t really matter; Greece and late-Victorian Britain are bound together by their shared human values. On the other hand, the inserted “provided he were a man of high culture,” suggests that the supposedly universal human values of Hellenism are not available to all English people, not even to all
Englishmen. As I will explore at greater length in the essay on Wilde, it is precisely the class contradiction at the heart of Hellenic humanism that compromises the writer’s attempts to frame his relations with working-class men in terms of Hellenistic pederasty, even though that strategy is partially effective in legitimating his relationship with Douglas.

Wilde’s relationship to humanistic Hellenism, as we will see, is quite slippery and contradictory: while at the trials, he appeals to a timeless Hellenism, in his love letters to Douglas, he wittily suggests that Greece is a retrospective creation of contemporary culture. By contrast, one can see a far more straightforward, so to speak, deployment of humanist terms in Benson’s homophilic mythology as elaborated in David Blaize. Frank, David’s schoolboy mentor, tells the younger boy that by reading Plato together they can return to a timeless Greek world and join Socrates and his company of Platonic friends. Forster both yearns for this timeless homoerotic realm beyond the contingencies of history and is deeply sceptical about being able to attain it. One way of thinking about the distance between Benson and Forster’s Hellenism would be to juxtapose Frank’s promise to David to recuperate a timeless Greece (250) with the disconsolate figure of Clive Durham when he literally travels to Greece: when Clive, a passionate Hellenist, reaches Greece, he finds that the values and Hellenic passions he has idealized amount to “only dying light and a dead land” (112).

The other historiographical model to which intellectuals appealed in analogizing Britain and Greece was a Viconian model of history. Viconian historians, such as Thomas Arnold, “suggested that all nations developed through a series of organic stages” (Turner 26). By contending that Greece and Britain occupied similar positions within their cultural/national life cycles, critics like Matthew Arnold were able to draw analogies between Periclean Athens and Britain in essays like “The Modern Element in Literature” or chapter 4 of Culture and Anarchy.

Many homophilic writers I examine also rely on cyclical or developmental models of history to analogize Greek and British male homoeroticism. A complex racial politics
often informed these cyclical analogies: Arnold in chapter 4 of *Culture and Anarchy* bemoaned the displacement of Hellenic by Hebraic values. While his essay attempts to create a dialectical synthesis between these supposedly polarized world views, Carpenter and Forster nostalgically want to recover a set of classical values that has been displaced by Hebraic morality in contemporary Britain: Carpenter, as I will explain at greater length in chapter 4, in certain formulations is unabashedly anti-Semitic in his association of the intermediate type with the lost values of Hellenism which can rescue Britain from its exploitation by mercenary and narrowly orthodox Jewish interests. Forster’s nostalgia for Greece and Hellenic values is tempered by his association of Jewishness with marginality of all kinds, including homosexuality. However, he does associate degeneration with a narrowly dogmatic Christian world view, which implicitly evokes Arnold’s model of Hebraism and both longs for a recovery of Hellenic values and seems to see that that recovery is impossible.

While Arnold’s poles are “Hebraic” and “Hellenic,” other homophilic writers appealed to a Hellenic/Oriental dichotomy. John Addington Symonds, for instance, a close friend of Carpenter who exerted a strong influence on late-nineteenth century homophilic discourse, in his *A Problem of Greek Ethics*, sharply distinguished moderate, virile Dorian homosexuality from “Asiatic luxury” (51) and “the Scythian disease of effeminacy” (18). This account implicitly aligns at least some strains of same-sex desire with the virile national values that Britain supposedly inherits from Greece while distancing those values from the inverted, effeminacy associated with the “Asiatic ‘corrupters of Hellenism and Britain’s effeminate colonized peoples. As we will see in chapter 2, the analogy between imperial Britain and classical Greece is made far more explicitly in Benson’s public school novel *David Blaize*: the shared appreciation for Greece that David and Frank share both distance them from the “stinking Persians” whom the Greeks bested at Salamacis and distinguish them from the effeminate Bengali babus over whom they are being prepared to rule. With more subtle, to use a typically Paterian adjectives, writers like Pater, the
Hellenic-Oriental binarism occupies a more unstable, multivalent position. In his celebration of Spartan virility that he associates with the culture of the British public school, Pater sounds very similar to Benson:

If you enter into the spirit of Lacedaemonian youth... you may conceive Lacedaemonian manhood for yourselves... We catch a glimpse of their boys chanting... a manifestation of the true Hellenism, though it may make one think of the novices at school in some Gothic cloister, of our own old English schools... (Pater qtd. in Jenkyns 224-225)

As Richard Jenkyns rightly comments, "Pater’s Sparta is an England idealized" (223). However, in other parts of Plato and Platonism, the collection of essays in which Pater’s celebration of Sparta appears, as well as in other writings, as commentators like David DeLaura have pointed out, the writer tries to synthesize a virile, Dorian and a more feminized, "Asiatic," Ionian strand of Hellenic culture (DeLaura 253). In these moments, Pater’s idealization of Greece becomes associated with its ability to synthesize oppositions, an ability which implicitly distinguishes it from morally absolutist Victorian England.

The Viconian model of history permitted writers to analogize the human life cycle to the life cycle of cultures, and as Jenkyns points out, this led to the common place association of Greece with humankind’s childhood (170-172). As many critics have pointed out, late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain was deeply anxious about national decline and the spectre of degeneration, the analogy between a vital, youthful Greece and contemporary Britain offered one ideological way of trying to cope with this anxiety. Jenkyns snidely suggests that "many of the aesthetes liked the metaphor of youth because it allowed them to slip [from talking about Greece] into talking about the cult of handsome young men" (169). While conceding that the analogy between Greece and youthfulness was often deployed by homophilic writers, I think it is more fruitful to think of the strategic advantages this analogy offered these writers, rather than simply dismissing their motives as prurient. As Williams has pointed out, same-sex desire was often associated with
degeneration and national decline. By attempting to associate male homosexuality or some strains of homosexuality with the youthful health of Greece, writers like Symonds and Carpenter attempted both to remove the taint of pathology from same-sex desire and to gain its acceptance into Britain’s “imagined community,” to use Benedict Anderson’s resonant term for the nation.

Not surprisingly the period in Greek history which often synecdochally stood in for all of Hellenism for male homophilic writers was the fifth century BC in Athens and more rarely in Sparta. The period was crucial for male homophilic mythologizing because of the centrality of male intergenerational relations to city states like Athens and Sparta, unlike the period associated with the Homeric epics, say. The association of the male homosexual with immaturity irresistably has led to his elision with the figure of the child molester in heteronormative ideology. There is a certain (il)logic to this equation: unable to attain adulthood himself, the pervert is seen as being forced to turn to children as the objects of his desire. The idealized, refined, values of Platonic pederasty allowed British Uranian writers - - the term Uranian is drawn from Plato’s Symposium where the idealized bond between an older and a younger man is associated with the goddess Urania, as opposed to the carnal, vulgar desires that characterize relations between men and women - - to argue that rather than wanting to prey on young men, they wanted to educate and prepare them to play their desired role within Britain’s male homosocial institutions. As I will show in chapter 1, for instance, Wilde in his speech on the love that dare not speak its name aligns his pederastic bonds with paternal-filial relations, relations that have been corrupted by Douglas’s biological father, the Marquess of Queensberry, and he is able to do so because in fifth century Athens, the father and the erastes occupied isomorphic positions. Rather than being seen as a pervert attempting to undermine paternal values, the erastes was seen as one who enforced and promoted those values. Some of the writers I examine ring variations on the pederastic model of classical Greece: Carpenter and Forster, for instance, align the homosexual with the youth rather than the older man. In their mythology, then, it
is the youthful eromenos who teaches an aged culture values from which it has been alienated. However, the emphasis on intergenerational relations and an educational model of erotics clearly align these variations of the myth with Platonic Hellenism.

Although the emphasis of my project is on the generational, rather than gendered, mythologies surrounding Hellenism, one can see the strategic possibilities that the emphasis on virility in Hellenic culture offered male homophilic writers in late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain. As Foucault has pointed out, sexology attempted to create a perfect correspondence between categories like biological sex, gender identity, and gender of one’s object choice. Not surprisingly, then, one of the most influential sexological models associated male same-sex desire with gender inversion, the male homosexual had a female soul trapped in a male body. By contrast, as Halperin points out, in classical Greece the diacritical distinction was between the sexual position one occupied, between penetrator and penetrated, rather than between homo and heterosexual identities (One Hundred 25). In such a system, a man who penetrated other men retained his virility. By aligning themselves with classical Greece, then, many of the writers I examine were, often quite misogynistically, attempting to distance themselves from the association of male same-sex desire with gender inversion.

In her study of Hellenism and homosexuality at Victorian Oxford, Linda Dowling has rightly cautioned against constructing developmental accounts of the link between classical studies and the rise of homophilic discourses (5). By the same token, degenerative accounts of Hellenism by unabashedly heterosexist critics like Jenkyns are equally unconvincing: Jenkyns maintains that Victorian Hellenism was misappropriated by Edwardian homosexuals, whom he persists in characterizing homophobically as “inverts,” like Goldsworthy Lowes Dickenson, leading to the public discrediting of classical values (290-293). Rather, I would suggest that British Hellenism was always an unstable space which simultaneously enforced heterosexist, masculinist values and provided the potential for homophilic counter discourses.
Take the educational realm: as I will show in my chapter on Benson, classical education was specifically seen by educational authorities as a means to ward off the effeminacy and degeneration they associated with homosexuality. And yet one of the primal scenes in coming out narratives of the late-Victorian and Edwardian period of homosexual men of a certain class involves discovering same-sex desire celebrated within the pages of the classics: reading Plato, Symonds rhapsodies, “In the Phaedrus and the Symposium I discovered the true liber amoris. It was just as though the voice of my own soul spoke to me through Plato” (Memoirs 99). Decades later, in almost identical terms, that normal debunker of all things Victorian, Lytton Strachey would declare that he read the Symposium with “a rush of mingled pleasure and pain”, filled “with surprise, relief, and fear to know what I feel now was felt 2000 years ago in glorious Greece” (Strachey qtd. in Garber 318). One way to read the seeming contradiction between the centrality accorded to a classical curriculum that afforded homosexual men a vocabulary of affirmation by an educational establishment that abhorred and prosecuted contemporary same-sex desire is to see it as simple hypocrisy. Symonds implicitly takes that stand when toward the end of his life, he bitterly reproaches his former teacher Benjamin Jowett for simultaneously “denounc[ing] erotic relations between men as ‘unnatural’” and “placing the most electrical literature of the world in his hands, pregnant with the stuff that damns him [the homosexual student]” (Letters 3, 347). Yet such a reading might be too stark with its reliance on an absolute opposition between repressive heteronormative and affirmative homophilic values. The celebration of virility and national vitality associated with Greece was available for both normalizing and homophilic forces within late-Victorian and Edwardian culture. Jowett might condemn same-sex desire as “unnatural” and might bowdlerize Plato to fit Victorian heterosexist sensibilities. Yet the terms in which he affirmed Greece were also available for homophilic writers like his pupil Symonds to construct affirmations of same-sex desire. Ironically, while humanists of all stripes would associate Greece with a transcendent originary purity, uncontaminated by the contingencies of history, my dissertation will
suggest that it was precisely the appropriability of Greece that made it such a rich and
dangerous space for local contestation.

Primitivism, which Arthur O. Lovejoy defines as "the belief that the earliest
condition of man and of human society was the best condition" (xi), arguably has a longer
history in European culture than Hellenism. For, long before the Renaissance and
resurgence of interest in classical culture, the figure of the wild man had occupied the
European imagination (Bartra "Introduction"). While it is true that the wild man was often
denigrated as belonging to a lower stage of the cosmic chain, his natural state was also used
to critique the values of contemporary culture, and in that sense, he belongs on a continuum
with the Romantic figure of the noble savage.

Colin Rhodes has suggested that primitivism gained its modern shape at "the time
of the Enlightenment, which coincided with the beginning of an unprecedented period of
European colonial expansion" (7). Helen Carr concurs with this chronology tracing the
first usage of the term "primitive" in its anthropological sense to the third volume of
Gibbons' History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Carr points out that
Gibbons uses the example of natives encountered in voyages to the new world to expound
on "the abject condition . . . [which] is perhaps the primitive and universal stage of
mankind" (Gibbons qtd. in Carr 2). If Gibbons sees the primitive in abject terms,
Romantic nationalists celebrated the primitive's intuitive, non-rational "genius." For
instance, the aesthetcian Hugh Blair discussing the poems of Ossian contended, "The
savage tribes of men are much given to wonder and astonishment . . . they are governed by
imagination and passion more than reason; and of course, their speech must be deeply
tinctured by their genius" (Blair qtd. in Carr 63).

The discourse of evolutionary biology in mid- and late-nineteenth century Britain to
some extent essentialized fin-de-siecle primitivism. Peoples from pre-modern or non-
modern, to use a less teleological term, cultures were seen as belonging naturally to earlier
evolutionary stages of human history. Thus as Johannes Fabian has pointed out, space
became temporalized, and "coeval" non-Western spaces were equated with earlier periods of time (31). Of course, evolutionary discourse had multivalent effects, and paradoxically another of its effects was to call into question historical teleology. As a scandalously aleatory process, evolution challenged the complacent assumption that the present was a necessary or final phase of human development. While its idiom may not have explicitly informed modernist anthropology, some of its anti-teleological assumptions undergird the theories of modernist anthropologists like Franz Boas which "claimed that primitive modes of thinking and cultures were not 'simpler' just different from Western thinking and cultures" (Torgovnic 19).

Though the discourse of relativism did not make value judgments about contemporary Western culture, many modernist writers like Forster and D. H. Lawrence used the idiom of primitivism fiercely to criticize modernity and its obsession with progress. While this critique had continuities with Romanticism, the Modernist figure of the primitive became aligned with far more forbidden transgressions against the rational, positivist norm than those associated with the more sentimental Romantic figure of the noble savage. Freud persistently analogized the unconscious to primitive states of humanity, and another commonplace in modernist art is to associate irrational instincts and appetites with primitive states. That equation like evolutionary discourse has contradictory consequences: on the one hand, if all human beings, including Western men, have the potential to regress to a state of primitivism, like Kurtz in Heart of Darkness, then the grounds for regarding the primitive as absolutely other is undercut. On the other hand, the capacious psychologizing metaphor troublingly annexes vast territories and peoples to figure aspects of the Western consciousness. In summation, like Hellenism primitivism functioned more as a projection of late-Victorian and Edwardian culture's anxieties and ideals as it did as a description of non-modern cultures. As Torgovnic puts it, "Those who write about the primitive usually begin by defining it as different from (usually
opposite to) the present... The primitive does what we ask it to do. Voiceless, it lets us speak for it” (8-9).

Primitivism’s close relationship with both anti-colonial and Orientalist colonial impulses informs the mythologies of many of the writers I examine. One of the paternalistic justifications advanced for the continuance of empire was that the childish native needed adult, Western protection and supervision. In attacking the developmental logic of normative culture, writers like Carpenter and Forster aligned their critique of a heterosexist society’s repudiation of the immature homosexual with their critique of an imperial culture’s contempt for “immature” non-Western peoples and cavalier destruction of indigenous ways of life. Primitivism, then, provided these writers with an idiom to align anti-colonial and anti-homophobic struggles. However, they simultaneously were complicit with the colonialism they critiqued: while their narratives represented non-Western men as standing outside history in youthful innocence, it was precisely imperial history that had made those men available for such erotic projections and for such strategic deployment in Western anti-homophobic politics. Renato Rosaldo has explored the double bind of imperialist nostalgia: the imperialist is nostalgic for a world he is unavoidably transforming. The double bind that anti-colonial homophilic writers faced is related but slightly different: their critique of colonialism was predicated on a nostalgia for primitive values. Since decolonization movements, even while sentimentalizing the past in a manner similar to the Orientalist writers I examine, inevitably transformed non-modern cultures, these writers were bound to be ambivalent toward the political changes that their anti-colonial stands engendered.

Race and class difference were complicatedly imbricated in the discourse of primitivism both in its normative form and in its homophilic variations. On the one hand, the racialized logic of fin-de-siecle imperialism demanded that an absolute racial divide be drawn between colonizer and colonized. While, as Ann Stoler has shown, imperial machinery depended on Europeans ranging from across the class spectrum, the discourse
of empire foregrounded the racial bond that differentiated the white colonizers, regardless of class, from those they colonized ("Introduction"). At the same time, as critics like Judith Walkowitz have shown, class difference in Britain was insistently racialized. Social reform tracts like William Booth's *In Darkest London* represented working-class spaces as analogous to the dark, primitive spaces of empire, and crossing class boundaries is often troped in nineteenth-century literature in terms of racial degeneration or biological atavism (Walkowitz 30-32).

Homophilic writers, while inverting the value accorded the primitive, often proceed on the assumption that non-Western and working-class men occupy identical positions. One of the odd consequences of this assumption is that class difference between non-Western men drops out as a term for consideration or is not accorded importance in these writers' texts. Further, the degree to which working-class Englishmen sustained and were affectively committed to the goals of empire gets ignored.

That homophilic writers should turn to primitivist myths is not surprising given the overdetermined connection between the figure of the pervert and the primitive. The place where that connection is most centrally seen is in the discourse of male education. While imperialist discourse might insist on the absolute otherness of colonized peoples, texts like *Adolescence* by Stanley Hall drawing on the evolutionary principle, we have already cited, that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, suggested that improper upbringing might lead the adolescent to regress to an earlier evolutionary stage rather than to develop to full middle-class Western adulthood. The same paradox informed the discourse surrounding the homosexual: on the one hand, the homosexual was seen as absolutely other, a somatic or psychic freak. On the other hand, he represented a constant threat of anti-developmental seduction, tempting susceptible male adolescents to turn away from the path to true adulthood.

To end on a slightly narcissistic note: one of the impulses that drew me to exploring homophilic writers' appropriation of and complicity with the discourses of
primitivism was that the topic had my name, so to speak, written all over it. My last name is “da Silva,” which in the Romance language Portuguese means “of the forest.” The same etymological origins underly the Latin description of the wild man or primitive: he is often referred to as homo sylvanus, a man of the forest, and the pastoral basis for primitivism is foregrounded repeatedly by many of the writers I examine. Forster’s short story “The Other Kingdom,” for instance, begins with the pedantic narrator schoolmaster explaining to Miss Beaumont that “silvas” means “woods, wooded spaces, the country” (Celestial 75). But in his bookishness, the narrator is cut off from the classical woods that he reads about, as is Miss Beaumont’s materialistic modern fiancé, who can only regard the woods as property to be fenced in. By contrast, Miss Beaumont, a primitive from Ireland -- her fiancé describes her as a “savage,” (111), a word also etymologically derived from the Latin “silva” -- and Ford, the uneducated adolescent have a deep sympathy with the pastoral landscape that is repeatedly (homo)erotically associated with the virile figures of youthful gods and satyrs.

The virile gods and youthful satyrs associated with the “silvas” in Forster’s story exist outside history. However, my name “da Silva” clearly betokens a moment in colonial history involving the Portuguese colonization of parts of India like Goa. That my first name is the Anglicized “Stephen” points to a complex historical interplay between British and Portuguese imperialism in India -- Christianized Goans, for instance, often worked in the British railways that were so crucial to the military and economic control of the British over vast Indian territories. The writers I examine often figure the wild man as pure, uncontaminated, but a Portuguese-English name attached to an Indian body suggests that I at least have a hybrid genealogy, culturally if not racially. Finally, the wild man does not speak in Forster’s story, and this silence is not surprising because as Hayden White has pointed out, the primitive is often associated with a state prior to or beyond language (194). He is believed to lack any self-consciousness. In turning a self-conscious eye on primitivist Western homophilic writers, I am refusing to occupy the position they have
designated for me in their mythology and am strategically misreading and revising their stories, as all sons and eromenoi eventually do.

Clarifying Choices and Describing the Project's Larger Stakes

One of the questions which I both want to pose and try to respond to is: why does my project choose to focus exclusively on male homosexual writers. The question requires posing since as writers like Luce Irigaray, Gregory Bredbeck, Halperin, and others have pointed out the Hellenic pederastic model of male same-sex desire wilfully and misogynistically excluded women. I think it would be unfortunate if my project replicated the troubling gender politics of some of the writers I examine, and I want briefly to explain why I think it does not.

Let me begin by conceding that like male homosexuals, lesbians too have been persistently figured in developmentally arrested terms. And like the male homosexual writers I examine, lesbian writers too have often constructed anti-developmental pedophilic myths (the lesbian school romance is almost as well established a genre as the public school romance) and have often drawn on the idioms of Hellenism and primitivism to do so: to take just one instance, Patricia Smith has explored how the journey to primitive territory in The Voyage Out provides Virginia Woolf with space to articulate female same-sex desire (21-27); and David Sweetman has explored how the idiom of Hellenism proved enabling for writers like Mary Renault to narrativize lesbian desire.

However, while these lesbian mythologies are similar to male homophilic discourses, they are different enough to make it extremely difficult to do justice to the specificity of two distinct traditions. Many of the differences spring from different ideological conventions associated with the genders and the different relationship to power that the genders occupy. To take one instance, the passionate homoerotic devotion between teachers and students characterize both male public school romances like David Blaize and
lesbian school romances like *Olivia* by Dorothy Strachey. While male public school romances belonged to a recognized and not particularly scandalous genre — Benson's public school novels sold widely — lesbian school romances were a distinctly marginal genre — Dorothy Strachey hid her authorial identity with the pen name “Olivia” and the novel *Olivia* was a clandestine text that circulated among lesbian audiences. Given how closely related male homosociality that structures patriarchy and a certain virile strain of male homosexuality are, the relative acceptability of male public school romances is not surprising. By the same token, given a phallocentric culture's difficulty with conceptualizing female desire, it is not surprising that texts that thematize desire between women should be treated as marginal and exotic.

The asymmetrical relationship to knowledge and desire that the male and female mentors occupy in male homophilic and lesbian school romances also reflects the different relations that these genres bear to the male homosocial norm. In *David Blaize*, the schoolmaster and the older boy Frank know and understand the young David's desires, but he is blissfully unknowing, to use Sedgwick's term, and the Head compliments the young boy on his innocence. David's lack of knowledge makes him an empty receptacle which can be filled by the Head and Frank, so he can move on to his appropriate position as male subject in a homosocial culture. The Head and Frank, as phallic male subjects, have knowledge and vigorous desires which they restrain because their appetites are balanced by their proper sense of adult responsibility to their class and imperial responsibilities. By contrast, the older woman in lesbian schoolgirl romances is the passionate object of desire of her schoolgirl charges, but she herself does not share in that desire. Given an androcentric culture's difficulty in conceptualizing female desire, the older woman is usually represented in maternal terms. As a surrogate mother, she guides and disciplines her young charge's unruly sexual desires, so the younger woman can attain a proper relationship to her sexual appetites.
Further, while it is true that both male homophilic writers and lesbian writers appeal to Hellenic mythologies, their relationship to those mythologies are very different. Hellenism occupied a central position in a male-centered public school and university curriculum, so writers of Forster or Wilde’s class could easily and unproblematically appeal to its terms. Women seeking to make strategic use of that idiom, however, were bound to occupy a mediated position to it. One might consider a lesbian writer like Renault here. Renault repeatedly returns to the classical world and male pederastic relations in her books, as though Greece provides her a realm to articulate queer desires but does not provide her space directly to articulate female homoerotic desires. Virginia Woolf occupies a similarly mediated relation to the classical tradition she also employed. While, as Perry Meisel has explored, Woolf was influenced by the Paterian strain of Hellenism that influenced the male writers of Bloomsbury, she did not encounter the Paterian ethos at university. Rather, she received private lessons from Pater’s sister Clara, who was forced to take “private pupils in the classics whenever finances were grim” (Meisel 18). Thus, Woolf both had access to the classical education of her brothers and male friends and must have been keenly aware of her material distance from the institutions to which this education gained them access. Rather than speaking with the easy confidence of a middle-class man steeped in the classics, it is not surprising that Woolf should ironically label her essay on classical tragedy, “On Not Knowing Greek.” At one level, the title reflects Woolf’s literary point about the inaccessibility of Greek tragedy; at another level, I would argue that the title signals that even for a woman educated in the classics, the power that accrued to men in knowing Greek was simply not available to women writers. In order to be as specific as possible, then, I have chosen to focus my project on the deployment of idioms of primitivism and Hellenism by male homosexual writers only.

Even though I do not read women writers in this project, I would contend that gender is a crucial issue in many of the chapters. One of the issues that arises repeatedly in the dissertation are the contradictory and shifting relations between issues of gender and
sexuality. As I point out chapter 1, the challenge that Wilde posed to the sex/gender system was often linked with the figure of the New Woman. Yet, the same melodramatic discourse that enabled middle-class feminists to challenge certain gender inequities was brought to bear on the disciplining of male same-sex desire in the Wilde trials. Ironically, however, that discourse was reappropriated by Wilde himself in framing his predicament in melodramatic intersubjective terms - - in De Profundis, he frames the story of his downfall in terms of his intersubjective relations with Douglas, refusing a larger political context, a move similar to that employed by feminists like Josephine Butler in framing political issues like the rights of female sex-workers. In the chapter on pederastic influence, I explore the tension between Forster’s mythologizing of a line of pederastic influence running from Whitman to himself and his material and artistic dependence on his great aunt Marianne Thornton. Similarly, in the chapters on Carpenter and Forster, I examine the relationship between their strategic deployment of middle-class stereotypes of femininity - - women are maternal and nurturant, a haven in a heartlessly materialistic male world - - with their simultaneous desire for “gender separatist,” primitive male communities, free from the constraints of feminizing domesticity. I take it as axiomatic that one cannot consider male homophilic politics without taking into account the relationship between those politics and the politics of feminism and lesbianism, and in that sense, I do not replicate the sexism of the writers I examine.

The other issue I want to examine is the ambivalent position that literature occupies in this dissertation: one of the thematic issues that I explore at some length in this project is the ways in which the category “English literature” has been used to discipline male same-sex relations and the ways in which canonical accounts of authorial careers are inflected by heterosexist developmental assumptions. And yet, this project obviously belongs within the genre of academic literary criticism. While I historically contextualize my readings, the chapters are close readings of particular literary texts and cannot be mistaken for the
interdisciplinary, materialist scholarship that recent queer theorists like Donald Morton, for instance, urge.

The reasons for my choice are two fold: first, as I have said before for a Foucauldian, complicity with disciplinary mechanisms is inescapable and sometimes productive. Thus, while speaking squarely from within the disciplinary formation “English literature,” I also believe my readings have the potential to trouble its heterosexist and nationalist assumptions. Second, I respond defensively to the accusatory tone of neo-Marxist strains of queer thought which seems to rely on precisely the developmental logic that this dissertation calls into question: Morton, for instance, angrily accuses poststructural queer theory of being “pantextual” (370), and he urges a movement away from the “fetishism” he associates with postmodern queer theory to the healthy, engaged world of material responsibility (371). An anti-homophobic critic needs to be suspicious when he is exhorted to give up the perverse pleasures of lingering over a text in order to move on to adult social concerns, as though readings have no potential material effects and as though there is a material world that can be approached without interpretive mediation. Confronted by Morton’s demand to grow up and give up reading, I am inclined to respond in the romantically anti-developmental terms of Adorno or Barthes: speaking of the pursuit of literary criticism, Adorno writes, “the essay . . . reflect[s] the leisure of the childlike person,” and Barthes, foregrounding the ecstatic pleasures of reading, declares, “Let yourself go, regress” (Adorno and Barthes qtd. in Litvak 124).

But beyond the pleasures of close reading, I do have certain broader stakes in this project. First, it seems very important at this moment, when queer theory is often understood and dismissed as the special pleading of a minority interest group, that critics continually reiterate and within specific reading contexts explore Sedgwick’s audacious claim that sexuality always already centrally inhabits a wide range of discursive registers that on the face of it have nothing to do with sexuality (11). Conversely, it is important for gay/lesbian theory not to reify homosexuality, but to situate it in relation to other cultural
discourses, for as Yingling points out, "sexuality does not exist prior to and apart from the ideological work it performs in containing and articulating struggles and contradictions that appear . . . on 'other' axes of cultural power and difference" ("Sexual" 186). The thematics of temporality and resistance to developmental narratives is particularly useful in this regard because it allows one to move among such a range of disparate discursive registers - - from the discourse of historiography (in the fourth chapter) to the discourse of literary value (in the final chapter) to the discourse of primitivist ethnography and evolutionary sociobiology (in several of the chapters).

Further, I would like to use the homophilic mythologies of several of the writers I examine to gain a defamiliarizing purchase on contemporary issues in Anglo-American gay male politics. The poisonous association of gay men with arrested development and predatory child molestation continues to occupy a powerful place in dominant ideology. And many of the anti-homophobic responses to these stereotypes bear discernable continuities with those advanced by the writers I examine: as I will explain in the chapter on Wilde, Hellenism continues to occupy a central place in the imagination of many Anglo-American gay male writers like Paul Monette. Geoff Mains's association of contemporary gay male S/M culture with primitive non-Western cultures in his sexual apology, Urban Aboriginals, also demonstrates that homophilic primitivism is alive and well within certain strains of Anglo-American gay culture. Similarly, when a contemporary queer writer like Sue Golding describes the "glorious gay community" as "adult children who refuse to give up our friendships and our loves in the face of . . . damnable brutality. . .[,] horror-children. . ., carrying on despite all odds" (180, my emphasis), she is drawing on a romantic link between children and homosexuals that would be entirely familiar to the fin-de-siecle writers I examine in my dissertation.

Clearly, one cannot simply read contemporary queer politics through the lens of fin-de-siecle homophilic discourses. Such a procedure would arrogantly erase historical difference and probably not be very useful. On the other hand, late-Victorian and
Edwardian discourses might provide a way to gain a denaturalizing perspective on contemporary ideology precisely because of its uncanny similarity to and difference from the present. Rather than monumentalizing and idealizing a history that is absolutely other to the present (in the way in which some of the writers I examine idealize the child/primitive) or in treating history as a mere stage leading up to the present (as heterosexist ideology treats the immature homosexual), I would like to treat history as a queer phenomenon that both vitally informs and is different from the present.

Finally, I would hope that my project has the potential to draw gay and lesbian theory into conversation with postcolonial studies. As I have noted before, several of the writers I examine link their critique of heterosexist developmental ideology to their critique of colonial Britain’s contempt for “primitive” peoples and its obsession with progress. They also draw on cross-cultural data to denaturalize Western assumptions about same-sex desire. In drawing this connection, between homophobic and colonial oppression, though, they ignore their own implication in imperial privilege. This vexed tension between anti-homophobic and anti-colonial concerns has its counterpart in contemporary gay and lesbian theory. While cross-cultural comparisons have proved very fruitful in contemporary queer theory in denaturalizing Western sexual categories, this disciplinary field centered in the Western metropolis has to confront the imperial history that allows it to draw on such data and has to recognize a certain complicity with the colonial past it simultaneously critiques. The point of such recognition is not to produce a paralyzing sense of liberal guilt but to produce intellectual work that does full justice to the messiness of history, to avoid replicating the limiting search for a space of innocence that characterizes the work of many of the writers in this project. Ann McClintock has cautioned that often postcolonial theory is understood as theory that is produced after colonialism, an understanding that safely places colonialism in the past. For queer theory to work within that logic and assume that colonialism belongs safely in the past would be to accept the complacent and oppressive logic of one developmental narrative, even while challenging that of another.
Postcolonial and anti-homophobic theoretical concerns also inform each
other in my dissertation’s consideration of the politics of literary value. As I have stated
before many of the writers I examine are critically dismissed as “minor,” and those
aesthetic terms often bear an overdetermined relation to the stereotype of the
developmentally arrested homosexual. Productive analogies can be drawn between the
canonical dismissal of subaltern literatures as “immature” or primitive and the similar terms
that are used to dismiss homosexual writers. At the same time, such analogies cannot
ignore that Western homosexual writers themselves often draw on those canonical terms to
advance their own anti-homophobic interests: in the chapter on E. F. Benson’s *David
Blaize*, for instance, I examine how the writer attempts to normalize the homoerotic bond
between English schoolboys by differentiating their shared, humanistically mature
appreciation of virile Greek and English literature from the pedantic, immature scholarship
of effeminate Bengali *babus*. While this issue goes beyond the scope of my
present project, in chapter 2, I briefly consider how the disciplinary category of English
Literature may have offered colonized male subjects of a certain class an idiom to articulate
their homoerotic desires.

Two weaknesses associated with the pervert are narcissism and a tendency to
look back rather than moving forward to closure. I take a certain perverse pleasure, then,
in ending this introduction with a point returning us to an earlier moment of narcissistic
confession. For, after all, one way to read my citation of *Julius Caesar* in my schoolboy
valedictory performance is precisely as a staging of the complex implication of the category
English literature and the nostalgic/anti-developmental mythologies of a certain strain of
male homosexuality.
Notes

1. There has been a long and heated debate between essentialists and social constructionists within gay and lesbian studies. A useful compilation of some of the more prominent arguments in that debate are collected in the anthology *Forms of Desire*. While my project assumes that the social constructionist position is more plausible, I fully endorse Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s point, in *Epistemology of the Closet*, that an attempt to adjudicate between essentialist and social constructionist positions in any definitive way is fruitless. It is more useful to consider what these positions tell us about the contradictions informing the conceptual history of homosexuality and to think about the multiple, sometimes contradictory political effects that they engender.

Several different accounts have been given for the inception of the hetero/homosexual binarism. Famously, in the *History of Sexuality, volume One*, Michel Foucault described a movement from a discourse of sexual acts to a discourse of sexual persons in the nineteenth century. For less polemical and more historically exact accounts, David Halperin’s *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* and several of the pieces in the anthology *Hidden from History* are useful. For several scholars, the figure and trials of Oscar Wilde play a seminal role in the constitution of the figure of the male homosexual. Sedgwick advances this argument in chapter of *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, a more richly specific, genealogical version of the argument is advanced in Ed Cohen’s *Talk on the Wilde Side*. In her influential account of the history of lesbianism, *Surpassing the Love of Men*, Lillian Faderman contended that sexology “morbidified” the accepted, hitherto non-pathologized affective bonds between women. An extensive body of more recent scholarship has called Faderman’s account into question. For instance, one might consult the pieces on lesbian history in *Hidden from History* or several of the essays in *Not a Passing Phase: Reclaiming Lesbians in History 1840-1985*.

2. In the penultimate section of this introduction, I address at greater length the rationale behind my focus on male homosexuality in this project, despite the fact that lesbians too were often represented in terms of arrested development and constructed their own resistant/complicit mythologies drawing on idioms of primitivism and Hellenism.

3. Marjorie Garber points out that bisexual object choice was often understood in nineteenth-century sexology in terms of the subject’s hermaphroditism or androgyne, physical or psychic. One of Freud’s radical claims in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* was that the mobile sexual drive did not have in its origin in either the biological constitution of the subject or the nature of her object of desire.

4. I recognize that my elision of the invert and the homosexual in that formulation might be seen as problematic. George Chauncey, for instance, has argued that there is a significant difference between inversion models of same-sex desire which focused on the inverted nature of the sexual subject and the homo/heterosexual system which focused on the gender of one’s object choice. Chauncey, whose work is informed by Michel Foucault with his notorious emphasis on epistemic discontinuities, stresses radical shifts in sexual/discursive models. I am more convinced by Sedgwick who, in *Epistemology of the Closet*, points out that at any historical moment several discursive models of same-sex desire sometimes contradictorily coexist. Thus, rather than thinking of one system superseding another we should think of a (homo)sexuality as the overdetermined product of several discursive systems.

5. While it is true that pornographic writers like the Marquis de Sade associated sodomy with the violent denial of gender difference, the assumption that anal sex refuses gender difference is predicated on the odd assumption that women do not have anuses or derive
pleasure from them. As Sedgwick points out in *Tendencies*, feminist discourse does not have the terms to gloss female anal pleasure (177-178). Ironically, in associating anal pleasure with a denial of gender difference an ideological system build around heterosexuality and reproduction itself is guilty of ignoring difference, blindly refusing to recognize heteronomous queer desires that may not be build around the penis-vagina dichotomy.

6. For a useful account of the continuities between psychoanalysis and sexology, see Frank Sulloway’s *Freud, Biologist of the Mind*.

7. Critiques of immature gay hedonism in Anglo-American gay culture in the seventies have been mounted from both within and outside the gay community. Clearly, I do not mean to accuse gay commentators like Larry Kramer of fantasizing about the genocide of gay men, even though these commentators draw on the developmental logic of openly homophobic accounts of AIDS. For an instructive reading of the ways in which a discourse of AIDS activism sometimes replicates developmental logic, drawing distinctions between narcissistic pleasure and adult political responsibility, see Edelman, 93.

8 The suggestion that Graves’s unconscious homosexual desires probably influenced the fictional name he chose for his friend whose actual name was G. H. Johnstone, is further strengthened when we learn, from Garber, that the writer’s nickname for his friend was the equally phallic “Peter” (311).

9. That I read Foucault through the mediatory female figure of Judith Butler symbolically contaminates, in Jane Gallop’s punning French sense of the word, an excessively pure paternal-filial theoretical line (Daughter’s 30-31). In citing a pun from *The Daughter’s Seduction* to situate Butler, I further complicate and feminize the intellectual genealogy of this project since Gallop is a teacher and thinker by whom I have been powerfully influenced.

10. Later gay Modernist writers like Auden and Isherwood, though strongly influenced by Forster in other respects, could no longer invest the affect he placed in Hellenism. In Isherwood’s *Down There on a Visit*, the pretentious Victorian Mr. Lancaster quotes a passage in Greek. The young narrator, who bears a close relation to the author in this roman a clef, and who later in the same novel lyrically celebrates the extent to which he has been influenced by Forster (175), describes the moment as follows: “And off he was into a long straggling string of Greek. How right Hugh Weston was in saying that it was the most hideous of all languages” (47). “Hugh Weston” is the name Isherwood uses for a character based on W.(Wystan)H.(Hugh) Auden.
Part One
Youthful versus Corrupted Homosexualities

Chapter One
The Love That Dare Speak Its Name: Paternity, Pederasty, and Wilde’s Reverse Discourse of Male Homosexuality

At his second trial, Oscar Wilde’s eloquent defence of "the love that dare not speak its name" moved the courtroom audience to applause. However, at the end of the third trial, after hyperbolically pronouncing judgment, Justice Willis summarily silenced Wilde: although the writer with great pathos asked the judge, "And I? May I say nothing my lord?", "Justice Willis made no reply beyond a wave of the hand to the warders on attendance who touched the prisoners [Wilde and Alfred Taylor] on the shoulder and hurried them out of sight to the cells below"(Hyde 273).

On the face of it, the two scenes might seem to stand in stark opposition to each other. In the first, Wilde in the face of adversity gives voice to a forbidden male homoerotic tradition, compelling the grudging admiration of a hostile audience; in the second, the humiliated writer is repressively silenced by the judge and hustled away to a prison cell. But Michel Foucault's History of Sexuality suggests that such an absolute opposition between the two scenes might be simplistic, for "silence... is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within overall strategies"(27). Foucault's formulation suggests that all utterances constitutively stand in some relationship to silences. Further, the silences that structurally inform utterances are not merely negative but productive quantities that have the potential to generate multiple, contradictory effects. In this essay, using Wilde's trials and De Profundis, I will consider what Wilde's public representation of male same-sex desire after
his arrest in 1895 strategically would not and constitutively could not speak about. Further, I will explore what effects these occlusions were designed to produce and what outcomes they disallowed for working-class men.

Although the love that dare not speak its name is often thought of as a defence of homosexuality, Wilde's famous speech did not speak about desire between two men of the same age. Rather, it was an eloquent defence of pederasty, the relationship between an older and a younger man:

"The love that dare not speak its name" in this century is such a great affection of an elder for a younger man as there was between David and Jonathan . . . . it repeatedly exists between an elder and a younger man, when the elder has intellect, and the younger has all the joy, hope, and glamour of life before him. (Hyde Trials 201, my emphasis)

Wilde was asked to define this forbidden love by the lawyers because he was associated with Lord Alfred Douglas who had scandalously addressed the topic in his poem "Two Loves." But in emphasizing the pederastic nature of this supposedly unspeakable desire, Wilde revised the emphasis of Douglas's poem. In "Two Loves" Douglas opposes "True love" who sings "of pretty maids/ And joyous love of comely girl and boy" and who fills "The hearts of boy and girl with mutual flame" to the melancholy, solitary "love that dare not speak its name" ("Two Loves," no line numbers. My emphasis). By stressing the gender difference of the actors involved in "true love," Douglas implicitly suggests that the love that dare not speak its name involves desire between members of the same gender. In other words, while Wilde's description of the love that dare not speak its name emphasizes the age difference between the lovers, Douglas's poem implicitly emphasizes the gender that they share. As Michael Foldy has pointed out, Wilde's erotic predilections do seem to have been for younger men (119), though as Sedgwick points out not exclusively so.

However, I wish to go beyond the details of Wilde's personal erotic tastes to examine what
strategic ends were served in Wilde's revision of Douglas's definition of the love that dare not speak its name.

Foucault's claim in volume 1 of The History of Sexuality that the same terms used to discipline deviant sexualities ironically provided a lexicon for a limited anti-homophobic resistance to "speak" on its own behalf (History 101) is borne out in Wilde's representation of the love that dare not speak its name both at the trial and in De Profundis. In eliding pederasty with same-sex desire, Wilde was strategically attempting to challenge normative culture's persistent association of homosexuality with child molestation by using and inverting that culture's terms. Thus, while Wilde concurs with his culture in conflating homosexuality with intergenerational relations, he presents those intergenerational relations in tutelary and spiritual rather than in debasing and exploitative terms. Further, through a set of elaborate analogies between paternity and pederasty and a calculated association of the love that dare not speak its name with a Protestant inflected strain of Hellenism and Shakespeare, Wilde both eroticizes paternity and attempts to sanitize pederasty and align it with Britain's patriarchal and homosocial culture, suggesting that at least one strain of homosexuality preserves and transmits patriarchal, nationalist, Protestant, and capitalist values. He sharply distinguishes this strain of same-sex desire from an excessively carnal, simultaneously sterile and wasteful form of same-sex desire that in De Profundis he associates with Douglas.

My examination of Wilde's trials and De Profundis through the lens of Foucault's notion of "reverse discourse" is indebted to Jonathan Dollimore's similar use of Foucault in his reading of Wilde. However, Dollimore chooses to limit himself to texts that Wilde wrote prior to his trial. For Dollimore, the trial and De Profundis painfully demonstrate Wilde renouncing his "transgressive aesthetic" and submitting to conservative values (95-96). I am not convinced by this sharply disjunctive account of Wilde's career. Undoubtedly, the challenge that Wilde mounts to normative culture at the trials and in De Profundis is more limited than the challenges he poses to the norm in his earlier works.
While in texts like *The Importance of Being Earnest*, as Christopher Craft has rightly argued, Wilde subverts and displaces the name of the father (Craft 131), in *De Profundis* and in the speech on the love that dare not speak its name, Wilde attempts to align male same-sex desire with paternal values. But a pragmatic anti-foundationalist theory of resistance cannot summarily evaluate different political strategies on some abstract scale located outside the contingencies of history. A highly popular dramatist writing a play and a prisoner facing a homophobic audience from the dock or writing from within prison are in very different existential predicaments. Unless Wilde was absolutely foolhardy, he could not have mounted the corrosively witty assault on normative culture of *The Importance of Being Earnest* from the dock or prison. After all, regardless of the specific charges mounted against him, he was in part in the dock precisely because his earlier challenges to his society had painfully hit home. So, instead of challenging the norm, Wilde attempted the more modest task of trying to transvalue same-sex desire by aligning it with normative patriarchal culture. Further, I will suggest that many of the seemingly conservative moves that Wilde makes contains the potential for at least some readers and listeners to recognize how fictive and potentially appropriable the norm is. For instance, by closely aligning pederasty with paternity, Wilde potentially unconceals both the disavowed homoeroticism that lies at the heart of paternal/filial relations and the constructedness of the institution of paternity itself.

My reading of Wilde is also partially informed by Linda Dowling's account of Hellenism and Victorian homosexuality. Dowling very usefully delineates the various ways in which Victorian homosocial and homosexual cultures deployed the discourses of Hellenism. Like Dollimore, she is heavily influenced by Foucault. However, Dowling's use of Foucault is problematically selective: she uses Foucault to challenge the repressive hypothesis and correctly argues against those readings that would gloss texts like *De Profundis* as simply homophobic rather than discursively productive. On the other hand, she ignores Foucault's careful attention to strategic silences, and in rejecting the repressive
hypothesis, chooses to read *De Profundis* as a purely expressive text, seeing Wilde as uncomplicatedly endorsing the conservative values of Hellenic pederasty. Unlike Dollimore, Dowling worrismously seems to empathize deeply with those conservative Hellenic values. Perhaps that is why although she is capable of being a canny reader, she remains resolutely deaf to the irony of *De Profundis*. Her misreading, I would suggest, reveals both the political uses and limitations of Wilde’s irony.

In the first section of the essay, I will explicate the homophobic stereotypes and narratives that were brought to bear against Wilde at the trials. In the second section, I will explore the reverse discourse that Wilde employs to counter them and the strategic effects that this discourse is designed to produce. In the final section, I will consider the political limitations of Wilde’s counter-narrative and the class interests that his reverse discourse constitutively cannot address.

Section 1

In stressing the educational and nurturant nature of the love that dare not speak its name, Wilde was first and foremost attempting to counter the Marquess of Queensberry’s representation of himself as a solicitous father, protecting his son’s, Lord Alfred Douglas’s, honor from the corrupting attentions of a dissolute, would be "somdomite" (sic). Frank Harris shrewdly warned Wilde that "no jury would give a verdict against a father," and indeed Queensberry’s lawyers repeatedly called upon the jury to identify with the Marquess as a protective father (Harris qtd. in *Trials* 94). Towards the end of Wilde’s first trial, for instance, Queensberry’s counsel Edward Carson read one of Wilde’s indiscreet letters to Douglas and asked, "Before you condemn Lord Queensberry, I ask you to read Mr. Wilde’s letter and to say whether the gorge of any father ought not to rise " (*Trials* 143). Queensberry was a despised public figure who was known for his scandalous and quarrelsome behavior, and so it was unlikely that the members of the jury would be able to identify strongly with him. Further, it was unlikely that the middle-class jury
members would strongly identify with an aristocrat. But Carson's question shrewdly transformed the individual "Lord Queensberry" into a paradigmatic figure of fatherhood, "any father," with whom the members of the jury could unproblematically identify.

Carson's metaphor of "the rising gorge" also seems masterfully calculated. The tropes that Wilde characteristically used to describe his relations with men were oral and/or gustatory ones — for instance, in the very letter that Carson refers to, Wilde extravagantly praises Douglas's scarlet lips and the testimony will repeatedly return to the lavish dinners that the writer ate with his working-class lovers. Further, the jury would hear Tommy Atkins matter of factly describing Wilde's predilection for fellatio. Thus, in describing the reactions of any father's gorge to Wilde's letter, Carson implicitly and forcefully sets up a sharp contrast between the "perverse" oral pleasures associated with Wilde and the properly nauseated visceral response, indeed appropriately a gag response, of a father to these deviant acts. Finally, if the phrase "any father" transforms Queensberry into an abstract figure for fatherhood, the "rising gorge" image endows that abstract figure with a body with which the jury can sensationally identify.

Apart from portraying Queensberry as a protective father, Carson also emphasized the threat that Wilde posed to Queensberry's paternal authority and by implication to a system structured around paternal authority. Repeatedly, Carson reminded the jury of Douglas's intemperate threats to shoot his father and his impertinent dismissal of his father as a "funny little man." By suggesting that Wilde had incited Douglas to consider parricide and had encouraged the younger man's filial insolence, Carson implied that regardless of what the jury thought of Queensberry, it must view Wilde as a threat to the institutionalized paternal authority which sustained British culture. This implication would be strengthened in the second trial when the jury heard how Edward Shelley, one of Wilde's working-class lovers, was "arrested for an assault upon [his] father" who "strongly objected to [Shelley's] friendship with Mr. Wilde." The press clearly fully grasped the connections between disrespect for paternal authority and Britain's national well being that Carson
subtly implied. Note, for instance, how the Telegraph's account of the trial clearly aligns the corruption of paternal/ filial relations with the decline of the whole nation:

   The aestheticism which worships a green carnation or a perfume has lost so much the sense of what is precious in parental and filial relations that we saw in this case a son addressing his father in terms which in ancient days would have involved his death . . . . A nation prospers and profits precisely by those national qualities which these innovators deride and abjure. It goes swiftly to wreck and decay by precisely that brilliant corruption of which we have just had the exposure and demonstration (Telegraph news story quoted in Cohen 171).

The Telegraph account erases the specificity of the actors involved to see the trial as an allegorical contest between corrupt aestheticism and the true patriarchal values that sustain the English nation. It appeals to its middle-class audience by linking feudal, patriarchal traditions to capitalism and nationalism. The values that Wilde and Douglas have flouted may have their roots in the traditions of "ancient days," but flouting these values is not merely an assault on feudal traditions, it supposedly undermines the material prosperity of the entire nation.

Apart from portraying Wilde as threatening Queensberry's paternal authority, Carson also suggested that Wilde demonstrated his perversity by misusing his own authority as a father and a middle-class gentleman: Discussing Wilde's relationship with Alphonse Conway, a youth who sold newspapers at Worthing, Carson in a tone of shocked horror declared:

   If the evidence of Mr. Wilde is true -- and I sincerely hope it is not -- Conway was introduced to Mrs. Wilde and her two sons, aged nine and ten. Now it is clear that Mr. Wilde could not take about the boy Conway in the condition he found him in. So what did he do? And it is here that the disgraceful audacity of the man comes in. Mr. Wilde procured the boy a suit of clothes to dress him up like a gentleman's son... (Trials 145-146)
In the description above, Carson suggests that Wilde is an improper father because he introduced his two sons and wife to his youthful lover. By specifying the ages of Wilde's sons, he is able indirectly to raise the spectre of child molestation without having to provide any supporting evidence that Conway had any designs on Wilde's sons. But for Carson, what seems even more "dishonest[ly] audacious" than the possible sexual corruption of Wilde's sons is the writer's violation of their class position. Specifically, Wilde's audacity lay in his dressing a working-class "boy" in the clothes of a gentleman's son. Discussing the subversive potential of drag, Judith Butler has suggested that "in imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself -- as well as its contingency" (137). Butler's acute analysis explains the vehemence of the court's response to Wilde's deception. By dressing working-class Conway "like a gentleman's son," Wilde threatened to unconceal how contingent and constructed class is. Wilde's successful deception hints that being a gentleman is not a matter of blood or breeding but a matter of looking like a gentleman's son.

In addition to countering the Marquess of Queensberry's portrayal of himself as a concerned father, Wilde's reverse discourse of the love that dare not speak its name also attempts to counter the melodramatic representation of male same-sex desire that informed the law under which he was being tried, a representation which figured the state as a benevolent paternal institution protecting childlike working-class men from the predatory attentions of middle-class homosexuals. Wilde was tried under section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885. The main purpose of that law was supposedly to raise the age of consent of young women and to protect them from falling into prostitution. Thus, historians like Montgomery Hyde have seen the Labouchere Amendment with its prohibition of relations between men in public and private as an anomaly that was tagged on to a law to which it had little or no connection (Trials 12). But Judith Walkowitz's analysis of the rhetoric and narrative genres deployed by the framers of this law suggests that there was a clear ideological continuity between the main law and the amendment, even
if the law itself focused on women and the amendment focused on male same-sex desire. As Walkowitz has pointed out, in order to raise the age of consent for women, reformers like W. T. Stead grossly exaggerated the number of female children who were involved in sex work (Walkowitz 83). Given the enduring homophobic association of homosexuality with child molestation, one can see how congruous an amendment banning homosexual acts would be with a law which hysterically emphasized the sexual vulnerability of children, albeit female ones. Further, the figure of the pervert was represented as having mobile, deviant appetites that could range from desire for young girls to desire for members of his own sex (Walkowitz 278). In other words, unable to meet the demands of adult heterosexuality, the immature male pervert was supposed to desire a wide range of improper objects.

Walkowitz has shown that the main narrative genre on which the framers of the law relied was melodrama: reformers like Stead and Josephine Butler represented young working-class women as helpless victims of rapacious aristocratic men, a representation designed to appeal to middle-class men (chapter 3). This melodramatic story line also served to link the Labouchere Amendment and the rest of the Criminal Amendment Law, for as critics like Jeffrey Weeks have shown, since the early nineteenth century, radicals had persistently associated male homosexuality with aristocratic decadence and had portrayed working-class men as the hapless prey of upper-class deviants (Weeks 18-20). Thus, scandals like the Cleveland Street Scandal of 1889 -- in which a number of aristocrats, including possibly a member of the Royal family, were involved in homosexual relations with telegraph boys -- only served to buttress and rigidify a set of melodramatic stereotypes that already animated the law. And these stereotypes were repeatedly brought into play against Wilde: the prosecution insistently represented him as corrupting young working-class men, who presumably had no agency. Thus, for instance, in his summation at the second trial, Judge Clark reproached Wilde and Alfred Taylor, Wilde's friend who had procured him some of his young lovers and who had gone to public
school, with misusing their class position to exploit those below them in the social hierarchy.

I would also suggest that this melodramatic narrative has some bearing on the fact that at the second and third trials, where Wilde was being charged under the terms of the Labouchere Amendment, the prosecution did not pursue the question of Wilde’s relationship with Douglas. At the third trial, Justice Willis explicitly reminded the jury that the charges of gross indecency that were levelled at Wilde dealt with his sexual relationships with working-class men and had nothing to do with his relationship with Douglas. Of course, there are several reasons why the prosecution at the second and third trials tended to downplay Douglas — first, the prosecution wanted to protect the reputation of the young aristocrat, and Wilde collaborated with them in his heroic desire to shield his young lover. Second, the prosecution did not have any evidence that Wilde and Douglas had had sex together while they had damning evidence about Wilde’s physical relationships with the working-class men. However, I would also like to suggest more speculatively that Douglas’s class status made him unsuitable for the melodramatic narrative that was brought to bear against Wilde at the second and third trials. Although Wilde was not an aristocrat, he could be portrayed as a relatively affluent gentleman who seduced innocent working-class "boys" with gifts of cigarette cases and expensive dinners, a story entirely consonant with a good melodramatic plot. But as an aristocrat, Douglas did not fit the story line — in the melodramatic story line, the aristocrat was the older seducer, not the youthful object of corruption. Perhaps for this reason, the prosecution downplayed Douglas’s relationship with Wilde. Douglas himself bitterly complained that he was not allowed to testify at the trial, and critics like Hyde have seen him as legally naive in not recognizing his irrelevance to the libel charges filed by Wilde against Queensberry (Trials 161). In strictly legal terms, these critics are right, but if my speculation is accurate, Douglas might have had a shrewder sense of the trial’s narrative logic, and he might indeed have had the potential partially to disrupt the trial’s melodramatic story line. Wilde would
suggest at the first trial that the category of youthfulness transcended class, declaring "I delight in the society of people much younger than myself. . . . I recognize no social classes at all of any kind; and to me youth . . . the mere fact of youth is wonderful" (Trials 129). But what the trials suggest is that "youth" cannot be reified as some essential category but always stands in some relation to class, so, for instance, Douglas's youthfulness or the youthfulness of Wilde's son Cyril was bound to signify culturally in a different fashion from that of Tommy Atkins or Alphonse Conway. As an aristocrat, Douglas's youthful rebellion against his father could be represented as a threat to Britain's material prosperity and national traditions. However, in a story line involving melodramatic corruption and exploitation, the hapless youthful victims needed to be working-class men.

In addition to representing Wilde's conduct as undermining paternal authority and Britain's class hierarchy, Queensberry’s counsel also suggested that Wilde's writing played a similar function. Explicitly, Carson invoked what he termed the "perverted novel" The Picture of Dorian Gray in order to suggest that Wilde's friendship for Douglas might be analogous to Basil Hallward's passion for Dorian Gray. But given the reception history of The Picture of Dorian Gray, Carson knew that by introducing the book, he would be able implicitly to raise the image of Wilde as a would be corrupter not just of Douglas or the working-class youths, but a corruptor of Britain's reading public. The notorious 1890 review of the novel in the Scots Observer effectively represents the stridency of the public reaction to The Picture of Dorian Gray:

Why go grubbing in muck heaps? The world is fair, and the proportion of healthy-minded men and honest women to those that are foul, fallen, or unnatural is great. Mr. Oscar Wilde has again been writing stuff that were better unwritten . . . . It is false art -- for its interest is medico-legal . . . . Mr. Wilde has brain, arts, and style; but if he can write for none but outlawed noblemen and perverted telegraph boys,
the sooner he takes to tailoring (or some other decent trade) the better for his own reputation and the public morals. Many things could be said about this passage. Note, for instance, the dense overlap of related but different historical discourses that inform this attack: the passage moves among the idioms of sodomy ("grubbing among the muck heaps"), scientistic discourses of medicine and sexology ("healthy-minded men and women"; "its interest is medico-legal," etc.), an older language of morality ("fallen," "public morals," etc.), and even the language of capitalism -- the notorious dandy, the passage suggests, should turn away from corrupting his readers to some productive work, such as being a tailor, a position perhaps better suited to a declassé Irishman than that of a gentleman artist. The discursive overdetermination of this passage forcefully illustrates how right Sedgwick is to warn against the oversimplifications that discontinuous historical narratives of sexuality can create. Just because one historical discourse gets superseded by another, does not mean that the former completely disappears (Epistemology 47).

For the purposes of this argument, though, I want to focus on the last part of The Scottish Observer's attack on Wilde. By suggesting that Wilde's prospective audience is comprised of "outlawed noblemen" and "perverted telegraph boys," the newspaper links The Picture of Dorian Gray to the Cleveland Street scandal. On the face of it, the story seems to say simply that Wilde's novel would appeal only to the deviants associated with the Cleveland Street Scandal and other perverts of their ilk. However, at the end of the passage, when the paper declares that if Wilde gives up writing for tailoring, "public morals" will be improved, there seems to be the implication that the novel does not merely appeal to deviants but is also responsible for producing them. That is, in violation of all temporal logic, The Picture of Dorian Gray is represented as causing the Cleveland Street scandal.⁶ Although Carson did not explicitly bring up the Cleveland Street scandal, by discussing The Picture of Dorian Gray, he implicitly evoked the cause and effect link that
newspapers like *The Scottish Observer* had discerned between Wilde's writing and the violation of sexual and class norms that had characterized this scandal.

While the prosecution did not explicitly figure Wilde's corrupting literary influence in terms of an undermining of paternal authority, the public seems to have clearly understood the implicit link between the charges of undermining Queensberry's proper paternal authority over his son and perverting Britain's reading public. A typographical parapraxis in the *Star*’s discussion of the trial demonstrates how this link shaped popular coverage of the trial: questioning Wilde about the corrupting influence of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Carson asked whether the sins of Dorian Gray constituted "unnatural vice." Wilde responded that "every man will see his own sin in Dorian Gray." However, in reporting the exchange, the *Star* misquoted Wilde as saying "Every man will see his own son in Dorian Gray" (the *Star* quoted in Cohen 163). Wilde's statement subversively makes corrupt Dorian Gray a revealing portrait of every reader. Thus, in Wilde's formulation, the reader who associates Dorian Gray's sins with male same-sex practices betrays his own homoerotic desires. By contrast, in the *Star*’s misreading, the reader becomes Dorian’s father. Just as Carson suggests that “every father’s gorge rises” at the notion of his son consorting with Wilde, the *Star* suggests that every reader sees his own son’s corruption in that of Dorian Gray. But I would suggest that the cultural anxiety which the *Star*’s misreading symptomatically reveals is precisely that readers will choose to identify with the sinful son Dorian rather than occupying the position of the responsible, shocked father.

In linking Wilde's undermining of paternal authority to his writing, the prosecution was making a connection that had been repeatedly made during Wilde's career, as the reception of Wilde's first published book, *Poems*, illustrates. When Wilde's *Poems* were published, the volume scandalized many fathers who insisted their sons not read the book. Canon Miles, the father of Frank Miles, Wilde's roommate at 9 Charles Street, insisted that his son separate from Wilde because of the "evil tendency in the poems" (Ellman 148).
Like Frank Miles, Robert Ross was forbidden to read the Poems and was beaten for doing so (Ellman 275). Although Ellman does not tell us whether it was Ross's father who beat him, one might say that symbolically at least paternal authority disapproved of the boy reading Wilde's Poems.

But beyond the disapproval of actual fathers, Wilde's Poems provoked the disapproval of figures who would play important roles in shaping Britain's national literary canon in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, fathers of the national canon, one might say. And the volume provoked these canonical father's disapproval precisely because of its suspect paternity. On the request of the Oxford Union librarian, Wilde donated a volume of Poems to the library. However, in the Oxford Union, Sir Henry Newbolt and Oliver Elton "rose to denounce" the volume and the idea of placing it on the library shelves. Specifically, Elton accused Wilde of plagiarizing from other poets, and he trooped this accusation in paternal terms. According to Elton, Wilde was not the real father of his poems: "[these] poems are for the most part not by their putative father at all" (Elton qtd. in Ellman 146). In other words, the perversely, multiply fathered volume of poems should not occupy a place beside poems that had been legitimately sired. Ultimately, a furious Wilde was forced to withdraw the volume. Both Elton and Newbolt played important roles in the forming of the British canon: as Terry Eagleton points out, Newbolt's 1921 report The Teaching of English in England helped to institutionalize the notion of an organic national tradition (Eagleton 28). Similarly, Elton became an influential literary critic and scholar later in his life, and as Brian Doyle points out, as English became instituted as a university subject in the late nineteenth century, Elton's magisterial Survey of English Literature played a seminal role in constructing a national literary canon. In his survey, Elton, like Newbolt, insisted on the organic continuity among a line of great literary figures underwriting Britain's national tradition -- "There is a true continuity of spirit as well as expression in our poetry... [,] an unbroken line of development in English literature" (Elton qtd. in Doyle 83). Although Elton does not explicitly use
masculine or paternal tropes in the formulation above, his "unbroken line" consists almost exclusively of male figures making the English literary tradition an organic line of great fathers. It is no wonder, then, that Elton would disapprove of Wilde who explicitly debunked paternity and challenged the connection between paternity and standards of literary value in epigrams like the following line from The Importance of Being Earnest, "Fathers are certainly not popular just at present. . . . At present fathers are at a terrible discount. They are like those chaps, the minor poets. They are never even quoted" (Wilde qtd. in Craft 122). Further, in its consistent skepticism about what constitutes "nature," Wilde's art understandably posed an intolerable challenge to the organic, familial metaphors of Elton's canonical paradigm. From his very first published work, then, Wilde was seen as challenging the paternal, familial values of the national canon.

The establishment of a British literary canon worked, as critics like Chris Baldick and Gauri Vishwanathan have pointed out, to consolidate national authority not only within Britain but in the colonies as well. In this context, it is worth recalling that young Robert Ross, beaten for reading Wilde's Poems, was the grandson of Canada's Governor General and the son of Canada's Attorney General. Perhaps Wilde's Poems scandalized Ross's family both because in its challenge to paternal authority, it indirectly challenged Britain's colonial authority. I am not suggesting that the content of the volume explicitly challenges British colonialism. Far more tentatively I am suggesting that since the Poems were perceived to be challenging the paternal and organic values that sustained the canon, and since the canon was used as a secular force to indoctrinate Britain's colonial subjects, it would not be surprising that this volume of poems should be seen as a danger to Britain's colonial authority and hence as forbidden reading matter for the son of a leading colonial official.

Having mapped the strategies that were brought to bear against Wilde at his trials, I will now examine how Wilde used the very terms that were brought to bear against him in constructing a reverse discourse of male same-sex desire.
Section Two

Wilde was highly aware of the constructedness, the literary nature of the case brought against him. In *De Profundis*, he writes:

I was arrested and your father became the hero of the hour; more indeed than the hero of the hour merely; your family now ranks strangely enough with the Immortals . . . . your father will always live among the kind pure-minded parents of Sunday-school literature, your place is with the infant Samuel, and in the lower mire of Maleboge I sit between Gilles de Retz and the Marquis de Sade. (89)

As the extended passage above demonstrates, Wilde was bitterly aware of how the public's perception of himself, Douglas, and Queensberry were informed by literary expectations -- Queensberry and Douglas were viewed as figures from pious Christian texts while Wilde was represented as an un-English libertine like de Sade or de Retz. or a figure from Dante. Discussing "Lockwood's appalling denunciation" at the third trial, Wilde compares Lockwood's speech to "a thing out of Tacitus," "a passage in Dante," once again demonstrating his self-consciousness about the literary constructedness of the entire trial, its intertextual relationship with a whole literary tradition.

That constructedness is underscored by Wilde's witty use of literary and theatrical puns. At one point, for instance, he refers to Queensberry as "the author" of the scandal. The term suggests that not only has Queensberry been the cause of the scandal, but he has also written the script for that scandal. At another point, discussing Queensberry's motives for provoking a "public scandal," Wilde writes, "He saw the opportunity of appearing before the British public in an entirely new character that of the affectionate father" (943). In that formulation, Wilde represents the trial as a play in which Queensberry gets the opportunity to play a new and exciting role that of "the affectionate father." By using the definite article "the," "the affectionate father" not "an affectionate father," Wilde is implies that there is a well established singular set of characterological expectations that the culture
has of fathers. Thus, Wilde explicitly responds to and inverts Queensberry’s charge against him: Queensberry had accused Wilde of “posing as a sodomite.” The term “posing,” in that formulation had been used to reinforce rather than weaken the term “sodomite” since in an ontological system where acting is seen as inauthentic and secondary as opposed to being, “posing” would be an attribute one would expect to be connected with unnatural sodomy. While true men simply are themselves; unnatural sodomites have to pose. But Wilde upsets the equation by linking “the affectionate father” to a theatrical role, suggesting that affectionate fathers should be associated with posing just as much as sodomites.

Not only is Wilde aware of the literary constructedness of the trial, like Foucault, he recognizes that the same language and roles that constituted the theatre of the trial are available for appropriation in constructing a resistant counter discourse. Thus, toward the end of De Profundis, Wilde writes:

> listening to Lockwood’s appalling denunciation of me. . . . Suddenly it occured to me, how splendid it would be if I was saying all this about myself! I saw then . . . that what is said of a man is nothing. The point is who says it” (947, Wilde’s emphasis).

The quotation suggests that the same language that is used by Lockwood can gain a different value, can become "splendid," if appropriated and deployed by Wilde himself. In other words, Lockwood’s language can provide Wilde with a reverse discourse.

In his reverse discourse, Wilde attempts to represent the love that dare not speak its name as being linked to paternal values rather than representing a threat to them. He does so by drawing a set of elaborate analogies between paternity and pederasty. First, he establishes a homology between Queensberry and himself and implicitly a homology between an erastes, the Athenian term for the older man in a pederastic relationship, and a father. Using this homology, Wilde is able to argue that he did not incite Douglas to rebel against Queensberry. Rather, Douglas’s filial insolence to Queensberry was isomorphic
with his insolence to his *erasets*, Wilde. Thus, for instance, Wilde points out that Douglas used to send equally violent and intertemperate letters to both Queensberry and to Wilde himself (*De Profundis* 939).

But Wilde goes beyond comparing his position to that of Douglas's father. He impudently suggests that his interest in Douglas was purer and more innocent than Queensberry's paternal concern, and he does so by inverting the narrative that the prosecution had employed against him. The prosecution had represented Wilde as wresting away an innocent son from his father for the purpose of preying on his flesh. In *De Profundis*, however, Wilde writes:

> the idea of your [Alfred Douglas] being the object of a terrible quarrel between your father and a man of my position seemed to delight you. . . . That your father might have had your body, which did not interest me, and left me your soul, which did not interest him, would have been to you a distressing solution of the question (895).

In this counter-narrative, rather than being the innocent victim, Douglas becomes the delighted object of rivalry between two men. Further, it is not the homosexual Wilde who wants to prey on the young man's body. He only wants to tutor Douglas's soul. Rather, it is Queensberry, the supposedly affectionate father, who has no use for Douglas's soul and desires to have his body, an ambiguous phrase full of erotic implications.⁸

A few pages later, Wilde rings another variation on this triangulated counter-narrative to represent himself as a Christ figure whose soul is gambled for by Queensberry and Douglas. In this narrative, Douglas is not the innocent, mediatory object between two men; it is Wilde who becomes the mediatory object between father and son. He writes.

> For two days you [Douglas] sat on a high seat with the Sherriffs, and *feasted* your eyes with the spectacle of your father standing in the dock of the Central Criminal Court. And on the third day, I took his place. What had occurred? In your
hideous game of hate together, you had both thrown dice for my soul and you
happened to have lost" (896, my emphasis).

While in the trial Wilde was represented as a sexually predatory figure, here he is a Christ-
like soul - - recall that a dice was thrown for Christ's garments by the Roman soldiers at the
foot of the cross; note too that Wilde enters the dock on the third day - - who is wagered
over by a sensual father and son. Further, while at the trial, the prosecution lingered over
Wilde's perverse oral appetites, in this description, it is Wilde's supposedly innocent victim
who is represented as voyeuristically feasting his eyes on the spectacle of his father in the
dock. In other words, the oral erotic bond, even if it takes the form of displaced
aggression, is between Douglas and Queensberry in this account, not between Wilde and
Douglas. Wilde is merely the innocent conduit for this perverse desire.

In addition to drawing a homology between himself and Queensberry, Wilde also
establishes an isomorphic relationship between truly worthy pederastic relationships and a
true paternal/filial bond, and he does so by sharply differentiating both of them from an
unworthy strain of homosexuality. Early in De Profundis, Wilde declares that he should
have distinguished between his truly worthy pederastic bonds and his ties with Douglas:
"When I compare my friendship with you to my friendship with such still younger men as
John Gray and Pierre Louys I feel ashamed. My real life, my higher life was with them
and such as they" (875). Further, throughout the dialogue he pointedly distinguishes
between his idealized relationship with Ross and his relationship with Douglas. Later in
the text, Wilde distinguishes between his unworthy relationship with Douglas and his
highly valued bond with his son Cyril:

I could not bear the idea of being separated from my Cyril, that beautiful, loving,
loveable child of mine, my friend of all my friends, my companion beyond all
companions, one single hair of whose little golden head should have been dearer
and more value to me than. I will not merely say you from top to toe, but the entire
chrysolite of the whole world (900).
In the act of declaring that he will not compare Cyril to Douglas, Wilde of course does just that, and as with Ross, John Gray, and Louys, Cyril is found far more worthy than Douglas. The effect of these comparisions is to analogize worthy pederastic and filial/paternal bonds. Inasmuch as both Cyril and Wilde’s eromenoi are more worthy than Douglas, they occupy isomorphic positions.

On the face of it, this move might simply seem conservative and normalizing, but it has certain subversive implications. For if pederasty is normalized in the comparison, paternal/filial relations are implicitly eroticized. This can be illustrated by examining the terms that are put in apposition to Cyril’s name: "my friend of all my friends, my companion beyond all companions" or the sentimental description of Cyril’s "little golden head." In the context of paternity, this language seems relatively innocuous, but when paternity is juxtaposed with pederasty, its eroticism becomes palpable. After all, the figure of the golden haired little boy was common in Uranian fiction and poetry. Indeed, there is a golden curled little boy in John Bloxam’s "The Priest and the Acolyte," the Uranian tale published in the Oxford magazine "The Spirit Lamp" along with some of Wilde’s epigrams, a tale which the prosecution determinedly attempted to associate with Wilde, an association which he energetically repudiated: "the priest... waited at the window for the glimmer of the pale summer moonlight on a crown of golden curls, for the sight of slim boyish limbs... and the pallor of the little feet speeding across the grass" (353); "The priest bowed low till his hair just touched the golden halo that surrounded the little face" (350). While Wilde leaves Cyril completely disembodied — we have no "slim boyish limbs" or "pallor of... little feet" -- the description of Cyril has a definite continuity with "The Priest and the Acolyte" in its erotic lingering over blondeness and littleness.

Furthermore, the phrases Wilde uses to describe his son, "my friend of all my friends, my companion beyond all companions," are also commonly found in many pederastic texts of the period. James Kincaid has provocatively suggested that post-Victorian culture fiercely repudiates pedophilia in part because the eroticized child plays a crucial role within familial
ideology (7). The ease with which similar language can be deployed by both fathers and pederasts bears out Kincaid's thesis by demonstrating the disavowed eroticism at the heart of paternal/filial relations, an eroticism that only becomes noticeable when paternity is juxtaposed with pederasty.

Note too how in measuring Cyril's value, Wilde implicitly suggests that the erotics of paternal/filial relations do not transcend the marketplace. From the trials, it is clear that Wilde weighed the relative attractiveness of the male prostitutes with whom he associated. Thus, for instance, at the first trial Wilde scornfully declared that he had not kissed Walter Grainger because "he was a peculiarly plain boy" (133). Plain Walter Grainger evidently was not worth a kiss unlike Atkins for instance. By measuring the relative value of Cyril's golden head against Douglas's entire body from head to toe, even while claiming that he is not doing so, Wilde implicitly suggests that paternal-filial relations are not insulated from the marketplace in which more grossly obvious transactions are conducted.

If like paternity pederasty is not insulated from the market, the main difference between the idealized form of pederasty and its perverse form is productivity. This contrast works on both a familial and economic register. To begin with the familial register: Linda Dowling has pointed out that Wilde insistently represents his love for Douglas as sterile (Dowling 147). He writes in De Profundis "Whether at Torquay, Goring, London, Florence, or elsewhere, my life as long as you were by my side, was entirely sterile and uncreative" (874). Later in the text, after constraining how Douglas wastefully exploited his time with the ways in which Gray and Louys fertilized his spirit, Wilde goes on to declare that after Douglas was out of the country, "An Ideal Husband" was "conceived" (875, my emphasis). As Dowling points out, Wilde is drawing on the language of "spiritual procreancy" from Plato's Symposium. In Symposium, Plato distinguishes between the carnal reproduction characteristic of heterosexual relations and the reproduction of ideas characteristic of pederasty. Given the spiritual nature of the offspring of pederasty, Plato privileges same-sex relations over heterosexuality. Wilde, however, uses Plato's
distinction to analogize true pederasty with heterosexuality and to distinguish both from a sterile form of homosexuality. This analogy helps him to counter the prosecution's representation of sterile homosexuality as the antithesis of the family. While concurring that a certain strain of homosexuality (the homosexuality represented by Douglas) is sterile, Wilde suggests that idealized pederasty is productive and by implication is not anti-familial.

Just as Plato views dialogue between the older and younger man as generating ideas, Wilde too sees conversation playing a crucial role in engendering ideas. But while Plato and homophile reformers like Carpenter represented marriage as a carnally generative institution, in opposition to the spiritually generative institution of pederasty, Wilde represents both marriage and true pederasty as spiritually and intellectually productive compared to an excessively carnal strain of homosexuality. Discussing the importance of conversation, Wilde writes, “Ultimately the bond of all companionship, whether in marriage or in friendship is conversation” (880). In this formulation, “marriage” and true “friendship” become isomorphic; both allow productive conversation. But Douglas does not provide Wilde with productive conversation because he is obsessed with sensuality, “it was only in the mire of life that we [Douglas and Wilde] met: and fascinating, terribly fascinating though the one topic round which your [Douglas] talk invariably centered was, still in the end it became quite monotonous to me[Wilde]” (881). Unlike a true “friend” or a wife, Douglas is obsessed with lust and so is unable to generate new ideas.

But the distinction between productive pederasty and a sterile strain of homosexuality does not merely draw on the language of Plato, it also draws on the language of capitalism. As we have seen, the newspapers suggested that in undermining paternity, Wilde threatened capitalist values. In his counter-narrative, Wilde represents himself as a business like artistic professional who gets a return from his investment in his true eromenoi but unfortunately loses a vast amount on the profligate eromenos Douglas. In great detail, detail distinctly unusual for Wilde who usually ostentatiously despises the
realist detail of novelists like Dickens, he lists the amount of money that he spent on
Douglas:

between the autumn of 1892 and the date of my imprisonment I spent with you and
on you more than 5000 pounds in actual money . . . . My ordinary expenses with
you for an ordinary day in London -- for luncheon, dinner, supper,
amusements, hansom, and the rest of it -- ranged from 12 pounds to 20 pounds
and the week's expenses were naturally in proportion and ranged from 80 pounds
to 130 pounds. For our three months at Goring, my expenses were 1340
pounds. (877)

Yet, Wilde suggests Douglas proved to be a poor investment because the invested capital
led to no real production, “Out of the reckless dinners with you nothing remains but the
memory that too much was eaten and too much was drunk” (877). By contrast, Ross on
the basis of a modest 3 franc 50 c meal helps Wilde to produce a dialogue:

One of the most delightful dinners I remember having ever had is one Robbie and I
had together in a little Soho cafe, which cost about as many shillings as my dinners
to you used to cost pounds. Out of the dinner with Robbie came the first and best
of my dialogues. Idea, title, treatment, mode, everything was struck out at a 3
franc 50 c. table-d'hote. (877)

While Wilde will scornfully declare elsewhere in De Profundis that “Love does not traffic
in the marketplace, nor use a huckster's scales” (899), here he is clearly measuring the
productive returns of true pederasty against the destructive waste engendered by Douglas's
strain of homosexual relations. One subversive implication of this otherwise conservative
move is that by combining material details with the idealized language of pederasty, Wilde
reveals the materialism that undergirds the elevated discourse of Hellenic spiritual
procreancy.

While an ideal form of pederasty is productive, Wilde repeatedly insists that it is not
physical. In the speech defending the love that dare not speak its name, for instance, he
declares, that "it is that deep spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect. . . . There is nothing unnatural about it. It is intellectual" (201). This supposedly idealized pederasty stands in opposition to Douglas's grossly materialistic form of desire. Significantly, the metaphors with which Wilde repeatedly associates Douglas are those of the mire and the sewer. For instance, describing how he fled from Douglas, Wilde writes

[I] was actually forced to run away from England, in order to try and get rid of a friendship that was entirely destructive of everything fine in me. . . . the person from whom I was flying being no terrible creature sprung from the sewer or the mire. . . . but you, yourself, a young man of my own social rank and position (882).

Later, reproaching Douglas for having incited him to destroy his family's name, Wilde writes, "I had dragged [my family's name] through the very mire" (904). By insistently linking the images of "the mire" and "the sewer" to Douglas, Wilde associates the younger man's strain of homosexuality with sodomy, as opposed to the "spiritual affection" of ideal pederasty or paternity. Anal sex, of course, is demonized by a heterosexist familial ideology precisely because it is seen as unproductive; hence, this association reinforces the connection between wastefulness and Douglas's strain of homosexuality.

In addition to analogizing pederasty with paternity, Wilde also tries to affiliate pederasty with a symbolically paternal British literary and cultural tradition, and he does so by associating the love that dare not speak its name with a catalogue of symbolic fathers:

"The love that dare not speak its name" . . . is such a great affection of an elder for a younger man as there was between David and Jonathan, such as Plato made the very basis of his philosophy, and such as you find in the sonnets of Michaelangelo and Shakespeare. . . . It dictates and pervades great works of art like those of Shakespeare and Michaelangelo, and those two letters of mine such that they are. (201)
The genealogy that Wilde establishes here sounds similar in many respects to that described in *The Portrait of Mr. W. H.*, where Erskine too invokes Plato, Michaelangelo, and Shakespeare, or *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, where thinking of Basil’s infatuation with Dorian Gray, Lord Henry invokes Michaelangelo and Plato. However, in neither *The Portrait of Mr. W. H.* nor *The Picture of Dorian Gray* does Wilde mention David and Jonathan who here play an important role since they begin the catalogue. David and Jonathan play more than one function in this list. For one thing, they allow Wilde to draw an implicit analogy between the triangles of David, Jonathan, and Saul and himself, Douglas, and Queensberry. In the Old Testament story, Saul clearly works against God’s will, and as readers we are meant to identify with David and Jonathan; hence, the analogy works to discredit Queensberry and glorify Wilde. But the allusion to these figures also works to Christianize Plato and to connect him with a specifically Protestant tradition. No doubt Hellenism occupied a salient position in the British male homosocial educational curriculum, and so Plato commanded immense cultural capital. However, the overtly homoerotic Hellenism of figures from Oxford like John Henry Newman, Pater, and Wilde made middle-class British patriarchal culture uneasy. This strain of Hellenism had sinister associations with Catholicism and excessive aestheticism: Ellman points out that Wilde seriously considered converting to Catholicism, and Dowling has shown how Newman’s interest in Hellenism intersected with his growing interest in Roman Catholicism. Further, pederastic fiction like “The Acolyte,” which links Hellenistic pederasty to the sensuous rituals of Catholicism, demonstrate the connection between certain strains of Uranian Hellenism and Catholicism. By contrast, the strand of Hellenism that was valued by British male homosocial culture linked Greece to Protestant values. Since within Protestant traditions the Bible and the Old Testament occupy a more salient position than within Catholicism, by connecting two Old Testament figures to the love that dare not speak its name, Wilde attempts to affiliate his strand of Hellenism not just with a Christian tradition, but specifically with a Protestant one.
From David and Jonathan, Wilde moves to the next cultural father in his catalogue, Plato. Describing Plato as a father figure seems appropriate because in De Profundis Wilde repeatedly associates Hellenism with the figures of his father and Oxford. He suggests that one of the seminal points in his life occurred when his father sent him to Oxford, and he reproaches Douglas for not having absorbed the Hellenistic ethos of Oxford, unlike more worthy eromenoi like Ross. Douglas, in other words, is represented as not being worthy of the cultural patrimony that Wilde and the more worthy eromenoi inherited at Oxford. The classics, as critics like Richard Jenkyns, Linda Dowling, and Frank Turner among others have pointed out played a crucial role in the university curriculum of a nineteenth-century gentleman, and occupied a particularly central position at Oxford. But just as Wilde idealizes his relationship with his father, he conveniently represses his conflicts with Oxford over his Hellenism. As Ellman tells us, Wilde was rusticated from Magdalen in 1877 for going on an unauthorized trip to Greece with his Irish tutor from Trinity College, Mahaffy, and not returning to Oxford on time. Ellman sarcastically writes, “That [voyages to Greece] were necessary to a classical course in Oxford was more than Magdalen was ready to concede” (77), and Wilde himself in some bewilderment protests “I was sent down from Oxford for being the first undergraduate to visit Olympia” (Wilde qtd. in Ellman 78). However, I would suggest that the harshness of Oxford’s response is less surprising than Ellman and Wilde seem to think. In order for Greece to remain the idealized center of a curriculum designed to prepare middle-class Englishmen for their role in Victorian, it was important that the Greece the undergraduates learned about be severed from the historical, geographical entity Greece. With the universalizing violence of humanism, Magdalen transformed Greece into an abstraction which could be made to serve Britain’s national needs. In insisting on travelling to Greece, then, Wilde was intolerably challenging the Oxford curriculum. Ellman tells us that Oscar’s brother Willie believed that the trip to Greece may simply have been a pretext for rusticking the writer for some sexual transgression. Indeed, there is a connection between Wilde’s homosexuality and his
rustication though it is probably more indirect than Willie Wilde thought. One of the aspects of Greece that blandly universalizing accounts ignored was its tolerance of pederasty. However, in contrast to English humanist writers on Greece, Wilde’s tutor from Trinity College, Mahaffy, was surprisingly open about Greek pederasty in the first edition of his Social Life in Greece from Homer to Menander, a text in which he acknowledges Wilde’s assistance (Mahaffy in subsequent editions dropped his discussion of homosexual love and his acknowledgment of Wilde’s assistance). I would suggest that Wilde’s assisting Mahaffy to write about Greek homosexuality and his travelling to Greece with his old tutor are related impulses. In both cases, Wilde was dangerously trying to get closer to a different Greece from the sanitized, Protestant, humanist Greece of British homosocial culture. Wilde paid the price for this transgression; he was rusticated. However, in his rewriting of his relationship to Oxford and Hellenism, Wilde ignores paternalistic Oxford’s attempt to normalize and Anglicize Greece and chooses instead to stress the continuity between Greek pederasty and the values that he received from paternal Oxford.

While Wilde invokes Plato to legitimate the indiscreet letter to Douglas, that letter and Wilde’s later discussion of it in De Profundis actually undercut the search for stable Hellenic paternal precursors. In that letter, Wilde writes: "I know Hyacinthus, whom Apollo loved so madly, was you in Greek days" (Trials101). This passage, of course, wittily deconstructs the notion of finding a stable paternal origin in Greece, for in that letter, what should logically seem to come earlier is defined by what comes later. It is not that Douglas imitates or resembles a precursor Hyacinthus. Rather, it is Hycacinthus the temporal precursor who is defined by Douglas: "Hyacinthus was you in Greek days" (my emphasis). It is the English son one might say who gives his name to and defines his Greek precursor. Further, as Kevin Kopelson has pointed out, in De Profundis, Wilde revises the passage, and I would suggest that this revision also subverts the valorizing of Hellenic paternal origins that seemingly underlies the defence of the love that dare not speak
its name (Kopelson 48). In De Profundis, Wilde writes about the earlier letter, "I reply by a letter of fantastic literary conceits: I compare you to Hylas, or Hyacinth, . . . or Narcisse, or someone whom the great god of Poetry favored or honored with his love" (880). In fact, in the letter, Wilde compares Hyacinth to Douglas, but by drawing up a catalogue of Greek mythological figures, "Hylas, or Hyacinth, or Narcisse," Wilde suggest that rather than providing him with some originary, singular father, Greece provided him with a set of mythic names which he could invoke almost interchangably depending on his particular need.

The next figure in Wilde’s catalogue of paternal sponsors of the love that dare not speak its name is Shakespeare. As we have seen the prosecution represented Wilde as threatening the paternal values which sustained the canon. In invoking Shakespeare, Wilde attempts to counter this accusation, for as Gary Taylor and others have pointed out, Shakespeare occupied a mythic status as one of the immortal fathers of the newly forming British canon at the end of the nineteenth century.

Let us trace the lawyers’ and Wilde’s invocations of Shakespeare at the trial in order to gain some sense of how he was strategically deployed. Wilde initially used Shakespeare at the first trial to try and distance himself from Basil’s declaration of love to Dorian Gray. Partially citing what he described as "the unpurgded edition" of The Picture of Dorian Gray, Carson asked Wilde whether he had ever "adored a young man madly." After some verbal sparring, Wilde responded, "No. The whole idea was borrowed from Shakespeare, I regret to say - - yes, from Shakespeare’s sonnets" (113). By invoking Shakespeare, with his status as a transcendent symbol of Britain’s literary heritage, a figure beyond the contingencies of history and material reality, as the real origin of Basil’s rhetoric, Wilde immediately elevated the passage to the status of a piece of art which could not be scrutinized for its referential content. Note too the irony that Wilde who was condemned by Elton for promiscuously borrowing from other literary fathers now uses precisely the same rhetoric to transfer responsibility for homoeroticism in The Picture of Dorian Gray.
from himself to Shakespeare, "the whole idea was borrowed from Shakespeare" (my emphasis). He used a related tactic later in the trial when on being questioned about the indiscreet letter written to Douglas, he responded by transforming it into a Shakespearian work of art, "It is a poem. I was not writing an ordinary letter. You might as well cross-examine me as to whether King Lear or a sonnet of Shakespeare was proper" (115). For any Victorian humanist, questioning the propriety of King Lear or a sonnet of Shakespeare was absurd because by virtue of being great literature these texts supposedly transcended any particular set of historical values.

However, Carson, Queensberry's counsel, seemed to know the rules of this game of canonical affiliation almost as well as Wilde did. Thus, as Wilde attempted to argue that Carson was inappropriately scrutinizing a transcendent piece of Shakespearian rhetoric as though it were a piece of sordid evidence, the lawyer responded by suggesting that just as Wilde had undermined Queensberry's authority over his son, he had attempted to undermine the authority of Shakespeare, by reducing the transcendent literary father to a figure associated with "unnatural vice" : speaking of The Portrait of Mr. W. H. Carson says to Wilde, "I believe that you have written an article to show that Shakespeare's sonnets were suggestive of unnatural vice" (113). Wilde sharply repudiates this accusation, "On the contrary, I have written an article to show that they were not. I objected to such a perversion being put upon Shakespeare" (113).

Both Carson and Wilde's descriptions of The Portrait of Mr. W. H. domesticate its undecidability. After reading the text, it is far from clear whether Shakespeare truly indulged in "unnatural vice," pace Carson, and pace Wilde, we are certainly not able unequivocally to see Cyril and Erskine's construction of Shakespeare's sonnets as "a perversion being put upon Shakespeare." In fact, the conclusion of the text leaves the question of Shakespeare's sexuality undecidable, for in the last line of the story, all we have is the narrator's vague statement, "sometimes, when I look at it [the portrait of Willie Hughes], I think there is really a great deal to be said for the Willie Hughes theory of
Shakespeare's sonnets" (1201). The phrase "there is a great deal to be said" is hardly a ringing endorsement of the Willie Hughes theory of the sonnets; on the other hand, the conclusion does not disapprove that theory either. The text, I would contend, dramatizes the impossibility of the search for the "true history," as the narrator would have it, of great literary fathers because these figures are interpretive creations. Cyril, Erskine, and the narrator never get to reach the truth about the "real" Shakespeare because there is no way back to a "real" Shakespeare prior to interpretation. Not only is this quest for paternal literary origins delusory; it can also have destructive effects -- recall that by the end of the story both Erskine and Cyril are dead; Cyril's suicide is directly a product of his search for the truth about Shakespeare; and the narrator hints that Erskine's death is somehow implicated in this hermeneutic quest. However, if the text dramatizes the illusory and destructive nature of the search for fetishized literary fathers, it also reveals the homoerotic charge that informs this quest for the canonical father. For instance, when Erskine gets convinced of Graham's theory about Shakespeare and Willie Hughes, his relationship to the Bard becomes highly eroticized. He writes, "I felt as if I had my hand upon Shakespeare's heart, and was counting each separate throb and pulse of passion" (1162). In this masturbatory image, Erskine derives autoerotic pleasure by imaginatively fondling Shakespeare's throbbing, pulsing, passionate organ. One could say that just as Wilde in De Profundis discloses the disavowed pederastic underpinning of paternal-filial relations, in The Portrait of Mr. W. H., he reveals the disavowed homoeroticism that underlies the shaping of a patriarchal literary tradition. However at his trial, Wilde strategically revises the message of The Portrait of Mr. W. H. and attempts to affiliate the love that dare not speak its name with the canonical, transcendent, originary authority of Shakespeare which he had so corrosively undermined in that text.

Not only does Wilde domesticate The Portrait of Mr. W. H., so he may strategically align Hellenic pederasty with a canonical national literary father, he also revises his relationship to paternal precursors in general and Shakespeare in particular.
Thus, for instance, while at the trial, Wilde played the role of the good son seeking to authorize his work by linking it to a set of canonical fathers. In fact, he had recognized (long before Harold Bloom) the agonistic relationship between male writers and their literary precursors. Hence, speaking of Flaubert's influence on him in *Salome*, Wilde had declared to his friend Will Rothenstein "Remember dans la litterature il faut tuer son pere (in literature you must always kill your father)" (Wilde qtd. in Ellman 375). Further, while Wilde represents himself as a humble successor of Shakespeare reverently borrowing the idea of the love that dare not speak its name from his great precursor, in fact his relationship to that precursor was complicatedly ambivalent. Writing to Goncourt, Wilde says, "French by sympathy, I am Irish by race, and the English have condemned to me to speak the language of Shakespeare" (352). Although the letter is ostensibly playful, the phrase "have condemned me" suggests that at some level, Irish Wilde chafed under the paternal authority of the Bard, symbol of England's national canonical authority. At the trial, though, in order to gain strategic advantage over his prosecutors, Wilde seeks to present himself and the love that dare not speak its name as an uncomplicatedly faithful sons of the Bard.

Significantly, when Wilde left prison, he took the name of "Melmoth" as he travelled through the Continent. "Melmoth" was the name of a Gothic novel by Charles Maturin, Wilde's maternal great uncle. One could speculate that after failing to win over the court by affiliating himself with a whole set of canonical literary fathers, Wilde in his exiled disgrace chose to assume the name of a figure connected with his mother and a name connected with a more disreputable, sensational, and hence feminized genre, the gothic novel. Further, Maturin is not a direct ancestor of Wilde; he is Wilde's great uncle, and as Sedgwick has suggested uncles occupy a queer, off-centered position within the patrilineal family (*Tendencies* 59). Indeed, the novel *Melmoth* itself stresses the queer relationship between uncles and their nephews, for it begins with a nephew, John Melmoth, visiting his dying, unmarried uncle's bedroom. Just before he dies, the uncle gives John the key to his
closet and the secret portrait hidden within it. Thus, in choosing to call himself "Melmoth," Wilde turns away from a paternal and pederastic tradition to a more feminine and queer genealogical line.

Having examined the strategies that Wilde deploys to legitimate the love that dare not speak its name by affiliating it with paternity on various registers, I want to briefly consider the limitations of that legitimating narrative.

Section 3

To begin with, I want to consider the role of melodrama both in the case that was brought to bear against Wilde and his reverse discourse. Section 11 of The Criminal Amendment Law under which Wilde was tried was a political action taken by the state to terrorize homosexual men into conforming with the heterosexist norm, but the state framed the law in melodramatic terms as an attempt to protect child-like working-class men from the predatory attentions of perverts. Wilde strategically attempted to counter this melodramatic narrative by creating his own melodrama: the real story Wilde insists in De Profundis is the story of how he was betrayed by his unfaithful, unworthy eromenos, Douglas, who tarnished the ideal values of the love that dare not speak its name. Repeatedly, Wilde insists that the state did not really care about the sex he shared with working-class men; those aspects of the case were merely peripheral to the melodramatic story of Douglas's betrayal -- "Do you [Douglas] think that I [Wilde] am here [in prison] on account of my relations with the witnesses on my trial? My relations... with people of that kind were matters of no interest to either the Government or Society" (902). The limitation of this strategy is that it allows Wilde no space to criticize the heterosexist legal violence that the state inflicted on him, for after all, regardless of what Wilde says, he was not sent to prison by Douglas, nor was he sent to prison for bringing a case against Queensberry; he was sent to prison by the state for having sex with other men, but there is
no place within Wilde’s melodramatic story of intersubjective betrayal to mount a political critique of “Government or Society.”

In addition to the limitations of a politics built around melodrama, Wilde’s reverse discourse structurally can only represent the interests of middle-class men. Wilde was applauded at the second trial when he defended the love that dare not speak its name in the context of explaining his passionate letter to Douglas. However, as Ellman points out, the discourse of Hellenic pederasty proved of no utility to Wilde at the second or third trials when he had to defend himself against the charge of committing indecencies in private with men of other classes. If the prosecution focused obsessively on Wilde’s sexual relationships with working-class men at the second and third trials, in De Profundis, Wilde himself repeatedly downplays the importance of his working-class lovers and represents the cause of his imprisonment as Douglas’s betrayal. I would contend that the lack of attention that Wilde pays to his working-class lovers is less a symptom of Wilde’s bad faith than a symptom of the inherent inability of the reverse discourse of pederasty to represent cross-class same-sex relations.

In his defence of the love that dare not speak its name, Wilde represented it as the transmission of knowledge from an older to a younger man. Such a representation was designed to appeal to a middle-class mainly male audience because middle-class male homosocial educational institutions like the public schools and universities, particularly Oxford as Dowling has shown, were built around precisely such bonds between older prefects and the younger boys or between tutors and their advisees. Of course, in such a system, the younger man was destined to occupy the position of the older one eventually. But Wilde could not use such a story in representing his relations with his working-class lovers, not just because it was false - he clearly derived pleasure from the class difference between himself and his lovers - but because it was narratively inconceivable to represent working-class men being prepared by a middle-class erastes to occupy the position of middle-class subjects. Thus, Lockwood to great effect declared,
It is upon the evidence... that I ask you to condemn the accused... He is a man of culture and literary tastes, and I submit that his associates ought to have been his equals and not these illiterate boys whom you have heard in the witness box (255).

Initially, at the first trial, when confronting Carson, Wilde attempted to foreground the age difference between himself and the youths and to ignore their class difference: when Carson asked, "What enjoyment was it for you to entertain grooms and coachmen?", Wilde responded, "The pleasure to me was being with those who are young" (127). However, he soon recognized that he could not extricate youthfulness from class and turned to different strategies at the second and third trials.

One story that was available to represent an eroticized tutelary bond between men of different classes was the narrative of working-class education. Middle-class reformers like C. R. Ashbee started educational settlements in the East End of London in the 1890s to improve the lot of working-class men. Although the bonds between these middle-class reformers and working-men were often erotic, the system was designed to prepare working-class men to occupy their proper position within a class hierarchy; hence, the middle-class reformers were often distinctly paternalistic to their charges. Wilde's rhetoric in response to the prosecution's questions has some of that distinctive condescension.

Note the differences in diction and tone between Wilde's description of his relationship with Douglas and the working-class men: while Wilde speaks about knowledge being transmitted from an older to a younger man in his description of the love that dare not speak its name, he consistently describes his working-class lovers as "boys." Further, while Douglas and Taylor are individuated because of their class, Conway, Parker, Atkins, Shelley, and Mavor tend to be collapsed together into the collective term "youths" or "lads" by both Wilde and the lawyers, a melding together which ignores the individuality that comes through in their individual testimonies. Working-class men, in other words, are seen as iterable compared to singular middle-class individuals. Finally, Wilde patronizingly represents his dinners with his working-class lovers as "a treat" meant to
impress "schoolboys": "They [the working-class men] enjoyed it [dinner at Kettner's] as a schoolboy would enjoy a treat. . . . They were amused by the little luxuries of Kettner's, the pink lampshades and so forth" (248-249).

While Wilde can attempt to affiliate his love for Douglas with British nationalism by invoking figures from the Hellenic canon, this story has no place for his working-class lovers. Instead he turns to Orientalist and primitivist discourses to represent them as the source of forbidden, transgressive physical stimuli:

People thought it very dreadful of me to have entertained at dinner the evil things of life, and to have found pleasure in their company. But they, from the point of view through which I, as an artist in life approached them, were delightfully suggestive and stimulating. It was like feasting with panthers. . . . I used to feel when the snake-charmer must feel when he lures the cobra to stir from the painted cloth or reed-basket that holds it, and makes it spread its hood at his bidding. (938)

In this description, the working-class men are reduced to an exotic stimulus for the artist. Unlike the younger man in the representation of the love that dare not speak its name, the panthers or snakes in this description have no consciousness and exist purely as raw material to give the observing artist, his "suggestive and stimulating" frisson. The exotically dehumanized figures in this fantasy are not British: they are imperial possessions that exist solely for the pleasure of the observing, explicitly colonial "I."

Many commentators have pointed out that the discourse surrounding the trials of Oscar Wilde and the mythology that Wilde created to counter that discourse continue to inform contemporary Anglo-American gay male culture. Dowling, for instance, convincingly argues that modern Anglo-American gay male identity politics draws heavily on the discourse of Victorian Hellenism. Her thesis seems borne out by the fact that Anglo-American gay male writers like Paul Monette see a natural affiliation between gay male culture and a Hellenic tradition: in Borrowed Time, Monette describes travelling to Greece in these idealized, nostalgic terms, "The moment we [Monette and his lover Roger]
set foot in Greece I was home free. Impossible to measure the symbolic weight of the place for a gay man" (20). However, I would caution that despite its strategic uses, Wilde’s reverse discourse of Hellenistic pederasty has distinct limitations for Anglo-American gay politics in its structural exclusions of working-class and non-Western men (contrary to Monette, there are many gay men for whom racist and ethnocentric Greece cannot and does not constitute a symbolic home) and its violent splitting of an idealized consciousness (associated with the love that dare not speak its name and middle-class white Western men) from the eroticized body (associated with non-Western or working-class “panthers”). Wilde himself strategically revised the past in constructing the myth of the love that dare not speak its name: rather than being a faithful son, he audaciously and perversely revised and made **selective** use of precursors like Plato and Shakespeare. I would suggest that Anglo-American gay politics remember this salutary lesson in selectively drawing on and revising Wilde’s reverse discourse of male homosexuality.
Notes

1. In emphasizing the solitary nature of the love that dare not speak its name as opposed to the mutuality which characterizes cross-gendered love, Douglas's poem can be seen to be continuous both with a sexological tradition which connected the etiology of homosexuality to masturbation and a discourse, which partially influenced psychoanalysis, that figured homosexuality as a form of narcissism. For a good account of the incoherence of this equation, see Michael Warner. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has convincingly read The Picture of Dorian Gray as dramatizing the movement from a pederastic discourse which emphasized the difference between the partners to a hetero/homosexual discursive system which figured the desire between two men as desire for the same (Epistemology 158-160). In contrast to The Picture of Dorian Gray, though, at the trial, Wilde emphasizes the alloerotic nature of pederastic desire, and in fact half jokingly uses his own narcissism precisely to defend himself against the charge of being excessively interested in other men Queensberry's counsel Carson, using Basil's description of his love for Dorian Gray in The Picture of Dorian Gray, asked Wilde if he had adored any "young man madly." Wilde responded "I have never given adoration to anybody except myself" (112). Later, in explaining his association with young men of a class far below him, Wilde again uses narcissism to make those contacts seem innocuous: Wilde told the prosecutor Lockwood, "I am enormously fond of praise and admiration.... I like to be made much of by my inferiors.... It pleases me very much" (Trials 248).

2. For a good account of the significance of food and gustatory metaphors in The Importance of Being Earnest, see Christopher Craft. In De Profundis, in addition to the memorable image of feasting with panthers, Wilde uses the image of the honeycomb to describe the forbidden pleasures in which he indulged (920).

3. Both Wilde and Douglas seem to have relished cross-class masquerade. In his poem, "Jonquil and Fleur de Lys," Douglas writes about a prince and a shepherd boy exchanging clothes. He loved the poem and would use the name "Fleur de Lys" when secretly writing to Wilde and visiting him on the Continent. Ultimately, however, Douglas's poem is far more conservative than Wilde's masquerade: for Douglas, under their costumes, both the prince and the shepherd possess intrinsic natures, and the poem ends with their returning to their proper positions within the hierarchy.

4. Wilde himself acutely recognized the constructedness of this melodramatic plot which he deployed in the Sybil Vane section of The Picture of Dorian Gray: Sybil is a hapless girl preyed upon by Dorian Gray because her virile brother is overseas and is not there to protect her honor. Speaking of this plot, Wilde said, "People love a wicked aristocrat who seduces a virtuous maid, and they love a virtuous maiden for being seduced by a wicked aristocrat. I have given them what they like, so that they may appreciate what I like to give them" (Wilde qtd. in Ellman 380).

Wilde's defense lawyer used a variation of the melodramatic narrative to explain why his client paid the sex-workers blackmail for their letters. He argued that middle-class men paid hustlers blackmail not because they had had sex with the hustlers but because they wanted to protect their mothers and sisters from the scandal (Trial 208). Just as the Labouchere Amendment was tagged onto a law ostensibly designed to protect women, Clarke strategically attempted to transform the issue of whether his client had had sex with men into a question of protecting women from male assault, albeit in the form of letters. Eve Sedgwick usefully explores the impossible position of mothers in the incoherent ideology surrounding male homosexuality: on the one hand, mothers are supposed to always know their sons are gay; on the other hand, they are supposed to be terribly vulnerable to the effects of discovering their sons are gay (Epistemology 248-249).
5. In representing Wilde as the seducer of the working-class men, the prosecution ignored Wilde’s constant undermining of the binarism seducer and seduced. As Lee Edelman shows in his reading of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, it is undecidable whether Lord Henry draws out Dorian’s internally nature or whether Lord Henry’s rhetoric produces that nature (14-15). In producing the mythology surrounding his own life, Wilde sometimes deploys the seduction narrative himself, declaring for instance that “Little Robbie” had seduced him (Wilde qtd. in Ellman 277). As Ellman points out, “Little Robbie” was seventeen, the same age as Sybil Vane, when he met Wilde, but in Wilde’s story rather than the older man seducing the innocent “little Robbie,” it is the younger man who seduces the older one.

6. In violating temporal logic and blurring the distinction between art and reality, the prosecution ironically was using techniques that Wilde himself regularly deployed in his art. For instance, if Wilde, through the ventriloquist’s dummy of Vivian, in “The Decay of Lying,” suggests that Nature is in fact a product of art (970), the prosecution implicitly argues that the Cleveland Street Scandal is a product of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

7. Elton does not discuss Wilde’s plays in his *Survey* since the work only goes up to 1830. However, in discussing Hazlitt’s dramatic criticism, Elton contrasts the Romantic’s “manly sense” with Wilde’s criticism which associates “artistic pleasure with ... solitary enjoyment, and also with a studious, somewhat fingering calculation” (373). The terms “solitary enjoyment” and “fingering calculation” present Wilde’s criticism as perversely masturbatory when compared to the healthily virile writing of Hazlitt.

8. If we are convinced by Lytton Strachey’s reading of *A Woman of No Importance*, this is not the first time that Wilde eroticizes the relationship between a father and a son. Strachey in a provocative letter to Duncan Grant reads the play as a homoerotic drama between father and son mediated through the mother: “It [the play] was the queerness mixture! Mr. Tree is a wicked Lord staying in a country house who has made up his mind to bugger one of the other guests - - a handsome young man of twenty. The handsome young man is delighted; when his mother enters, sees his Lordship and recognizes him as having copulated with her twenty years before, the result of which was - - the handsome young man. She appeals to Lord Tree not to bugger his own son. He replies that that is an additional reason for doing it “ (Strachey qtd. in Ellman 378, my emphasis).
Chapter Two

Disciplined Perversity: Identification, English Literature, and Intergenerational Homoerotics in E. F. Benson’s David Blaize

E. F. Benson’s public school novel David Blaize, published in 1916, celebrates the erotically charged but chaste bond between the eponymous protagonist and his older “chum,” Frank Maddox, as well as David’s intense affective investment in his prep and public-school headmasters. On the face of it, the text’s unabashed homoeroticism might seem surprising considering that it was published just two decades after the Oscar Wilde trials in a climate of lingering homosexual panic by a writer who had assiduously distanced himself from Wilde, his former friend in the wake of the scandal. ¹ However, the anomalous tolerance accorded chaste pederasty at public schools even in a climate of homosexual panic can be explained by considering the disciplinary function that masculine identification played in preparing young men to administer the nation and British empire.

While Greek pederasty provides a source for the intergenerational male bonds in both David Blaize and its Victorian textual precursors, the discourse through which classical homoeroticism gets articulated changes in the later novel: whereas in Victorian public school fiction, Christianity mediates between Greece and contemporary British ideology, in Benson’s novel, English literature occupies the space that Christianity once did. Literature works in this novel to distance Frank and David’s relationship from the taint of sodomy and effeminacy, to advance the male homosocial marriage plot, and to justify their relationship in terms of Britain’s imperial goals.

That the category “English literature” should advance conservative interests hardly comes as a surprise since there is a considerable body of postcolonial and Marxist inflected criticism which has examined how this institutional category served to consolidate middle-class hegemony and advance Britain’s imperial interests. ² However, confirming Michel Foucault’s claim of the implication of power and resistance, even a seemingly conservative
force like “English literature” has multivalent and contradictory political effects for different sets of interests (History 95). Ironically, then, the very category, “English literature,” that works to idealize, Frank and David’s relationship, also allows Benson to represent the two boys sharing feminizing, masturbatory, and sadomasochistic pleasures, pleasures which after the instantiation of the homo/heterosexual divide have been paradigmatically linked to the carnal male homosexuality the writer so strenuously repudiates elsewhere in the text.³

Homosexual Panic and the Public Schools in the Wake of the Wilde Trials

In the wake of the Wilde trials, Benson was placed in a vulnerable position. Not only was he a lifelong bachelor, but he had had close ties both with Wilde and members of Wilde’s circle: when he was an undergraduate at Cambridge, Benson was a friend of Robert Ross, Wilde’s friend and first lover. Then, while traveling in Egypt in 1894, Benson made friends with Wilde himself, Lord Alfred Douglas, and Reginald Turner, “the ‘boy snatcher,’ who would figure prominently in the scandal to come” (Masters 109). Wilde and Douglas attested to their close friendship with Benson by giving him several “rare” texts, texts like Salome, moreover, which were dangerously explicit in their homoeroticism.⁴ Douglas even “signed his presentation copy [of Salome] with both their [Benson’s and Douglas’s] nicknames, ‘To Dodo from Bosie’” (Masters 111). Although Benson’s biographer, Brian Masters, does not comment on Douglas’s inscription, one can see that it comes playfully close to outing its recipient: the main character of Dodo, Benson’s first and highly popular novel, is a debutante who is nicknamed Dodo. In addressing Benson as “Dodo,” then, Douglas is feminizing him. Douglas’s nickname “Bosie” was derived from the term “Boy,” so the inscription can be read as a message from a virile boy, “Bosie,” to an inverted one, “Dodo.” Given the sexological equation of homosexuality with gender inversion, such camp banter in the quasi-public space of a book inscription had the potential to draw Benson dangerously into the orbit of the taboo category of male homosexuality.
Beyond his vulnerability during and right after the Wilde trials, Benson, like other homosexual acquaintances of Wilde, must have been placed in renewed danger around the time when David Blaize was published. At the height of Britain’s nationalist fervor during the First World War, the conservative and anti-Semitic M. P. Noel Pemberton Billing used various newspaper stories to insinuate that the government was riddled with pro-German sodomites (or sodomites who were vulnerable to blackmail by the Germans) and Jews who were undermining the national war effort. The chief objects of his attacks were Ross, Wilde’s former lover, and the circle of friends surrounding Margot Asquith. Benson had several connections with this circle. He was one of Ross’s friends and an acquaintance of Margot Asquith, on whom the protagonist of his first novel Dodo was based. No doubt, the most pointed attack that Pemberton-Billing would make on Wilde’s supposedly traitorous sodomite circle, and the infamous Maude Allan libel case, which would resurrect the Wilde scandal and tarnish Salome’s reputation, occurred two years after the publication of David Blaize; but the climate of nationalist paranoia on the subject of homosexuality and a renewed suspicion of the Wilde circle was well established at the time the novel came out.5

Given the climate of homosexual panic during the two decades after the Wilde scandal, it is not surprising that Benson energetically attempted to distance himself from his former friends. This distancing can be seen in Benson’s novel The Judgment Books, which was published in 1895, the year of the Wilde trials. As Masters points out, Benson’s novel is clearly indebted to Wilde’s The Picture of Dorian Gray (45): just as Dorian Gray’s sins are inscribed on his portrait, so too the true nature of Frank, the artist protagonist of The Judgment Books, is inscribed on the face of the self-portrait he feels compelled to paint. Significantly, though, Benson never mentions The Picture of Dorian Gray in this novel. Instead, the one precursor text on doubling that he invokes is The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: we are told, for instance, that when Frank’s wife Margery is away, “her absence” changes him “almost as the draught that transformed
Jekyll into Hyde" (102). While critics like Wayne Koestenbaum have convincingly argued that *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* richly thematizes homoeroticism and homosexual panic, the author Robert Louis Stevenson, unlike Wilde, was not personally associated with homosexuality. In choosing to invoke *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* rather than *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, then, Benson tries to distance himself from the dangerously perverse figure of Wilde. Apart from displacing his debt to Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* onto Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Benson implicitly tries to exorcise Wilde and domesticate his novel at the end of *The Judgment Books*: As in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The Judgment Books* ends with the destruction of the revealing picture—just as Dorian Gray stabs his portrait, Frank stabs and tears his self-portrait. However, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Dorian Gray himself stabs the portrait which has become the reproachful voice of his conscience, “[The picture] had been like conscience to him... He would destroy it... He seized the [knife] and stabbed the picture with it” (167). By contrast, in Benson’s *The Judgment Books*, it is Margery acting as the wifely voice of conscience who persuades Frank to destroy the corrupting picture. Like a virtuous version of Lady Macbeth, she hands Frank the dagger, “[Margery] gave the dagger into [Frank’s] hand.” Her position, “opposite the picture,” and the object she holds in her hand, “with the lamp, she stood,” clearly underline the opposition between the radiant virtues of heterosexual bliss and the dark corrupting forces of homo/autoeroticism represented by the picture. Drawing resolve from his wife’s eyes, Frank acts, “looking at Margery... he grasped the side of the easel with one hand, and with the other plunged the dagger through the face [of the image in the picture]” (*The Judgment Books* 176). After the picture is destroyed, Margery and Frank are reunited. Thus, the novel ends on a note of connubial bliss, with the perverse precursor figure of Wilde/Dorian Gray safely removed from the picture as it were.

In addition to distancing himself from Wilde in *The Judgment Books*, Benson also tried to distance himself from Wilde in his 1930 memoir, *As We Were*. In his chapter on
Wilde in this memoir, Benson with some courage reproaches the law for its "savage punishment" of a great playwright. However, he then goes on vehemently to condemn that great playwright's indulgence in sodomy, referring with ostentatious distaste to Wilde's "slime of intemperance and perverted passions" and "unbridled . . . animal appetites" (239). While the title of Benson's memoir, *As We Were*, disingenuously pretends to recapture the past faithfully, his strident condemnation of sodomy depends on a revision of his own close connection with the Wilde circle and possible participation in their "unbridled animal appetites."  

But beyond casting individual acquaintances of Wilde, like Benson, in a suspicious light, the trials also opened the institution of the public school itself to the charge of condoning "unnatural practices between men," to use the language of the Labouchere Amendment under whose terms Wilde was tried. Both the court and the press reminded the public that Wilde's procurer Alfred Taylor was a public school man. However, while the court professed shock at Taylor's betrayal of public school values, the radical press insinuated that Taylor and Wilde's perverse practices were promoted by the public schools: here one might juxtapose the Solicitor General's exaggerated incredulity during his cross examination of Taylor during Wilde's third trial, "Was it not repugnant to your public school ideas, this habit of sleeping with men?" (*Trials* 230) with the editorial on the trial in the radical newspaper *Reynolds*:

> The real lesson taught by the recent appalling revelations should not be lost sight of by the public. . . . The source of the abominations which contaminate the minds of thousands of English lads yearly . . . is to be found, we grieve to state, in the great public schools of England. (*Reynolds* April 14, 1895 editorial qtd. in Stokes 57)

The connection between Wilde's vices and the British public school system became such a common place that James Joyce in his essay on Wilde could confidently assert that Wilde's
"strange problem" is "the logical and inescapable product of the Anglo-Saxon college and university system" (Joyce qtd. in Valente 167).¹

Given their vulnerability to the charge of promoting homosexuality, public schools stridently condemned sodomy, and in some schools, "close associations between boys" became "suspect" (Honey 183). J de S Honey points out that until fairly late into the nineteenth century, public schools like Eton allowed boys to share the same bed, but by the later part of the century, boys were isolated from each other in cubicles (171-172). Indeed, Benson's father, E. W. Benson, the founder and head of the public school Wellington College, forbade boys to visit each other's cubicles after bedtime and before the dressing bell in order to prevent "evils of a gross nature." He even toyed with the idea of placing latches on the cubicles to shut the boys in (Newsome 45).² This anxiety about covert physical intimacy between public schoolboys is clearly evident in David Blaize where David is sharply reprimanded for being in his friend Bags's cubicle before the morning dressing bell (63).

The Benefits and Dangers of Pederastic Identification

Despite their vigilance about boys illicitly having sex, though, public schools continued to support and encourage the potential benefits of male intergenerational bonds. In order to understand this contradiction, one needs to consider the profound role that the post-Thomas Arnoldian public school played in supplying Britain with imperial and national administrators.

Public school discourse frequently drew analogies between the nation and the public school. A. P. Stanley, Thomas Arnold's disciple, for instance, wrote in the second number of Rugby Magazine:

the idea of a . . . public school . . . implies not only a place where boys are receiving knowledge from masters, but a place also where they form a complete society among themselves. . . . This our world . . . is at once . . . our country and our commonwealth. (Stanley qtd. in Honey 17, my emphasis)
A slight variation of this analogy was to compare smaller units like the houses within the public school to the nation. In Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown’s Schooldays*, for instance, Arthur East compares his house to the nation: After a fight between the houses, when the boys are wondering whether to continue fighting, Arthur declares, "[i]t all depends on the houses. We're in the hands of our countrymen you know. Must fight for the school-house flag." (230, my emphasis). Similarly, in *David Blaize*, David sees the court of appeal the fifth form sets up to temper the ineffectual and tyrannical rule of the house prefects as being analogous to the national judiciary: he tells Mr. Adams the housemaster that the court has a constitution, and the constitution adheres to "English law" (307-308). Later, in the same section, shifting from judicial to executive metaphors, he sees himself as "a kind of prime minister" (310).

One reason for the constant employment of the school-nation analogy might have been that the public schools did in fact supply Britain’s imperial and national elites. In *Tom Brown’s School Days*, Mrs. Arnold declares of former public school boys, "many is the brave heart now doing its work and bearing its load under the Indian sun, and in Australian farms and clearings" (my emphasis), and although one might not wish to endorse her sentimentally uncritical description of imperial administrators as "brave hearts," she is certainly correct about the extent to which the empire depended on the public schools. Honey, for instance, has shown what a profound influence the post-Arnoldian public schools had on colonial administration -- Arnold himself toyed with the idea of going abroad to India or New Zealand, and dozens of his pupils became "educational administrators, inspectors, or schoolmasters in India, Tasmania, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada," including Arnold’s own sons, Thomas and William Arnold (3, 28). Through these educational functionaries, Arnoldian public school discourse was disseminated through the colonies, so that, as Gauri Viswanathan has shown, the educational curriculum in schools in colonial possessions like India were variations on the Arnoldian public school curriculum (55). Apart from educationists, all ranks of imperial
administration had large numbers of public school men. Charterhouse provides a good example of the degree to which public schools staffed the empire: according to Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, in 1860, Charterhouse sent ten to fifteen percent of its pupils to serve in India (192). T. W. Bamford points out that of the twenty-two governor generals and Viceroyds who ruled India between 1798 and 1898, fourteen were public school men: “nine have been Etonians...; three were old Harrovians; [and] two were old Westministers” (239). The influence of public schools in the colonies is further evidenced by the prominence of Old Boys’ Associations throughout the empire: former Etonians, Paulines, Carthusians, and Harrovians held enormous annual dinners in cities like Simla, Calcutta, and Kabul, and belonging to these associations, helped imperial functionaries to promote their careers (Honey 305). Even the curriculum for the competitive exams to the imperial administrative services were designed to favor public schoolboys and weed out “youths from Irish universities or commercial schools”: the classics were heavily favored in these exams, and boys were expected to show that they had taken part in the team sports which were such a central part of the public school curriculum (Honey 226-227). Not only did public schools prepare students to administer the empire, a large proportion of the public school boys came from overseas (Honey 203-204). So, the public schools to a large extent educated the children of imperial functionaries in order to prepare them to conserve and reproduce the imperial system. Thus, J. E. Welldon, the headmaster of Harrow, correctly described the main function of the public school headmaster as preparing schoolboys for their imperial responsibilities:

An English headmaster, as he looks to the future of his pupils, will not forget that they are to be citizens of the greatest Empire under heaven; . . . . he will inspire them with faith in the divinely ordained mission of their country and their race.

(Welldon qtd. in Gathorne-Hardy 194)

Apart from playing a crucial role in administering the empire, former public schoolboys also played a crucial role in administering the nation. Bamford points out that
from 1734 till 1945, public school men dominated both houses of Parliament and the Cabinet. Further, public schools “produce[d]” “30 to 40 percent of the ruling class (defined as a group which provides the majority of those who occupy positions of power, and who in their turn, can materially assist their sons to reach similar positions)” (Bamford 232-233). As in the empire, former public schoolboys also played a key role in administering education at home (several of Arnold’s students became headmasters of other public schools; many other students served in Britain’s educational bureaucracy), disseminating Arnoldian ideology throughout the national educational system.

In order to prepare young men for their role as administrators of empire and nation, public schools stressed the importance of hierarchy. Thus, some of the worst crises in public school novels occur when the hierarchical system is challenged or compromised. In David Blaize, for instance, one of the major plot crises occurs when the Sixth Form prefects who are supposed to administer David’s house prove to be ineffectual, leading to David and his friends forming a Court of Appeal. Both Mr. Adams the house master and Frank Maddox tell David that he cannot challenge the hierarchy in this fashion, and the crisis is only resolved when the prefects learn how to exercise their authority correctly and the younger boys voluntarily submit to that authority. In these novels, public school masters too insist on boys recognizing their authority. “I will not be bullied,” is the characteristic phrase used by David Blaize’s headmaster at his prep school, and he is deeply disturbed when he realizes that because of his unworthiness one of the masters is not respected by his young charges. The master’s authority must not be flouted because that would undermine the hierarchy.

However, the form that the hierarchy assumed changed in the post-Arnoldian public school. The nineteenth-century public school was a middle-class, rather than aristocratic, institution which was based on capitalist standards of meritocracy, rather than feudal values. Thus, the aristocratic Howard Tracey, in St. Winfreds, miscalculates when based on his blood, he challenges the middle-class monitors’ authority: “who, [Tracey] asked,
were these monitors that they should thrash any one at all? He had never heard that they were of particularly good families" (205). Powers, one of the monitors, easily bests Tracey by articulating an eminently Thomas Arnoldian justification for the monitors’ authority:

Tracey has asked, “Who are the monitors? and what right have they to interfere?” I [Powers] answer that the monitors . . . are simply representatives of the most mature form of public school opinion. They have all been lower boys; they have all worked their way up to the foremost place; they are in short, the oldest, the cleverest, the strongest, and the wisest among us. (207)

In contrast to Tracey’s feudal discourse, Powers’s discourse appeals to democracy—the monitors are representatives of public opinion—and a capitalist form of Social Darwinism—the monitors’ authority is derived from having beaten the competition (they are “the cleverest, the strongest, and the wisest”) and from having put in the effort to rise in the hierarchy (they have “worked their way up” to the top of the hierarchy).

Not only did the nature of the hierarchy change in the post-Thomas Arnoldian public school, the way in which that hierarchy was maintained also changed. Both Newsome and Bamford point out that in the eighteenth-century, public school headmasters and other masters precariously enforced tyrannical power over their charges. Students were often brutally flogged, and these bloody spectacles were meant to intimidate their fellow students from revolting. To use Foucauldian terms, in the public school before Arnold, power was exercised through the spectacle of punishment (Discipline 8). In instituting the prefect system at Rugby, however, Arnold constructed a disciplinary system built around the notion of delegated moral authority: the younger boys were supposed to recognize, internalize, and accept the moral authority that the Head delegated to the prefects.

No doubt, in exercising that delegated authority, prefects and masters often brutally punished younger boys. But according to the logic of Arnoldian ideology, the
punishments were not arbitrary or sadistic exercises of power. Rather, in truly Foucauldian fashion, they were meant to induce the young schoolboy internally to accept the error of his ways, to see that his punishment was in his best interests, and sometimes even to acknowledge this verbally. In *David Blaize*, for instance, we see both the Head and Frank “swish” David, to use the idiom of the public school, but the Head for one disavows any sadistic pleasure in his task and denies that the boy could derive any masochistic pleasure from the punishment: he tells David, “I am not going to whip you for my amusement . . . far less for yours” (265). At first, David is angry and responds resentfully to Frank’s reminder that he “jolly well deserved it [the Head’s swishing].” But the scene, ends with David accepting the justice of the punishment: and accepting personal responsibility, “I say, I’m a damnable chap. . . . I don’t know if you can forgive me. . . . I think I’d better not make an ass of myself any more” (266-267). If in the flagellation scene, David’s body is a passive object at the disposal of the Head’s pleasure, the insistent use of the first person in this speech suggests that the boy is an autonomous subject who purely voluntarily chooses to accept his culpability. But the insidious paradox of this disciplinary discourse is that it is only through accepting and internalizing the authority of the school that David can attain the illusion of occupying the position of an autonomous subject.

The degree to which the enforcement of this disciplinary mechanism was carefully calculated can be seen in David’s exchange with the head of his prep school. Throughout the first half of the novel, we are told how the Head of the prep school sees all that goes on in his institution. In one moment of carelessness, however, in consulting his punishment book, the Head mistakes the schoolboy Bellingham’s spotless record for David’s tarnished one. Almost immediately after making the mistake, the Head spots his error, but he deviously pretends not to notice, allowing David the opportunity to escape punishment. Although tempted to escape, the boy points out the mistake, showing that he has internally accepted the authority of the institution, and the Head rewards and compliments him for
telling the truth (64-65), a rather ironic compliment, one might think, considering the
dishonesty that we have seen the Head himself display in his test of the boy. While David
never recognizes the Head’s deception and thinks of himself as having won a moral victory
over the regenerate side of his nature, the reader can see that the entire moral crisis is in fact
engineered by the Head to advance institutional control over the boy. Derek Verscholyke
has suggested that an analogy can be drawn between the way in which the public schools
and the colonies functioned, and David’s encounter with the Head demonstrates the force
of this analogy: as many historians have pointed out, a relatively small number of
Englishmen ruled over vast native populations in the colonies. So, their authority could not
depend on brute force; it often was based instead on the native populations’ or a certain
section of the native populations’ illusion of voluntarily acceding to disciplinary imperial
institutions. Thus, the disciplinary structure of the public school was ideal in preparing
future rulers of the colonies.

One incentive for the younger boy voluntarily to internalize the authority of the
older one was the force of identification: the younger boy wanted to be like the older one.
We see the power of identification played out repeatedly in David Blaize. In prep school,
David is embarrassed by his first name—prep school boys think first names are
effeminate—and considers smoking a wonderfully adult pursuit. However, after visiting
Marchester, meeting Frank Maddox, and discovering that the older boy uses first names
and despises smoking, David immediately surrenders his old habits and opinions. Clearly,
what drives David’s change is his desire to become a version of Frank. And, in the sequel
to David Blaize, David at King’s, when we see Frank and David at university, they have in
fact become very like each other. The three years between them that make a world of
difference in school are not of that much significance in university, and David and Frank
uncannily resemble each other as undergraduates. Successfully working his way up the
hierarchical system of the school, David earns the right to be Frank.
Given the younger boy's commitment to the hierarchy that this identification fostered, it was in the interests of the public school to encourage identification between younger and older boys. However, as Diana Fuss and other psychoanalytic critics have pointed out, desire and identification are complexly imbricated(4). In institutionally sanctioning and indeed encouraging identification between boys of different ages, then, public schools inevitably sanctioned desire between them as well. Take David's relationship in prep school with his senior Hughes. David so deeply identifies with the older Hughes that he thinks him "altogether godlike" and slavishly imitates all that Hughes does. That identification is sanctioned by the prep school because it binds the younger boy emotionally to the hierarchy. The fact, however, that David keeps a picture of Hughes beside his bed suggests that his masculine identification is mingled with homoerotic desire. The same institution that prohibits the boys from visiting each other's cubicles before the dressing bell allows the boys to keep pictures of each other besides their beds because this idealized, non-carnal form of desire facilitates the working of the school's disciplinary mechanism.

Of course, there were dangers to this homoerotic disciplinary mechanism. One danger was that rather than reinforcing the importance of the hierarchy, the younger boy's relationship with the older one might undermine it. In Dean Farrar's Victorian public school novel *Eric, or Little by Little*, for instance, we see how pretty young Eric becomes insubordinate after being "taken up," to use the idiom of the novel, by the older Upton. (The phrase "taken up" itself, of course, can be read as an upsetting of a hierarchical ordering.) The danger of the younger boy losing his respect for authority is usually represented in these novels as being a consequence of the older student irresponsibly using his mentoring position. Indeed, it is easy to see why systemically the older boy should pose a problem: according to the logic of public school pederastic discourse, the younger boy was supposed to remain un tarnished by any knowledge of homoerotic desire and view his identification with the older boy in the most innocent terms. Thus, in *David*
Blaize, although David has intense erotic feelings for Hughes, he is completely puzzled, albeit impressed, by the prep school Head's veiled warnings about the horrendous consequences of practicing "impure acts" and the Head thoroughly approves of his "unknowing," to use Sedgwick's useful term. By contrast, the older boy is structurally expected to have knowledge, and so he has the potential to use that knowledge irresponsibly: in David Blaize, for instance, not content with mentoring David and being his bedside pinup, Hughes aggressively sits on David's bed and tries to seduce him by telling him a "filthy tale."

One deterrent that Victorian public school fiction used to restrain the older boy from using his superior knowledge irresponsibly was the threat of degeneration. In Dean Farrar's fiction, older boys who undermine the hierarchy often regress emotionally and perhaps more importantly somatically. Rather than becoming adult middle-class subjects ready to rule over the nation and the empire, they begin atavistically to acquire characteristics stereotypically associated with the "primitive" non-Western races and working-class men over whom they are supposed to rule: in Dean Farrar's St. Winifred, for instance, as he succumbs to corrupting younger boys, Kenrick's face begins to bear the marks of his degeneration, and he begins to resemble the grotesque, "nasty" working-class "lout" Dan, the fisherman's son (98-99).

By the time of David Blaize, however, the discourse of degeneration is no longer in play as can be seen by the way in which Benson deals with Hughes's homoerotic transgression: Hughes's improper behavior earns him the contempt of David, Frank, and the narrative voice, and he is eventually expelled from the school and the narrative, but his body does not spectacularly bear witness to his transgression. Significantly, we do not see Hughes expelled from the school or get any of his reactions. Rather, we learn about Hughes's expulsion from a letter that Frank gives David:

Frank gave Adams's letter to [David]. . . . It spoke of the letter written by
Hughes to a boy in the house, a letter disgusting and conclusive . . . [ellipses in original].

"Well, I'm awfully sorry, just as you [Frank] are," David said, "but if fellows will be brutes - -" (226, the dash at the end of the passage is in the original too)

The ellipses and dashes in this passage attempt to erase Hughes's forbidden carnal desires from the text and the school. However, as with any form of negation, one of their paradoxical effects is tantalizingly, to evoke the very desires they would seemingly conceal. And as I will suggest later in the essay, the grotesque corpse in David's ghost story can be read as a spectacular return of Hughes's perversely desiring body.

Mediating Hellenic Pederasty: Christianity Gives Way to English Literature

As in the post-Arnoldian Victorian public school, the homoeroticism in David Blaize is clearly informed by the Hellenism which occupies such a central place in the public school curriculum. But if in Victorian public school fiction, Christianity mediates between Greece and contemporary British ideology, in David Blaize, it is English literature which performs that function. In a sense, Benson is an ideal writer to examine in tracing the shifts from Arnoldian public school to Edwardian public school values because he has such literal connections with a genealogical line of educators descending directly from Thomas Arnold. Newsome usefully retraces Benson's intellectual patrimony: his father. Edward White Benson, was the first headmaster of Wellington College, a public school established by the Prince Consort in 1858. Edward White Benson's own headmaster at King Edward's School in Birmingham was James Lee who had earlier served as Thomas Arnold's housemaster at Rugby and was deeply influenced by Arnold's reforms (Newsome 25).

To use Benedict Anderson's resonant terms, nations constitute "imagined communities," and it is clear that for Victorian public school novelists, the imagined English community is Christian (1). Thus, in Tom Brown's Schooldays, the adjectives "Christian" and "English" are repeatedly linked: Squire Brown, for instance, believes that
the school’s goal is to turn out “a[n] Englishman, a gentleman, and a Christian” (69), and later in the text, the narrative voice endorses the Squire’s position by suggesting that the noblest public schools carry out the “training of Christian Englishmen” (158). Such a view is entirely consonant with Arnold’s political philosophy, for as Honey points out, Arnold wanted to reassert “the identity of Church and State in England” and saw the school as a microcosm of the ideal Christianized state (4-5). One fifth to one sixth of Arnold’s pupils took holy orders and the Victorian headmasters of public schools were usually Anglican clergymen — Benson’s father, the head of Wellington College, for instance, was the Dean of Lincoln and would later become the Archbishop of Canterbury. Christianity, classical culture, and Englishness were seen as organically linked; thus, Arnold could use an Anglicized form of a Greek word “sophronise” to describe the transformation he wanted to effect on naturally wild young boys in shaping them into Christian Englishmen.

The strain of Christianity in the Victorian public school novels worked to sanitize eroticized but chaste pederastic bonds. In Farrar’s St. Winifred’s, for instance, it is the idiom of Christian fraternal responsibility that sanctions the pederastic bond between the hero Walter and his young friend Arthur Eden. After all the section in which Walter rescues young Arthur and befriends him is called, “My Brother’s Keeper.” At first Walter, like Cain in Genesis, wants to deny responsibility for his “brother,” but he eventually accepts his Christian responsibility for mentoring Arthur and preserving his edenic innocence from the older bullies. While the narrative repeatedly insists on the fraternal nature of their relationship, the fervid tactility which characterizes their encounters suggests an intense, if sublimated, eroticism between them: “The little fellow [Arthur] pressed Walter’s hand” (31); “[Arthur] squeezed Walter’s hand tight and sobbed his thanks, while Walter gently smoothed the child’s pillows and dried his tears” (93); “Walter . . . felt . . . [Arthur’s] little hand trembling with passion and emotion in his own” (98). Even though Arthur is more literally tactile than Walter, the older boy too is constantly holding out his hand, even if it is only figuratively, for the younger one: “By God’s grace,
[Walter] did hold out a saving hand at last, and it was grasped firmly, and a dear life was saved” (96, emphasis in original).¹⁰
Not only does Christianity advance homoerotic bonds between older and younger boys, it also sanctions eroticized bonds between masters and their younger charges. In St. Winifred’s, for instance, Walter’s vengeful burning of Mr. Power’s manuscript, and the master’s Christian forgiveness of his transgression provide a representational space for them to share physical contact:

“Have you asked God’s forgiveness for your passionate and revengeful spirit, [Walter]?” said [Mr. Paton].
“Oh, sir, I have, and I know God has forgiven me. . . . if you forgave me, I could almost be happy.”
. . . He dared not look up through his eyes swimming with tears; but he had not expected the kind and gentle touch of the trembling hand that rested on his head as though it blessed him, and that smoothed again and again his dark hair, and wiped the big drops away from his cheeks. He had not expected the arm that raised him up from his kneeling position, and the fingers that pushed back his hair from his forehead and gently bent back his head. . . . Walter flung himself on his knees again in a passion of weeping, and clasped Mr. Paton’s knees. . . . For a moment more, the kind hand again rested on the boy’s head and gently smoothed his dark hair. (68-69)

The language of Christian forgiveness seems to sanction Mr. Paton to “touch” and “smooth” and “wipe” and “raise” and “gently push” parts of his student’s body -- note, for instance, how Paton’s hand on Walter’s head is described in terms of a benediction, “the trembling hand. . . . rested on his head as though it blessed him” -- and allows Walter melodramatically to prostrate himself before his master and clasp his knees. Although the passage repeatedly insists on the boy’s surprise, “he had not expected . . . he had not expected,” there is something quite stylized about this tableau, as though the staging of
transgression and forgiveness provides an unstated, mutually understood script for
schoolboys and schoolmasters to articulate intergenerational homoerotics.\textsuperscript{11}

While Mr. Paton and Walter's erotic bond draws on the language of Christian
forgiveness, Tom and the Head's eroticized bond in Tom Brown's School Days draws on
the idiom of emulating and worshipping Christ. Early in the novel, we witness Tom and
his fellow schoolboys' homoerotic idealization of the Head who is delivering a sermon.
The Head's impressiveness lies not in his message, which is inaccessible to many of his
young listeners - - the narrative voice tells us, "We couldn't enter into half of what we
heard" (135) - - but in his "tall gallant form," his "kindling eye," and his "voice, now soft
as the low notes of a flute, now clear and stirring as the call of the light infantry bugle," "a
warm living voice" (134-135). This scene is recalled at the end of the novel when Tom
comes to mourn the memory of the Doctor in the same chapel. But in contrast to the earlier
scene, the narrator at this point distances himself from Tom's idealization of the Head.
Indeed, he treats it as a minor failing which "we" should excuse because the Head is a
surrogate for Christ, and idealizing the Head is merely a stage in Tom's progress toward
the "worship" of Christ:

\begin{quote}
let us not be hard on him [Tom]. . . . Such stages [of hero worship] have to be
gone through, I believe, by all young and brave souls, who must win their through
hero-worship, to the worship of Him, who is the King and Lord of heroes. (360)
\end{quote}

In other words, just as a liberal psychoanalytic narrative rather condescendingly tolerates
homosexuality as an immature stage on the way to maturity, this Christianized discourse of
pederasty tolerates intergenerational homoerotics as a stage on the way to the true worship
of Christ.

In David Blaize, however, Christianity no longer seems to occupy the center of
public school discourse. The disenchantment of David's generation with Christianity is
dramatized in the opening scene in the scripture classroom. Early in the scene, Bags, one
of the students, not realizing he has an out of date prayer book, reads the nonsensical
passage “To honor and obey the King and all that are put in authority under her.” Bags uses the pronoun “her” because his prayer book was published during Queen Victoria’s reign, but in a Georgian setting, this phrase is anachronistic. However, his mistake might also suggest that in 1916 the Christian pieties of the prayer book themselves are anachronisms, relics from the Victorian public school. The Head, who is testing the boys, tries to make them feel guilty about betraying the standards of their fathers: he tells them, “I am particularly distressed... when I think that some of you are the sons of clergymen, and therefore have greater opportunities to study sacred history” (26), and the narrative voice makes it clear that the boys’ ignorance of Christianity is an implicit act of violence against their paternal precursors: when Ferrers Major makes a mistake in answering a question on scripture, the narrative voice tells us, “If Ferrers Major had committed parricide under circumstances of unique horror he could not have been held up to blacker obloquy” (25, my emphasis).

This Oedipal figuration of Christianity can be also be seen in David’s relationship or rather non-relationship with his clergymen father. David’s father is a well-meaning but obtuse man with whom his son cannot communicate — we are told, for instance, that David has to “grind out” his weekly letter to his “dear papa” because there were no “zones of interest common to them” (12). Significantly, the grounds for their miscommunication often hinge on issues of religion: for instance, at one point, David’s father urges him to say his prayers regularly, but the narrative voice tells us that characteristically his father has chosen the wrongest moment for this piece of moral exhortation since David has prayed to succeed in his cricket match and his less than stellar performance has filled him with some skepticism about prayer (88).12

In pointed contrast to his alienation from his father, David has a very strong, even eroticized relationship with both the Head of his prep school and the head of his public school. No doubt, both the Heads are clergymen also. However, the link that binds them to David is not Christianity — indeed, David feels the greatest distance from and fear of the
Head of his prep school during his scripture lesson -- but a shared love of English literature and Greek culture. Right after David’s father has paid an embarrassing visit to the school, the Head of his prep school consoles the boy by reading him Keats for the first time. Keats allows David and the Head to share a moment of intimacy in which his clergyman father could never participate:

David felt a lump rise in his throat, a mysteriously blissful misery took possession of him. And when the Head finished [reading Ode to a Nightingale], he found himself smiling at him with a mouth that trembled a little. (113)

The Head gives the boy the volume, and we are told a few pages later that David “took the Head’s volume of Keats up to bed with him” (115). Through the mediation of the Keats volume, the Head and David can share a bed, even if they are literally prohibited from doing so.

A volume of Keats also works to cement the bond between David and Frank Maddox. When David runs into Maddox at an old bookstore, he is shy at first about expressing his admiration for the older boy, but when the older boy discovers that David has bought a second edition of Keats, the reserve between them melts (155-156). As with the scene with the Head, the erotically charged meeting employs the idiom of literary instruction -- David doesn’t realize the value of the second edition of Keats, and Frank plays the role of literary instructor. Later in the narrative, Frank and David’s erotic intimacy is further advanced, when Frank introduces David to Swinburne’s Atlanta in Calydon when they are bathing together in the ocean (220-221). Once again a scene of intense affect between the older and younger boy is framed in the idiom of a shared appreciation of English literature.

Benson repeatedly draws homologies between Greek culture and English literature. Both are supposed to promote a humanist sympathy that transcends history. After reading Keats to David and his classmates for the first time, the Head tells them:
if ninety or hundred years ago, you . . . Blaize, had gone into a doctor’s little
dispensary near Hampstead to get a dose because you had a pain in your inside. . .
you might have had your medicine given you by one of the greatest lyrical poets
who ever lived. The doctor’s assistant, a pale young man with a bad cough, might
perhaps have mixed it for you. (110)

The Head’s charming picture suggests that through reading Keats’s poetry, David can
imaginatively gain human contact with the poet, despite the temporal distance between
them, because of the supposed timelessness of great literature. Frank invokes an almost
identical picture for David when he paints a picture of what they would experience if they
went to Greece:

we [Frank and David] should lunch off grapes and figs, . . . and go down to the
theatre just below to hear perhaps this very play by Sophocles, first performance
. . . . perhaps we should see Pericles, awfully handsome chap, and a queer ugly
fellow would go by, who would be Socrates. (290)

Like Keats, Sophocles, Pericles, and Socrates transcend the contingencies of history, and
English schoolboys can gain imaginative contact with them and their values by immersing
themselves in classical culture and English literature.

Hellenism, English literature, and imperialism mutually inform each other in the
eroticized cultural lessons that Frank and David share. At a particularly telling moment in
the novel, for instance, Frank compares the Attic culture’s defeat of “the stinking Persians”
at Salamis to the British victory at Trafalgar, admiringly pointing out that “Attica [was] no
bigger than a small English county” (291). While the specific battle from English history
that Frank invokes in his comparison involved a European antagonist, the non-Western “
stinking Persians” implicitly summon up a comparison between British imperialism and
Greek heroism: just as the Greeks defeated the “stinking Persians,” against great odds,
British boys can use Greece to learn how to prevail against non-Western foes whatever the
odds, and indeed as Honey has pointed out, colonial administrators like Elphinstone and
Lord Cromer literalized this analogy, consulting copies of Plato and Thucydides before making military and administrative decisions in India and Egypt (130).

If one of Benson's strategies is to compare Greece to Britain, the other is to figure Hellenism as a means to becoming more authentically British. In David of King's, for instance, David makes it clear that he does not want to be a pedantic scholar of Greek. Rather, he wants to learn Greek to improve his English and to develop the humanistic sympathy that characterizes both a proper appreciation of the Greek classics and the works of the English canon to which he has been introduced by Frank and the Head. Significantly, though, David characterizes the pedantic approach to Greek that he wants to avoid as "Baboo Greek" (268). As Mrinihilal Sinha points out, the term "baboo" literally means clerk in Bengali but was used in British colonial discourse as an ugly stereotype of the Westernized Bengali. The English derided westernized Bengali men, "baboos," as being hopelessly pedantic and effeminate--they were represented as using the most high-flown English without realizing how anachronistic, unidiomatic, and effeminate such language was (20). In distancing his strain of Anglicized classicism from "Baboo Greek," David is both differentiating himself from effeminate non-Western men and implicitly signalling how the lessons he has received in the virile glories of both English literature and Greek culture have prepared him to rule over and civilize those men.

Indeed, the novel repeatedly and quite anxiously tries to distance David's homoerotic lessons in English literature from effeminacy by opposing him to abject, feminized others. In the opening scene of the novel, for instance, we see Mr. Dutton the ineffectual, emasculated schoolmaster, whose inverted strain of homosexuality is betrayed by his "favourites, usually pink, pretty little boys" (90), covertly reading a yellow-backed French novel by Guy de Maupassant. The national origin of the novel signals its effeminacy, for Frenchness is associated in Benson's public-school novels with a grotesquely embodied femininity. In David of King's, for instance, reflecting on his
mutually virile friendship with Frank, David with some revulsion imagines the feminizing intimacy that Bags shares with French **cocottes**. David tells Frank

When Bags told me about the gay... **cocottes**, I could only think of how priceless he must have looked with his arm around one fat wench and the other sitting on his knee, all stinking of musk, and smeared about with paint... Fancy, calling that love! (80)

While it is the **cocotte** who is "stinking" and "smeared," the passage implicitly suggests that by association with the French, English Bags himself gets "smeared" and feminizingly sullied. Indeed the fact that he becomes a "priceless" spectacle for his English male friends' derisive gaze distinctly feminizes him, for this is the position paradigmatically assumed by a woman.¹³

When the Head discovers Dutton's French novel, he tears it apart and stamps on it, while describing it as "stinking carrion." The Head's violent response reflects the strength with which the text repudiates effeminacy and unEnglish literary tastes. But it also betrays a certain anxiety because ultimately it proves impossible to quarantine Dutton's perverse reading pleasures from the proper pleasures of reading English poetry to which the Head will introduce David. If literary canons represent themselves as disinterested, Olympian monuments, uncontaminated by desire, I would suggest that the Head's excessive response to Dutton's literary transgression unconceals the exclusionary violence and motivated desire that sustain the fantasy of an organic, national literary tradition.

The Head's dismissal of the novel as "**stinking**" also implicitly evokes sodomy in a text where the language of malodorousness and dirt has such an overdetermined connection to carnal male same-sex relations. When Hughes makes sexual advances to David, for instance, he is described as talking filth and later when Frank resists his temptation to seduce David, he refers to the temptation as a "muddy place" and is relieved that like Lot fleeing from the cities in the plain, he had chosen to "turn his back on" the "mire." In contrast to this language, metaphors of cleanliness are insistently used to describe Frank
and David's tutelary relationship so that it can be safely distanced from sodomy -- at one point, for instance, their relationship is described as "clean as the trickle of ice-water on a glacier" (235) and Frank describes his bond with the younger boy in these terms: "David, you always make me feel as if I had just had a bath with plenty of soap" (David of King's 81).

Finally, in addition to being distanced from effeminacy and unEnglishness, Frank and David's shared love of literature is represented as ultimately advancing the homosocial marriage plot. The channeling of male homoerotics into the marriage plot is a commonplace in Victorian as well as Edwardian public-school fiction. In Tom Brown's Schooldays, for instance, young Arthur's deathly fever both allows Tom Brown to advance his pederastic intimacy with the younger boy -- "[Tom] stole gently across the room and knelt down and put his arm round Arthur's head on the pillow. He felt ashamed and half angry at his own . . . health (292) -- and allows Hughes to evoke the marriage which is supposed to replace that intimacy. The writer achieves this goal through the figure of Arthur's mother: A few pages after the sick bed scene we have already examined, Arthur's mother enters the room

Tall and slight and fair, with masses of golden hair drawn back from . . . the calm blue eye meeting his [Tom's] so deep and open -- the eye that he knew so well, for it was his friend's over again. . . . She stood there. . . old enough to be [Tom's] mother. . . but he thought he had never seen anything so beautiful. He couldn't help wondering if Arthur's sisters were like her. (305)

Contradictorily, the passage contends that Tom thinks that "he has never seen anything so beautiful" as Arthur's mother; yet, it also suggests that the desirability of Arthur's mother for Tom lies precisely in her resemblance to her son -- that Hughes should single out the similarity between her eyes and those of her son is significant because the exchanged erotic looks between older and younger boy was a staple topos of Platonic pederasty since eyes were considered the window to the soul. Hughes cannot consciously acknowledge the
contradiction at the heart of this passage because it functions ideologically to make Arthur and Tom’s pederastic bond retrospectively completely respectable. The appearance of Arthur’s mother makes Tom’s desire for Arthur a mere prelude to his more acceptable desire for a feminine object like Arthur’s mother or more properly Arthur’s sisters since a desire for Arthur’s mother would come too dangerously close to breaching Oedipal prohibitions.

In David Blaize, David’s sister, Margery, performs the role that Arthur’s sisters do in Tom Brown’s Schooldays. When David and Frank meet for the second time, their meeting is unabashedly eroticized — Frank, for instance, lays his hand on David’s shoulder and looks into his eyes (157). That eroticism is legitimized by the fact that it is mediated through David’s sister Margery. It seems significant that Benson chooses to call the characters in this later novel “Frank” and “Margery,” the same names he used for the husband and wife in his 1895 novel The Judgment Books. If, as we have seen, in The Judgment Books, Margery compels Frank violently to destroy his Wildean desires, in this later novel, Margery functions to assure the reader that the boys’ intimacy will give way to culturally prescribed heterosexual desire. Yet I would suggest that the two novels are really not that different: the overt violence of The Judgment Books unconceals the more subtle violence that animates male homosocial culture — a violence directed both at male homoerotic desire and at the iterable women who mediate and contain that desire.

Where David Blaize differs from Victorian public school fiction is in the homology Benson draws between the role of Margery and that of English literature. For instance, David uses Margery and the volume of Keats in similar ways to try and entice Frank: when he wants Frank to accept his invitation to tea, he turns to Margery declaring, “Margery, do ask him [Frank]” (156). By the same token, later in the text, when David recognizes that Frank desires the volume of Keats, he attempts to use the volume to gain Frank’s favor, “Oh, I say, please take it then” (155-156). The homology between Margery and the volume of Keats becomes even stronger when we discover that the volume of Keats
actually belongs to Margery, not David: “Suddenly David remembered that the find was not his but Margery’s.” In offering his sister’s volume of Keats to Frank, David implicitly is also offering his sister to the older man.

At the same time as the category “literature” disciplines the bonds between Frank and David, though, it partially undermines the norm. Mark, for instance, the specific poets that the novel uses to represent “English literature.” Viswanathan points out that the Arnoldian curriculum linked the study of Romantic poetry to the study of the classics, but according to Newsome, the Romantic poet who was privileged in the Thomas Arnoldian canon was Wordsworth (12). Consonant with Newsome’s observation, in David Blaize the figure of Wordsworth is comically associated with David’s hopelessly anachronistic Archdeacon father, not with eroticized Frank Maddox or the Head of the prep school: “To begin with his [David’s] father was an Archdeacon and . . . he wore a shovel-hat and odd, black wrinkled gaiters even when . . . he climbed the hills in the Lake District with a small edition of the poems of Wordsworth in his pocket” (72). By contrast, the Romantic poets whom David shares with Frank and the Head are Keats and Swinburne.

The figures of Keats and Swinburne, however, occupy complicated positions in the sexual mythologizing of the English literary tradition. Marjorie Levinson has pointed out how many of the early reviewers of Keats represented his sensuousness “as a species of masturbatory exhibitionism” (4), and Susan J. Wolfson has explored “the feminizing of Keats in nineteenth-century letters” (321). By the same token, Cassandra Laity has shown how male modernists like T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, Benson’s juniors by just one generation, consistently maintained a safe distance from Swinburne whose ‘effeminate’ . . . poetics they repeatedly invoked to exemplify the lapse of Romanticism into decadence and decay.” Swinburne’s effeminate degeneracy was specifically associated with “the unwholesome confusion of boundaries” in his poetry (Laity 461). In addition to being associated with an effeminate disregard for boundaries, Swinburne was also notoriously associated with sadomasochism (Praz 213-245). The perversely ambiguous figures of
Keats and Swinburne allow Benson to represent the very sexual transgressiveness which English literature is supposed to regulate.

Take the issue of the feminizing surrender of boundaries: Frank and David's difference from each other is repeatedly stressed. For instance, we are constantly reminded that Frank has dark hair and brown skin while David is blonde and fair. Similarly, the narrative repeatedly reminds us of the difference in their ages. Stressing their alloerotic difference is ideologically important because the goal of the public school is to produce unified phallic male subjects. English literature seems to facilitate the goal of maintaining the difference between Frank and David: Frank has knowledge about English literature and the classics; David is the eager but naive student who needs to acquire that knowledge. However, English literature also works to undermine those boundaries. Repeatedly, David's passionate experiences of reading literature are linked to an ecstatic loss of boundaries, which is implicitly coded as feminine or at least feminizing. Almost immediately after the Head of his prep school has first introduced David to Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*, specifically reading the lines in which the poetic persona is tempted to surrender his self-consciousness to the deadly but seductive liquid powers of Lethe and hemlock, the boy surrenders to the oceanic "embrace" of the swimming pool. Similarly, after Frank has allowed David for the first time figuratively to "drink in" (221) the language of Swinburne's "Atlanta in Calydon," the two boys literally immerse themselves in the ocean. Rather than fostering a sense of phallic integrity, reading Swinburne seems to work to undermine a rigidly bounded sense of the self, for at the end of their shared oceanic ecstasy, Frank declares that he wishes he could blur the boundary between the ocean and himself, ecstatically declaring "Lord, I wish I could be the sea" (223). Not only does this wish blur Frank's phallic integrity, it implicitly feminizes him since he two pages earlier has described the sea in feminine terms as "mother sea" (221).

A similar ambivalence about femininity can be seen in David's attitude toward his translation assignment. Asked to construe a passage from Virgil's *Aeneid*, David comically
complains: "What an awful gasser Aeneas was! He talked straight off for two books, and I suppose Dido didn’t go to sleep because she was so mad keen on him. Why can’t I copy out something decent like Keats or Swinburne, instead of this mouldy old Johnny" (242). While David’s stated reason for his distaste for the Aeneid is Aeneas’s self-important garrulousness, it is worth remembering that the text he is discussing and the specific part of the text he cites represents a heroic man renouncing female and feminizing pleasures to serve his duty as the founder of a classical empire. So, symbolically in this passage David is swerving away from the heroic masculine realm of imperial duty symbolized by Aeneas to the feminizing world of Keats and Swinburne. In other words, at the same time as it serves to produce virile would be colonizers, the category English literature seems to offer a way to undermine those values.

Finally, it through the medium of story telling or literature, specifically a ghost story which Frank tells David, that all the perversions the text ostensibly abhors enter representation. Frank’s ghost story is provoked by the boys seeing “something vague and black and humped up” on the beach (236). Frank tells David that the hump is “a body” that the younger boy had secreted in his “bedroom.” He then goes on to suggest that the corpse belonged to “a boy of fifteen” who had his “throat cut ear to ear” (235-236) and a sentence or two later discloses that the corpse is supposed to represent David. The police, Frank declares, “traced the bloodstains to [David’s] bedroom” (237), and discovered him to be the murderer. Puzzled by the dual role that he plays, David asks Frank whether he is supposed to be the corpse or the murderer in the story, and the older boy responds “You’re both” (237). If the language of tutelary instruction represents a publicly sanctioned, even valorized homoeroticism, the body secreted in the bedroom evokes the more familiar figure of the closet concealing a perverse secret. Further, the lurid details about the way in which the corpse died and the way in which its murderer, David, staunched the flow of blood - - he pinned the corpse’s wound together with safety pins (236)- - draws on precisely the language of sadomasochism that has elsewhere been banished from the text: although
David is beaten by Frank and the Head, his flagellation never enters representation, and his punishers insist that their motivation is educational rather than perverse. By the same token, although Swinburne has such an enduring association with sadomasochism, when David learns to appreciate the pleasures of reading Swinburne from Frank, the sadomasochistic aspect of his poetry is nowhere explicitly referred to. The sensational ghost story, however, allows a perverse sadomasochism, not motivated by any disciplinary pedagogical end to enter into representation, or perhaps it allows us to see the disavowed sadomasochism which already informs the far less sensational and hence far more insidious disciplinary discourses we have witnessed in the public school. Finally, Frank’s ghost story indirectly draws on the language of autoeroticism. If David is both the murderer and the corpse, then the torture that the murderer inflicted on the corpse is a form of sadomasochistic self-pleasuring. In other words, the ghost story works to undermine the insistence on hierarchical difference that has sustained Frank and David’s pederastic bond.

Sedgwick has suggested that the instantiation of the homo/heterosexual divide led to a wide range of perversions becoming linked to the figure of the homosexual, “indicatively male” so that ontological categories like the “masturbator,” lost their autonomy as the homo/heterosexual divide occupied center stage. By default, they became associated with homosexuality (Epistemology 8-9). Although Frank’s ghost story evokes a whole range of perversions with some economy, then, in the final analysis it is the carnal pleasures of male homosexuality which the idealized discourse of pederasty so strongly repudiates that the story invokes. Another way to put it would be to read the corpse as the return of Hughes’s improperly carnal homoerotic desires, the filling in of the tantalizing ellipses in the letter that Frank read to David regarding Hughes’s expulsion, or one could think of it as a figurative return of the feminized, excessively embodied French novel that the furious Head dismissed as “carrion.”

Both the image of the body being washed up in the ocean and the body secreted in the bedroom lend themselves easily to psychologic readings. Frank’s ghost story could
be read as revealing the repressed truth of David Blaize. Such a reading might hold that beneath the sublimated language of literary instruction encouraged by the public school is a perverse pleasure that must be repressed. By contrast, I would suggest that the police in fact help produce the perverse body they claim to discover in the bedroom, even if the effects of that body exceed their complete disciplinary control. Or to put it less elliptically, I would contend that the lurid ghost story is not the repressed truth of the idealizing discourse of literary instruction. Instead they are both products of a mechanism that simultaneously enabled and disciplinarily contained intergenerational erotic pleasure in British public schools at the turn of the century.

Both Wilde and Benson distinguished between youthful and corrupted forms of same-sex desire to legitimate their own brand of homosexuality. In the next section, I will focus on writers who draw on similar tropes, but the romantic distinction they draw is between an aged, corrupt heterosexual culture and a youthful homosexual who has the potential to revivify that culture.
Notes

1. I get the term "homosexual panic" from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. She defines that term as follows: "[It] is the most private, psychologized form in which many twentieth-century western men experience their vulnerability to the social pressure of homophobic blackmail" (Between Men 89). In Epistemology of the Closet, Sedgwick crucially distinguishes between the way in which she uses "homosexual panic" and the way in which it has been used in legal defenses of gay bashing: in certain cases, gay bashers have attempted to use the term "homosexual panic" to rationalize their acts of violence against gay men and lesbians (Epistemology of the Closet 19-21).

2. For Marxist inflected accounts of the role that English literature served in consolidating middle-class interests, see Brian Doyle, English and Englishness; Chris Baldick, The Social Mission of English Criticism, 1848-1932; and Terry Eagleton, Literary Theory: An Introduction. For an excellent account of the way in which English literature was used to promote British colonial interests in India, see Gauri Viswanathan, Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India.

3. My formulation is indebted to Sedgwick’s claim that the homo/hetero binarism subsumed perverse ontological categories like that of the onanist in the late nineteenth century (Tendencies 116-117).

4. As Masters points out, productions of Salome were banned in England at the time when Benson received his copy from Douglas. For perceptive readings of the homoerotics of Salome, see Showalter, 149-156 and Dellamora, "Traversing."

5. For an excellent account of the renewed homosexual panic and xenophobia provoked by the memory of Wilde and his circle, see Philip Hoare, Wilde's Last Stand.

6. Wayne Koestenbaum explores the homoerotics and homosexual panic that inform The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in two related pieces: in "The Shadow on the Bed: Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde, and the Labouchere Amendment" Koestenbaum links the thematics of blackmail in Stevenson’s romance to the effects of the Labouchere Amendment which criminalized all sexual relations between men. In Double Talk: The Erotics of Male Literary Collaboration, 149-151, Koestenbaum examines the relationship between Stevenson’s literary/erotic collaborations and the doubling in his all male romance. For other brief accounts of the homoeroticism and homophobia in this text, see Veeder and Sedgwick, Epistemology 188-189.

7. There is a tension, though, between the title of the memoir, As We Were, with its suggestions of a positivist recapturing of a collective ("we") history, and the subtitle, "A Victorian Peep Show," which sets up an ironic distance between the writer in the present and his exoticized (his past persona is an object at a peep show) Victorian past and hints at the interested desires (the term "peep show," after all, suggests voyeurism) which inevitably informs such autobiographical exercises.

8. When Joyce uses the term "college," he is referring to what Americans might term "high school," in accordance with British usage. Thus, for instance, Joyce’s own elite school was called Clongowes Wood College. Benson’s father E. W. Benson was the first head of Wellington College. “College” could also be used to describe the various units of a larger university. For instance, King’s College is affiliated with Cambridge University.
9. Ultimately, E. W. Benson did not go through with this plan because of the fear that it might encourage unmonitored boys to indulge in masturbation. One of the etiological explanations of homosexuality saw excessive reliance on what was described as self abuse as leading to a taste for sodomy. So, this remedy to prevent homosexual activity might end up engendering the very perversion it was supposed to check.

10. That the grasping of hands should be the privileged trope for representing male homoerotics makes ideological sense. For one thing, the sociable respect for hierarchy that these grasps engender is distinct from the solitary pleasure produced by that other form of manual pleasuring, masturbation. Further, if the hand is synecdochically linked to the sphere of work, and work is ideologically associated with masculinity, all this grasping of hands does not feminize the participants.

11. In stating that this drama is “mutually understood,” I do not mean to suggest that the two participants share equal power. Clearly, there is a troubling power dissymmetry between the actors in this script, even if they both seem to know the lines all too well.

12. Several critics have suggested that David Blaise’s father is based on Benson’s own father. Benson’s father was both a headmaster and a clergyman, but in the novel David’s father is not a headmaster, as though Benson wants imaginatively to preserve the charismatic, Thomas Arnoldian tradition with which his father was implicated but simultaneously distance it from his father and his father’s occupation as a clergyman.

13. According to the racial logic of the novel, it comes as no surprise that it should be Bags who gets linked to feminizing French influences. In David Blaise, we learn that Bags has a Jewish mother (3). While he preserves the Englishness of his father, presumably the influence of his mother makes him vulnerable to debilitatingly feminizing French influence.

While the positioning of Bags as spectacle makes him completely other to David and Frank, I would argue that their bond depends on the diacritical existence of this fantasized scene of feminizing degradation.

14. While it is beyond the scope of the present project, I am interested in exploring the extent to which the category of English Literature provided an idiom for subjects of a certain class in Anglophone colonies to articulate male homoerotic desires. In a recent novel, Beach Boy, the British-Indian expatriate novelist Ardhashir Vakil, for instance, uses Keats to articulate pederastic desire in a manner very similar to that used by Benson. Right before describing how he patrilinearly inherited a love of Keats from his father and grandfather, a sailor who had visited Keats’s house in Hampstead and “who had collected more than a hundred volumes of the poems and letters” (101), the narrator describes a moment of homoerotic intensity that he shares with his father: “‘Cyrus,’ he [the father] said softly. ‘Are you sleeping?’ He sat down on the bed. . . . With his fingers, my father combed back the hair that fell around my face. I felt like a bird ruffled by the wind. . . . He spoke soothing words. . . . ‘Sleep tight, kiddo, my tough cookie, my little badmash, rascal that you are. . . .’”(100-101).

15. I am indebted to Alan Grob for drawing my attention to the essay by Susan Wolfson.
Part Two
Youthful Homosexuality versus Corrupted Heterosexual Culture
Chapter 3
A Queer Touch and the Bloomian Model of Authorial Influence

In chapters four and five, I consider the homophilic mythologies of Edward Carpenter and E. M. Forster respectively. As you will see, Carpenter’s anti-developmental account of history exerted a powerful influence on Forster’s reverse discourse. So, I want to begin the section by bringing Carpenter and Forster together in chapter 3, almost literally bring them together since the essay revolves around an inspirational touch that the two writers shared. The ramifications of that inspirational touch, as it is imagined by Forster, extend both backwards and forwards temporally, so the essay also brings the figures of Walt Whitman, a precursor who exerted a strong influence on both Carpenter and Forster, and Christopher Isherwood and J. R. Ackerley, writers on whom Forster exerted a salient influence, into this drama of genealogical construction by several generations of gay male authors.

My objectives in this chapter are to consider the limited uses that Harold Bloom’s Oedipal model of authorial literary influence continues to have for gay male literary theory. Conversely, I want to use the gay male family romance constructed by Forster to queer Bloom’s model. The similarities between Forster and Bloom’s dramas, I will argue, help to un conceal a disavowed homoeroticism which lies at the heart of the Oedipal model of literary influence. Further, even while disavowing them, Forster’s genealogical drama evokes issues of national, class, and gendered difference that the story of fathers and sons advanced by Bloom resolutely ignores.

A Tactile Genealogy

I will begin by describing the primal scene which frames this entire chapter: In a “terminal note” appended to Maurice, E. M. Forster dramatically describes the novel’s
genesis. According to Forster, *Maurice* was "conceived" when he was visiting Edward Carpenter and George Merrill, Carpenter's working-class lover, at Millthorpe.\(^1\) The idea for *Maurice* was born, according to this account, when Merrill touched Forster's "backside":\(^2\)

> It must have been my second or third visit to the shrine that the spark was kindled. Carpenter and his comrade George Merrill combined to make a profound impression on me and to touch a creative spring. George Merrill also touched my backside. . . . It [the sensation] seemed to go straight through the small of my back into my ideas . . . . If it really did this, [it] would prove that at that precise moment I had conceived. I then returned to Harrogate. . . and immediately began to write *Maurice.* (245-246)

Although it was Merrill, who touched Forster's "backside," Carpenter is intimately implicated in that touch. The repetition of the word "touch" in the following two sentences — "[Carpenter] and his comrade George Merrill combined to make a profound impression on me and to touch a creative spring. . . . George Merrill also touched my backside" (my emphasis)— demonstrates that regardless of who literally touched Forster's backside, Carpenter is figuratively implicated in Forster's impregnation fantasy.

The verb "touch" appears again in Forster's 1929 memorial tribute to Carpenter, "Some Memories": "Edward Carpenter was the sea. He touched everyone everywhere" (75, my emphasis). The reappearance of the word "touched" in this memorial tribute suggests that Forster, in looking back on Carpenter's life, might have been associating the older writer, at some level, with the inspirational touch that led to *Maurice's* conception. Further, at the end of 1913, the year in which the Millthorpe incident took place, thinking of his creative plans for finishing *Maurice,* Forster wrote in his diary, "Forward rather than back. Edward Carpenter! Edward Carpenter! Edward Carpenter!" (Furbank, volume 1, 258). In other words, at the end of the year, when Forster was looking back at the source of his inspiration for *Maurice,* he powerfully associated it with Carpenter, so much so that
Merrill entirely disappeared from the picture. In the diary description, it is Carpenter alone who propels Forster forward.

Forster’s tactile metaphor situates the conception scene within a gay male literary tradition. For one thing, the trope intertextually links the novel to Carpenter’s writing, particularly his long poem Toward Democracy, for that poem insistently uses the word “touch” and tactile metaphors. To cite just one example, expansively celebrating the incorporative and insatiable power of his desire, the poet declares, “Him I touch, and her I touch, and you I touch – - I can never be satisfied” (Towards 67). But the metaphor also implicitly invokes Walt Whitman. Whitman exerted a profound influence on Carpenter, who played a key role in popularizing the older poet in Britain. He also exerted a strong influence on Forster (one might consider here the intertextual link between works like Whitman’s poem “A Passage to India” and Forster’s 1924 novel) though Forster does not directly acknowledge his influence in the way that Carpenter does. More to my purpose, Whitman too insistently relies on the language of touch. To cite just one instance, in the poem “Whoever You are Holding Me Now in Hand,” the poet speaking in the guise of the volume of poetry itself invites the reader to

Thrust... me beneath your clothing.

Where I may feel the throbs of your heart or rest upon your hip,

...

For thus, merely touching you is enough, is best,

And thus touching you would I silently sleep and be carried eternally.

(Leaves 116; lines 25-26, my emphasis)

Not only does the language of touch attend the conception of Maurice, it also informs discussions of the novel’s reception by younger gay male writers influenced by Forster like Christopher Isherwood. In texts like Lions and Shadows, Isherwood has acknowledged the powerful artistic influence that Forster exerted on him (130-131; 135-136), and Alan Wilde, in his study of Isherwood, has usefully traced the formal and
thematic connections between the two writers' works (38-40). In *Christopher and His Kind*, Isherwood one page after citing Forster's description of the birth of *Maurice* (126), describes his own reaction to the novel and Forster's response to that reaction:

the Pupil [Isherwood] was being asked by the Master... how *Maurice* appeared to a member of the thirties generation. ... My memory sees them sitting together facing each other... Christopher stammers some words of praise and devotion, his eyes brimming with tears. And Forster -- amused and *touched*, but more *touched* than amused leans forward and kisses him on the cheek. (127, my emphasis)

While in this scene, it is the older writer who is "touched" by the younger writer's response, there is an intense affective reciprocity between them: The younger writer's reverent emotion for his precursor is mirrored by his precursor's mingled amusement and emotion at the younger writer's obvious admiration, a reciprocity that is underlined by their spatial positioning -- they sit "facing each other. Not only is Forster emotionally "touched," he literally touches his "pupil" with an affectionate kiss.

The investment that the circle of gay male writers influencing and influenced by Forster has in constructing genealogical relations among themselves in terms of touch make it particularly useful to juxtapose *Maurice*'s conception with Bloom's authorial model of influence that also focuses on the relationships of influence among male writers of different generations, albeit in paternal-filial rather than pederastic terms. I feel authorized in using a literary scene of conception to construct a theoretical allegory about gay male authorial influence because Bloom himself, both in *Anxiety of Influence* and *A Map of Misreading*, has used certain literary scenes in *Paradise Lost* to generate rich theoretical insights.

If I am influenced by Bloom in using a literary scene to construct theoretical claims, I am influenced by Forster in giving salience to the metaphor of "touch" in articulating those claims. But I want to stress that I use the metaphor of touch in this paper as Forster does, as opposed to Whitman and Carpenter's characteristic use of the word. For Whitman
and Carpenter, touch usually works to heal separation or difference in order to achieve transcendent unity. In Carpenter’s poem, “By the Shore,” for instance, the poet moves from celebrating his tactile contact with the waves in the darkness: “The night is dark overhead; I do not see them [the waves], but I touch them...” (Towards 160, my emphasis) — to actually becoming the waves: “Suddenly I am the ocean itself...” (160). By contrast, in the birthing scene of Maurice, there is no indication that the touch allows Forster to merge with his precursors. The touch brings him into contact with them, but they remain separate; indeed, as we shall see, vexedly, anxiously separate. By the same token, I want to touch an Oedipal model of literary influence with a fantasy of gay male literary transmission, rather than absolutely collapsing them into each other. But if the touch at Millthorpe does not erase Forster’s inegritv, it does productively unsettle him, bring him into contact with something outside his accustomed boundaries, and I am hoping that touching a Bloomian model of influence with a scene of gay literary transmission might productively unsettle both parties.6

To begin let me briefly and schematically sketch those aspects of Bloom’s model which are of relevance to my project. My purpose is not to explore fully the complexities of the Bloomian model; rather, I am concentrating on those aspects of it which have resonance with my particular concerns in articulating a relationship between gay male literary theory and Oedipal models of influence. Such an interested (mis)reading of Bloom is consistent with his own model of critical reading: “Poets’ misinterpretations... are more drastic than critics’ misinterpretations... but this is only a difference in degree and not at all in kind. There are no interpretations but only misinterpretations” (Anxiety 95). In Bloom’s Oedipal model of authorship, the relationship between a younger male author and his precursor is analogous to the relationship between a father and a son: “a poem is a response to a poem, as a poet is a response to a poet, or a person to his parent” (Map 18). No doubt, Bloom uses the non-gendered “parent” in this formulation, but by the next
page, he makes it quite clear that he is really thinking of the relationship between a father and a son: "To the poet . . . a poem is always the other man, the precursor and so a poem is always a person, always the father of one's Second Birth" (19). Later in A Map of Misreading, the metaphorics of paternity become more insistent. Thus, in describing the relationship between Percy Shelley and Robert Browning, Bloom writes: "[Shelley] is the presence that the poem [Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came] labors to void, and his is the force which rouses the poem's force. Out of that struggle between forces rises the force of Browning's poem, which is effectively the difference between the rival strengths of poetic father and poetic son" (Map 116). Poetic creation arises in the Bloomian model from the struggle between paternal and filial forces. In order for the younger poet to gain his distance from the paternal precursor, he has creatively to misread the older one. Bloom then elaborates a series of complex tropes by which poets misread their paternal precursors, but these tropes are not of crucial import to my argument.

The value of Bloom's Oedipal model is its aggressive desublimation of literary production, its recognition of the violence and anxiety that underlie the relationship between writers of different generations. Before applying the Bloomian model to the writers under consideration, though, I would like to sketch the counter-mythology that they constructed, a mythology that opposes paternal-filial relations to nurturant, non-aggressive, pederastic ones, a counter-mythology which has been too often uncritically endorsed by gay male literary theory. Then, I will consider how the Bloomian model salutarily helps to complicate that counter-mythology and reintroduce aggression and conflict into intergenerational bonds between gay male writers.

Pederastic Mentors versus Fathers

The two specific writers on whom I will focus are Isherwood and J. R. Ackerley: both writers were strongly influenced by Forster, and both of them opposed their vexed
relations with their fathers, or the cultural patrimony that their fathers synecdochally represented, to their pederastic ties with Forster.7

Forster often appears as a character in Isherwood’s novels, and the younger writer insistently represents his homosexual precursor in terms of youthfulness. As we will see in the final chapter on Forster, these are anti-developmental terms that Isherwood inherits from Forster himself. In Down There on a Visit, for instance, Isherwood celebrates Forster’s “light, gay, blue baby eyes” (162, my emphasis), and in Christopher and His Kind, he writes, “Forster never ceased to be babylike. His light blue eyes behind his spectacles were like those of a baby. He had a baby’s vulnerability which is also the vulnerability of a creature one does not dare not harm” (106). Even in his critical descriptions of Forster’s works, Isherwood tends to emphasize the older writer’s youthfulness. For instance, in the 1957 anthology of short stories with critical introductions, Great English Short Stories, that he edited, Isherwood describes Forster’s personality as “perennially boyish”(173). Further, the particular Forster story that he chooses to anthologize foregrounds the older writer’s idealization of Mediterranean primitivism: In “The Story of the Siren,” an eroticized Italian boatman - - “[The boatman] stood naked in the brilliant sun. . . wonderful. . . past all description” (175)” - - whom one of the characters describes as “a child of nature” (174, my emphasis), a phrase from the story that Isherwood significantly chooses to cite in his introductory summary of the tale, has knowledge about nature’s wonderful and sometimes sinister mysteries that are denied to the excessively cerebral English narrator.

Whether Isherwood intended the pun or not, the double valence of the term “gay” in the phrase used to describe Forster’s eyes in Down There on a Visit, “gay, blue, baby eyes” is highly apposite because for Isherwood, Forster’s youthfulness is linked to his homosexuality. Thus, Isherwood’s reverential description of Forster in Christopher and
His Kind as "master of their [Isherwood and Forster's] craft... great prophet of their tribe who declares that there can be real love, love without limits or excuses between two men" in no way contradicts his earlier emphasis on the writer's babyishness. It is precisely Forster's babyishness that is the source of his strength.

Isherwood repeatedly pits the youthful and modest heroism of Forster against the false heroics of patriarchal authority. In *Down There on a Visit*, for instance, Isherwood movingly compares "the antiheroic hero" Forster, "entirely human and deeply loveable" to national political icons like Chamberlain:

The newspapers are moved to tears by the spectacle of a gentleman [Chamberlain] standing his ground against a non-gentleman [Hitler], so they call him

[Chamberlain] 'England'... Well my 'England' is E. M.; the antiheroic hero

(162).

No doubt, Chamberlain is figured here in class rather than patriarchal terms, but as Prime Minister of Britain he is a sort of national father figure as well. More germane to my case is the implicit comparison that Isherwood makes between Mr. Lancaster's father, embodiment of patriarchal Victorian values, and Forster. The narrator tells us that Mr. Lancaster has a photograph of his father

showing a vigorous, bearded old man of perhaps seventy-five. What a beard!...

It roared in torrents from his finely arched nostrils and his big lobed ears, foamed over his cheeks in two tidal waves that collided over his chin to form boiling rapids...

(23)

The comically hyperbolic description of the Victorian father's beard associates him with almost manic energy (note the verbs "roared," "foamed, "collided") and excess (note the "big ears" and the sheer luxuriance of the beard). By contrast, here is the description of Forster:
my England is E. M. . . with his straggly straw mustache, his light, gay, blue
baby eyes and his elderly stoop. Instead of a folded umbrella or a brown uniform,
his emblems are his tweed cap (which is too small for him) and the odd-shaped
brown paper parcels in which he carries his belongings. . . (162)

In opposition, to the almost fearfully luxuriant beard of the Victorian father, we have
Forster’s “straggly mustache,” and in contrast to the size and exaggerated energy associated
with the patriarchal figure, we have Forster’s diminutive (his cap is too small), physically
unthreatening (he has an “elderly stoop”), odd (one might hear the resonances of that
near-synonym “queer” hovering around the adjective “odd”) personality marked by its
cheerful youthfulness (“gay blue baby eyes”). Isherwood stresses Forster’s modesty in
that description. By contrast, he emphasizes the capricious self-absorption of the Victorian
patriarch and wittily uses the patriarch’s beard, the very sign of his supposed maturity, to
do so: “What a beard-conscious old beauty -- tilting his head up to be admired with an air
of self-indulged caprice”(23). The campy description suggests that contrary to normative
culture, it is patriarchy that is hopelessly narcissistic, not supposedly immature
homosexuals.

Not only does Mr. Lancaster’s father differ from immature homosexuals by his
heroic achievements at a preternaturally early age, he also serves to induce guilt in those
supposedly arrested under achievers, and in that respect he stands in stark opposition to
Forster, who urges a guilt free vitality on his youthful followers. Mr. Lancaster admiringly
describing his father’s career declares:

Before he was sixteen he had rounded the Horn and been north of the
Aleutians, right up to the edge of the ice. By the time he was your age,

`Christopher -- this was a faint reproach -- he was second mate sailing out of
Singapore on the China Seas run. He used to translate Xenophon during the typhoons. (23)

His admiring, if unintentionally comic, description of his father’s exploits suggests that this Victorian adventurer was preternaturally mature, ready when he was a boy simultaneously to advance humanist knowledge (he translates Xenophon during typhoons) and Britain’s economic interests (he is second mate sailing out of Singapore on the China Seas run). The way in which Mr. Lancaster uses the dead Victorian father to try and induce guilt in the narrator (he reproachfully reminds Christopher of what the dead father had achieved when he was Christopher’s age) should remind us, that for Isherwood, as critics like Paul Piazza have pointed out, the institution of paternity is often implicated with society’s attempt to make the young feel guilty (55-56). In Kathleen and Frank, Richard eloquently articulates the oppressive role that the father occupies in Isherwood’s mythology:

I did so hate being everlastinglly reminded of him, when I was young. Everybody kept saying how perfect he was, such a hero and so good at everything. He was always held up as someone you could never hope to be worthy of, and whenever I did anything wrong, I was told I was a disgrace to him... I used to simply loathe him. (57)

The deadly role that this oppressive father figure can play becomes evident when we learn at the end of the section on “Mr. Lancaster” that Mr. Lancaster commits suicide, as though unable to measure up to the heroic role he has assigned to his dead father. By contrast, gaily childlike Forster is associated in Down There on a Visit with vitality and hope “While the others tell their followers to be ready to die, he advises us to live as if we were immortal” (162).

Ackerley too sets up an opposition between his strained relations with his father and his close ties with Forster. In one of the key scenes in his memoir My Father and Myself,
Ackerley represents his paradigmatic filial discomfort with his father’s all seeing eye. Ackerley’s father had given him the “maxim” not to trust “a chap who doesn’t look you straight in the eyes” (My Father 85). But his son, all too aware of the bent, perverse secrets he is concealing finds it deeply painful to confront his father’s eyes:

with his magnificent blue eyes . . . he fixed one. . . so that one sometimes felt not merely scrutinised but trapped. . . My own eyes . . . felt as though they were starting from their sockets under the strain of bravely meeting his; if my . . . gaze so much as wavered, I thought . . . my guilt would be established. (86)

That Ackerley chooses to trope his reconstruction of his father’s life in visual terms at several points in the memoir suggests that his auto/biographical venture is in part a way of aggressively reversing that gaze.3 In the memoir, his father, rather than being the eye that can detect secrets and that demands visual reciprocity, becomes an object on display, one, moreover, that is unaware it is on display: “Any nosy Parker keeping a watch upon our house would have seen the front door opened punctually at [eight o clock] . . . and my father descend the steps in his grey Edward VII hat, his light fawn or heavy overcoat, his umbrella on his arm . . . “(92). All this battling over who will control the gaze would seem to stand in stark opposition to the mutuality suggested by the touches we have seen gay men of different generations sharing though I will suggest later in the essay that it would be unwise to draw that opposition too sharply.

Ackerley sharply opposes his lack of communication with his father from his close bond with his homophilic mentor Forster. As Peter Parker shows in his biography of Ackerley, there was an enormously close and communicative relationship between Forster and Ackerley (Parker 49-84). They regularly commented on each other’s work - - the friendship began, after all, when Forster wrote to the younger writer complimenting him and giving him critical suggestions on a homoerotic poem “Ghosts,” and the older writer went on to give Ackerley extensive revision suggestions while he worked on texts like
Hindoo Holiday. Like Isherwood, Ackerley refers to Forster as a mentor, an appellation that would appeal to the older writer with his investment in the pederastic, tutelary model of male intergenerational relations: Ackerley writes in his diary "Morgan was already my mentor and had upon me the effect of keeping me up to the mark and making me feel that I had a best and should look to it" (80). Forster’s position as Ackerley’s literary mentor links him to another mentor who played an equally crucial role in the young man’s life, Arnold Lunn: Ackerley explains that at a time when he was not able to articulate his homosexual desire, Lunn introduced him to “books” by “Edward Carpenter” among others (My Father 117), which gave him a lexicon to express his desires. Not only do the readings Lunn gave Ackerley place him in a genealogical relation to figures like Carpenter and Whitman, they also help reaffirm a distinction between Ackerley’s father, who doesn’t read much and willfully refuses to recognize his son’s sexuality, and a pederastic literary tradition embodied in the figure of Forster and the books to which Lunn introduced Ackerley (Lunn himself was a self-identified heterosexual).

But it was not merely the older writer who influenced the younger one. Parker explains that in fact the two writers exerted reciprocal influence upon each other. Ackerley gave Forster extensive revision suggestions on several of his homoerotic short stories, Maurice, and the libretto to Benjamin Britten’s opera Billy Budd. Indeed, sometimes it is unclear as to which writer one should treat as the precursor and which writer occupies the position of the ephebe. This ambiguity can be seen when we consider Ackerley’s Indian travel memoir, Hindoo Holiday. This text was written in 1932 at the prompting of Forster, and as I have mentioned before, Forster gave Ackerley extensive revision suggestions on the text. So, in that sense, Forster is Ackerley’s precursor. Yet, Forster’s own Indian travel memoir, published in 1953, The Hill of Devi, has close intertextual relations with Ackerley’s book. In other words, the mentor’s book is influenced by that of the ephebe, or to switch metaphors, in this case, one cannot be sure who is doing the touching and who is being touched.
Forster and Ackerley’s collaboration on the short story “Little Imber” is of particular import to the concerns of this chapter because the thematics of the story are so similar to those of the birthing scene at Millthorpe. Ackerley closely collaborated with the eighty-three-year-old Forster (Arctic xxiii) on this uncompleted story, whose reflexive topic is arguably the productive possibilities of pederastic relations of influence. To summarize the plot of the story: in a futuristic world, which is growing increasingly sterile because of the imbalance between the female and male populations, two men, Little Imber and Warham reproduce. The tale repeatedly emphasizes the age difference between Little Imber and Warham: as the name Little Imber suggests, Little Imber is the younger of the two. He is repeatedly described as a “boy” and as “immature,” and we are told that Warham is “jealous” of Little Imber’s “youth” (cf. 230 and 229, for instance). In other words, in this tale, the fantasy of male reproduction is linked to the age difference between Warham and Little Imber, an age difference which can be analogized to the generational difference that separates Forster from Ackerley or Isherwood. In one fragmented conclusion to this story, for which two contradictory conclusions exist, the intergenerational coupling between the men leads to immense generativity. In that version, two male infants are born of the first male union, and they incestuously couple and bring back fecundity to an increasingly sterile world:

And from that swaddling a babe burst . . . [What] it really desired was its own younger brother. . . . They met and then things hummed. Retiring to a pagan grove, the whereabouts of which they concealed, they perfected their techniques and produced Romuloids and Remoids in masses. It was impossible to walk in that country-side without finding a foundling, or to leave two together without finding a third . . . . [T]he population graph shot up until it hit the jackpot. (235)

The link between Ackerley and the fertilizing force of Little Imber becomes evident when we read Forster’s description of how the story was composed in a December 1961 journal entry: “[Ackerley] woke up to help over “Little Imber” which . . . might see the light of
night after my death. Once aroused he may be active and penetrative” (Arctic xxiv). The journal entry links the story “Little Imber” to the character Little Imber; like Little Imber, Forster suggests, the story may be “penetrative” and fertilizing. However, the referent of the pronoun “he” is ambiguous; it could refer to Little Imber or Ackerley. In other words, like “penetrative” Little Imber, Ackerley at least metaphorically impregnates the aging Forster with a new story. Like the scene of Maurice’s conception, then, this story can be read to allegorize the generative consequences of relations between homosexual men of different generations, as opposed to the sterility which informs relations between homosexual men and their fathers.¹⁰

Touching Homophilic Mythologies with the Bloomian Model

In this section, I will explore how contrary to the oppositions Isherwood and Ackerley draw between paternity and pederasty there is in fact a strong continuity between the anxious and aggressive relations between literary fathers and sons that Bloom explores in his model and the relations between male homosexual writers of different generations.

Take the relationship between Carpenter and Whitman. Bloom has posited that the anxious literary son pursues various revisionary strategies to separate himself from his paternal precursor. That description resonates strongly with Carpenter’s attempts to distance himself from Whitman. In “A Note on Toward Democracy,” for instance, Carpenter performs a series of complex negotiations to differentiate himself from Whitman. He begins the note, “I have said . . . nothing about the influence of Whitman -- for the same reason that I have said nothing about the influence of the sun or the winds. These influences lie too far back and ramify too complexly to be traced.” But immediately after acknowledging Whitman’s influence on him, Carpenter denies that he consciously imitated Whitman: “I find it difficult to imagine what my life would have been without [Leaves of Grass], but I do not think I ever tried to imitate it or its style. . . . I did not adopt it [ the form of Toward Democracy ] because it was an approximation to the form of ‘Leaves of
Grass.'" The repeated negations -- "I do not think; I did not adopt it -- suggest that Carpenter is trying to repress an indebtedness he unconsciously recognizes." He ends by declaring that Toward Democracy is extremely modest compared to Whitman’s work:

Whitman’s full-blooded, copious, rank masculine style must make him one of the world’s great originals -- a perennial fountain. . . . ‘Toward Democracy’ has a milder radiance, as of the moon compared with the sun. . . . Tender and meditative . . . and altogether less massive, it has the quality of fluid and yielding air rather than of the solid and uncompromising earth.

(Towards 414-415)

In this formulation, Carpenter feminizes himself -- he is the moon to Whitman’s sun; his poem is a “fluid,” “yielding,” “airy” work compared to Whitman’s generative, “massive” “fountain.” Yet when one remembers that Carpenter celebrates the feminine and feminizing qualities of the intermediate type, who can heal a masculinist culture that is alienated from female qualities, the tone of this distinction becomes decidedly ambiguous: is Carpenter praising or criticizing Whitman when he describes Leaves of Grass in such conventionally masculine, phallic terms? Regardless of how one reads Carpenter’s tone, his seeming self-effacement allows him to differentiate himself from the older poet, Whitman.

Forster demonstrates a similar anxious ambivalence about Carpenter. That ambivalence can be demonstrated by juxtaposing Forster’s tribute to Carpenter with his comments on his precursor in his Commonplace Book. In his tribute to Carpenter, Forster admiringly acknowledged how much deeper Carpenter was than he, “If I am as deep as a pond. . . . Edward Carpenter was the sea” ("Some Memories" 275). Yet in his Commonplace Book, Forster was brutally dismissive of Carpenter:

Astonishing how he [Carpenter] drains away. . . . the spirit is there, but it has got into the wrong skin. Gerald Heard summed him up the other day at my request and most devastatingly: “An echo. Walt Whitman was the first blew through that
hollow reed. Morris, J.A. Symonds -- there you have the whole. He knew nothing he couldn't think. . . . He knew nothing about civilization. He was always a clergyman, you were not to wear boots but sandals, you were not to go to church. . . . I suppose there was something there, but as soon as one touches it, it's gone. Slow but steady decline of power." (Commonplace Book 52-53)

In this passage, by endorsing Heard's view of Carpenter, Forster is able to devalue his predecessor. Ocean-like Carpenter is here described as "draining away." This spermatic metaphor together with the image of "the hollow reed" make Carpenter a figure of sterility. To describe Carpenter as "draining away" is particularly cruel because in his own work, he constantly figures primitive man's youthful vitality in terms of his unity with the ocean. While in his essay on Carpenter, Forster rejects Havelock Ellis's gibe about Carpenter being "Whitman with water" ("Edward Carpenter" 214), here Forster endorses Heard's description of Carpenter as Whitman's "echo." Further, while in the "Terminal Note" to Maurice, Forster acknowledges Carpenter as the origin of the novel, he here denies his own indebtedness to Carpenter by endorsing Heard's dismissal of the older writer as belonging to a dead ("hollow") tradition descending from Whitman through Morris and Symonds. Moreover, if in the "Terminal Note" to Maurice, Forster sees Carpenter and Merrill as providing him with a source of vital, non-cerebral power -- "it [the sensation] seemed to go straight through the small of my back into my ideas without involving my thoughts" (my emphasis) -- here, he endorses Heard's view of Carpenter as a pedant who "knew nothing he couldn't think." Again, this is a particularly damaging accusation given that Carpenter himself despised an intellect that was alienated from the body and living experience. Carpenter, the inspirational spirit to whom Forster pays a "pilgrimage" in the "Terminal Note" to Maurice, here is transformed into a cranky nay-sayer, "you were not to wear boots but sandals, you were not to go to church." Also, since both Carpenter and Forster were strongly anti-clerical, the dismissal of Carpenter as an anti-clerical clergyman is particularly telling. Finally, if in the "Terminal Note" to Maurice, Forster represents
Carpenter/Merrill's touch as powerfully generative, here he endorses Heard's claim that Carpenter's work is so insubstantial that as soon as one "touches it, it is gone" (my emphasis). Note that throughout this passage, Forster is supposedly citing Heard's views. Perhaps Forster's use of Heard as a ventriloquist's dummy indicates his ambivalence toward Carpenter: on the one hand, like the son in an Oedipal model, the younger gay male writer feels an indebtedness to the older one; hence, Forster finds it difficult to attack Carpenter directly and uses Heard to do so. On the other hand, precisely because he is indebted to an older man, the younger one has to establish a distance between them; hence, the sharpness of Forster's indirect attack on Carpenter.

Even when Forster does not directly repudiate Carpenter, the younger writer distances himself from precursors in general by challenging the whole notion of influence. In Aspects of the Novel, Forster writes:

The idea of a period or a development in time with its consequential emphasis on influences and schools, happens to be exactly what I am hoping to avoid. . . . We are to visualize the English novelists. . . as seated together in a room, a circular room. . . all writing their novels simultaneously. They do not, as they sit there, think: . . . I carry on the tradition of Trollope, I am reacting against Aldous Huxley. (5, my emphasis)

While in the scene at Millthorpe and in Isherwood's staging of his reception of Maurice, spatial positioning was very important (Forster was able to move forward because of a touch from behind; and Isherwood and Forster's reciprocal influence was underlined by their position facing each other), in the passage above the writers in their circular reading room are atomistically self-contained, fantastically lifted outside time and history altogether. Although the dominant tone of the passage is urbane, the excessiveness of the word "enemy" used to characterize time -- "Time all the way through is our enemy"-- suggests that at some level Forster cannot completely banish history or the specter of precursors and successors from his atemporal circular room.
While Bloom's Oedipal account of authorial relations tends to emphasize the anxieties of the younger writer, according to the logic of the Oedipal model, the father too is bound to be anxious about the parricidal ambitions of the son. Despite the ways in which Isherwood and Ackerley sentimentalize their relations with their precursor Forster, there is evidence that those bonds too were at times informed by anxious aggression. Gore Vidal's recently published memoir Palimpsest vividly captures a moment of aggressive, sadistic tension between the two writers which never enters into Isherwood's depiction of affectionate ties to Forster:

[Isherwood] had sent Forster his latest novel Prater Violet, and had heard nothing... Christopher asked, "Morgan, did you get the copy of Prater Violet I sent you?"

... Forster went on chatting to William Plomer and seemed not have heard. Christopher swallowed more gin. "Morgan!" The voice had gone up half an octave. The room was quiet. Forster's eyes twinkled in Christopher's direction.

"Did you get the copy of Prater Violet I sent you?..."

"Yes, Christopher." Morgan's twinkle never ceased. "I got it." Then he turned back and continued his conversation with Plomer, leaving Isherwood garroted in plain view. (190)

Unlike the mutually affectionate glance that Forster and Isherwood share when the younger writer explains his reactions to Maurice, in this scene, Forster may twinkle his eyes in Isherwood's direction, but he deliberately isolates the younger man and sadistically makes him a vulnerable social spectacle. Forster also displays considerable anxiety about his protege Ackerley: in a 1923 diary entry, Forster wrote about Ackerley, "I don't quite like A., though he has intelligence and charm. I suspect him of cruelty, but perhaps it's merely that I suspect all young men. I have no friend under thirty now" (Forster qtd. in Parker
63). Similarly, Forster writes in his Commonplace Book “young people keep me young unless they are the sons of my contemporaries; then, I regard them as spies” (53). Presumably, Forster was threatened by his contemporaries’ sons because they could report back ("spies") to their fathers about his inadequacies. However, perhaps Forster was also made anxious by these surrogate sons because they reminded him of the vulnerability of his authority as an older man. In other words, homosexual Forster did not have sons of his own, but his contemporaries’ sons reminded him that he would be supplanted by another generation, just as fathers are supplanted by their sons.

**Touching the Bloomian Model with the Queer Scene at Milthorpe**

While aggression and denial are distinct parts of the bonds between the gay male writers I am examining, they do not completely describe those relations. After all, the scene at Milthorpe is both tender - - note that Forster uses the adverb "gently" in describing that touch, "George Merrill also touched my backside...gently" - - and erotic. Bloom’s model, I would suggest, is unable to do justice to the non-aggressive, homoerotic desire of such a scene because although, or perhaps because, desire between men lies at the heart of the Bloomian model, literal homosexual desire is persistently disavowed.

To substantiate the claim that desire between men lies at the heart of the Bloomian model, let me begin by citing Bloom’s formulation from A Map of Misreading again: “a poem is always the other man, the precursor and so a poem is always a person, the father of one’s second birth.” In this formulation, the male poet regenerates himself by recreating, reproducing his father, the poem. There is no female present in the scene at all. and in this sense, this scene is uncannily similar to Forster’s homosexual birthing fantasy. Now, it is true that the scene is more heterosexualized in The Anxiety of Influence. In that book, Bloom writes, “what is the Primal Scene, for a poet as poet? It is his Poetic Father’s coitus with the Muse. There he was begotten? No—there they failed to beget him. He must be self-begotten, he must engender himself upon the Muse, his mother”(37). But even though a female Muse is present in this version of the Bloomian myth, she merely acts
as a passive intermediary between the two men. She is either the mother who bears the father’s son, or she is the incestuous vessel for the son’s self-generation of himself as a poet. In other words, the Muse in this scene classically conforms to the role of the woman in the male homosocial paradigm explored by Sedgwick in *Between Men*, although she concentrates on the role that women play in mediating desire between male coevals and does not really explore the role that mothers can play in mediating paternal-filial desire. In any case, the real actors in this scene are two desiring men, the older and the younger poet. Bloom partially concedes this point when he says that “the poet-in-a-poet cannot marry, whatever the person-in-poet chooses to have done” because poet-in-a-poet’s true affective bond is with his male precursor (*Map 19*). But having implicitly suggested that regardless of the poet’s literal marital status and sexual orientation, the act of poetic creation by a male writer is intrinsically homoerotic, Bloom rapidly moves on, as though he cannot deal with the outrageously queer claim he has made.

Further, note how salient a position a homosexual, specifically pederastic tradition occupies in Bloom’s theoretical edifice. The very first author that he cites, literally on the first page of *The Anxiety of Influence*, which is after all the first book in which he articulates his Oedipal model of influence, is Oscar Wilde. Given the importance of origins and beginnings for Bloom, it seems quite significant that despite the ostensible paternal/filial frame of his model, we do not find a heterosexual patriarch at the beginning of his project but a gay man, one, moreover, whose name has become a cultural synonym for homosexuality itself, so that in *Maurice* the periphrasis “an unspeakable of the Wilde sort” functions unambiguously to designate a practitioner of the love that dare not speak its name. Perhaps, it is not so surprising that one should find a gay man at the origin of a story supposedly revolving around fathers and sons, for as Jonathan Dollimore has pointed out, Freud in his reading of Oedipus’s conflict with Laius willfully forgets that Laius’s fate is an outcome of an originary homosexual transgression which was condoned by the Thebans but condemned by the Gods. In other words, while Freud and Bloom want to
keep the story of fathers and sons center stage, lurking behind this familial scene is the figure of male homosexual desire (204).

It is true that by using the term “ephebe” and making pedagogy central to his model, Bloom situates it in relation to a classical pederastic tradition. And it is also true that he acknowledges the role that erotics play in education: “Teaching is necessarily a branch of erotics.” But that formulation continues, “Teaching is necessarily a branch of erotics in the wide sense of desiring what we have not got, of redressing our poverty, of compounding with our fantasies” (A Map 39). By discussing “erotics” in “the wide sense,” Bloom is able to avoid discussing erotics and specifically homoerotics in the narrow, literal sense. In stark contrast to the way in which he literalizes tropes of heterosexual rape and reproduction in his readings of the scenes from Paradise Lost, Bloom anxiously shies away from the homoerotic implications that lie at the heart of his model.

The gay male writers genealogically implicated with the inspirational touch at Millthorpe far more clearly recognize the homoeroticism that informs paternal-filial relations than Bloom does. Forster, for instance, often eroticizes paternal-filial bonds. In Where Angels Fear to Tread, for instance, through the eyes of Caroline Abbott, as readers we are allowed voyeuristically to observe the eroticized relationship between the Italian Gino and his son:

“Wake up, “ [Gino] cried to his baby as if it was some grown-up friend. Then he lifted its foot and trod lightly on its stomach . . . He stood with one foot resting on the little body, suddenly musing, filled with the desire that his son should be like him and should have sons like him to people the earth. (123)

That there is something menacing about the father’s foot resting on his son’s stomach, while he narcissistically muses on his own replication, is undeniable. And on the next page, Forster implicitly criticizes the ways in which patriarchal culture reduces children to objects that belong to the father: Gino objectifies his child by thinking of him as “a little
kicking image of bronze," and in a spirit of passionate possessiveness declares, "he is mine . . . I am his father" (124). Yet even if the narrative critiques the possessiveness of paternal love, it undeniably eroticizes it. If the fantasy of paternal authority in an Oedipal system is that the father is immune to desiring his son, that he is merely the enforcer of a prohibitive law, Gino undoes that fantasy by eloquently and urgently speaking his desire for his son, "he is mine: mine for ever. Even if he hates me, he will be mine. He cannot help it. . . I am his father" (124).

If Forster represents the homoerotic desire of the father for his son, Isherwood often represents the son’s homoerotic desire for the father. In Kathleen and Frank, for instance, Isherwood describes how his father Frank exercised every morning in his dressing-room, naked except for his undershorts. He let Christopher come in and watch him. Christopher can remember taking pleasure which was definitely erotic in the sight of his father’s muscles tensing and bulging within his well-knit body and the virile smell of his sweat (350)

While Isherwood will passionately rebel against the symbolic authority with which the figure of his dead father will become associated, he desires the embodied man whom he watches exercising, and one might speculate that his father betrays a certain homoerotic exhibitionism in the exercise routine he stages for his son. A little later in the passage, describing his father’s anger, Isherwood writes,

. . . sometimes [Frank] would fly into rages with Christopher and shake him till his teeth rattled. Christopher may have been frightened a little, but this too is a sensual memory for him: his surrender to the exciting strength of the big angry man. (350)
Like Bloom, Isherwood represents the violent conflict that can occur between fathers and sons, but Isherwood explicitly addresses the sadomasochistic pleasure that may be derived from such conflicts, a perverse pleasure that Bloom’s Oedipal model chooses not to recognize.

Like Isherwood, Ackerley deconstructs the opposition between pederastic and paternal bonds. While his father is alive, Ackerley thinks of him as benignly thwarting his son’s homoerotic desires. But after his father dies, Ackerley discovers that in fact, like his son, he guarded several secrets, including possible homoerotic ones: when Ackerley discovers that his father had been financially helped by his homosexual friend, the Count de Gallatin, he becomes obsessed with finding out whether his father had a homoerotic past. Ackerley disavows any homoerotic desire for his father, foregrounding instead his identification with the gay Count de Gallatin — “studying the photograph of [my father] in uniform, I decided that I would not have picked him up myself” (My Father 199); “the Count, like myself, may have started his emotional life (continuing it longer than I) by falling for men whom he was unable to touch but worshipped from afar” (194, my emphasis). The intensity, however, with which the son conducts his search to find out his father’s past betrays the desire that drives that quest. As we have seen, one of the figures Ackerley draws on to represent his distance from his father when his father was alive was the trope of the paternal gaze. While the son could not look directly at his father when he was alive, after his father is dead, he erotically pores over pictures of him and voyeuristically imagines observing the homoerotic bonds that his father may have shared with the Count de Gallatin: responding to a picture that he has of his father and the Count standing by an open window, Ackerley writes, “Would that I had been able to peep . . . through that window and discover their secrets if any” (28-29). Or, to shift from the visual back to the tactile metaphors that have dominated this essay: consider that Ackerley first finds out about his father’s possible homoerotic past from a homosexual contemporary of the Count and his father, Arthur Needham. Since Needham is “an old quean” (190) and
Ackerley is drawn to butch young men, he loses contact with the older man, or to use his terms, he gets “out of touch”(202) with Needham. However, driven by the need to find out more about his father’s past, he gets back in touch with the older man. Through Needham, Ackerley is trying to touch his dead father. Rather than seeing Ackerley’s homoerotic quest for his father’s past as other to his discomfort with his father’s authoritative gaze, I see them as always having been implicated. The paternal authority that claims to be immune from desire, in other words, belongs on a continuum with the homoeroticism, which among other things, it is supposed to proscribe.

Both Ackerley and Isherwood disclose the paternal-filial bond relation to the homoerotic. Conversely, Isherwood sometimes frames the homoerotic in paternal-filial terms, a move that has the same effect of unconcealing the desire that informs Oedipal relations. In his posthumously published diaries, for instance, Isherwood writes of his relationship with Don Bachardy, “I am very happy in my father relationship with Don” (458), and later on in the journals, responding to his brother Richard’s maudlin declaration of fraternal love, Isherwood thinks, “I have had a hundred brothers already and a thousand sons” (572, my emphasis), once again resignifying homoerotic relations in filial/paternal terms.

If touching Bloom’s Oedipal story with Forster’s birthing fantasy helps to unceal the disavowed homoeroticism of the former narrative, my reading will be mirroring the way that touching between men functions in wider Anglo-American culture. Straight men are made enormously defensive if they are intimately touched by gay men, particularly if they are touched on the behind. Part of the reason why such a touch might provoke anxiety is that it forces a heterosexual man in a homosocial culture to confront homoerotic desires that he would rather deny completely. Like many other commentators, I would suggest that the recent “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell, Don’t Pursue” compromise reached on the issue on gays in the American military shows that male homosocial institutions are far more anxious about knowing that they have gay men in them than they are about having
gay men in them. For, knowing that there are openly gay men around them forces heterosexual men to confront the homoeroticism that already informs homosocial institutions. By analogy, I hope that touching Bloom’s model from behind with a scene of gay male literary transmission forces the former the theoretical paradigm to acknowledge the homoeroticism that so powerfully informs it.

However, beyond disclosing the disavowed homoeroticism of the Bloomian model, the queer touch at Millthorpe also discloses other limitations to the Bloomian model. Critics like Frank Lentricchia and Thomas Yingling have criticized Bloom for the resolutely ahistorical and narrowly familial nature of his story line, and Bloom himself readily admits that he sees issues of race and class and contingent historical issues as irrelevant to the repeated drama of filial insurrection. But a queer reading of the scene at Millthorpe discloses how much is left out of a narrowly familial or pederastic account of Maurice’s conception. In order to construct such a queer reading, I want to resist Forster’s spatial model with its emphasis on front and back (the touch from behind allows him to move forward rather than backward, etc.), pederast and ephebe, and substitute Sedgwick’s sense of the queer as that which is etymologically related to crossing boundaries (Tendencies xii). Such crossing will allow me to trouble the family story constructed by both Forster and Bloom with consideration of issues of class, national, and gender difference.

In Bloom’s drama, class plays no role; artistic fathers and sons wage their battles with no reference to material differences. And yet in the scene at Milthorpe, class is a crucial issue. It is no coincidence, I would suggest, that it is working-class Merrill who touches Forster’s behind, rather than middle-class Carpenter since for both Carpenter and Forster, working-class men have access to particular forms of knowledge denied middle-class ones. In particular, they both fetishize the working-class man as being materially embodied in a way denied to middle-class men. Yet as we have seen, at the end of the year when Forster looks back at the moment of Maurice’s conception and celebrates his ability
to move forward rather than backward, Merrill drops out of the picture altogether.

Carpenter gets credited with being the sole source of Forster’s liberation. Forster and Carpenter’s dilemma is similar to that faced by Wilde when he attempts to incorporate working-class men into the story of Hellenic pederasty. Having credited Merrill with a relatively unmediated, non-cerebral relation to the body, Forster cannot accommodate him in a narrative involving the transmission of ideas, but at the same time, he needs Merrill as an embodied medium through which those ideas can be transmitted to him from Carpenter. So, like the mediating woman in a male homosocial triangle, working-class Merrill’s touch helps to mediate between Carpenter and Forster; having served that purpose, he disappears from the scene of authorial influence.

Or take the issue of national difference: in Bloom’s account of influence, writers have no race or national origin. However, national difference and imperial history play an important role in the homoerotics of the circle surrounding Forster: Whitman, Carpenter, Forster and Isherwood’s anti-developmental mythologies are all implicated with Anglo-American imperial involvements in India, and this space, which is supposed to be off stage from the familial drama being enacted at Millthorpe, symptomatically intrudes when Forster invokes the term “yogified mysticism”: “‘If it [the touch] really did this [went straight through the small of Forster’s back to his ideas], it would have acted in accord with Carpenter’s yogified mysticism.”

The two writers whose homoerotic anti-developmental myths are most intimately linked to the figure of the Indian yogi are Carpenter and Isherwood. As we will see in the next chapter, Carpenter fairly uncomplicatedly figures his Indian Gnanī as a wise child who will help him escape the constraints of corrupt Western adulthood. This story can be accommodated by a variation on the Bloomian narrative of fathers and sons - - the childlike father influences the worldly wise son. However, Isherwood situated at a far less secure
moment in Britain’s imperial history is forced to acknowledge the mediated and constructed nature of his anti-developmental myth. Like Carpenter, he associates his guru Swami Prabhavanda with a youthful innocence, similar to that he associates with the figure of Forster:

Prabhavananda, though nearly forty-six, was still aware of his boyish appearance . . . He was considerably shorter than I [Isherwood] was. This made me able to love him in a special, protective way, as I loved little Annie Avis, my childhood nanny . . . His smallness sometimes seemed babylke . . . (39)

Unlike Carpenter’s description of his gnani, though, Isherwood’s novel foreground both the narrator and the guru’s imbrication in the ironies of Britain’s colonial history. Isherwood tells us that the Guru prior to becoming a holy man was a nationalist rebel against the British, and the writer speculates that the Guru’s nationalist past was bound to affect his attitudes toward British disciples like Isherwood (My Guru 37). So, Isherwood’s Swami self-consciously negotiates ambivalence in his relationship with the writer. Like Prabhavananda, Isherwood too cannot escape colonial history, and at several places in the text, he explains the effect that being “an heir to Britain’s guilt in her dealings with India” exerted on his relationship with the Guru (My Guru 36).

It is particularly significant too that in describing the Guru’s past as a nationalist freedom fighter, Isherwood stresses the role that the holy man’s youthful appearance played in those activities: “Because [Prabhavananda] looked so boyish and innocent, his comrades entrusted him with some revolvers which had been stolen from a British storehouse; he hid them in his room” (32, my emphasis). If, as Judith Butler argues, the performative nature of drag helps to reveal the contingent, constructed nature of gender itself, Isherwood’s alignment of supposed boyish innocence with a calculated, violent, anti-imperialist strategy has a similar potential to denaturalize the supposedly essential innocence and youthfulness which primitivism ascribes to non-Western peoples (Gender
Prabhavananda cannot be simply described as a father or a son, an erastes or eromenos, he is a man from another culture whose relationship to the narrator can be read only if we take into account stories outside the family romance, stories involving colonial history and national differences.

Finally, turning to the issue of gender difference. Both Forster and Bloom's dramas of literary generation are resolutely androcentric. However, if one reads the scene at Millthorpe against the grain and draws on biographical details about Forster that he withholds from his account of the novel's "conception," one can see that female influence - - in literary, psychic, and material manifestations - - cannot be quarantined from this scene of male literary birthing. Because of the proximity of the Forsterian myth to the Bloomian one, I will suggest that by implication one has to recognize the disabling limitations of a mythology that tries to effect a rigid gender separatist account of literary influence.

In as much as the scene at Millthorpe represents the birth of Maurice occurring in a moment of pastoral intimacy among men, safely removed from the feminizing influence of domesticity, that scene mirrors what occurs in the novel itself, for in the novel, the eponymous protagonist eventually escapes from the female entanglements represented by his mother and sisters, as well as by Anne, his former lover Clive's wife, and flees to the all-male world of the greenwood with Scudder. However, figuratively women cannot be entirely banished from the greenwood because as we will see at greater length in the final chapter on Forster, the writer irresistibly associates nature with a nurturant maternity. Thus, in the same "Terminal Note" to Maurice in which he celebrates his fantasy of male generation in the absence of women, Forster evokes a maternal landscape: bemoaning the effects of urbanization, he declares "there is no . . . cave in which to curl up" (250), linking an image of the womb to a natural landscape of homoerotic possibility. In a similar fashion, Forster ambivalently both figures his mother as one who throttls his artistic
development and homoerotic desire, and as one who provides the nurturant space on which his artistic powers depend.

In describing the conception of *Maurice*, Forster foregrounds his male precursor Carpenter, and later in the terminal note, he also mentions Lytton Strachey’s reaction to the novel. Nowhere in that note does he mention Virginia Woolf. On the face of it, there is no reason why he should mention Woolf: after all, Furbank tells us that Forster never showed *Maurice* to Woolf, even when in 1927 he knew that she was writing an essay on what she thought was his entire oeuvre, and even though, he normally took “every... [critical] word... [of Woolf’s] to heart” (Woolf qtd. in Furbank volume 1, 146). If one accepts Forster’s belief that the scene at Millthorpe was the origin of *Maurice*, then, one might not be inclined to make much of Forster’s not showing the novel to Woolf; after all she had played no part in its “conception.” However, I would suggest that it would be just as plausible to think of the birthing scene at Millthorpe as being a metaleptic, retrospective construction -- as primal scenes generally are. In that case, Forster’s reluctance to show the novel to Woolf might be understood as a defensive need to preserve the fantasy of its all-male genesis. In other words, I would suggest that the fact that Woolf was not shown *Maurice* by Forster might paradoxically signal the extent of her influence on Forster, an influence that the writer has to disavow.

Finally, turning to the issue of material feminine influence. The triumphal version of “Little Imber” ends with the narrative voice declaring with misogynistic glee. “Men had won.” Appropriating the female power to conceive, men in this version of the story gain complete independence from women. But as Joseph Bristow points out, at the same time as Forster was writing this fantasy of absolute male autonomy, he was also working on the biography of his great aunt Marianne Thornton (94). In that biography, he acknowledges that it was the eight-thousand pound inheritance that he received from his great aunt which “made [his] career as a writer possible,” and tellingly he goes on, “her love in a most
tangible sense followed me beyond the grave" (Forster qtd. in Bristow 94). "Tangible" literally means that which can be touched. In addition, then, to the inspirational male touch that Forster received at Millthorpe, his growth as an artist depended on the tactile, material contact with the property of his great aunt. Contrary to the scene at Millthorpe or the plot of "Little Imber," then, Forster's pederastic bonds of influence with other male homosexual writers cannot be absolutely quarantined from the impact that various feminine sources exerted on him as well.

In an entry in his Commonplace Book, Forster lists a number of gay writers whom he saw as exerting an influence on him, ranging from Samuel Butler through a series of minor novelists of public school romances. One could treat this list as constituting a gay male canon and oppose it to the patriarchal canon. Such a move would be consonant with the homophilic myths of many of the writers I have examined. My intent in this essay, however, has been to argue that such counter-canonical male homosexual genealogical lines are not particularly helpful. More politically efficacious is the move to queer existing genealogical lines of authorial influence everywhere informed by a male homoeroticism that is fiercely disavowed.
Notes

1. Forster links pederastic relations of influence to male impregnation in both the terminal note to *Maurice* and in the tale “Little Imber.” This equation draws on the Hellenic idiom of spiritual procreancy explored by Linda Dowling (75-79), an idiom we have seen Wilde draw on in chapter 1. Edward Carpenter, whom Forster implicates in the conception of *Maurice*, eloquently articulates the Hellenic position: “Just as ordinary sex-love has a special function in the propagation of the race, so the other love should have its special function in the generation - - not of bodily children - - but of children of the mind” (*Homogenic* 343).

2. The tactile metaphors which saturate *Maurice* may in part be the fruit of the inspirational touch which engendered the novel. For instance, when Clive Durham first speaks to Maurice in the “sunlit court” about the Hellenic love celebrated in *Symposium*, Maurice feels that “a breath of liberty touched him” (69, my emphasis).

   I am indebted to Jon Harned for suggesting that I examine tactile metaphors within the novel in connection with the inspirational touch. I read a conference version of this essay at a panel chaired by Harned at the SCMLA in Houston in October 1995. One of the pleasures of that panel was that I was reading a paper on influence on a panel with two former teachers who have powerfully influenced me, Dennis Foster and Nina Schwartz.

3. For a persuasive account of *Maurice*’s position within a Whitmanian literary tradition, see Martin, “Edward Carpenter and the Double Structure of *Maurice*.”

4. In *Christopher and His Kind*, Isherwood refers to himself in the third person as “Christopher.” This usage emphasizes two themes that he repeatedly returns to in his work: the mediated distance one occupies in relation to one’s past and the intricate relationship between naming and identity. Significantly, right after telling us about the intimate moment that Forster and he shared, he parenthetically raises the issue of naming again, “(Nevertheless he [Forster] continued to call Christopher ‘Isherwood’ for two more years)” (127).

5. There are a few exceptions to Whitman and Carpenter’s expansive sense of the possibilities of touch. In “Song of Myself,” for instance, Whitman obscurely hints at the treacherously dispossessing power of touch. Poem 28 initially suggests that touch can expand the poet’s ontological mobility, though the uncharacteristic question with which it begins undercut Whitman’s usually unequivocally affirmative certainty, “Is this then a touch? quivering me to a new identity” (*Leaves* 57, line 620), but the poem ends with a fantasy of surrender to and imprisonment by racialized others, “The sentries desert every other part of me/They have left me to the helpless marauder/I am given up to traitors” (635-637). While the poet acknowledges in one clause that he exercised agency, “I went myself first to the headlands,” in the next clause, in that same line, he represents himself as an object controlled by his hands, “my . . . hands carried me there” (638). Rather than allowing the poet to incorporate the world, “villian touch” (639) is here in sadistic control of the poet, “you are too much for me” (641).

   Carpenter too has rare moments when he acknowledges the incorporative limits of touch. In the poem “In the Drawing Room,” the poet alienated by the pointlessness of urban life longs for Nature to revivify him, and he figures that yearning in terms of a transsexual simile: “as a woman for the touch of a man/So I cried in my soul even for the violence and outrage of Nature to deliver me from this barrenness”(*Towards* 120-121). Longing for a masculinized Nature to deliver him from the “barrenness” of quotidian reality, the poet compares himself to a woman yearning for the touch of a man. Similes, however, evoke both sameness and difference; one can compare two things only because
they are not identical, so the “as” reminds us that the poet is not a woman and even the
invocation of his favorite tactile image will not allow him to collapse the difference between
his relation to Nature and the fantasy of a heterosexual female’s yearning for intercourse
and reproduction.

Underlying these lines is a troubling view of rape. The poet ostensibly treats
sexualized violence as a last resort, “Even . . . for the violence and outrage of Nature” (my
emphasis). Yet, it seems as though the poem’s frisson is derived from his imagining
himself being violated by Nature, a violation that will revivify him. By extension, the
woman’s desire to be touched by a man and impregnated also gets linked at some level to a
desire to be violated into life. As we will see, this ambivalent relationship to sexual
violation can also be found in many of Forster’s texts.

6. My formulation is indebted to the opening of Jane Gallop’s The Daughter’s Seduction.
In that text, Gallop stages a seductive encounter between father psychoanalysis and
daughter feminism: “this book is the continual working of a dialectical tension between
psychoanalysis and feminism. . . . The radical potential in their marriage is not a mystical
fusion obliterating all difference and conflict, but a provocative contact which opens each to
what is not encompassed by the limits of its identity” (xii).

Gallop’s title plays with genitive ambiguity — the daughter is both seduced and is
the seducer. The figure of the touch has some of the same ambiguity — when one touches
someone, one both makes active contact with and are passively are brought into contact
with an other.

7. While my analysis focuses on Ackerley and Isherwood, Carpenter constructs a similar
dichotomy between the figures of Percy Shelley and his father: in The Psychology of the
Poet Shelley. Carpenter stresses Shelley’s androgynous nature and suggests that he might
be described as an “intermediate type.” Throughout the introduction, Carpenter stresses the
influence that this precursor intermediate type exerted on him, and in one telling moment,
he Oedipally challenges his father by first pointedly juxtaposing his father and Shelley in
terms of age, and then distinguishing between his father’s reflection of wrong-headed
public opinion on issues of sexual morality and Shelley’s liberatory ideas: “I remember
well that my own father (who was born in 1793, that is one year later than Shelley) . . . . did
strongly disapprove of the poet’s ideas. . . . especially on the subject of marriage. Knowing
my father so well, and through him having obtained glimpses of the current public opinion
of that period, I appreciate all the more the mental clarity and boldness of the growing boy
(for such Shelley was at the time) who so decisively cast aside the conventions that
surrounded him” (8–9). Carpenter both aligns and distinguishes his precursor intermediate
type from his father — they are both almost of the same age — and uses Shelley’s youthful
rebellion as an indirect way to articulate his own non-conformity.

8. While Ackerley may want to reverse the control of the gaze, in fact, he seems quite
uncertain about his ability to affect this Oedipal insurrection. In the memoir, he himself
never gazes at his father, it is usually the reader who is imaginatively asked to gaze at his
objectified father: For instance, in chapter 12 of My Father and Myself, a passive voice
construction leaves it unclear who exactly is doing the watching. “A useful vantage point
for observing my father and myself together is the Bois de Boulogne in the spring of
1923” (109).

Even when Ackerley’s father is dead, he finds himself unable to gain mastery over
the sight of the dead body, and Muriel, Roger Ackerley’s mistress, who has been
observing Ackerley from the shadows, chides him for his timorousness, as though
functioning as a surrogate for his masterful dead father, even in this moment of supposed
scopic control: “I had done what was expected of me, I had seen my dead father; I wanted
to go. But Muriel . . . was in the shadows observing me . . . ‘What are you standing there for?’ she suddenly exclaimed, ‘Are you afraid of the dear old chap?’” (153).

9. Forster’s friends called him “Morgan” rather than “Edward.” Significantly, “Edward” was Forster’s father’s name. So in calling him “Morgan,” his gay friends were in part refusing to acknowledge the linguistic authority of paternity.

P. N. Furbank describes an amusing muddle, to use a characteristically Forsterian term, that surrounded Forster’s naming. Forster’s parents had decided to name him “Henry Morgan” after his uncle. “On the way to church, the verger asked Edward [Forster’s father] what the child’s name was to be, and absent-mindedly he gave his own, ‘Edward Morgan,’ instead which the verger wrote down . . . [Thus, Forster was] registered one way and baptized another” (volume 1, 9-10). The uncertain relationship Forster bears to his father’s name resembles the uncertain relationship he will bear toward the paternal law as a practitioner of a love that dare not speak its name.

10. Forster betrays his ambivalence about the fantasy of all male generation by having two endings to the fragment. The other ending bleakly represents the death of the strange new fetal membrane which is the fruit of Warham and Little Imber’s homosexual union: “‘They [Warham and Little Imber] watched the enigmatic mass shrink, expand, and shrivel up. Very gently [Little Imber] laid his finger on the membrane. ‘Yes, it’s dead,’ he whispered’” (234). Note how in this conclusion not only is the fetus aborted, Little Imber’s touching it does not serve to revivify it. Despite the failure of male generativity in this conclusion, though, this story ends on an erotically consolatory note. Despite the loss of their offspring, Warham and Little Imber agree to “warm” each other, and the last word in the fragment is “come” suggesting the recuperative erotic possibilities of non-reproductive homoerotic desire: “‘Will you lay warm under me afterwards?’ [asked Little Imber] ‘I’ll lay warm above you’ [replied Warham] ‘That’s fair enough. Come.’” (234)

That same ambivalence can be seen in Forster’s 1961 journal entry about the possible reception of the story. On the one hand, there is the hope that the story will be “active and penetrative” “once aroused” (Arctic xxiv); on the other hand, rather than talking about the story seeing the light after his death, Forster changes the cliche to “it might see the light of night after my death” (xxiv, my emphasis), a description which undercuts the emphasis on the story’s possible vital and generative effects.

11. For the seminal discussion of the way in which repressed desires are articulated through negation, see Freud’s “Negation.”

12. Or to be more precise, one might use D. A. Miller’s formulation and describe homosocial institutions as not wanting to know that they know they have gays and lesbians in their ranks (206). The connection I draw between the debate on gays in the military and Miller’s “open secret” is indebted to Colleen Lamos’s piece on the equivocal position of homosexuality in Joyce’s Ulysses (“Signatures” 339).

13. For the most cogent theorizing of the primal scene and deferred action, see Laplanche and Pontalis.
Chapter 4

The Intermediate Type and the End of History: Edward Carpenter's Dialectical Model of History and a Reverse Discourse of Male Homosexuality

Since Edward Carpenter, the once famous late-Victorian homophile and Socialist thinker, was a Utopian reformer, it is not surprising that many of his books have titles or subtitles associated with change, growth, or forward movement -- Toward Democracy, Towards Industrial Freedom, The Promised Land, Love's Coming of Age, The Drama of Evolution and Transfiguration, etc.-- or that his commentators should tend to draw on similar terms in discussing him -- Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks's study of Carpenter and Havelock Ellis is entitled Socialism and the New Life; both Chushichi Tsuzuki's and Stanley Pierson's studies of Carpenter have the word "prophet" in their subtitles; and the term "prophet" also appears prominently on the back jacket of the Gay Men's Press edition of Toward Democracy where Carpenter is described as "a prophetic figure in the twin movements of socialism and sexual freedom." However, at the same time as Carpenter was concerned with moving toward the future and reforming his society, he was also deeply invested in returning to and reconstituting a mythical past. Thus, in Civilisation Its Cause and Cure, he nostalgically looks back to a pre-industrial world; in texts like Toward Democracy and Intermediate Types Among Primitive Folk, he repeatedly celebrates "primitive" cultures and values; and in his account of his travels through India and Ceylon, From Adam's Peak to Elephanta, he yearns to free these countries from colonialism, so they might return to what he sees as their pre-colonial innocence. Carpenter reconciled these seemingly opposed temporal attitudes through a dialectical model of history. Deeply alienated by late-Victorian England's capitalist and colonial ideology, he advocated a future that would both return to and transform the values of "primitive" cultures. For Carpenter, this revival and sublation of primitive values would allow capitalist Western culture to transcend history altogether.
In this essay, I will explore how Carpenter's dialectical model of history mutually informs and is informed by his mythologizing of the homosexual or, what Carpenter calls, "the intermediate type." For Carpenter, the fall into history is the fall into difference — an alienation of man from maternal nature, an exaggerated difference between the genders, an estrangement between man's body and his consciousness, and a gulf between different races and classes. (My use of the gender specific noun "man" in the previous formulation is deliberate and will be explained and explored later in the argument.) According to Carpenter's mythology, the intermediate type, by virtue of belonging to an earlier phylogenetic stage than heterosexuals and by virtue of being positioned between the genders, has the ability to reconcile these differences, so culture can both return to and sublate its organic past. This formulation of Carpenter's position is complicated by certain alternative versions of the myth which the writer never reconciles with the main story line. But in explicating Carpenter's myth, I will show how these narrative contradictions are not an indication of Carpenter's intellectual inadequacy but are constitutive of the late-Victorian homophobic ideology upon which Carpenter draws in constructing his homophile reverse discourse.

Most of the scholarship on Carpenter's dialectical model of history is informed by a rather reductive psychologistic approach to homosexuality. Critics like Tsuzuki and Pierson have ably explicated Carpenter's dialectical model of history, but they have tended to treat his homosexuality as a personal idiosyncrasy which affected that model in eccentric ways. Pierson, for instance, while conceding that Carpenter's millennial mythology might have been influenced by his sexuality, goes on to characterize that sexuality in terms of "private anguish" and "personal deviance." Pierson declares that since he is an intellectual historian, rather than a psychologist, he is not competent to develop or explore the connection between the personality and the intellectual positions of this "troubled Victorian" (316, my emphasis). Pierson's categorizing of Carpenter's homosexuality as a private, personal matter, as opposed to public historical and intellectual concerns, insidiously
reinscribes the binarism of the closet, a binarism which Carpenter himself notably resists, for he visualizes the intermediate type playing a very public role as the savior and teacher of a morally bankrupt culture. Further, Pierson takes the psychologic category of homosexuality as a given, which need not be interrogated further. But if, like Sedgwick, we see homosexuality as a discursive construction, a product of ideology, rather than a personal aberration, then it becomes clear that the generational fictions which inform late-Victorian and Edwardian myths of history and anthropology are saliently linked to those which inform representations of homosexuality, so any consideration of Carpenter's model of history which ignores the discourses surrounding sexuality is bound to be seriously conceptually disabled.

Conversely, any account of Carpenter's mythology of homosexuality must consider its implication with and partial resistance to racist anthropological and colonial discourses. Further, an adequate consideration of Carpenter's generational mythology of homosexuality must also take into account its difficult and productive relationship with late-Victorian feminism. In particular, I will examine the tension between Carpenter's idealization of maternity in his myth of the intermediate type and his feminist critique of the patriarchal family. I will also examine the vexed position that the lesbian occupies in relation both to Carpenter's generational myth of the intermediate type and his idealization of the maternal.

Carpenter's myth of the intermediate type's relation to history bears out Foucault's contention of the appropriability of the norm for anti-homophobic purposes, for Carpenter draws on and transvalues normative culture's incoherent stereotypes regarding homosexuality. Carpenter draws on and transvalues the contradictory developmental myths that we have already examined: a) that the intermediate type is arrested in his development. b) That the intermediate type is a degenerate symptom of the pressures of modernity. The main strain of his myth celebrates the intermediate type precisely because he is youthful and belongs to an earlier stage of history. Another strain in the myth,
however, associates the intermediate type with the forward movement of culture. In this narrative, the intermediate type is seen as the driving force behind variation and change in society, particularly change in gender roles. In a similar vein, Carpenter strategically deploys normative culture’s stereotypes regarding the relationship between same-sex desire and gender difference. On the one hand, the most influential sexological account of same-sex desire viewed the homosexual as constituting a third-sex who combined masculine and feminine qualities. On the other hand, there were also influential accounts of same-sex desire that associated homosexuality with gender separatism. Carpenter deploys and transvalues both versions of this stereotype too. In the main version of his myth, the intermediate type’s particular power is associated with his ability to reconcile the two genders by virtue of being positioned between them. But at certain points, Carpenter celebrates the male intermediate type by associating him with a hypervirile all male community that existed prior to the fall into feminizing history and civilization.

One of the broader theoretical issues that Carpenter’s homophilic mythology raises is the utility and ethical/political problems involved in making strategic use of cross-cultural and historical comparisons of same-sex desire. Carpenter draws on various cultures and periods in history to contend that in other cultures and periods same-sex desire was valorized, rather than being despised. Cross-cultural and historical comparisons remain a powerful strategy in contemporary anti-homophobic scholarship as well. Social constructionist theorists like David Halperin, Gilbert Herdt, Martha Vicinus, Harriet Whitehead, and many others very effectively use other cultures and periods to denaturalize contemporary Western assumptions about sexuality. While this work is immensely useful, an analysis of Carpenter’s mythology salutarily dramatizes how easily cross-cultural and historical comparisons can become ethnocentric and imperialistic, for Carpenter, I will argue, violently flattens cultural and historical differences in order to legitimate the Western homosexual. Thus, ironically, in attempting to make a heterosexist culture respect
homosexual difference, he is not willing to acknowledge the complex differences within the ethnic and historical data he employs.

My position is not that of cultural purists like Robert Fulton and Steven Anderson who see cross-cultural comparisons as being invariably ethnocentric (608), for, as Will Roscoe points out, "anthropologists have largely abandoned the view of cultures as holistic, discrete, and closed systems" (195). Rather, my objection to Carpenter is precisely that he denies other cultures the messiness of their own histories. He freezes them in time as exhibits to make his denaturalizing case. Take the Native American berdache. For Carpenter, the berdache is an exotic, ahistorical phenomenon which he can decontextually deploy to show that other cultures respected intermediate types. However, Roscoe shows that the concept "berdache" rather than being a timeless primitive phenomenon has a history and one that is implicated with colonialism:

originally a Persian term for captive or slave youth, 'berdache' had entered most Western European languages by the Renaissance, without any reference to North America ... with the meaning of 'catamite' -- the younger partner in an age-differentiated homosexual relationship. As this pattern of homosexuality became less frequent in the eighteenth century and gender based model became dominant, use of 'berdache' lapsed in Europe. It continued to be used on the American frontier, however, having been introduced there by French explorers and traders in the seventeenth century. By the time Anglo-Americans recorded it in the early nineteenth century, its origin and European meaning had been forgotten. . .

(203)

Rather than treating "berdache" is a piece of objectified static data, then, I would suggest that Carpenter needed to historicize it and more importantly historicize his own position in relation to it. For, of course, acknowledging colonial history makes one recognize that there is a historically based dissymmetry which makes certain cultures more available as historical data to be used by other societies. These uncomfortable issues that reading
Carpenter's texts raise remain of considerable relevance to contemporary gay and lesbian cross-cultural theory.

Another theoretical/political question that Carpenter's mythology provokes us to explore is the complicated and sometimes contradictory relationship between feminism and anti-homophobic politics. Carpenter associates the abjection of the intermediate type with a rejection of feminine qualities and values, and he sees the intermediate type as rescuing women from patriarchal oppression. In other words, for Carpenter, the struggle against homophobia and gender oppression (to use anachronistic terms) is continuous. Variations of this argument, in very different idioms admittedly, permeate post-Stonewall gay politics as well as some contemporary feminist and queer scholarship. Suzanne Pharr, for instance, confidently links the oppressions of homophobia and sexism as springing from a contempt for feminine qualities (18-19). Other critics like Kaja Silverman employing a psychoanalytic idiom have seen at least some strains of male homosexuality as "accommodat[ing] the psychic 'stigmata' of femininity" and offering a challenge to normative constructions of masculinity and hence normative gender structures(11). By contrast, scholars like Gayle Rubin and Sedgwick have argued that while gender and sexuality are related, they cannot be elided; thus, feminist and anti-homophobic struggles are not necessarily continuous; indeed, their stakes can sometimes be painfully contradictory (Rubin 32-33; Sedgwick Epistemology 27-35). Examining Carpenter's mythology, I would contend, helps to dramatize the validity and importance of not eliding gender and sexuality, for despite his own perceptions of the continuity between women's oppression and that of the intermediate type, his paradigm reveals that feminist and anti-homophobic political interests are tortuously , even at times contradictorily, related. Further, Carpenter's difficulty in dealing with lesbians within his mythology reveals how collapsing gender and sexuality can result in either eliding lesbians with homosexual men or with straight women.
In acknowledging that one of my objectives is to use Carpenter's myth to gain a defamiliarizing perspective on contemporary debates within anti-homophobic theory, I am also indicating a self-reflexive relationship between the texts I am examining and my project. That is, both Carpenter and I draw on materials from different historical periods and cultures in order to gain some political purchase on contemporary homophobia. In that sense, I am complicit with Carpenter's imperialism. On the other hand, while I acknowledge the violence that I am committing, Carpenter never does so, and I see no evidence that he recognizes that violence. On the contrary, he presents his excursions into the past and into other cultures either in scientific terms — he is an anthropologist or historian disinterestedly transmitting knowledge — or in sentimental, identificatory ones — by virtue of being a youthful homosexual, he has access to the lost innocence of other periods and other cultures. Ironically, in representing myself as being more acutely self-conscious of difference than my late-Victorian predecessor, I am repeating a version of Carpenter's own story line, for in Carpenter's myth, the further one progresses through history, the more painfully self-conscious of difference one becomes. But unlike Carpenter's story, my account offers no dialectical resolution outside the dilemmas of historical and cultural difference. Indeed, unlike Carpenter, I see difference as being the source of pleasure as well as conflict, or sometimes as a source of pleasure because of conflict, and regard his idealized state of undifferentiation outside history as slightly sinister.

Metaphors for the State Prior to History: Maternity and Nakedness

Carpenter's dialectical myth posits an originary organic unity prior to the fall into history and associates that idyllic state with maternity. Carpenter develops that association in two tonally and generically different registers: in texts like Civilisation Its Cause and Cure and Love's Coming of Age, he draws on the anthropology of Lewis Morgan as it has been read by Socialist thinkers to argue in "scientific" terms for the existence of a matriarchal society prior to capitalism and the institution of private property. By contrast,
in texts, like Toward Democracy, he develops a mythopoeic, figurative account of man's estrangement from maternal nature. But although the genres of the anthropological argument and the figurative myth function differently rhetorically, their contents are homologous. Both stories equate idealized maternity with a state prior to history.

In his anthropological account, Carpenter draws heavily on the work of Lewis Morgan as it has been read by Friedrich Engels. Morgan in his canonical anthropological treatise Ancient Society: Researches in the Line of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization, uses his research into matrilineality among the Iroquois and J. J. Bachofen's discussion of matriarchy in Das Mutterrecht to posit an ancient matriarchal culture or "gyneocracy." In this matriarchal culture, marriage and property were communal. The rise of private property leads, in Morgan's account, to the origin of monogamous marriage and the modern family. Morgan's subtitle, Researches in the Line of Human Progress, indicates that despite the disinterested tone he adopts in the book, he sees the movement from matriarchal to patriarchal culture as "progress." By contrast, Socialist readings of Morgan see the movement away from this matriarchal culture in highly negative terms. Engels, for instance, in The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State, uses Morgan's developmental argument to mount a polemical attack against private property, the modern family, and the status of women in modern capitalist societies. For Engels, the movement from a matriarchal communal culture to a patriarchal one based on private property represented a tragic "world-historic defeat of the female sex" (87). Carpenter cites Engels's Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State at the very opening of Civilisation Its Cause and Cure, and it is clear that the latter book written in 1891 is deeply indebted to the former. The historical narrative that Carpenter tells in the passage I cite below draws heavily on the one developed in Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State:

The growth of wealth and the conception of private property brought on certain very definite new forms of life; it destroyed the ancient system of society based
upon the **gens**, that is a society of equals based upon blood relationship and introduced a society of classes based upon different material possessions; it destroyed the ancient system of mother-right and inheritance through the female line and turned women into the property of man... (4-5)

Like Engels, Carpenter sees the transformation of gender relations being inextricably implicated with a change in economic and labor relations, as can be seen in this passage from *Love's Coming of Age*:

> nothing short of large social changes stretching beyond the sphere of women only, can bring about the complete emancipation of [women]. Not till our whole commercial system, with its barter and sale of human labour and human love for gain, is done away [with].... will women really be free. They must remember that their cause is also the cause of the oppressed labourer over the whole earth, and the labourer has to remember that his cause is theirs. (124)

But one significant difference between Engels and Carpenter is the way in which they represent homosexuality. Unlike Carpenter, Engels never discusses the position of the lesbian. Further, the one passage in *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* which deals with male homosexuality is virulently homophobic. Discussing the position of men in Athenian culture, Engels writes:

> The men, who would have been ashamed to show any love for their wives, amused themselves by all sorts of love affairs with *hetaerae*; but this degradation of the woman was avenged on the men and degraded them also till they fell into the abominable practice of sodomy and degraded alike their gods and themselves with the myth of Ganymede. (95)

Apart from appealing to anthropological accounts of matriarchal culture, Carpenter also draws on certain well established Romantic images and themes to link maternity to a state prior to history. In many of his works, he links maternity to nature and represents human society's alienation from nature as an estrangement from a maternal atemporal
alternative to human history. In *Toward Democracy*, for instance, he draws on the figures of water, particularly the ocean, and the moon in dramatizing the narrative of estrangement from and redemptive reunion with the maternal. These maternally coded images represent an organic unity that stands in opposition to fragmented, mechanistic capitalist culture. Thus, many of the poem's epiphanic moments occur when the individual speaker loses his painful sense of isolation by merging with the ocean: in "By the Shore," for instance, the poet lying by the ocean, washed by its waves, proclaims that he has become the Ocean, "I am the great living Ocean itself:" and this union frees him from "the pain, the acute clinging desire" of individuated existence in a capitalist culture. It also allows him to merge with others, "I feel beings like myself all around me, I spread myself through and through them,/ I am merged in a sea of contact." (No line numbers. *Toward Democracy* 161). The maternal ocean stands in these poems both as the origin and as the ultimate culmination of the stream of history; thus, in poem VII, "the broad-bosomed mother-stream" prior to history turns into "the great river of history," but that river finds its way back into the maternal ocean providing a way to return to a prehistoric, maternal organic unity, but a unity that has been altered since the river has flowed through and absorbed history (*Toward Democracy* 18).

The moon plays a similar role to the ocean in *Toward Democracy*. In the poem, "As To You O Moon," for instance, the poet affectionately refers to the moon as an "old lady," suggesting that the moon is a maternal figure here, rather than the seductress of Romantic poems like *Endymion*. The "old lady's" access to the whole of human history is emphasized: we are told that she has been seen by "the cave dwellers" and has shone on "the groves of Ashtoreth," the Syrian and Phoenician goddess associated with fertility. And it is precisely her great age which gives her access to various secrets. But these secrets are inaccessible to adult scientists because they have allowed their rationality to estrange them from this maternal wisdom: "I know very well that when astronomers look at you through their telescopes they see only an aged and wrinkled body / But though they
measure your wrinkles ever so carefully they do not see you... " (127); "the scientific
people for all their telescopes know as little about you as any one -- / Perhaps less than
most" (129). However the moon's secret, inaccessible to the adult scientists, is available to
a little boy, for if the moon has seen the beginnings of human history, the boy occupies an
analogous position at an ontogenetic level. But while the boy has access to the maternal
secret, he is not able to use that knowledge because he lacks self-consciousness. It is the
poet who by voyeuristically observing the boy's communion with the moon is able to
participate vicariously in that union:

... O moon you shone out wonderfully bare and bright,

Lo! Far down in the face of a boy I saw you.

(127)

The poet's distance from the boy's communion with the moon is inescapable; he is
observing not fully participating in their union. But that distance is necessary for the poet
to synthesize the pain of adult self-consciousness with the primeval unity of the boy and the
moon. In other words, Carpenter does not wish to regress to the level of the boy's
communion with the moon, but he wishes to participate in that union, so he can move on to
a further stage that comprehends both the individuated consciousness of the adult poet and
the child's organic unity with the maternal moon. Significantly, the moon is both evoked
and left behind at man's apocalyptic transformation later in Toward Democracy:

O wonderful unutterable secret! the moon gliding through the trees!

The soul of man gradually transforming itself, growing, bursting through the
sheaths-- the stars looking on!

The new creature born anew, in travail and in suffering, ascending into heaven.

(241)

To lift oneself out of history into heavenly transcendence in this myth, then, one both
returns to and rises above one's maternal origins.
Carpenter's myth of the maternal state prior to history also has a nationalist inflection. In *Towards Democracy*, Carpenter begins by figuring England as a sleeping woman who needs to be awakened by her lover, the alienated Englishman: "England spreads like a great map before me.../ I see a great land poised as in a dream -- waiting for the word by which it may live again. / I see the stretched sleeping figure -- waiting for the kiss and the reawakening" (52, 55. No line numbers). But a few stanzas later this heterosexual romance becomes a drama about a mother's relationship with her children:

Everything that the land has -- calls an answer in the breasts of the people, and quickly grows love for the use of those that live on it.

Without this love no People can exist; this is the creation, nourishment, and defence of Nations. It is this which shall save England (as it has saved Ireland); which ultimately -- of the very Earth-- shall become the nurse of Humanity.

Between a great people and the earth springs a passionate attachment, lifelong-- and the earth loves indeed her children. (57-58, no line numbers)

In Carpenter's agrarian nationalist myth, the true basis of nationhood is the bond between the people and the maternal land. Hence, Carpenter criticizes industrialism for cutting Englishmen off from their maternal ties to the English soil. Colonialism too is a perversion of this bond because rather than establishing ties with their own soil, Englishmen lust after and ravage the soil of other lands. Thus in the poem "Empire," England the "nurse of Humanity" is transmogrified into a blind, mad figure obsessed with greed and unheedful of the pathetic condition of her children trapped within the industrial "mills" and "factories."

Curiously, the betrayal of England by her children gets projected onto mother England herself. Thus, the children's estrangement from the maternal soil of England in the earlier poem becomes monstrously perverted mother England's inability to see her children in the later one. Ironically, Carpenter's demonizing of the mother for the children's perversions and his simultaneous representation of the perversions as a betrayal of the mother resonate with a common etiological narrative regarding male homosexuality: the "perversion" of
male homosexuality is often blamed on an overprotective mother. At the same time, the
mother is represented as the site of absolute innocence and purity and hence the revelation
of her son's homosexuality is seen as being potentially fatal to her well being
(Epistemology 248). The innocent mother, then, is both betrayed by her perverse son and
somehow is responsible for that betrayal.

There is another fundamental ambivalence in Carpenter's nationalist myth which he
never addresses directly: for most of Toward Democracy, Carpenter draws on an
internationalist vocabulary. He sees the fall into national difference as a symptom of
alienated historical man's estrangement from the unity of prehistoric society. Hence, the
return to the mother leads to a healing of all national differences. Thus, early in Toward
Democracy, Carpenter ecstatically celebrates the coming together of "children" from every
country and race in the creation of a "new world" (22-23). On the other hand, as we have
seen in the passage cited above, Carpenter also sees the return to maternal nature in
parochial nationalist terms. In this version of the myth, the end of history coincides with
the recovery of a true English nationalism that has been obscured by industrialism and
colonialism. Note too that while Carpenter criticizes a virile, exploitative, plundering of
other lands, he has his own kinder gentler version of imperialism, for he blithely assumes
that England has the vocation to be "the Nurse of Humanity." Humanity, of course, is not
consulted about whether it needs or wants its would be Nurse. Carpenter's critique of
colonialism in maternal terms and his complicity with the object of his critique belong to a
tradition of British feminism going back to the end of the eighteenth century, for as Vron
Ware has pointed out, both in the struggle against slavery and in various critiques of British
colonialism, British feminists often quite effectively linked racial/colonial injustice to
patriarchal values. However, in critiquing patriarchal colonial and racist attitudes, these
feminists often appealed to "feminine" values, and maternity was one of the more common
of these problematic "feminine" values, in ways which were complicit with the very
attitudes they were critiquing (Ware, specially parts two and three).
Although Carpenter criticizes industrialism for cutting the Englishman off from contact with mother earth, he believes the industrial working-classes still have closer access to the maternal realm than the middle-classes do. Carpenter’s biographer Rowbotham describes how the writer rhapsodized about “large-bosomed and large hearted” working-class Louise Usher and celebrated the “physical enormity and ‘raciness’ of his [working-class] lover George Merrill’s mother.” Further, Rowbotham tells us that when Alf Mattison’s mother, another working-class woman, died, Carpenter declared, “What endless patience and devotion these mothers exhibit. From what deep source in the universal life do they draw it?” (95). There is a striking contrast between the vitality of these working-class maternal figures and his description of his own mother in My Days and Dreams:

There was an unspoken tragedy in those beautiful gazelle-like eyes — the tragedy as of dumbness itself. The tender loving spirit which beamed forth from them never found direct utterance in this world. It was the look of a prisoner.… Her life was one long self-sacrifice — first to her parents, then to her husband and children. (42)

Like the working-class mothers, Carpenter’s mother shows “endless patience and devotion,” but she has none of the earthy vitality that Carpenter associates with older working-class women. Since Carpenter associates middle-class women with being restricted and repressed, the eroticized reunion with the maternal that he envisages needs a working-rather than a middle-class maternal figure. This class inflection makes sense within the logic of Carpenter’s evolutionary scheme, for if working-class people belong to an earlier stage of history, and are not as estranged from their bodies as middle-class ones, then it is not surprising that like children they should have greater access to an originary, organic vitality which is denied middle-class people, including middle-class mothers.

Carpenter’s feminism occupies a tense relationship with his sentimentalization of maternity: On the one hand, Carpenter the feminist is deeply critical of the limits the patriarchal family imposes on women. On the other hand, he naturalizes maternity and
leaves it completely immune to his critique of the patriarchal exploitation of women. In *Love's Coming of Age*, Carpenter passionately attacks the way in which middle-class women are transformed into "ladies" and alienated from their potential productiveness by their patriarchal "owners" (119). Not only is Carpenter acute about the ways in which patriarchy alienates women from productive labor, he also recognizes that women's domestic labor is often devalued or not recognized as labor at all: "Few men realise... or trouble themselves to realise, what a life this of the working housewife is. They are accustomed to look upon their own employment, whatever it may be, as work...; the woman's they regard as a kind of pastime" (119). Indeed, Rowbotham points out that Carpenter and Merrill saw their sharing of domestic duties at Millthorpe as an explicitly feminist endeavor, for they were treating seriously work that was usually dismissed as not being real work at all (Rowbotham 86). And yet despite Carpenter's recognition that the family and heterosexual familial roles are ideological, often repressive, constructions, Carpenter treats maternity as a special case outside political and economic systems. Thus, while he correctly criticizes the ways in which men have projected their constraining idealizations onto women, he himself falls into the trap of idealizing maternity by refusing to examine its political and economic costs for women:

> Motherhood is... woman's great and incomparable work... [It is] her most perfect work. A woman capable at all points to bear children, to guard them, to teach them, to turn them out strong and healthy citizens of the great world, stands at the farthest remove from the finnikin doll or the meek drudge whom man by a kind of false sexual selection has through many centuries evolved as his ideal. (124)

While "motherhood" is described as "work" at the beginning of the passage, the reference to a "false sexual selection" at the end of the passage indicates the biologist underlying the passage: if the "finnikin doll and drudge" represent man's alienating "false" imposition on an evolutionary plan, maternity remains nature's true destiny for woman. Carpenter's ambivalence toward women's traditional domestic and maternal roles can also be seen in
his treatment of the term "home." On the one hand, he analyzes the ways in which women are constrained within the home, but on the other hand, he figures man's transcendence of history as a return to his true "home," presided over by mother nature beyond and prior to human history.

It should also be pointed out that while the dominant strain of Carpenter's myth of the intermediate type essentializes and romanticizes maternity, there are contradictory aspects of his work which work to denaturalize it as well. The image of male maternity plays a key role in this denaturalization. In several poems in Toward Democracy, Carpenter fantasizes about male maternity. In poem XXI, for instance, the poet writes, "This is one of my bodies -- of the female -- which if you penetrate with true sexual power, clinging it shall conceive" (35). And in "As a Woman of a Man," Carpenter begins by representing the spirit of Democracy as a virile man with "huge limbs naked" and "stalwart member" and himself (the poetic voice) as a "child." But the pederastic terms shift into a gendered register as the poet analogizes his relationship to Democracy with a woman's relationship to a man: "As a woman of a man so I will learn of thee," and this gendered analogy continues as the poet is impregnated by the spirit of Democracy: "I will conceive by thee Democracy." However, in this poem, the mode of conception is oral rather than penetrative. The poet is orally impregnated by Democracy in lines that both evoke kissing and fellatio ("drain thy lips"):

I will draw thee closer and closer,
I will drain thy lips and the secret things of thy body,
I will conceive by thee Democracy.

Clearly these repeated representations of male impregnation are symptomatic of the erotic power that the image of male conception seems to have had for Carpenter and undoubtedly there is something appropriative about these male fantasies of impregnation without women. But the representations also have the potential, I would suggest, to denaturalize maternity's idealized position in Carpenter's myth. By representing impregnation in terms
of fellatio between two men and analogizing maternity to pederasty, Carpenter implicitly suggests that maternity is not simply some absolute biological given, it is a name that holds together a certain set of ideological fictions, a set of fictions that is available for appropriation by various individuals including male homosexuals. In other words, Carpenter's appropriation of maternal tropes place maternity within rather than outside ideology.

The Intermediate Type as the Healer of the Disease of History: Gender in Carpenter's Generational Narrative

For Carpenter, the state prior to history is characterized by organic unity. One reason why he finds the trope of maternity so powerful in representing that state is that it allows him figuratively to draw together subject and object, infant and nursing breast, nature and alienated man. The lullaby "Baby Song, " for instance, dramatizes the unity that the image of a mother nursing her child offers the poet:

Baby baby, come to Mammy,
Stifle sobs upon her breast --
Little blunt gums on the nipple,
That's the feel we both love best;
Sleep will soon come after titty,
Sobs will cease and baby rest. (Toward Democracy 250, no line numbers)

The baby and the maternal "titty" lose their integrity in that expansive "we." Further, where is the male poet? Is he in the position of "Mammy"? Like her he is singing, after all. Or is he in the position of "baby"? Like baby, he is male after all. The poem seems to suggest that these distinctions vanish in a scene of nursing. Indeed the ambiguous genitive in the title "Baby Song" suggests that trying to distinguish who is singing and whom is being sung to is impossible. For Carpenter, the state prior to the fall into history too is characterized by perfect unity of this bond between mother and infant.
Consistent with this belief in the unity of all things prior to history, Carpenter holds that in a prehistoric realm there was no marked difference between the genders. His reliance on evolutionary discourse proves useful to him here. For as Lawrence Birken has pointed out evolutionary thought diverged from Enlightenment ideology in positing a genderless origin to the universe:

In all the states of nature theorized by Enlightenment thinkers, men and women are always different from the beginning. But the emergence of Darwinism [led to] a conception of . . . a genderless state of nature inhabited by transsexual organisms . . . . sexual difference was . . . replaced by a doctrine of sexual differentiation from a common sameness. (10).

The shift in paradigms that Birken indicates was crucial to progressive sexual and gender politics. For if, gender difference was not essential but a contingent evolutionary variation, then it was plausible to call into question artificial divisions of gender roles.

The fall into history leads to the difference between genders. And Carpenter suggests that the further one moves through history, the more exaggerated the difference between the genders becomes. In several of the poems in Toward Democracy, Carpenter figuratively represents earlier periods of history being more unified in terms of gender than contemporary culture. In poem VII, for instance, "the broad-bosomed mother stream" originates in a mythic space where "Brahma two-sexed dwells amid the groves" (Toward Democracy 18-19, my emphasis). Even when Carpenter represents the genders as differentiated, he suggests that they were more equal in primitive times than in contemporary culture. In the poem, "These Populations," for instance, Carpenter compares the "white-faced," "machine made" masses of industrialized culture to primitive societies where "bronzed hardy men" and "a thousand women swift footed and free, owners of themselves, forgetful of themselves in all their actions — full of joy and laughter and action" lived lives of comradeship and equality: "Comrades together, equal in intelligence and adventure" (220-221). Obviously, these men and women are much more
similar to each other than the men and women in a culture ruled by the doctrine of separate spheres. Victorian culture with its notion of separate spheres brutally separates male from female qualities.

What exactly are these gendered qualities? Carpenter sharply criticizes Victorian culture for its sexism, but his description of what constitutes masculine and feminine qualities draws on most of the gender stereotypes of the culture he is critiquing. Thus, the qualities that Carpenter associates with the masculine realm are reason, "pluck, skill, enterprise" (Love's Coming of Age 108); by contrast, the qualities that he associates with the feminine realm are the ability to cope with adversity and the ability to concentrate single-mindedly on love and personal relationships (109). In a characteristically phallocentric fashion, Carpenter considers that men have more (passions and powers) than women although he nervously tries to hedge his sexism with vague modifiers like "perhaps" and "speaking broadly," some of these modifiers further hedged in by parentheses: "Perhaps (speaking broadly) all the passions and powers, the intellect and affections and emotions and all are really profounder and vaster in Man than in Woman" (Love's 109). However, women's strength is that their powers are focused and concentrated, while men's powers are disjointed and diffuse: "woman has this advantage that her powers are more co-ordinated, are in harmony with each other, where his are disjointed or in conflict" (Love's 109).

It is far from clear whether Carpenter is an essentialist or a social constructionist in his attitudes toward gender difference. On the one hand, several of his views seem biologicist. His belief, for instance, that women conserve and focus their qualities while men diffuse them is drawn from the nineteenth-century evolutionary commonplace which connected the male with the "catabolic process associated with the discharge of energy" and the female with the "anabolic (tissue conserving) " processes (Birken 54). On the other hand, in other places in Love's Coming of Age, he constructs a historical argument, which, as I have pointed out, he derives from Engels and Morgan, for the differences between men
and women in bourgeois culture. This inconsistency allows him strategic political flexibility: he is both able to appeal to putatively innate biological differences between men and women in advocating those qualities and changes he supports and is able to appeal to history in critiquing and calling for the reform of those institutions he considers oppressive.

Carpenter paints a dismal picture of the consequences of the exaggerated difference between the genders that exists in middle-class Victorian culture: In Carpenter's narrative, middle-class men "pelt along," obsessed with their numerous pursuits such as business, career, inventions, subjugation of the colonies, etc. (Love's 108), while they remain alienated from "Affection and tenderness of feeling" (109). The consequences of this alienation from feeling are disastrous for the health of British society over which these emotionally stunted men rule:

It is certainly very maddening at times to think that the Destinies of the world, the organisation of society, the wonderful scope of possible statesmanship, the mighty issues of trade and industry, the loves of women, the lives of criminals, the fate of savage nations, should be in the hands of such a set of general nincompoops. (Love's 111).

While men are alienated from their feelings, women are unable to reform society by themselves since they are so focused on intuitive particularities that they cannot create any larger political critique of the system:

... [the] want of the power of generalisation has made it difficult for women... to emerge from a small circle of interests, and to look at things from the point of view of public advantage and good. While her sympathies for individuals are keen and quick, abstract and general ideas such as those of Justice, Truth Since the power to rationalize and abstract is a male quality, women cannot reform their culture on their own. (109)

The only one who can mediate between the two genders is the intermediate type because he or she has a mixture of both masculine and feminine qualities. In the
description of the Uranian man below, for instance, we can see the synthesis between the
physical and rational strength of the man with the intuitive and affective powers of the
woman:

[in] the Uranian man, we find a man who while possessing thoroughly masculine
powers of mind and body combines with them the tenderer and more emotional
soul nature of the woman. Such men . . . are often muscular and well built . . .
but emotionally they are extremely complex, tender, sensitive, pitiful, and loving
. . . . [Their] intuition is always strong; like women they read characters at a glance.

(The Intermediate Sex 197)

This synthesis of qualities allows the intermediate type to interpret the two genders to each
other, to mediate between the two genders, and to lead them back to a prehistoric
androgyne: "These people [Uranians] have a special work to do as reconcilers and
interpreters of the two sexes to each other" (Intermediate Sex 188).

Thus, Carpenter both draws on and inverts his culture's homophobic stereotypes.
While the Uranian was despised by normative culture for monstrously mingling the
qualities of both genders, Carpenter argues that it is precisely the mingling of gendered
qualities in the Uranian that gives him or her a "special" role in integrating a culture that has
brutally severed masculine from feminine qualities. And while normative culture
pathologized the Uranian, Carpenter suggests that it is heteronormative civilization that is
"sick" -- recall the title of his book Civilisation Its Cause and Cure -- and the Uranian has
the potential to cure this sickness because of his or her link to a state prior to history.

Carpenter's theories of homosexuality draw on the ideas of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs,
but the two thinkers' metaphorical systems have important differences. In The Intermediate
Sex, Carpenter acknowledges his debt to Ulrichs: "More than thirty years ago . . . K. H.
Ulrichs drew attention . . . to a class of people . . . with whom specially this paper [The
Intermediate Sex] is concerned" (190). However, the tropes that dominate Ulrichs's work
are inside and outside. The Uranian has a feminine soul trapped within a male body, anima
muliebris in corpore virili inclusa. An inner female truth is concealed by male external trappings. By contrast, Carpenter's metaphors rely on the notion of a continuum. The ends of the continuum are masculine and feminine, and the intermediate type lies somewhere in the middle of the spectrum:

It is beginning to be recognized that the sexes do not or should not normally form two groups hopelessly isolated in habit and feeling from each other, but that they rather represent the two poles of one group — which is the human race; so that while certainly the extreme specimens at either pole are vastly divergent, there are great numbers in the middle region who (though differing corporeally as men and women ) are by emotion and temperament very near to each other.

(The Intermediate Sex 188)

The continuum metaphor works slightly differently from the inside/outside binarism. For one thing, the former trope depends on a idea of a range of differences while the latter depends upon an absolute binarism, inside and out, male and female. And as we have already pointed out, the language of evolution on which Carpenter relies depends the notion of differentiation more than absolute difference. Second, one can see how a dialectical narrative would find the figure of a continuum useful: at either end of the continuum are absolute poles, but in the center the poles are mingled and raised to a higher level which comprehends and transforms the nature of the absolutes at the end.

Carpenter's narrative of the return to and transformation of a primal androgyney also has curious class and racial inflections to it. For Carpenter, the working-class man occupies a position analogous to that of the woman. Like the woman, he is unable to theorize abstractly and hence resist oppression (Love's 112). Consistent with the logic of his gender/class stereotypes, he suggests that the emotionally stunted, excessively rational middle-class man is as estranged from the working-class one as he is from the intuitive woman. The unfortunate consequence of this estrangement, Carpenter argues, is that "Jews" and "Speculators" are able to exploit England:
It is really lamentable to think how his [the middle-class Englishman's] great organizing capacity which might create a holy Human empire of the world -- is simply at present the tool of the Jew and the Speculator. In Parliamentary, Military, Indian, Home, or colonial politics, the quondam public schoolboy is just led by the nose by the money grubbing interest, to serve its purposes. . . . [The middle-class man must] form an alliance with the other two great classes of the modern nations -- the women and the workmen. (Love's 112 - 113)

Carpenter's distrust of the Speculator seems to be connected to his nostalgia for the land. Presumably, the turn to speculation involves a movement away from the maternal earth. Further, according to certain strands of Socialism, value is constituted by labor, and since speculation does not involve production of goods, it is seen as an economic perversion.

Birken has convincingly argued that "productivist" economic theories, including Marxism, are implicated with bourgeois heterofamilial ideology (22). It seems particularly ironic, then, that Carpenter, who is otherwise so skeptical about a heterosexist ideology of reproduction, should uncritically accept Socialist distinctions between productive and "pervasive" economic activity. In any case, according to Carpenter, the middle-class Englishman's estrangement from his feelings and the land make both him and the nation vulnerable to Jews and speculators. Following the logic of this story, we can see that part of the intermediate type's function is to conserve England's racial integrity by drawing masculine and feminine qualities and working-class and middle-class men together. While Carpenter's anti-Semitism is indefensible, one can see its rationale: Part of Carpenter's strategy in defending the intermediate type is to insist that he or she is not marginal but superior to normative culture, and perhaps this is why he disavows any connection between the marginalized Jew and the homosexual and goes so far as to represent the homosexual as saving normative culture from the Jew.2

While one strand of Carpenter's mythology holds that the intermediate type is able to return contemporary British culture to a primal androgyny associated with an oceanic
union with the mother, another strand of his mythology runs in almost the opposite direction. According to that alternative story line, which appears far less frequently in his writings, the origin of the world is characterized by a primal virility. In this story, the fall into history involves the estrangement from that primal virility, and the male homosexual's role is to return a feminized and enervated culture to that original virility. In the poem, "India, the Wisdom Land," for instance, Carpenter evokes a fabulous time in the past, "Ages back thousands of years lost in the dim past," when "a race of seers," "eagle-eyed, gracious-eyed old men" lived in perfect harmony and control of their bodies, in contrast to the alienation from the body that characterizes contemporary Western culture (Toward Democracy 355). Although these ancient seers are "old men," they are so at ease with their bodies that they are truly youthful as opposed to aged modern culture. The poem suggests that beneath all the external show of modern civilization flows "the precious semen of Democracy" (356) which springs from that ancient brotherhood, and it ends with the ecstatic vision of the dissolution of modern civilization and the merging of individuals into the "precious semen of Democracy." While the image of the liquid merging does have connections with the oceanic narrative which we examined earlier, the nature of the fluid indicates a masculine origin to the world. Thus, in this account, the external shell of Civilization must be shed so that one can return to an estranged masculinity represented by the ancient brotherhood of seers. "India, the Wisdom Land" was written in 1890, the same year that Carpenter fascinated by the "germinal ideas" (my emphasis) of "the wise men of the East" traveled to India specifically to meet an Indian holy man, a Gnani, who was recommended to him by an Indian friend (My Days 143). The Gnani claimed that his teacher, Tilleinathan Swamy, had told him years before "that an Englishman . . . would come to him" (144). Carpenter was deeply impressed by this claim feeling that he was getting in touch with an ancient Indian male tradition, and the terms which Carpenter uses to describe his meeting with the Gnani are entirely consistent with the narrative of "India, the Wisdom Land": "This visit to the Eastern sage was like going back to the pure lucid
intensely transparent source of some mighty and turbulent stream. It was a returning from West to East, and a completing of the circle of the Earth" (My Days 144). The image of the circle fits Carpenter's dialectic model. In completing the circle, Carpenter, the Western man, is returning to the origin from which he fell into history, and he is able to return to this origin by coming into contact with a primitive man who is the source of a seminal "mighty turbulent stream."

At a biographical level too, one can see Carpenter's uncertainty as to whether to identify the homosexual with androgyny or hypervirility. In most of his theoretical writings, he celebrates androgyny, advocates a return to a primal transgendered state, and associates the intermediate type with androgyny. But in his confessional case history in Ellis's Sexual Inversion, Carpenter writes, "Anything effeminate in a man . . . repels me very decisively " ("Self-Analysis" 290-291). The language here is very strong: it is not merely that Carpenter prefers butt men to effeminate ones. He seems unequivocally, phobically, averse to even a trace of femininity in a man. How do we reconcile the two positions? One strategy might be to oppose Carpenter's "false" public apologies for homosexuality to his "true" feelings which come through in his anonymous and hence more private confession to Ellis. Such a reading, however, adheres too closely to the binarism of the closet. Why should one suppose that a confession to a sexologist is any less a rhetorical construction than a public defense of homosexuality? I would suggest, rather, that we are looking at two stories that Carpenter tells at different times or sometimes confusingly combines at the same time, two stories between which he is unable to decide. One story associates homosexuality with the reconciliation of masculine and feminine qualities and celebrates that reconciliation; the other story repudiates femininity in a man and associates homosexuality with the conservation of a primal virility. Perhaps it is Carpenter's very ambivalence about these two stories that makes him insist hysterically that there is no ambiguity in his attitude toward male effeminacy, "Anything effeminate in a man repels me very decisively" (my emphasis).
But Carpenter's ambivalence is not merely a product of his idiosyncratic psyche. Rather, he is reflecting an ambivalence which lies at the heart of nineteenth-century ideological fictions of homosexuality. For, as Sedgwick points out: "since at least the turn of the century, there have presided two contradictory tropes of gender through which same-sex desire could be understood. . . . the trope of inversion. . . . [and] the trope of gender separatism" (Epistemology 86-87). Sedgwick convincingly argues that there is no real "standpoint of thought" from which one could "adjudicate" between these competing models (90), and it is a testimony to Carpenter's intellectual and political honesty that even though he struggles to create a consistent mythology about homosexuality's relationship to gender, his contradictory and muddled story lines faithfully mirror the incoherence that structurally sustains the modern homo/heterosexual system.

The two different story lines also affect the way in which Carpenter represents lesbians. Carpenter is one of the few male homophile writers to discuss lesbians, but lesbians can only be accommodated by his gender transitive story line; he has no place for her in his other story. Carpenter conceives of the lesbian as a mannish woman, an intermediate type. Hence, like the male intermediate type, s/he can act as an interpreter between the divided genders. On the other hand, Carpenter does not have a lesbian separatist story line to complement his male separatist one. Hence, she vanishes from that alternative myth. Sedgwick has pointed out that paradoxically gender integrative models often lead to a "minoritizing" model of homosexuality: gay men and lesbians are seen as constituting a minority that is positioned between the genders. And we see this claim born out in Carpenter's gender integrative model. Since he sees both male and female intermediate types sharing special qualities that differentiate them from other men and women, qualities that can help them heal the rift between men and women, he is able to theorize a myth that will accommodate both homosexual men and lesbians. Conversely, as Sedgwick points out, gender separatist models often paradoxically lead to universalizing understandings of homosexuality (Epistemology 89). Carpenter's gender separatist story
line bears out this paradox too. For in envisioning male homosexuality as an originary
brotherhood prior to history, Carpenter implicitly suggests that there is a kinship between
the ruling male homosocial patriarchy and the intermediate type. Thus, rather than being
less than a man, the intermediate type becomes a figure who can help all men to recover a
true masculinity from which they have been alienated.

But even within the gender integrative version of Carpenter's mythology, there is
an inconsistency regarding the intermediate type's relationship to time. In the version of
the myth we have looked at so far, Carpenter associates the intermediate type's gender
transitive status with a primal androgyny. However, in other versions of the myth, the
intermediate type's ambiguous gender status is associated with his highly developed state;
in other words, the intermediate type is a forerunner of the future. This story is sketched
out in Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk, for instance. In this text after extensively
cataloging gender transitive behavior within primitive cultures, Carpenter argues that the
intermediate type represented the principle of evolutionary change within those cultures, for
the s/he challenged conventional gendered roles. And these challenges forced those
primitive cultures to diversify the functions that were open to the two genders:

\[
\text{in the evolution of society there are many more functions to be represented than [war and domesticity]. ... [I]f it had not been for the emergence of intermediate types -- the more or less feminine man and similarly the more or less masculine woman -- social life may never have advanced beyond the primitive phases . . . . The non-warlike man and the non-domestic woman sought new outlets for their energies . . . , and so they became the initiators of new activities . . . The intermediate man or woman [was] a forward force in human evolution.}
\]

(273)

In Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk, then, it seems that rather than representing a
link to the past, the intermediate types represent the principle of evolutionary differentiation
and forward movement. According to this story, without the intermediate types'
adventurous experimenting with gender roles, heterosexual men and women would be stuck in the limiting primitive drudgery of hunting and domesticity.

But Carpenter's inability to decide whether the intermediate type represents a regression to non-differentiation or progress toward evolutionary differentiation is not merely a weakness within his particular myth. It reflects a conceptual inconsistency which lies at the heart of the modern homo/heterosexual system. Both within sexology and psychoanalysis, the relationship between homosexuality and degeneration or regression have been highly vexed and confused. Birken sketches out the contradictory connections that sexologists made between a return to the past/ a movement toward the future and perversion: To begin with, Birken points out that there were three different forms of degeneration "morbid," "atavistic," and "atypical," the third category being merely a synonym for variation. "Perversion" was sometimes seen as. "a 'morbid' dissolution of sexuality." It was sometimes seen, "more benignly as an atavistic return to an older form of sexuality." And yet again, it was sometimes regarded by theorists, like Ellis in Sexual Inversion, "as a relatively advanced but deviant sexuality " (Birken 110). Even Birken's useful divisions oversimplify the picture, for within any one of these accounts, there were a number of temporal paradoxes and inconsistencies. Atavistic degeneration, for instance, might involve regressing to the past, but for theorists like Nordau and Lombroso it was often brought on by the pervert's excessive precocity, his preternatural responsiveness to the rapid changes that were occurring and the intense stimuli that were available in late-nineteenth century culture. The pervert's return to the past, then, was often triggered by his moving too quickly forward into the future. Evolution or regression, forward movement or backward, sexologists could not seem to decide what the precise relationship of the pervert was to change and temporality. Clearly, then, Carpenter's inability to decide whether the intermediate type represents a principle of regression or differentiation, faithfully reflects this larger systemic incoherence. One should recognize, though, that it does not really matter which of the two stories prevails, for both the stories of
differentiation and regression end up serving the same ideological function: Deconstruction has shown us how deviant categories sustain an unmarked norm which remains unexamined. Whether the homosexual was figured as arrested in development, a regression to the past, or as a symptom of rapid social change, a figure heralding the future, he or she was seen as occupying an unnatural relationship to the present, to time, and to the rate of change. By contrast, the heterosexual was tacitly assumed to occupy a proper and natural relationship to time and change. Thus, both story lines ultimately served to naturalize an unmarked heterosexuality and sharply differentiate it from deviant homosexuality.

Lesbians, or what Carpenter calls "homogenic women," figure very differently in the evolutionary and regressive versions of the myth. The lesbian fits far more comfortably into the evolutionary developmental story. As a "mannish" woman, she challenges repressive gender conventions and therefore offers a way forward toward greater social and economic equality (Love's Coming of Age 131). Thus, Carpenter the evolutionary biologist compares the lesbian to "a new sex -- like the feminine neuters of ants and bees -- not adapted for child bearing but with a marvelous and perfect instinct for social service." And, he sees lesbians as bringing about a "tremendous improvement in the general condition of their more commonplace sisters" (Love's 131). However, the lesbian occupies a far more uncomfortable position in Carpenter's regressive plot. As we have seen, for Carpenter transcendence from history involves a reunion with the mother. But he almost invariably figures the child who returns to the mother as male. By contrast, Carpenter associates women with maternity. There seems no place in his myth for a woman occupying the position of the subject alienated from the primal mother; rather, women replicate the role of the primal mother. Since Carpenter assumes that lesbians as manly women are not mothers or not interested in maternity, the lesbian becomes an uncomfortable supplemental third term in the story of man's estrangement from his mother. Furthermore, since Carpenter considers the true function of women to be maternity, how
can he justify lesbian desire, which he sees as antithetical to maternity? He does so by asserting that the "influence" of female homogenic love will make society "render [its] notion of motherhood far more dignified than before" (Love's 131). In other words, lesbians may not desire maternity themselves, but the reforms they bring about in a patriarchal culture will lead to maternity occupying a better position in society. Thus, although the lesbian herself is not a mother, she indirectly leads to the betterment of the institution of maternity. Carpenter's vagueness about the precise mechanics of how female homogenic love better the institution of maternity may be connected to his discomfort with the topic since he is both so deeply invested in maternity and committed to lesbian rights which he associates with a movement away from maternity.

Ultimately, the limitation of Carpenter's reverse discourse is that it remains extremely faithful to the terms of the normative sex/gender system, even if it inverts and transvalues those terms. Christopher Craft has pointed out that the inversion model is heterosexist because it reads desire as a transaction between male and female essences, regardless of the material, sexed bodies these male and female essences occupy (Craft 114). The same criticism may be leveled at Carpenter's model. For while his model allows for various permutations and variations between the male and female poles of a gendered continuum, there seems no place within his paradigm for a desire that might not be primarily governed by the polarities of gender. There is one formulation in The Intermediate Sex, which seems to hold out the promise of a more queer version of desire: "Nature, it might appear, in mixing the elements which go to compose each individual, does not always keep her two groups of ingredients -- which represents the two sexes--properly apart, but often throws them crosswise in a somewhat baffling manner" (Intermediate Sex 189, my emphasis). What seems potentially queer to me in that formulation is Carpenter's use of the term "crosswise," for as Sedgwick has pointed out, "The word 'queer' itself means across -- it comes from the Indo-European root -twerkw, which also yields the German quer (transverse), Latin torquere (to twist), English athwart
"(Tendencies xii). But despite the promising metaphor, Carpenter's impulse is not really to twist, or malform, or play with the sex-gender system; rather he tends to assume the primacy of two poles, "the two sexes," and tries to find syntheses, mid-points that combine qualities from both the poles; thus only two groups of ingredients are thrown crosswise to form a synthesizing third which reconciles the two. The problem with this strategy is that even though the gendered poles might get transvalued, they are not displaced or even significantly disturbed. As a result, the model unavoidably ends up privileging heterosexuality. For as Foucault has convincingly argued, sexed difference is not some "natural" origin prior to the constitution of historical systems of sexuality but is an effect of a modern Western system of (hetero)sexuality (History, section 3). That is, while men and women have obvious biological differences, the notion of seeing those differences as a salient polar opposition is an effect of a system built around heterosexuality.

Carpenter's focus on and naturalization of gender difference make him elide several different categories. Thus, in an attempt to show that same-sex desire is universal, he catalogues examples of transvestitism, homosexuality, and hermaphroditism throughout the world and throughout history. Apart from the decontextualizing ethnocentrism of this gesture, the problem with Carpenter's merging of these categories is that they refer to very different phenomena. A person who cross dresses, for instance, does not necessarily desire someone of the same sex. By the same token, a homosexual does not necessarily identify with the opposite gender. Further, one's anatomy cannot be used to infer one's gendered identifications or the nature of one's object choice, so one cannot assume that a hermaphrodite thinks of him/herself as homosexual, or that homosexuals identify with hermaphrodites. In fairness to Carpenter, there is one point in Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk when he acknowledges that cross-dressing and homosexuality are not necessarily identical phenomena (Intermediate Types 40). But after having made that concession, he goes on to ignore it in the rest of the text by unproblematically lumping the
two phenomena together. Carpenter is able to treat three very different phenomena (which admittedly often have complicated overlaps) — homosexuality, transvestitism, and hermaphroditism — as essentially the same because he can only think of them in terms of the heterosexual sex/gender system and in terms of their difference from the heterosexual binarism. Thus, he is unable to recognize the multiple differences among these phenomena which cannot be accommodated by the dualistic terms of heterosexuality. This inability to recognize multiple differences is, of course, the great limitation of dialectical paradigm which relentlessly absorbs heterogeneity in its movement toward synthesis and closure.

If gender difference provides one register for Carpenter to map the synthesizing role of the intermediate type, age difference provides another. In the next section of the essay, I will consider how Carpenter draws on classical pederasty and primitivism to suggest that intermediate type has an important educative role to play in recovering middle-class men's lost youthfulness, so they can move outside history.

**The Youthful Teacher of an Immature Culture: Pederasty and Carpenter's Dialectical Model of History**

For Carpenter, the child has access to great powers that are denied the adult. In *Toward Democracy*, he extols the child's power in hyperbolic terms. "Fate is leveled and the mountains and pyramids look foolish before the glance of a little child" (18); "All the books of political economy ever written, all the proved impossibilities are of no account/.../Before the forces which lie dormant in the pale and wistful face of a little child" (125). Carpenter's idealization of the child is clearly informed by both Romanticism and certain strands of Christianity. While the main English Romantic influence that Carpenter explicitly acknowledges is Shelley, the extravagant celebration of the child's power in *Toward Democracy* seems to owe a great deal to Wordsworth as well. As far as religion goes, Carpenter's attitude toward Christianity is ambivalent: he is deeply repelled by Christian asceticism, but he is drawn to the Christian paradox that to be a savior one must become humbly childlike:
Do you not know that one who would save his own life must lose it?

... 

Have you sat humbly at their [those who are lost] feet and waited on their lips that they should be the first to speak -- and been reverent before these children -- whom you so little understand. (150-151. My emphasis) 

Similarly, he is drawn to the Christian paradox that makes children and the poorest more spiritually wealthy than the "rich and powerful":

O rich and powerful of the earth,

Behold, your riches are all in vain -- you are poorer than the poorest of these children! (111)

As the quotation above indicates, Carpenter's strain of Socialism is sentimentally humanistic in a Christian tradition. If my harsh tone betrays a certain defensiveness on my part about sentimentality, a quality that critics like James Creech have (somewhat sentimentally themselves?) argued queer theory should reclaim and transvalue (47), it is a defensiveness that Carpenter himself shares. For in the poem "In a Manufacturing Town," Carpenter prefaces the sentimental closing claim ("all the books of political economy... are of no account,/ Before the forces which lie dormant in the pale and wistful face of a little child," with a phrase, which psychoanalysts might describe as an instance of negation, "Not as a sentimental vision but as a fact" (124, my emphasis). In vehemently denying his sentimentality, Carpenter covertly acknowledges his anxiety and defensiveness about it.

When Carpenter celebrates the child, he is not merely celebrating literal children but working-class and non-Western men too since he sees these groups as being analogous to children. He never explicitly makes this analogy but continually implies it. In the poem, "In the Drawing Rooms," for instance, the poetic voice, implicitly male and middle-class, is repelled by "the grinning, gibbering organisation of negations" of middle-class social life, but his frantic despair is calmed when he meets the eyes of a stoker: "the firelight fell
on him brightly as for a moment his eyes rested on mine/ That was all. But it was enough." The poet then goes on to specify that it is precisely the youthfulness of the stoker's face that calms him and cleanses the taste of aged civilization: "The youthful face was enough" (119-121, my emphasis).

The link between working-class masculinity and youthfulness is made even more explicit in poem LI of Toward Democracy. In the poem, the poetic eye is watching "a navvy and his little son":

By the curbstone, in the forefront of the crowd, a man, a navvy -- with his hands clasped in front of him on the breast of his little son!

The boy timid, standing between his father's feet pressing back against his legs, with his own little hands the great hands clasping;

The two equal, childlike... (Toward Democracy 72-73. No line numbers)

The working-class father and his son have obvious differences -- for instance, the father has "great hands" while the son has "little" ones. From those lines, one might infer that the two have other kinds of size differences as well, an inference that is provoked for this reader by the detailed description of the little boy's position -- between his father's feet, leaning back against his legs. Yet despite their differences, the poet is able to describe the navvy and his son as "equal" because they are both "childlike." In other words, all the differences between the adult navvy and his young son are eclipsed by their shared class which makes them both childlike.

If the paradox implied in this poem is that working-class childishness supplants age difference, so all working-class men are childlike, the paradox in Carpenter's July 12, 1874 letter to Whitman is that the working-class man's youthfulness is old because it harks back to a period prior to the fall into middle-class "inanity":

You hardly know what the relief is here to turn to turn from the languid inanity of the well-fed to the clean hard lines of the workman's face. Yesterday, there came
(to mend my door) a young workman with the old divine light in his eyes... and perhaps more than all he made me write to you. (Katz 359)

The workman's "clean" "hard" face has not yet been softened and enervated by civilization; hence, he is both brimming over with youth and possesses the "old divine light." While ontogenetically he is youthful, phylogenetically he is linked to an ancient past prior to civilization.

Like working-class men, people from non-Western nations count as children in Carpenter's mythology. Thus, in the opening of Towards Democracy, he apostrophizes "the wild races of Africa" as "beautiful children of the sun" (Towards Democracy 21). Even when he does not directly address non-Western people as children, Carpenter often uses the figure of a boy as a synecdoche for an entire culture; thus, in the opening section of Towards Democracy, where the races and nations of the world are drawn together by the expansive spirit of Democracy, "the young man from China," "the Portuguese lad," and "the young Tamil boy" act as representatives of their cultures (22-23).

In From Adam's Peak to Elephanta too Carpenter often links the Indians and Cinghalese to children. For instance, he describes the Tamil opium seller as having a "friendly child nature" (46) and he approvingly endorses his friend Ajax's comment that coolies are like children (81). While Carpenter is deeply impressed by Hindu meditation, he also warns that without careful control of meditation, one can degenerate into "babbling" "child[ishness]," like "some Eastern devotees" (169). Significantly, the descent into childishness involves loss of control over language, though one wonders whether what Carpenter discerns as "babbling" might not have some significance within the language that the Eastern devotees speak. After all, nowhere in From Adam's Peak to Elephanta is there any evidence that Carpenter really knows how to speak any Indian language; he seems to depend on interpreters at all times and tells us that he is trying to learn Tamil from the opium seller. Perhaps, then, it is Carpenter's inability to understand Indian languages that makes him perceive "some Eastern devotees" as having a child like
inability to speak coherently. Even when Carpenter does not directly describe the Indians and Cinghalese as children, his patronizing tone infantilizes them. For instance, he describes the Tamil horse keepers as "a charming race, dusky, active, affectionate" (15), and later in the text, criticizing the injustices of British colonialism, he describes the Indians as a "people" "gratefully affectionate," "dependent . . . and inclined to lean upon others for guidance" (369).

There is one moment in From Adam's Peak to Elephanta when Carpenter tacitly acknowledges the constructedness of the link between non-Western people and childishness or childlike qualities, but he draws back from that moment of insight, never fully to develop it. Speaking about the insufferable Indian staff at the hotel, Carpenter rants about "a lying Indian manager, lying and cringing servants, and an idiotic old man who acted as my 'boy' and tormented my life out of me, fiddling around with my slippers on pretence of doing something" (226). Carpenter then goes on to suggest that the sly tormenting ways of Indian servants are the revenge of Indians on their colonial masters, "Good old John Bull pays through his nose for being ruler of this country. He overpowers the people by force, but they turn upon him -- as the weaker is prone to do -- through craft; and truly they have their revenge. . . . And the worst is one is conscious all the time of being laughed at" (226). By putting "boy" in quotation marks, Carpenter shows that he recognizes that at least in this case, the term is a convention. No doubt, in this particular case, the age of the man ("an idiotic old man") emphasizes the artificiality of the term "boy," but this particular case also implicitly raises the possibility that the term "boy" used to describe non-Western men in other contexts might be equally conventional. Further, Carpenter's analysis of colonial ressentiment suggests that rather than being naturally childlike, or innocent and dependent, the Indians and Cinghalese are crafty manipulators who torment their British masters by exaggerating the very qualities that their rulers project upon them. Thus, behind the childish mask the colonized subjects mock their British masters.
But despite this brief acknowledgment of the possible subtlety and duplicity of colonized peoples, Carpenter's sympathies truly lie with a more primitivist conception of colonialism. According to this paradigm, non-Western people are childlike, and they should be preserved from the contamination of Western colonialism which might ruin that innocence. In Civilisation Its Cause and Cure, for instance, after telling us of the literal diseases (venereal diseases, small pox, etc.) that colonialism brought to the lands it colonized, Carpenter declares that civilization itself is a "disease" that pollutes the childlike innocence of non-Western people (2-3). This historical narrative is particularized or individualized in From Adam's Peak to Elephanta where Carpenter, after celebrating the innocent beauty of the Cinghalese youth, Pinha and Punjha, reflects that their desire "to pick up phrases and words of English and ideas about the wonderful Western world...will soon destroy their naked beauty and naïveté" (27-28). Significantly, Carpenter associates the corruption of Pinha and Punjha with their acquisition of English, as though the language they presently speak is somehow pre-cultural.

Since non-Western men have access to childlike qualities, Carpenter also associates moving away from England with moving back in time. Thus, his mythology, like much of Western evolutionary anthropology of the nineteenth century "spacializes time" (Fabian 16). For instance, in his autobiography My Day's and Dreams, Carpenter represents his journey to Italy and Greece in 1873 as vivifying because it introduced him to a view of man "remote from the current ideals of commercialism and Christianity" (68, my emphasis). In other words, according to Carpenter, traveling to Italy and Greece allowed him to gain access to pre-capitalist and pre-Christian values. Similarly, Carpenter represents his journey to India and Ceylon as a search for an origin prior to history, a quest for the "germinal" ideas of the East (143). Given Carpenter's motivation for this journey, it is not surprising that the word "Adam," rich with prelapsarian, Edenic connotations, should find its way into the very title (From Adam's Peak to Elephanta) of the book he writes about the trip. However, there is one telling moment in From Adam's Peak to Elephanta which
deconstructs Carpenter's faith in origins un tarnished by history. In discussing the contentious local history of the mountain "Adam's Peak," Carpenter reveals that the mountain's name, rather than signifying Edenic innocence, is in fact a belated product of struggles among the Christians, Mohammedans, and Buddhists as to who should name the peak and as to what significance should be attributed to the footprint on its summit.

This is a most remarkable mountain... When the Buddhists first came to Ceylon, they claimed the footprint [on top of the mountain] as that of Buddha. Later on some Gnostic Christian sects attributed it to the primal man; the Mohammedans following this idea, when they got possession of the mountain, gave it the name of Adam's Peak; the Portuguese consecrated it to S. Eusebius; and now the Buddhists are again in possession -- though I believe the Mohammedans are allowed a kind of concurrent right. (66)

The complex narrative of multicultural struggle above refuses one the luxury of seeing Adam's Peak as a primal point from which one falls into history; rather it suggests that Adam's Peak was always already embroiled within history. However, for the rest of the text, Carpenter manages to avoid recognizing what this passage indicates at some level he knows.

The main qualities that distinguish the child or childlike man from the middle-class one is the degree of self-consciousness he possess and his attitude toward the body. Carpenter believes that the child or the childlike man revels in his body, while the middle-class man is alienated from it. The contrast between the naked and the clothed body provides a central trope for Carpenter's representation of the difference between the child's attitudes toward the body and that of the middle-class man. In Love's Coming of Age, for instance, Carpenter contrasts the little boys, reveling in their bodies and bathing naked in a pool, with the policemen, representatives of an erotophobic middle-class culture, who force the boys to cover themselves (104-105). The middle-class man's unhealthy relationship to his body is exemplified by the fact that he covers it in excessive layers of clothing and
conceals it from the sun, a point that Carpenter makes in several of his texts: "the body is kept religiously covered. . . The skin becomes sickly and corrupt, and of a dead, leaden white hue" (Love's 103); "[The middle-class man] muffles himself in the cast-off furs of the beast, every century swathing himself in more and more layers. . . till he ceases to be recognizable as the Man that was once the crown of the animals" (Civilisation 26). In contrast to the covered body of the middle-class man, the primitive or working-class man's body is brown because untrammelled by repressive forces, he bares his body to the sun. Thus, Carpenter's texts are full of brown skinned working-class and primitive men -- the idealized working-class man in poem XXX of Toward Democracy, for instance, has an "open shirt" with "brown neck and face" (43); similarly, in the poem "These Populations," Carpenter sets up a contrast between the "puny" "white faced" populations produced by industrial society and "bronzed" "hardy" "live" primitive "man" "catching the lion" "with [his] hands" (220); in Toward Democracy, as we have already seen, Carpenter apostrophizes Africans as "children of the sun" (my emphasis); and in From Adam's Peak to Elephanta, Carpenter rhapsodizes about the "golden brown skin and muscular bodies" of Indians (240). In fact, one reason why Carpenter celebrates Greece is because it was a culture characterized by a respect for the bronzed male body. The contrast between primitive brown and covered white civilized bodies fits Carpenter's Lamarckian paradigm of exfoliation: The middle-class man covers himself with layers of clothes, alienating himself from the sun and nature, but in order to reach the innate human potential which he possessed prior to the fall into history, he must shed these layers of clothing and bare his body to the sun.

Because of their differing attitudes toward their bodies, the middle-class and childlike man have very different degrees of vitality. For Carpenter, the childlike man has "superabundant" vitality because of his simple, natural attitude toward the body. He enviously reports on "the amazing animal spirits" of the "Kaffirs" and the "North Americans," who spend "nights" "shouting, singing, [and] dancing" (Civilisation 8). By
contrast, Carpenter characteristically tends to use terms like "enervated" and "effete" to characterize middle-class men. Carpenter's use of the term "animal spirits" to describe non-Western men draws on evolutionary logic. Animals are happy, Carpenter suggests, because they lack self-consciousness: "In the animals consciousness has never returned upon itself . . . . It radiates easily outwards." Since, primitive men are close to the animal stage, they still possess this lack of consciousness, "When man first appears on the earth and even up to the threshold of what we call civilisation, there is much to show that he should in this respect still be classed with the animals" (Civilisation 23). Hence, the childlike man possesses a vital energy, denied to the middle-class one.

Carpenter believes that because the primitive man lacks consciousness, primitive cultures are organic and unified; by contrast, middle-class civilization is made up of atomistic individuals who are cut off from each other: "when we come to consider the social life of the wilder races . . . it is more harmonious and compact than that of civilised nations. . . . There is more social unity" (Civilisation 8-9). In order to transcend civilization, then, the middle-class man must learn to lose his excessive individuality and merge with the group. Thus, Toward Democracy repeatedly draws on the metaphors of melting and merging to represent the movement beyond civilization toward a sublated prehistoric unity. However, there are certain moments in the poem which seem to pull in the opposite direction. In poem XXX, for instance, Carpenter admires the working-class man because of his self-assured independence from those who admiringly gaze on him (Toward Democracy 43-44). Here, the working-class man seems associated with separateness and autonomy from the masses rather than with melting and merging. Or, take the poem "These Populations" where the "masses," "puny, white-faced, machine made" stand as the figure for the ravages of civilization (Toward Democracy 220). Here it seems that civilization is associated with loss of individuality rather than excessive individuality. Yet, there is no real contradiction between these two sets of images. No doubt, the working-class man in poem XXX is self-assured and independent of the group.
But his "easy" self-assurance is the product of his lack of self-consciousness. Thus, his autonomy is very different from the unhealthy alienation of the middle-class man who is painfully conscious of his separation from the masses. By the same token, civilization may lead to the bringing together of masses of people as industrial workers. But these people are not united; they remain a crowd of atomized individuals. By contrast, primitive men are bound together by organic ties. Chris Bongie in his analysis of primitivist myths of the early twentieth century has suggested that the Western makers of these myths wanted to escape from the anonymity of the industrial crowd, so they fantasized fleeing to primitive lands to recover an untrammelled individuality (Bongie 147). Carpenter's myth somewhat complicates Bongie's analysis, though. For in his myth, the middle-class man seeks to transcend the industrial crowd produced by civilization by merging in an organic fashion with other men. This merging leads to a synthesis that goes beyond the fusion of the primitive masses and beyond the painful individualism of civilization.

In his analysis of the different forms that a reverse discourse can assume, Dollimore points out that one can either transvalue the terms of the dominant discourse or accept those terms but refigure who has access to those terms. Carpenter draws on both these strategies. On the one hand, he transvalues the developmental narrative which informs his culture: Rather than valorizing maturity, he celebrates childlike qualities and argues that the middle-class man is deprived of those qualities that Uranians, primitive men, working-class men, and children have access to. But Carpenter also draws on the terms of a developmental discourse and labels the middle-class man "ungrown": "The ungrown, half-baked sort of character is conspicuous in the class of men who organise the modern world - - the men of the English-speaking well-to-do class "(Love's 110). Paradoxically, it is precisely the alienation of the middle-class Englishman from youthful qualities that makes him immature, "ungrown." Thus, Carpenter suggests that love will only reach true maturity -- his feminist polemic is entitled Love's Coming of Age -- in corrupted
civilization when the lost youthful qualities embodied in the Uranian are recovered are
recovered by the immature Englishman.

Ironically, one form in which their deprivation manifests itself is in the actual
maltreatment of children. Thus, Carpenter's works often powerfully indict the ways in
which capitalism, colonialism, and the middle-class educational system neglect and abuse
the child. Toward Democracy is full of Dickensian images of children who suffer
horrifically under capitalism -- for instance, early in Toward Democracy, the poetic voice
fiercely poses this rhetorical question to capitalism, "Do you think that it is a fine thing to
grind cheap goods out of the hard labour of ill-paid boys? and do you imagine that all your
Commerce Shows and Manufactures are anything at all compared to the body and soul of
these?" (27). For Carpenter, the most horrific crime of industrial capitalism is that it stunts
children and perverts their childlike qualities. In the poem "Deep Below Deep," for
instance, the miner's child crushed in the pit physically is a child but has been
transmogrified mentally into an old man by the horrors visited on him by the system: "Is it
a child or an old man? . . . / A child surely, by his top heavy knock-kneed gait and
perching semi-perceptive ways; / An old man by the two deep horizontal furrows in his
brow" (107). Similarly. From Adam's Peak to Elephanta has several images of children
who have suffered from the effects of colonialism -- consider, for instance, the image of
"the naked little boy of about ten years of age, minding a spinning jenny . . . [and working]
shamefully long hours" (344-345). In that image, Carpenter implicitly suggests that the
boy is being abused not only because of the shamefully long hours which he works, but
also because his naked body has been wrenched away from nature and thrust into a
mechanistic industrial system, represented by the spinning jenny. If capitalism and
colonialism mistreat children's bodies, the educational system perverts children's minds by
making them ashamed and fearful of sexuality. Thus, in Love's Coming of Age, Carpenter
eloquently critiques the way in which an erotophobic culture denies children knowledge of
sexuality:
Our public opinion, our literature, our custom, our laws, are saturated with the notion of the uncleanness of Sex. . . [and] our children have to pick up intelligence on the subject in the gutter. (105)

Until these subjects [sexual subjects] are put before young people with some degree of intelligent and sympathetic handling, it can scarcely be expected that anything but the utmost confusion, in mind and in morals, should reign in the matter of Sex. That we should leave our children to pick up their information about the most sacred. . . of all human functions from the gutter, and learn to know it first from the lips of ignorance and vice, seems almost incredible, and certainly indicates the deeply rooted . . . uncleanness of our own thoughts. (99)

Carpenter's indictment of his erotophobic culture unfortunately seems all too painfully relevant to us today and has gained a deadly edge with the advent of AIDS, for as Simon Watney has pointed out, in the name of protecting children from "unclean sex," conservatives refuse children the kind of sex education that could literally save their lives (389).

Why is it that unlike other middle-class men, the Uranian retains his "remarkable youthfulness " (Intermediate Sex 188)? Carpenter suggests two reasons. One is based on an evolutionary argument. According to this argument, since the Uranian belongs to an earlier phase of time, before the fall into gender difference, he has access to qualities that other people have lost. The other reason is more sociological. Carpenter contends that since the Uranian is independent of the institutions of marriage and the family, he is not bound by the material constraints of these institutions. Thus, unlike the middle-class man, the Uranian is able to transcend the barriers of race and class and mingle with working-class and non-Western childlike men. Hence, in Toward Democracy, "the young heir" is able to "knit" his "soul" with the "fireman shoveling coal into the boiler furnace," for despite their class difference they are united by a Uranian passion; similarly, despite the fact that "the Cinghalese cooly" and "the engineer" may be divided by race and class, they are
bound together by a homoerotic passion that is supposed to transcend these barriers (322). By the same token, Carpenter represents himself as a Uranian poet being able to cross and transcend class and generational lines: "Children go with me, and rude people are my companions" (Toward Democracy 60). For Carpenter, like Whitman, homoerotic Eros has great democratizing potential:

Eros is a great leveler. Perhaps, the true Democracy rests, more firmly than anywhere else, on a sentiment which easily passes the bounds of class and caste, and unites in the closest affection the most estranged ranks of society. It is noticeable how often Uranians of good position and breeding are drawn to rougher types, as of manual workers, and frequently very permanent alliances grow up in this way, which although not publicly acknowledged have a decided influence on social institutions... and which would have a good deal more influence could they be given a little more scope and recognition. (Intermediate Sex 237)

In order to support his assertion that Uranians are free from the material and institutional constraints that hem in middle-class men, Carpenter contends that not only are Uranians independent of institutions like marriage and the family, but also unlike middle-class heterosexual culture, Uranian culture is relatively free of prostitution, for prostitution is an outgrowth of the property institutions that surround marriage (The Intermediate Sex 243). In making this claim, Carpenter strategically inverts a stereotype that figured the male homosexual as a wealthy libertine who uses his wealth to encourage working-class boys to become prostitutes, a stereotype that was fueled by a series of scandals involving prostitution and middle-class homosexuals in the nineteenth century such as the affair of Bishop Clogher early in the century, the Cleveland Street Scandal in 1889, and the Wilde scandal and trial of 1895. This association of homosexuality with aristocratic libertinism and exploitation of working-class men was particularly common in Socialist rhetoric, and Rowbotham gives several instances of the homophobia Carpenter had to contend with from some of his Socialist friends, who might be willing to tolerate Carpenter's own sexual
deviance but were repelled by the notion that the issue of homosexuality could have
anything to do with Socialist politics. In the face of these stereotypes, Carpenter boldly
(and inaccurately) argues that in fact Uranian culture is remarkably free of prostitution and
offers an example to heterosexual culture mired in materialism.

Another strategic myth that Carpenter employs is that of classical pederasty. As
critics like James Bowen have pointed out, the classics occupied a central role in middle-
class male Victorian homosocial culture, a culture that simultaneously disavowed
homosexuality(163). Carpenter too valorizes Greece, but he insistently associates Greece
with pederasty and contends that the true heir of Hellenic values is the intermediate type,
rather than male homosocial institutions like the public schools and universities which have
perverted the true Hellenic spirit. Thus, the intermediate type has the potential to teach his
culture to get in touch with its classical origins. In particular the intermediate type can teach
a culture overly influenced by Hebraic asceticism to recover a lost Hellenic balance between
consciousness and the body (The Intermediate Sex 231-232).

While Carpenter's myth draws on classical pederasty, he also partially transforms
that mythology. For one thing, Platonic erotics celebrated sublimated love and had a
distaste for the body. Carpenter's myth, by contrast, affirms and celebrates the body and
sexuality. Indeed, he argues that the homosexual has a far more healthy relationship to his
body than male heterosexual culture, and this relationship is one of the lessons that the
homosexual has to teach male heterosexual culture. Further, while in Hellenistic pederasty
knowledge is transmitted from the older man to the younger one, in Carpenter's myth it is
aged immature culture that learns from the youthful homosexual. Indeed, in parts of
Carpenter's myth there are three terms rather than the two of Greek pederasty: in Athenian
pederasty, the older man, the erastes teaches the young boy, the eromenos. But in
Carpenter's myth, immature and paradoxically aged heterosexual middle-class culture is
reconciled with the youthful working-class or foreign culture by learning from a third
synthesizing term, the middle-class Uranian. Finally, the Hellenistic pederastic tradition
was intensely androcentric. Greek boys were prepared by their elder lovers to occupy
positions of authority within a male homosocial culture. By contrast, Carpenter sees the
Uranian as teaching male culture to recover female qualities from which it has become
alienated. Thus, he uses a gender separatist tradition to suggest a program that is, in part at
least, gender integrative.

My association of Carpenter with a Hellenistic pederastic tradition runs counter to
the way in which he has been placed by other critics. Louis Crompton, for instance, draws
a distinction between homosexual writers who desired adult men, writers who he claims
were more egalitarian and progressive versus pederastic writers whose politics were
supposedly more reactionary and conservative. Carpenter in Crompton's reading belongs
to the former set of progressive writers (239). I suspect that Crompton's simplistic
division tells us more about his personal discomfort with pederasty than the ostensible
objects of his discussion, a discomfort that is shared of course by many sections of the
contemporary Anglo-American gay liberation movement. More cautiously, Robert Martin,
in tracing the genealogy of Forster's *Maurice*, sets up a distinction between a Hellenistic
pederastic tradition associated with figures like Symonds and an egalitarian Whitmanesque
tradition that he associates with figures like Carpenter. According to Martin, Clive can be
associated with the pederastic tradition of Symonds and Maurice and Scudder with the
Whitman/Carpenter tradition (Martin esp. 37-45). Martin's distinction draws on terms that
Carpenter himself uses. For in discussing the role of the modern Uranian in *The
Intermediate Sex*, he mentions two strands of homosexuality, egalitarian comradeship and
pederastic relationships:

The homogenic attachment left unrecognized... loses some of its best quality and
becomes an ephemeral or corrupt thing. Yet... it may when occurring between an
erlder and a younger, prove to be an immense educational force, while as between
equals it may be turned to social and heroic uses. (221)
Note, though, how in this formulation Carpenter unlike Martin and Crompton does not valorize egalitarian comradeship over Hellenistic pederasty. Both homosexualities have a role to play as an educational and as a social and heroic force respectively. But I would go even further and suggest that Carpenter’s opposition between the comradeship of equals and pederasty can be deconstructed within his own mythology. In Carpenter’s myth, there is ultimately almost no distinction between the Socialist egalitarian and pederastic stories, for the workers and primitive men who supposedly embody the spirit of egalitarianism are troped as youth, youth who can teach an aged/immature culture. Hence, it is no surprise that unlike his commentators, Carpenter does not place Whitman in opposition to Greek pederasty but sees Whitman as embodying the Greek spirit (for instance, he describes Whitman’s face as a “Greek temple”). Ultimately, for Carpenter, Whitmanian Socialism and Hellenistic pederasty are different angles on the same story, not two competing story lines.

While the pederastic tradition is broad enough to accommodate the socialist story line, Carpenter finds it more difficult and ultimately, I would contend, impossible to accommodate lesbians within this story line. In his discussions of the intermediate sex, Carpenter finds it relatively easy to draw together male Uranians and lesbians because he sees both of them as being positioned between the genders. But in representing homogenic relationships in intergenerational terms, Carpenter has more trouble accommodating lesbians. No doubt, as critics like Martha Vicinus have pointed out, intergenerational erotic relationships between girls at women’s schools were common, and there was a discourse for articulating these relationships (Vicinus 215). Thus, Carpenter after linking the Uranian to a Greek educational/ pederastic tradition, suggests that lesbians too can occupy this role: “The remarks in this paper have chiefly had reference to boy’s schools; but they apply in the main to girl’s schools [as well]” (The Intermediate Sex 232). But Carpenter doesn’t seem to have truly convinced himself because the figure of the lesbian educator never reappears after this formulation. For Carpenter wants to ally homosexuality with a Hellenic
tradition which possesses enormous cultural capital in late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain, but there is no place in this tradition for female homogenic relations. There were discourses, no doubt, to articulate relationships between women at girl's schools, but these discourses did not have the prestige and leverage of Hellenistic pederasty.

Not only does Carpenter see the intermediate type as teaching his culture at large, he also suggests that individual Uranians tend to be drawn to education and have an important role to play as teachers. Uranians should be cherished, Carpenter contends, because they have a special link to children in a culture where children are otherwise exploited and repressed:

It is incontestable that a great number of men (and women) are drawn into the teaching profession by [the Uranian] sentiment, and the work they do is, in many cases, beyond estimation. Fortunate, the boy who meets with such a helper in early life! (IntermediateSex 234)

By praising the educational qualities of the Uranian, Carpenter audaciously reverses the insidious stereotypes associating homosexuality either with narcissistic self-absorption or with a desire to prey upon or molest children. In his myth, the Uranian becomes the paradigmatic protector of the culture's future.

Uranians are good teachers for all children, but they are particularly important for Uranian children Carpenter suggests. He eloquently describes the shame and stigma which young Uranians confront:

we may point out how hard it is, especially for the young among them [the Uranians] that a veil of complete silence should be drawn over the subject of [homosexual desire], leading to the most painful misunderstandings, and perversions and confusions of mind; and that there should be no hint of guidance; nor any recognition of the solitary and really serious inner problem they have to face. (Intermediate Sex 194)
In the face of the oppression of young Uranians, he quite movingly sees his own intellectual work as an attempt to provide guidance to these hapless young people (194). And indeed, his work seems to have profoundly influenced many young Edwardian gay men at formative moments in their education. Robert Graves, for instance, fell in love with a younger boy at Charterhouse, and when he was accused by his headmaster, quoted Carpenter chapter and verse to that public school official. Later, Graves wrote appreciatively to Carpenter, "Iolaus and The Intermediate Sex . . . have absolutely taken the scales from my eyes and caused me immense elation. You [Carpenter] have provided a quite convincing explanation for all the problems, doubts, and suspicions that I have been troubled by" (Graves qtd. in Tsuzuki 148).

The Price of Carpenter's Dialectical Model

Carpenter's dialectical model of homosexuality and history has a price that I will contend is too costly for a progressive anti-homophobic politics. The title of my essay on Carpenter is indebted to Christina Crosby's fine study of Victorian culture's association of women with the end of history, The Ends of History: Victorians and "the Woman Question." Crosby's title makes a pun with the terms "end" and "ends." Models which proclaim the end of history, she correctly points out, normally serve the ends of particular interests and militate against those of others (Crosby 2). Carpenter's model is no exception. In this section, I will explore the relentless ways in which Carpenter's model erases differences in order to secure the transcendence of middle-class Western culture outside the travails of history and in order to celebrate the Western Uranian.

In Carpenter's dialectical model non-Western men represent a childlike stage prior to Western history which gets absorbed and lifted to a higher level by the Uranian. In order to make such an analogy, however, Carpenter has to repress the fact that non-Western men might have a history of their own, a history separate from that of the West. Thus, his model bears out Torgovonic's incisive analysis of primitivist anthropological models:
The belief that primitive societies reveal [Western] origins... depends on an ethnocentric sense of existing primitive societies as outside of linear time, and the corresponding assumption that primitive societies exist in an eternal present which mirrors the past of Western civilization. (46)

There is a certain irony to the ethnocentricity that results from such primitivist/evolutionary models. As Torgovonic points out, monogenesist models of history, models of history which proclaimed a common origin for both Western and non-Western peoples, were originally seen as progressive and anti-racist because they insisted on the common humanity of all races. Unfortunately, such models also led to the "delusion [that] primitives originated at the same time as we [Western peoples] did... but did not change; [hence] studying them can tell us about earlier versions of human society" (Torgovonic 186).

Part of the reason why non-Western men have no history is that they have no self-consciousness. This distinguishes them from the Uranians who share their childlike qualities but have the self-consciousness which allows change. This distinction comes through most clearly in Carpenter's comparison of Whitman and the Gnani.

I have two portraits... which I am fond of comparing with each other. The one is of Whitman taken in 1890; the other, taken at about the same and about the same age (seventy years) is that of an Indian Gnani, or seer. Both are faces of the highest interest and import. But how different! That of Whitman deeply lined, bearing the marks of life-long passion and emotion, aggressive and determined, yet wistful and tender, full of suffering and full of love, indicating serenity, yet markedly turbid and clouded... The other portrait of a man equally aged shows scarcely a line on the face; you might think for the lithe, active form that he was not more than forty years old; a brow absolutely calm and unruffled... In this face, you discern... no wandering emotions or passions... self-hood... has
vanished -- the self has, as it were, returned to its birthplace -- leaving behind
the most childlike. . . character imaginable. (My Days with Walt Whitman 49-50)

Although in this quotation, Carpenter refers to only the Gnani as childlike, he associates
Whitman with childlike qualities too. After all, he makes it a point to tell us that he reads
Whitman for the first time in an Edenic garden, he continually associates Whitman with the
Greek "dawn of civilisation," and he comments on Whitman's "child-like" face during his
first meeting with the poet (Days 6). But Whitman in addition to possessing primitive
values also has the consciousness of the modern man; hence, he is able and forced to
accommodate contradictions -- his face exhibits aggression as well as tenderness, serenity
as well as clouds, etc. By contrast, the Gnani belongs to a stage prior to the constitution of
the self; he belongs to a period prior to history, a stage which Carpenter idealizes but one
that seems deathly, completely removed from human ambivalence and concerns. The
Gnani can play no role in the dialectical resolution of history, for he remains frozen before
the advent of history; the transformative role must be played by Whitman who has
integrated primitive values. Hence, Carpenter describes Whitman as representing "a stage
of human evolution not yet reached" (Days 55). Whitman, the Western Uranian sage
combines self-consciousness and primitive values and hence truly belongs to the stage
beyond history, a stage that is inaccessible to non-Western men like the Gnani.

Further Carpenter's three part dialectical model allows no room for multiple
differences between so called primitive men. The consequence of such a model is clearly
seen in Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk. The organizational format of that book
is the list. Carpenter will take an issue like the connection between divination and
homosexuality and after an opening discussion, exhaustively list instances of this
connection through history and within various cultures. Here is a characteristic passage:

the constant connection between the *choupan* and the *angakok*, the *ke yev* and the
*shaman*, the *berdache* and the witch doctor, the ganymede and the temple priest,
and their correspondences all over the world, the *basir* among the Dyaks, the boy
priests in the temples of Peru, the same in the Buddhist temples of Ceylon, Burma, and China -- all these cases seem to point to some underlying fact, of the fitness or adaptation of the invert for priestly or divinatory functions. (56).

This anthropological catalogue flattens differences between individual cultural examples and radically decontextualizes them. Clearly from an anthropological viewpoint, Carpenter's findings are dubious: to reify certain Western categories and then to look for and predictably discover them in a variety of other cultures is a circular method that projects Western categories onto those cultures. Beyond the epistemological flaws in Carpenter's method, though, note Carpenter's authoritative encyclopedic tone. This is the tone of high Victorian anthropology: the list of exotic foreign names and the urbane authority with which Carpenter can expound on these names and cultures, all work to give him enormous power. Situated nowhere himself, he majestically surveys other cultures and periods through history with the disinterested eye of the scientist. Ironically, this tone is similar to one that many late-Victorian sexologists used in describing sexual deviants.

Carpenter's tone, I think, should provide a warning to contemporary queer theory. Today, we are far too theoretically sophisticated to elide cultural differences in the way Carpenter does, but I fear that many of us still lapse into Carpenter's tone. At a 1992 MLA session on queer theory, for instance, David Halperin gave a very fine reading of intergenerational erotics in *Shane*. During the course of that reading, in order to denaturalize our modern understanding of pederasty, Halperin invoked Gilbert Herdt's research on the Sambia and the role that intergenerational oral insemination plays within that tribe. But after bringing up the Sambia, Halperin moved on to his real purpose of denaturalizing pederasty in *Shane*. Now, of course, his method was very effective rhetorically and conceptually -- the Sambia provided a useful way to denaturalize our assumptions. And for the sake of the unity of his talk and given time constraints, how could one expect him to do anything but touch on the Sambia? And yet, for this listener at least, there was something offensive about the way in which the Sambia were brought on
stage as exotic others and then whisked off after having played their appointed role. I think one needs to acknowledge while making such argumentative moves that they are not innocent and are implicated with colonial history. The Sambia are available to us as useful denaturalizing data on which we can casually draw precisely because of the difference in political and economic power between us. It is ludicrous to contemplate, for instance, a Sambian denaturalizing his culture’s assumptions by casually invoking the exotic practices of gay bars on Castro Street, say. My point is not to attack Halperin, who is enormously attentive to historical and cultural differences in most of his work, whose One Hundred Years of Homosexuality has indeed played a seminal role in making queer theory conscious of the ethnocentrism that underlies essentialism. Nor is my point that one should give up such useful argumentative gestures; we are all located in history and cannot simply be paralyzed as a result. But I think that we need to be more theoretically self-conscious and acknowledge the implications of and the history behind our argumentative moves when we use other cultures to denaturalize our own cultural assumptions if we are not to fall into Carpenter’s offensively authoritative, encyclopedic tone.

Coda

Carpenter’s mythology has very limited utility for contemporary anti-homophobic politics for two reasons. First, by valorizing a state prior to or beyond history, his mythology allows an anti-homophobic struggle very limited political purchase. Further, his dialectical model of history violently erases differences in order to secure the transcendence of white middle-class homosexual men. Ironically, though, I think that his mythology is most useful when it breaks down: although Carpenter’s myth emphasizes synthesis, it is in fact rent by contradictions that he cannot reconcile, as we have seen. These contradictions are built into the homophobic mythology which Carpenter both employs and partially transvalues. However, given how insidiously naturalized ideology is, we rarely perceive the contradictions that inform normative culture’s sex/gender system. By faithfully drawing on and transvaluing the terms of normative ideology, Carpenter’s
mythology allows us to gain a defamiliarized perspective on that ideology's incoherence and hence perhaps some limited political purchase in resisting it.
Notes

1 Engels' understanding of sodomy as nature's revenge on male non-procreative excesses draws on sexological commonplaces, but the vehemence of his tone suggests personal homosexual panic. This panic is not surprising, for *The Origins of Private Property, the Family, and the State* is a product of male homosocial relations, and as Sedgwick has pointed out, late-modern Western male homosocial systems are characterized by homosexual panic (*Between Men* 4-5). To retrace the homosocial origins of this text: Marx had felt a strong sense of identification with Morgan's work and had long desired to read Morgan's work in terms of dialectical materialism. However, Marx did not live to carry out the project. Hence, Engels wrote the book as a posthumous act of filial responsibility to Marx. Indeed, Engels describes the writing of the book as an "execution of Marx's bequest," a description which seems particularly ironic, given that *The Origins of Private Property, the Family, and the State* is a scathing critique of a system built around the transmission of property between men. Just as sons in a patriarchal culture defend the property and the family name they inherit from their fathers, so too Engels insists that the real origin of the text is Marx rather than Morgan. Morgan merely happened to "discover afresh" ideas that had been previously discovered by Marx (*Origin* 71). Just as women mediate the desires among men in a patriarchal culture, so too the ideas and notes for *The Origin of Private Property, the Family, and the State* seem to have mediated the intellectual and affective relations among Engels, Marx, and Morgan.

For an excellent account of how the homosocial bond between Marx and Engels informs *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, cf. Andrew Parker.
2 In contrast to Carpenter, other late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century homosexual writers like Marcel Proust and E.M. Forster analogized the position of the marginal Jew to that of the marginal homosexual.

3 Carpenter's contradictory attitudes toward feminism and maternity can be seen in other prominent Victorian feminists. Olive Schreiner, for instance, in her book *Women and Labour* both strenuously argues that women should have greater responsibility and at the same praises maternity as woman's highest destiny. Like Carpenter, Schreiner sees civilization as having alienated middle-class women from their true calling as mothers. Schreiner argues that one reason to improve woman's lot in England is to improve the nation's racial stock since healthy, contented women make good mothers. In particular, she suggests that the nation needs healthy women to breed virile rather than effeminate sons (*Women and Labour*, esp. 82-83).
Chapter 5

Transvaluing Immaturity: Reverse Discourses of Male Homosexuality in E. M. Forster's Posthumously Published Fiction.

An examination of some of the critical accounts of E. M. Forster's authorial career demonstrates that the stereotype of the developmentally arrested homosexual powerfully inflects many readings of his authorial career: these accounts represent Forsterian texts which explicitly thematize homosexuality as "immature" distractions from a developmental trajectory that reaches its aesthetic telos with A Passage to India. Forster's posthumously published texts are both complicit with and resistant to the fiction of the immature homosexual, which so conspicuously informs critical reactions to them.

To put it schematically, the writer employs three contradictory but related strategies in reinscribing and challenging the connection between immaturity and homosexuality: First, at times, he faithfully rehearses the critical developmental plot and sets up an opposition between the mature demands of great literature and the immature pleasures of homosexuality. In this version of Forster's mythology, great art gets located outside historical contingency and stands in sharp opposition to homosexual desire which becomes associated with a movement backwards in time. Second, at other places in the texts, he works within the developmental plot but transvalues it. That is, while he associates male homosexuality with youthfulness, he celebrates this youthfulness and sets it in pointed opposition to the destructive obsession with progress that characterizes heteronormative culture. In this version of Forster's mythology, the youthful homosexual is represented as having a special access to the pleasures of the body because of his access to lost classical culture as well as "primitive" working-class and non-Western men, an access that is denied to excessively self-conscious, middle-class, "mature" heterosexual men. Finally, there are still other moments in these texts where through the use of repetition and violent endings, Forster undermines and reflexively questions the myths that he simultaneously employs:
empty repetition in these texts works to undercut their optimism and nostalgia. Further, by associating sterile repetition with normative culture’s punitive response to homosexuals’ transgression of racial, class, and gendered boundaries, he suggests that rather than homosexuals, it is heterosexist society that should be seen as pathologically arrested, endlessly repeating the enforcement of its rigid laws. Similarly, the violent endings of the stories work to unconceal the brutal, indeed deadly, limitations of the generational mythology surrounding homosexuality that Forster is forced to employ.

In focusing on Forster’s posthumously published texts, I do not wish to obscure thematic continuities between texts published during and after his life. Clearly, certain themes and topoi repeatedly appear in Forster’s work: The association of Italy and classical Greece with childlike, sensual pleasures that informs many of the stories in The Life to Come can also be found in texts published during his lifetime, like Where Angels Fear to Tread or the stories of The Celestial Omnibus. The association in Maurice of pastoral England with a non-domestic space of homoerotic possibility also clearly underlies The Longest Journey. And, the eroticized violence between men of different races and nationalities which I examine in the stories in The Life to Come can also be found in texts like Where Angels Fear to Tread.

That the texts published prior to Forster’s death are framed in heterosexualized terms does not vitiate my reading of the posthumously published works. For reasons of space, I will elaborate on just one instance of the continuity between the representations of male homoerotics in Forster’s posthumously published work and texts published during his lifetime. In this essay, I contend that the violent conclusions of many of the stories in The Life to Come can be read as Forster self-reflexively commenting on the limitations of the developmental narrative which he simultaneously employs in representing male same-sex desire. On the face of it, a novel like Where Angels Fear to Tread might seem to call this claim into question. After all, that novel, published during Forster’s lifetime, represents a scene of intense violence between the Italian Gino and the English protagonist
Philip. Yet, Philip and Gino are not lovers, and the novel ends with Philip meditating on his thwarted love for Caroline Abbott. However, I would suggest that the novel’s triangulated homosocial configuration places it on a continuum with the texts that more directly thematize homosexuality.\(^1\) after all, Philip learns to desire Caroline physically only by heeding the commendations of his male “friend” Gino:

[Philip] had reached love by the spiritual path: [Caroline’s] thoughts and her goodness and her nobility had moved him first . . . the beauties of her hair, and her voice, and her limbs -- he had noticed these last; Gino . . . had commended them to his friend. (154, my emphasis)

If, in The Life to Come, male ethnic and racial others help the English homosexual to gain access to his body, in the passage above, it is through the mediation of Gino, the Italian male other, that Philip comes to apprehend Caroline physically. Further, while the narrative voice rather abstractly tells us of Philip’s mediated physical desire for Caroline, the text vividly dramatizes the two men’s sadomasochistic struggle (a struggle, incidentally, which begins with the sadistic Gino “approaching” Philip “from behind,”) thus evoking the thematics of interracial sodomy and homosexual rape so crucial to many of the stories in The Life to Come,\(^2\) as though the imaginative energy of the novel is far more engaged by the bonds between the two men than Philip’s relationship with Caroline.

The logic of the heterosexual marriage plot demands that Where Angels Fear to Tread ends with a consideration of the relationships, even if thwarted, between men and women -- Philip’s frustrated desire for Caroline and Caroline’s frustrated desire for Gino. Yet, the intense scene of physical confrontation between two men refuses to disappear as a mere stage on the way to that conclusion. It functions, I would suggest, as an irreducible supplement to the novel’s ending, both allowing Forster to represent Philip and Gino’s eroticized relationship and to register violently the impoverishment of the terms through which he can represent that relationship.\(^3\) In other words, despite the homosocial frame of
the text, this scene in the novel functions in the same way as the conclusions to many of Forster’s posthumously published texts which more directly thematize homosexuality.

Far from desiring to quarantine those of Forster’s texts which explicitly address homosexual desire from his canonical body of writings, I want to underline precisely how tortuous are the developmental/generational boundaries some critics have attempted to draw between the supposedly major and minor parts of the Forsterian oeuvre. Unavoidably, though, in challenging this critical developmental narrative, I partially reinscribe its terms by artificially separating those texts which Forster published posthumously from those published during his lifetime. In that sense, I am in a similar predicament to Forster himself: in calling into question the (il)logic of a dominant developmental narrative, I am forced to rely partially on that narrative’s terms.

Developmental Accounts of Forster’s Authorial Career

This cultural figuration of the homosexual as arrested and immature powerfully informs critical evaluations of Forster. F. R. Leavis’s single essay on Forster illustrates this claim. At various points, Leavis declares that Forster’s works are "unmistakably minor," "disconcertingly inexperienced," and "immature" (264 and 268). Although he does not directly mention homosexuality, merely coyly declaring that Forster’s biographer does not "provide the biographical information about Forster that however impertinently, in one sense of the adverb, we should like to have" (261), his repeated, impertinent, in the denigratory sense of that adjective, feminization of Forster suggests that he is more than aware of the information the biographer withholds.4 The discourses of inversion and immaturity play off each other in Leavis’s description of Forster’s "light . . . rather spinsterly poise" (262), his "spinsterish inadequacy" (263), and his "lack" of "force or robustness of intelligence" (267). These descriptions with vicious economy both feminize and infantilize Forster, for a "spinster" is a woman who according to the telos of the heterosexual narrative has not attained full maturity since she has not fulfilled the demands of the marriage plot. The other essays in The Common Pursuit, the collection in which the
essay on Forster is republished, reinforce how overdetermined Leavis's axiological pronouncements are by a heterosexist developmental narrative. Thus, in an essay on homosexual W. H. Auden, Leavis predictably speaks of "undergraduate immaturity," and in his essay on bisexual John Maynard Keynes, he focuses on Keynes' and the whole Bloomsbury circle's (with their queer, anti-normative ethos) "undergraduate immaturity" and dismisses them as being "arrest[ed in their] development" (257).

The metonymies of immaturity so central to Leavis's evaluation of Forster also shape the dominant critical narrative regarding Forster's authorial career.5 In Archaeology of Knowledge, Foucault convincingly argues that the collection of texts we consider as constituting the "works" of an author is constructed:

The problems raised by the oeuvre are even more difficult. Yet at first sight what could be more simple? A collection of texts that is designated by the proper name of an author. But this designation (even leaving to one side problems of attribution) is not a homogenous function: does the name of an author designate in the same way a text that he has published under his name, a text that he has presented under a pseudonym, another found after his death in an unfinished draft . . . The establishment of a complete oeuvre presupposes a number of choices. . . (24)

Prior to the publication of Forster's posthumous fiction, the canonical critical account of his oeuvre was invested in a developmental narrative which represented him as growing through a series of novels which culminated in A Passage to India: Stephen Land, for instance, writes, "If we survey the sequence of Forster's five published novels, we see in outline a creative career of increasingly progressive achievement" (Land, x). The title of the first volume of P.N. Furbank's biography of Forster, The Growth of the Novelist, reflects Land's story line. According to this canonical narrative, Forster falls into a mysterious silence after A Passage to India and does not write anything major again. Thus, for instance, in 1953, L. P. Hartley writes, "one of the saddest gaps in the bookshelves of contemporary literature is the space that should be occupied by the unwritten works of Mr.
E. M. Forster. . . It is nearly thirty years since . . . A Passage to India” (Critical Heritage, 46).

However, Forster’s posthumously published texts challenge the developmental accounts of his writing career. If the canonical story line represents his texts as steadily developing toward the culmination of A Passage to India, how can it explain stories that are published after A Passage to India, stories, moreover, which explicitly thematize “immature” homosexuality? The heterosexist critical plot can accommodate those posthumously published texts that were written prior to A Passage to India. For even though they are published posthumously, they can be represented as the author’s “immature” work which leads to the telos of A Passage to India. Thus, Barbara Rosecrance writes of Maurice:

Maurice is a painful book. We must respect the suffering it reveals, but the novel is otherwise largely distinguished by an absence of eloquence and depth that makes Forster a novelist of distinction . . . [Forster] did write another novel -- his greatest [A Passage to India] -- after Maurice. (150)

In Rosecrance’s account, Maurice is a flawed, immature, superficial symptom of Forster’s “suffering,” his homosexuality, but it gives way to Forster’s “greatest” novel, A Passage to India. Maurice in this critical story is an unfortunate stage through which Forster passes on his way to the artistic maturity of A Passage to India. Neil Bartlett, a contemporary gay novelist, has described how as a closeted schoolboy, he both internalized and resisted a version of Rosecrance’s critical story: while he tried to convince his teacher at school that Maurice was better than the Forster novel assigned by the educational authorities, A Passage to India, he was simultaneously embarrassed about whether, in doing so, he was betraying an excessively “adolescent enthusiasm” (31, my emphasis). In other words, not only does this developmental critical account impose a heterosexist grid on Forster’s career, it also works to discipline the taste of Forster’s readers, including some of his gay-identified ones.
While Maurice, written more than a decade before A Passage to India, neatly fits the developmental account of Forster's career, The Life to Come poses great difficulties to this plot since most of the stories in the anthology were written well after A Passage to India: while A Passage to India was published in 1924, "Dr. Woolacott," "Arthur Snatchfold," "The Classical Annex," "What Does it Matter," "The Obelisk," "The Torque," and "The Other Boat" were written in 1927, 1928, 1930-31, probably the 1930s, 1939, 1958 at the latest, and 1957 or 58 respectively. One way to cover this temporal contradiction in the developmental story line is to dismiss the quality of the stories as "immature" because of their subject matter, regardless of when they were written. Thus, they are often dismissed as "light-weight," "minor," "self-indulgent" (cf. Land xi, Rosecrance 151, the critics cited in Martin, "Forster's" 69). These are, of course, the very adjectives that are often used in pathologizing the "immature" homosexual. The adjective "minor" is a good example of the economical way in which seemingly formal evaluative statements are inflected by the developmental narrative. "Minor," in many of these readings, shifts between two senses. On the one hand, "minor" implies something "insignificant" as opposed to something central, something "major." On the other hand, "minor" also implies something young, something immature. Through a tight web of associations, then, The Life to Come is seen as unimportant and trivial (minor) because it is young (minor), and its youthfulness is linked to the fact that it represents homosexuality (which is a form of youthfulness). Other related terms often used in dismissing these stories such as "frivolous" (Martin, "Forster’s” 69) or "light-weight" (Land, xi) do not directly refer to the stories as immature but reinforce the metaphors of immaturity that inform representations of homosexuality.

Another way to deal with the immature homosexual stories that come after A Passage to India is to represent them as a perverse byway that does not belong on the story line of Forster's authorial career at all. While grudgingly acknowledging that Forster's "pen did not dry up after A Passage to India", to use the explicitly spermatic terms of Judith Hertz, these critics figure the stories as a perverse distraction from Forster's "mature" art
(Hertz 7). Thus Rosecrance chides Alan Wilde for placing the stories in *The Life to Come* "implicitly on the same conceptual level of *A Passage to India,*" and she suggests that the only reason he does so is because of "their temporal position." But she contends that since the stories deal with "a byway of experience, the thrills and punishments of homosexual passion," "these private fantasies debar themselves from consideration or judgment with the mainstream of Forster's fiction. Thus, despite their greater contemporaneity [to *A Passage to India*], the homosexual stories close the byway opened in *Maurice* with a no-exit sign [and] direct our attention to the culmination of Forster's art in *A Passage to India*" (Rosecrance 150). On the one hand, Rosecrance criticizes Wilde for misjudging the stories' "minor status" simply because of their "temporal" position. On the other hand, the vehemence of her tone suggests that she too is invested in the "temporal" position of Forster's writings because she is invested in a plot in which Forster consistently grows, and the homosexual stories upset the satisfying ending of that developmental story line. So she attempts to exclude them from her critical plot by suggesting that they are irrelevant to the "mainstream" of Forster's art. They are a mere "private," "dead end" "byway" that should not distract us from the true "culmination" of Forster's career in *A Passage to India*. Rosecrance's metaphors and critical story line draw on sexological and psychoanalytic representations of homosexuality as a non-reproductive perversion. Just as a "perversion" is defined in sexological and psychoanalytic discourse as a swerving away from the path toward reproductive adulthood, so too the stories in *The Life to Come* are mere byways to the mainstream which leads to *A Passage to India*. Rosecrance's phrase "dead end" is particularly sinister, given dominant culture's persistent association of male homosexuality with anal intercourse and death (cf. Bersani, esp. 211-212, and Edelman, 22-23). In other words, while Forster's true art leads to the healthy aesthetic maturity of *A Passage to India*, homosexual texts like *Maurice* and the stories in *The Life to Come* lead to the unproductive, "dead end" traditionally associated with sodomy.
Literature versus Immature Homoeroticism: Forster’s Complicity With the Developmental Narrative.

Unhappily, Forster himself at various places internalizes the homophobic developmental account of literary production I have traced above. For instance, after burning a number of his stories in April 1922, Forster wrote in his diary “Have this moment burnt my indecent writings. . . They clogged me artistically. . . When I. . . began them, I had a feeling that I was doing something . . . dangerous to my career. . . they were a wrong channel for my pen” (xii). In this formulation, Forster employs precisely the hydraulic developmental metaphors that homophobic critics use in describing his posthumous writings. The journal entry implies that the homosexual writer has to renounce the stories which thematize sodomy, "the wrong channel," for they will "clog" his artistic development. Like his homophobic critics, then, Forster too sets “true” art or Literature in opposition to the irresponsible, deviant pleasures of homosexuality

Incidentally, Forster’s description of how the stories were destroyed -- "Have this moment burnt my indecent writings" -- intertextually resonates with this passage from Maurice also figuring a relinquishing of immature homoeroticism: Clive Durham on his return from Greece finds that he has lost his homoerotic feelings and is ready to assume his position as an adult male heterosexual subject, and the narrative voice exclaims, "the love of women would rise, certainly as the sun, scorching up immaturity and ushering in the full human day" (Maurice 128, my emphasis). Just as Clive’s homoerotic "immaturity" is "scorch[ed] up," then, Forster’s homosexual stories are consigned to the flames, so he can move forward to artistic maturity. One should add, though, that while the quoted passage in Maurice is in free indirect discourse and represents Clive’s position, a position from which the narrative voice maintains considerable ironic distance, the passage cited from Forster’s journal seems anything but ironic.

It is not surprising that Forster should set up an opposition between homosexuality and great art, for like many modernists, he believes that great art transcends history while,
as we will see at greater length in the next section of the essay, he often associates homosexuality with a movement back in time. Aspects of the Novel best illustrates Forster's characteristically modernist distrust of history. As I have mentioned before, in this text, he repudiates historicist interpretations of literature and contends that rather than regarding the English novelists as influencing each other temporally, we are to think of them seated together in a circular room, writing their novels simultaneously, removed from the contingent flux of history: Later, he approvingly cites T. S. Eliot's contention that the "duty of the critic" is "to see [literature] not as consecrated by time, but to see it beyond time" (Eliot qtd. in Aspects 23). Significantly, Forster uses a homoerotically charged example to illustrate the difference between an immature attachment to temporality and the true critic's distrust of mere time: in a section entitled "Story," Forster declares that as a boy he "loved ... The Swiss Family Robinson ... [with its] four demigods named Fritz, Ernest, Jack, and little Franz," and that even now he could deliver "a glowing lecture" on that tale "because of the emotions [he] felt in boyhood." But, he goes on, such feelings should not be indulged in until one's "brain decays entirely." The mature critic's concern is "great literature," and "great literature" transcends temporality (Aspects 31). In this example, Forster links pleasure in mere temporality, which he associates with the formal category "story" as opposed to "plot," both to pathology (the decayed brain, etc.) and the implicitly homoerotic figures of the "four demigods named Fritz, Ernst, Jack and little Franz" of The Swiss Family Robinson. And in opposition to the suspect, immature pleasures of temporality and the male demigods of the celebrated boys' story, he sets great literature which transcends history and the temporality connected with mere "story."

The opposition between immature homosexual pleasures and mature heterosexual art appears in The Life to Come also, but in the short stories, youthful homosexuality is usually privileged over the supposedly adult worlds of writing and literature. In the story "Ansell," for instance, it is precisely the first person narrator's bookishness -- he is working on his dissertation -- that cuts him off from his boyhood friend, the gamekeeper
Ansell: "We [the narrator and Ansell] were now so very different that comparison was painful... I was writing a dissertation on the Greek optative for a Fellowship and Ansell was now gamekeeper" (3). When the narrator's books are destroyed in the river, he represents it in the catastrophic terms of amputation or castration -- "It means-- well it's as if you [Ansell] had to lose your leg" (3-4). And yet it is precisely the loss of the books which allows the narrator to communicate with Ansell and to reach an idyllic homoerotic union with him at the end of the story: "Ansell began to talk... The weight of the books which had kept him down... had fallen into the river, and now he was at his own level and could speak of the things he cared for" (7). "Ansell has appropriated me, and I have no time to think of the future... Whenever we look at the place [where the books fell over into the stream], Ansell... laughs, and I laugh too" (9). It is the destruction of the books, then, which allows the narrator to return to his joyous boyhood union with Ansell and to forget about the future.  

In both the journal entry and in his posthumous stories, Forster draws on the terms of a developmental narrative to conceptualize homosexuality. In contrast to the journal entry, though, which faithfully repeats a denigratory heterosexist developmental narrative, in most of the posthumously published works, Forster affirms the connection between homosexuality and youthfulness but attempts to transvalue the implications of youthfulness in order to celebrate male homosexual desire.  

Youthful Homosexuality and the Return to the Past  

Forster's posthumously published texts draw on many of the same terms that are used to pathologize them: if normative culture equates homosexuality with childishness, these writings too associate realizing homosexual desire with moving back in time or returning to childhood. For instance, Maurice represents the realization of homosexual fulfillment as the recovery of a lost childhood object of desire. At the beginning of the novel, Maurice loses the garden boy George, significantly because George has become "too old" (17). Maurice tries to convince himself that this loss is insignificant and to adapt
himself to the demands of the heterosexual marriage plot: "[Maurice] whispered, 'George, George.' Who was George? Nobody -- just a common servant. Mother and Ada and Kitty were far more important" (19). But the whole of the novel can be read as Maurice's finding his way back to that lost childhood object. For closure is achieved when Maurice reaches lasting physical intimacy with the working-class gamekeeper Alec Scudder who both in his class and pastoral profession evokes the lost garden boy George from the beginning of story. In other words, in Maurice, realizing homosexual desire is represented as recovering a lost past.

This pattern can also be seen in many of the short stories in The Life to Come. To take just one instance, in "The Other Boat," Lionel is able to experience his homosexual desires on the boat traveling from England to India, by repeating his childhood encounter with Cocoanut on another boat traveling in the opposite direction. Lionel's second meeting with Cocoanut is full of uncanny echoes of the first one. To take one sinister example: on the earlier boat, the boy Lionel had wanted Cocoanut to "play" because "he [was] the only one who fell down when he [was] killed" (Life 166). On the second boat, Lionel and Cocoanut play again; this time in the closeted space of their cabin; and once again Lionel kills Cocoanut, as in their boyhood games.

In "Arthur Snatchfold" an early morning homosexual encounter foregrounds the link between youthfulness and homosexuality. Aging Sir Richard Conway -- we are told he has "grey hair" -- is hemmed in by his responsibilities as a heterosexual patriarch and businessman and is depressed by the dullness and sterility of the Donaldson's home (Life 97-98). But he is able temporarily to escape these restraints in his early-morning tryst with Arthur Snatchfold in the woods. The sexual play between Conway and Snatchfold is described in terms of boyish horseplay: "[Conway] tweaked at the impudent nose [of Snatchfold]. It dodged, it seemed used to this sort of thing" (102). Horseplay, in fact, plays an important role in Forster's figuring of male homosexual pleasure -- think of the constant "ragging" between Clive and Maurice (Maurice 44) -- perhaps both because
"horseplay" provides a genteel way to represent physical intimacy between men but also because Forster associates realizing homosexual desire with recovering youthful pleasures. At the end of "Arthur Snatchfold," in order to preserve his safety and "go forward with his career" (112), Conway has to suppress the early morning boyish pleasures he shared with Arthur Snatchfold. Significantly, we are told at the end of the story that Conway's "face in the mirror" was that of an old man" (112). In other words, having to relinquish the youthful matutinal pleasures of homosexuality, Conway returns to being an old man living in the drab afternoon or evening hours of heteronormative culture.9

Apart from moving back in time at an ontogenetic level, homosexual characters in Forster's posthumously published fiction also move back in history. In particular, they tend to return to Greece. In his Commonplace Book, Forster approvingly quotes Marx's description of Greece as embodying "the social childhood of Humanity" and his description of the Greeks as "normal, healthy children" (Marx qtd. in Commonplace Book, 108). It is consistent with this conception of Greece that in order to experience their childlike homosexual desires, many of the characters in The Life to Come should move back in time to Greece: In "Albergo Empedocle," for instance, Harold, who is getting ready to marry Mildred, falls asleep between "two ruined columns of the temple of Zeus" at Girgenti, which the editor tells us "are clearly the legs of a gigantic male figure" (235). In this sleep, Harold discovers that he has lived in Greece in an earlier time and has "loved better too" (24-25). As Harold begins to revert to his Greek persona, the only one whom he thinks might understand him is his friend Tommy: "Is there no, no one who understands?[Harold cried out.] He stumbled up the passage as if he were blind and they heard him calling 'Tommy'" (32). The story ends with Harold who has now completely slipped away from the modern world into his Greek past kissing his attentive friend Tommy (35). If in a psychoanalytic narrative, homosexuality represents an early stage that must be left behind in order to move to adult heterosexuality, in "Albergo Empedocle," Harold has to
slip backward in time to a past life, his Greek childhood, in order to avoid the confines of compulsory heterosexuality and achieve union with Tommy.

"The Classical Annex" is slightly different from "Albergo Empedocle" in that Denis, the homosexual figure, is a boy, rather than an adult, and the statue is "late Roman" rather than Greek work. But the terms of the story's discourse participate in the same logic as that of "Albergo Empedocle." They set up an opposition between the adult curator who is influenced both by rationalism and middle-class Protestant values and his son Denis and the classical statue both of whom are linked to a youthful, sensual, classical past. When the statue in the museum comes alive and makes a pass at the curator, he is scandalized by this "obscene breath from the past" (149) and flees from the museum. But his beautiful young son Denis responds to the seductive advances of the statue with pleasure and amusement:

Then far away the [curator] heard a familiar, an adorable sound: a giggle. Denis was laughing at something. . . . he heard his son,' Aren't you awful?' and there was the sound of a kiss. (150)

In at least two places in the story, one gets the sense that the curator at some level wants to do to his son precisely what the statue is doing: early in the story, when the curator is trying to replace the fig leaf on the statue, he thinks "how much more personable" "than this classical lout" "Denis" is (148). Later in the tale, the curator perceives Denis's giggle as "adorable," an ambiguously sentimental adjective which eroticizes the curator's paternal concern. The adult, "modern" (149) curator, however, cannot return to the past at either an ontogenetic or phylogenetic level, and so is cut off from the youthful homosexual pleasures of Denis and the statue.

In some of the texts, the homoerotic movement back in time involves a return to England's pastoral past, rather than a return to Greece. In Maurice, for instance, Maurice and Scudder return to England's greenwood. We know from the pageant in Forster's Abinger Harvest that the writer associates the woods with an idealized, preindustrial state
of harmony. In that pageant, the greenwood is represented as both being ancient and "eternal," an antidote to the fruits of modern progress, "houses and bungalows, hotels, restaurants and flats, arterial roads, by-passes, petrol pumps, and pylons" (363). By making Maurice and Scudder return to the greenwood, Forster links homoerotic desire to a pastoral England prior to the fall into capitalism and urbanization. The same link can be seen in "Ansell" where the early morning encounter, as I have said, takes place in the woods.

There is a tension between Forster's theoretical statements on history in essays in Abinger Harvest and the ways in which he draws on other historical periods in his posthumously published texts. In several of the essays in Abinger Harvest Forster self-consciously addresses the problem of violating historical difference. In "The Consolations of History," for instance, he gently pokes fun at the ways in which historians can avoid "social and moral" "dangers" by projecting their desires onto the past: "If only a sense of actuality can be lulled -- and it sleeps for ever in most historians -- there is no passion that cannot be gratified in the past. The past is devoid of all dangers social and moral" (167). While in the quotation above there is no explicit value judgment, in the essay on visiting Cnidus which follows "The Consolations of History," Forster implicitly suggests that there is something predatory about projecting one's indulgent desires onto the past. In this essay, he recounts how he retrospectively has revised a muddled, to use a characteristically Forsterian term, journey that he made to the shrine of Demeter at Cnidus. According to Forster, when he visited Cnidus, there was a storm, and a mysterious man attempted to join his party on its return. Although the stranger was friendly, "everyone avoided [his] attentions," and he finally "melted away in the darkness," an image suggestive of death. However, Forster confesses that in retrospectively considering this visit, he idealizes it. For instance, he "never cease[s] to dry up [Cnidus's] puddles, and brush away its clouds, and span[s] it over with blue sky, in which is hanging a mid-day sun that never moves." Although he does not explicitly revise his deathly encounter with the extra male passenger,
he enigmatically tells us in the last sentence of the essay, "even over that extra person the brain will not keep steady." We do not know for sure how Forster revises that non-encounter with the stranger, and why he should characterize his revision as "not steady." Could it be that in retrospect he tries to endow that frustratingly empty (non-) encounter with some more idealized homoerotic content? Regardless of how exactly he reshapes the encounter at Cnidus, it is clear that Forster sees these revisions as assaultive: The experience at Cnidus, he writes, "lies a defenceless prey to the sentimental imagination" (Abinger 178, my emphasis). But Forster's scruples about appropriating the past and revising it which are so evident in Abinger Harvest vanish in his posthumously published texts where he seems fairly unreflectively to appropriate Greece and other cultures in constructing his reverse discourse of male homosexuality.

Another manifestation of the link between homosexuality and youthfulness is Forster's emphasis on cross-racial, cross-national homosexual relationships. For Forster, non-Western men seem associated with youthfulness. Hence, many of the stories in The Life to Come use youthful and infantilizing language to figure the non-Western men whom the Englishmen desire. For instance, in "The Other Boat," Lionel's Eurasian lover Cocoanut is at various points described as "adolescent" (174), a "subtle, supple boy" (174), "a weird youth" (171), and "kid" (194). Similarly, in the short story "The Life to Come," Vithobai, the non-Western lover of the Christian missionary Paul Pinmay, is initially described in youthful terms as a "gracious and bare-limbed boy" (68). But when Vithobai converts to Christianity and becomes Barnabas, he loses his youth and becomes old and sick, as though his primitive youthfulness is corrupted by Western culture. At the end of the story, however, when Barnabas returns to his pagan persona, Vithobai, and stabs the missionary, so they might be united together in the life to come, he regains his youth: "He rejoiced as in his boyhood" (82). In the same vein, in "The Torque" we are told that the barbarian Goths, who will rape the Christian Marcian and allow him to discover the pleasures of a younger, pre-Christian, pagan sensuality, have "childish" faces
(157) and are “wild boys” (157). In associating homoerotic desire with the crossing of racial and national boundaries, Foster also associates it with crossing generational ones. By realizing their desire for men of other races, English homosexuals are able to recover their youthfulness, in a way denied to heterosexual men.

But it is not simply the objects of desire that link youthfulness to homoeroticism in The Life to Come. The insistent association of homoerotic pleasure with a movement to non-Western spaces also establishes that link. Johannes Fabian has pointed out how “evolutionary anthropology” "spatializes time"(Fabian 31), and Forster deploys a similar technique. Just as the anthropologist, in Fabian’s argument, imagines that he is moving to another time when he moves to another culture(31), so too Western homosexuals in The Life to Come often move back in time when they move into non-Western spaces. In “The Other Boat,” for instance, when Lionel comes aboard the ship in England, he is an adult “soldier man,” who is revolted at Cocoanut’s sexual advances (174.); he certainly doesn’t want to play. But as the ship moves toward the East, it is Lionel who in an actively passive fashion makes the next sexual move: “Resistance weakened under the balmier sky.... Cocoanut was leaning out of the porthole to see the sunlit rock of Gibraltar. Lionel leant against him to look too and permitted a slight, very slight familiarity with his person.” “More happened off the coast of Sicily, more, much more at Port Said, and here in the Red Sea they slept together as a matter of course” (177). The narrator’s scrupulous mapping of the ship’s trajectory functions to make geography as much as Lionel the agent in this seduction. It is "the balmier sky" and "the sunlit rock of Gibraltar" that allows Lionel to initiate the moves that will allow him to move back in time to his childhood intimacy with Cocoanut, and the further east they move, the greater their ability to slip back in time. This spatialization of time can also be seen on the boat itself. During the day, Lionel plays the role of the proper, adult, colonial Englishman, playing bridge with his fellow Englishmen on deck. But at night he descends to his cabin, for while Lionel and Cocoanut can’t “associate on deck”; “it [is] a very different business down there” (173). In other words,
night and the childhood intimacy of Lionel and Cocoanut become associated spatially with
the cabin below deck, as well as the "lower" pleasures of genital (homo)sexuality. A
similar connection between time and place can be seen in "The Life to Come." The
"remote, romantic spot" (65) of the forest hut surrounded by its vast aged trees represents a
pre-historical space in which Western inhibitions can be completely shunned. Hence, in
the forest, Paul Pinmay can enjoy sex with Vithobai. In the forest too, Paul Pinmay’s
youth is repeatedly stressed — he is described as a “young man” with “pagan limbs and
ruffled gold hair” (65) and as “a very young man” (66). But as the “development” that the
Christian missionaries bring to the natives destroys the timeless forest (74), Pinmay grows
older— his hair grows “scanty” and it is no longer golden — and more dogmatically
intolerant of the youthful pleasures that he could enjoy in that vernal space — he is
obsessed, for instance, with the natives covering their pagan limbs(cf. 70 and 78). The
destruction of this primitive space, then, becomes equivalent to destroying the possibility of
moving back to an earlier time.

In associating the homosexual with youthfulness, Forster is complicit with several
conservative discourses, supporting Foucault’s contention that resistance is always
implicated with power. For instance, in representing Greece as a valorized, childlike
space, The Life to Come draws on the canonical terms of a long tradition of nineteenth-and
twentieth-century British Hellenism. The poles of “The Classical Annex,” for instance,
have a clear affinity with Matthew Arnold’s distinctions between Hebraism and Hellenism
in Culture and Anarchy. In “The Classical Annex,” the past is regarded nostalgically, and
we are meant to see that part of the curator’s inadequacy is his complete commitment to
modernity: his mind is described ironically as “powerful and modern” (149). This same
tone of nostalgia for the classical past permeates Arnold’s essay: for instance, he writes of
the movement from Hellenism to Hebraism, “the bright promise of Hellenism faded and
Hebraism ruled the world ” (470). Further, the representation of the community of
Bigglesmouth in “The Classical Annex” clearly draws on Arnold’s critique of Hebraism.
For Arnold, one of the greatest weaknesses of Hebraism is its obsession with sin: "the space which sin fills in Hebraism . . . is prodigious" (469). The community of Bigglesmouth embodied in Town Councilor Bodkin exemplifies this Hebraistic tendency. Thus, Bodkin and the town councilors, all "God-fearing men" (149), are continually preoccupied with preserving "decency" (150), and it is their desire to protect their children from sin—"You never know where young people may not pick up dirty thoughts"—that leads to them covering the classical statue's genitalia with an iron fig leaf. The discursive terms of The Life to Come, then, draw on many of the commonplaces of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century British Hellenism which undergirded British male homosocial culture.

Forster's fictions are also complicit with primitivism and the discourse of evolutionary anthropology. For instance, as we have seen, Forster figures non-Western men as childlike. This representation is resonant with a long tradition of evolutionary anthropology. As writers like George Stocking Jr., Marianna Torgovnic, Adam Kuper, Christopher Herbert and others have amply documented, many Victorian and Edwardian anthropologists represented people from non-Western cultures as childlike primitives. In these accounts, which were shaped by a vulgarized theory of evolutionary development, non-Western cultures became childish precursors to adult Western societies. Conversely, as historians of youth like John Springhall have shown, Anglo-American adolescent boys were often figured in terms that linked them to "primitive," non-Western cultures. For instance, Stanley Hall, in his enormously influential 1904 study Adolescence, argued that every individual passes through all the historical stages of humankind (Springhall, 30-31). The adolescent, in this ontogenetic recapitulation of human phylogeny, occupies a position analogous to the non-Western primitive, and it is enormously important to "civilize" him, so he can move beyond this state to reach his rightful position as an adult, male Western subject.

Further, Forster tends to associate the non-Western man with an intense eroticism which blurs the boundaries between self and other and this representation is consistent with
discourse of anthropological primitivism. As Herbert has pointed out, anthropological fictions of primitivism figured the primitive as intensely sensual and completely uninhibited. Hence Victorian and Edwardian anthropologists like Mc Lennan stressed the originary promiscuity of primitive tribes (58). The point was that in these youthful societies, there was no sense of individuation or boundaries. A sense of selfhood and a control over the passions in these accounts is a product of civilized Western culture. A version of these same fictions inform the discourse of *The Life to Come*. In many of the stories, the sexuality of “primitive” cultures is represented as completely unbounded and lacking any sense of individuation. The excitement of these “primitive” cultures for the Western homosexual protagonists is that it helps them to dissolve the restrictive adult, boundaries of selfhood that their culture has imposed on them.

“The Other Boat,” for instance, ends with a powerful and deadly sado-masochistic encounter between Lionel and Cocoanut, in which it is very difficult to separate sex from violence (note, for instance, how orgasm and death get conflated in the phrase, “when the end *came*”) or to completely distinguish the two men from each other: “[Cocoanut] lowered his mouth onto the muscular forearm and bit it. . . . The sweet act of vengeance followed, sweeter than ever for both of them and as ecstasy hardened into agony his hands twisted the throat. Neither of them knew when the end came” (195-196). Lionel’s hands are the only things that are distinct here (“His hands twisted the throat”). For the rest of the passage, it is very difficult to keep the actors separate, or to discern exactly what is happening. Whose “ecstasy is hardening”? Who is feeling “agony”? Any sense of separation between the two men collapses inward into the “them.” Similarly, violence and erotic pleasure blur into each other in this scene. The scene begins with Cocoanut asking for a kiss, but when the kiss is denied, he bites Lionel. Biting and kissing, ecstasy and agony, orgasm and literal death all collapse into each other. This representation of orgiastic, boundless erotic pleasure conforms with Western culture’s fantasies about the
complete absence of repression in and the insatiable sexuality of childlike, primitive cultures.

While the stories in *The Life to Come* draw on are undeniably complicit with the problematic terms of conservative discourses of Hellenism and primitivism, Forster does attempt partially to alter these conservative vocabularies in order to create a limited reverse discourse to celebrate and affirm homosexuality.\textsuperscript{10} No doubt, for instance, Forster associates the homosexual with the childlike, and in doing so, he is complicit with a heterosexist developmental narrative. However, rather than denigrating the child as immature when compared to the mature adult, Forster in many of the stories associates the child with a more healthy relationship to the body and greater perceptiveness than the adults. In “The Classical Annex,” for instance, the young boy Denis, unlike his father, the curator, shows no horror or terror at the homosexual advances of a classical statue. For while the adults in the story are fearfully anxious about repudiating sexuality, Denis is amused by it -- note the contrast, for instance, between the council’s decision to protect children by covering the statue’s genitalia with Denis’s going to meet his father with “practically nothing on but his football shorts” (*Life* 149). Not only are heterosexual adults extremely imperceptive in this story -- note how the council at the end of the story looks at the sculpture of Denis and the statue making love and can only perceive it as a wrestling match (153) -- they are also associated with a deadly stasis. After all, the curator’s prayer, intended to “protect” Denis from the delightful homosexual pleasures he is sharing with the statue, ends up literally petrifying the boy. Vitality and perceptiveness are associated with the child and the homoerotic rather than the adult world of heterosexuality.

This same inversion can be seen in Forster’s representation of the public school. Like Connolly, Forster attacks the public school as the source of the arrested emotional development of Englishmen, but unlike Connolly, Forster does not associate this immaturity with homosexuality. Indeed, like his homophile precursor Edward Carpenter, Forster sees childlike homosexuality as offering an alternative to the emotional sterility of
public school (Carpenter 110). Forster mounts his most detailed critique of public school ideology in the essay "Notes on the English Character." In this essay, he contends that "just as the heart of England is the middle classes, so the heart of the middle classes is the public-school system" (Abinger 3-4), but these institutions produce men who are hopelessly emotionally stunted: "[Public school men] go forth into [the world] with well-developed bodies, well-developed minds, and undeveloped hearts" (5, my emphasis). In contrast, to the emotionally sterile world of the English public school, Forster invokes "a world that is not entirely composed of public-school men or even of Anglo-Saxons, but of men who are various as the sands of the sea; . . . a world of whose richness and subtlety [public-school Englishmen] can have no conception" (5). This richly subtle international male community becomes particularized later in the essay when Forster compares his own need prudently to measure out his emotions with his "Oriental" male friend's emotional "kingly munificence and splendour." Masood, whom we know to be the unnamed "Oriental friend" in the essay, accuses Forster of measuring out his emotions "as if they were potatoes," and Forster responds that such prudence "is better than slopping them [emotions] about like water from a pail" (6). The spermatic metaphor suggests that the sterile world of the public school makes the Englishman scared of depleting his erotic resources as well as his emotions: "if I [Forster] poured it [emotion/semen?] out on small occasions, I was afraid of having none left for the great ones and for being bankrupt for the crises of life." By contrast, Masood with perverse grandeur believes that "the emotions may be endless. The more we express them, the more we have to express" (6-7). Forster's homoerotic bond with Masood, then, offers him a way to discover a more generous view of the world than that offered by the world of the public school.

In Maurice too, we see the inversion of Connolly's link between immature homosexuality and the ethos of the school. Maurice's school, designed to prepare boys to occupy the position of heterosexual subjects, is characterized by deadly stasis-- for instance, to the principal of Sunnington, his charges appear "a race small but complete, like
the New Guinea pygmies, 'his boys'' (10). In other words, like a racist anthropologist, the headmaster freezes the boys in time and regards them as perfectly finished, dead specimens. Paradoxically, for Maurice to grow, he must break out of this petrifying school atmosphere and move backward in time to the greenwood and the childlike pleasures of homoeroticism.11

Just as Forster both draws on and inverts the heterosexual developmental narrative, he both employs the terms of Arnoldian Hellenism and transforms them. As Richard Dellamora has pointed out, while Arnold is deeply nostalgic for Greece, his vision of Greece is a de-eroticized, cerebral one (Dellamora 104-109). Repeatedly, Arnold associates Greece with intellectual clarity, "The uppermost idea of Hellenism is to see things as they really are" (466). But for Forster, in stories like "Albergo Empedocle" and "The Classical Annex," Greece becomes a sensual, homoerotically charged signifier. In fact, in many of these stories, intellectual Hellenists of the Arnoldian variety are denied access to the true knowledge of Greece that "youthful" homosexuals have. In "Albergo Empedocle," for instance, Mildred Peaslake and her father are far better educated Hellenists than Harold, yet they are completely unable to perceive the Greek past he does. Similarly, in "The Classical Annex," although or perhaps because the curator has been trained at Oxford (149) and has a developed taste for classical art (147), the living manifestation of the homoerotic classical past terrifies him, and it is his completely naive son Denis who responds in a childlike, sensual fashion associates with the classical world. In "Ansell," the narrator may be studying the Greek optative, but he only discovers the true Hellenic spirit when he discards his books and surrenders to the garden boy Ansell. Finally, in Maurice, it is Clive, rather than Maurice, who is deeply invested in classical culture. But significantly as Clive's homosexuality slips away from him, he can only find Greece moribund. "Clive sat in the theatre of Dionysus. . . . But he saw only dying light and a dead land. He knew that the past was devoid of meaning like the present" (113). Without living homosexual desire, a desire that Maurice will realize with Scudder, Greece is dead for Clive.
immersd in Greek at both the public school and the university (Turner 5). At the same
time, homophobic British culture attempted to disavow the male same-sex desire which
was so central to Greek culture. Note, for instance, how Dean Cornwallis at Maurice's
college at Cambridge attempts to repress any discussion of homosexuality in Greece, "Mr.
Cornwallis observed in a flat toneless voice, 'Omit: a reference to the unspeakable vice of
the Greeks'" (50). By insistently linking Greece to a physical realization of homosexual
desire, Forster aggressively forces the male homosocial community to acknowledge the
homoeroticism of Greece which they would rather disavow.

But Forster's use of Greece does not merely challenge male homosocial
representations of the classics but a strand of male homosexual discourse as well. Linda
Dowling has explored how Platonic pederasty provided intellectuals at Oxford with a
powerfully enabling homophilic vocabulary. Although she emphasizes the distinction
between the temperaments of Oxford and Cambridge, many of her assertions can be
usefully applied to Cambridge as well (Dowling 79). As at Oxford, at Cambridge,
Platonic pederasty provided a way to defend same-sex desire, and many of Forster's
mentors, perhaps most notably Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, powerfully associated
their homosexuality with Plato, particularly the Plato of Symposium and Phaedrus. But as
Lionel Trilling points out, unlike Dickinson, Forster's brand of Hellenism resists the
asceticism of Plato: "We know of Forster that he is a Hellenist but not a 'classicist,' ... that
Plato has never meant much to him perhaps because he mistrusts the Platonic drive to
the absolute and the Platonic judgment on the body and senses" (Trilling 13). In his work,
Forster sometimes pits a sensual, chthonic, pre-Platonic Greece against the ascetic, cerebral
Platonic Greece of Lowes Dickinson and Clive. In constructing this distinction, Forster
draws on Jane Harrison's revisionary feminist account of Greece (Schneidau 77). Harrison
argued that prior to the creation of the anthropomorphic Olympian pantheon, matriarchal
Greek culture had a collective, organic unity with nature that was disrupted by the virile
individuating culture of the Olympic deities (Turner 125 - 127). Her influence is evident in
Maurice where Forster opposes Clive's ascetic faith in the motherless, virginal Athena — "Here dwelt his [Clive's] gods — Pallas Athene in the first place. . . . She understood all men though motherless and a virgin" (113) — with Maurice and Scudder's physically fulfilled homosexual desire in the greenwood that, as we have seen in chapter 3, Forster in his "Afterword" explicitly associates with the maternal womb: lamenting the loss of the greenwood, Forster writes, "There is no forest or fell to escape to today, no cave in which to curl up, no deserted valley for those . . . who wish to be left alone " (250, my emphasis).12

As with Arnoldian Hellenism, The Life to Come is both complicit with and partially transvalues a primitivist discourse of evolutionary anthropology. For the evolutionary anthropologist, the primitive was someone insufficient who needed to be developed. Thus, this discourse sustained the logic of colonialism: Western nations took over primitive societies in order to educate and civilize the childish natives. In this discourse, then, development was represented as something positive. But in The Life to Come, the "development" that Western culture brings is represented as being horrifically destructive. In the story "The Life to Come," for instance, the conversion of Vithobai and the invasion of the Western Christian missionaries leads to the destruction of the forest, epidemics among the villagers, and brutal economic exploitation.

Further, in this story, Forster draws an implicit analogy between the limitations of the marriage plot and the colonial, developmental one. At the beginning of the story, Vithobai the primitive shares his homoerotic pleasure with Pinmay in the forest. But as Vithobai "progresses" toward marriage, Christianity, and westernization, his culture is systematically destroyed. The metonymic linkage of marriage with Christianity and westernization suggests that just as the heterosexist developmental plot violently erases same-sex desire, the "progress" of colonial and Christian values ruthlessly destroys indigenous cultures. Neither plot can recognize difference; rather, difference is
immediately read as primitive or immature and attempts are made to erase it. Clearly, drawing a comparison between two incommensurate oppressions is politically problematic, but Forster's analogy suggests that he is not merely internalizing primitivist discourse but is attempting to critique it to some extent.

Not only does Forster criticize the developmental narrative of colonial anthropology, he also inverts it. While in the developmental narrative of evolutionary anthropology, the primitive is the child who needs to be educated by the adult Westerner, in The Life to Come, it is the Western homosexual who learns from the "primitive." The lessons that the youthful primitive is able to teach the Western homosexual include taking pleasure in the body. In "The Other Boat," for instance, Cocoanut teases Lionel saying, "Lion, he don't know nothing at all. Monkey's got to come along to tell a lion he's alive" (181). And indeed, it is Cocoanut who thaws Lionel's frozen, repressed sexual desire (192-193). Similarly, Paul Pinmay the Christian missionary in "The Life to Come" glibly talks of love but is alienated from the pleasures of the body. By literalizing the Christian formula, "God is love" and sleeping with Pinmay in the forest, Vithobai offers the missionary the possibility of confronting the lovelessness of his strain of Christianity and the emptiness of his professions of love. For Forster, the middle-class man's learning of bodily pleasure seems to be often implicated with the experience of being penetrated. Repeatedly in the stories, the experience of being buggered by a younger, "primitive," non-working man helps the overly cerebral Englishman/middle-class man to move from pure consciousness to an acknowledgment of his body: In "Arthur Snatchfold," for instance, the aged Sir Richard Conway is able to exult youthfully in his body after being penetrated by the working-class milkman. Similarly, even though in Maurice the first physical encounter between Scudder and Maurice is not explicitly figured in terms of anal intercourse, Scudder's forceful entry through the window of Maurice's bedroom evokes the thematics of penetration, and it is through Scudder that Maurice recovers his youth.
Beyond teaching the middle-class Englishman physical pleasure, the primitive destabilizes the Englishman's sense of integrity and forces him to confront the constructedness of identity. In "The Other Boat," for instance, Lionel starts out with a deep faith in a phallogocentric notion of selfhood. He views his name as guaranteeing the unequivocal nature of his identity and stoutly pronounces the almost mystical tautology, "My name is Lionel March and that's my name" (184). For Lionel, culture/the father/the law puts its stamp of approval on the essential identity of things by conferring motivated proper names on them; thus as a boy he sternly declares to Cocoanut that everything "must have a name because Adam named all the animals when the Bible was beginning" (167). But Cocoanut, the primitive, non-Western man is characterized by his shifting identity and his hybridity — he has different names for different people (to the people on deck he is known by his Eurasian surname, "Moraes," but for Lionel, he is "Cocoanut" because of the shape of his head); he has two passports ("one of the passports was Danish, the other Portuguese"); he is racially mixed ("half the blood must be Asiatic, unless a drop was Negro") and hence looks neither black nor white but has a "blackish-greyish skin" (173); and his gender appears indeterminate, so Mrs. March in some exasperation calls him "a silly, idle, useless, unmanly little boy" (170, my emphasis). Given Cocoanut's indeterminacy, it is no wonder that he should be radically skeptical of a system built around the unified self, and he destabilizes Lionel's certainties. Thus, by the end of the story, Lionel loses his rigidly defined sense of self and ecstatically merges with Cocoanut in a moment of deadly sadomasochistic intensity. It is important, I would suggest, that we do not join Lionel (and Forster perhaps) in mystifying Cocoanut's hybridity in metaphysical terms by locating him outside or beyond culture; to do so would be to dehumanize him in a familiarly Orientalist fashion. Rather, we should see Cocoanut as unconcealing the constructedness of all subjects. Lionel's identity, after all, is just as artificially constituted as that of Cocoanut, but from his unmarked position as a Western,
adult male subject, he cannot perceive its fictiveness until he sees it through the defamiliarizing lens of seemingly exotic Cocoanut.

In addition to inverting and transvaluing dominant developmental fictions of homosexuality, Forster also relies in his posthumous texts on empty repetition and violent endings to deconstruct the brutal (il)logic of those fictions.

Empty Repetition and Violent Endings

Both the title story of The Life to Come and Maurice illustrate the tortuous temporal split that Forster associates with realizing homosexual desire. "The Life to Come" begins in the past perfect tense: "Love had been born in the forest" (65). Right at the beginning of the story, then, we are already looking retrospectively at a homosexual passion that lies in the past. The story ends with Vithobai killing Pinmay, so he can recover the love they had in the life to come. However, the recovery of their passion does not enter representation. Forster told Siegfried Sassoon that he attempted unsuccessfully to represent Pinmay and Vithobai's life together beyond the grave, but it is significant that in fact, we never do get to see them beyond the grave (Life to Come 237). Similarly, in Maurice, right at the beginning of the novel we learn that Maurice has lost his object of desire, the garden boy George. Once again, we begin with homoerotic desire already lying in the past. And the novel ends with Maurice slipping away into the darkness "leaving no trace of his presence except a little pile of petals of the evening primrose, which mourned from the ground like expiring fire" (232). The image of the mourning petals like expired fire and the darkness link Maurice's disappearance into the greenwood with death. Again, Forster tells us in the Afterword to the novel that he tried to represent Maurice and Scudder's idyllic life in the greenwood, but he found himself unable to do so (Maurice 250). So, we never get to see Maurice recover George and his past in the life beyond death in the greenwood.¹³

The tension in these texts between a homoerotic desire which has already occurred but does not enter representation and the promise of a future realization of that desire which Forster cannot seem to represent, as well as the insistent association of homosexual desire
with death are eminently logical given the developmental narrative which he is both employing and inverting. In the developmental marriage plot, homosexuality is a stage that must be eliminated, in order to progress to adulthood. So, it is no wonder homosexuality should be associated with death, or merely seen as an immature stage that lies somewhere in the past prior to the language and culture employed by fully adult heterosexual subjects. Within the (il)logic of this narrative, then, it is impossible for homosexuality to enter full representation. No doubt, Forster inverts the terms of the narrative to celebrate youthfulness and to celebrate the life beyond the grave, but he is ultimately unable to displace that narrative's terms.

But if Forster is unable to displace the terms of a heterosexist developmental narrative, he does create limited friction within the developmental machinery that he employs. For instance, in many of the stories, he deploys empty repetition to undermine developmental logic. Perhaps the best example of this empty reversal of the developmental narrative occurs in the Afterwood to Maurice. On the face of it, Maurice seems to reach dialectical closure by moving forward through returning to England's past represented by the maternal greenwood. But in a 1960 "Afterword," Forster undermines the dialectical telos of the story. The "Afterword" begins in the same nostalgic terms as the novel with Forster looking back enviously at the greenwood which is being destroyed by industrialism and capitalism, a greenwood which Maurice and Scudder could flee to but one that is not available to us. It ends, however, by undercutting Maurice and Scudder's escape from heterosexual culture and class difference by asserting that nothing has really changed, and the same cycle continues to be repeated: "police prosecutions will continue and Clive on the bench will continue to sentence Alec in the dock. Maurice may get off" (251). The repetition of the phrase "will continue" in those final sentences undermines any hope of closure. Similarly, in "The Life to Come," Lionel's March's transgression and punishment emptily repeat those of his father: Lionel's father crossed racial boundaries by having an affair with a woman of color, and his transgression caused him to be deemed
unspeakable by his family and culture. Lionel practices miscegenation with a man, rather than a woman, but in an empty repetition of his father's punishment, he is posthumously deemed unspeakable by his mother. Again, the past provides no way to escape the cycle of repetition. One way to provide this empty repetition with some political content is to see it as an inversion of the heterosexist developmental plot: as we have seen, in the developmental plot, the homosexual is seen as a deviant who endlessly repeats his immature pleasures, but in these texts it is normative culture that is represented as pathologically frozen in time, ceaselessly and vengefully enforcing its prohibitions on crossing racial, class, and gendered lines.

More politically useful than his use of repetition, however, is Forster's use of violent endings to undermine the developmental logic of his stories. Several critics have pointed out how many of the stories in The Life to Come end with brutal deaths. For instance, both "The Life to Come" and "The Other Boat" end with murders and suicides -- Lionel kills himself and his lover Cocoa Nut in "The Other Boat" and Vithobai kills himself and Pinmay in "The Life to Come." I would suggest that one can read the violence in these stories as a self-reflexive comment on the murderously constraining limits of the plot which Forster is forced to employ. The heterosexist developmental plot erases homosexuality as a preliminary stage that must be eliminated on the way to the telos of heterosexual closure. But this violent erasure is effected with bland complacency -- homosexuality must slip away into the darkness, giving way to heterosexuality, because that's the way things are. While the idyllic tone of Maurice's ending might eroticize the link between death and homosexuality, it does not uncover the heterosexist violence that sustains this link. By contrast, the hyperbolic, even sadistically pornographic, tone of the endings of stories like "The Other Boat" and "The Life to Come" has the potential to plot. I use the phrase "has the potential" because as critics like Colleen Lamos have pointed out, one can never predict the "multivalent," "contingent" political effects of irony or parody, and indeed those critics who read these endings simply as a symptom of Forster's self-
hatred demonstrate the vulnerability of ironic attempts to undermine the norm (Lamos, "Postmodern" 99). However, at least one potential effect of these endings might be to disclose the complacent brutality of heterosexual developmental ideology. Indeed, I would suggest that Forster’s violent endings have greater potential to do anti-homophobic work than his nostalgia, for a celebration of youthful homosexual desire prior to or beyond culture offers very little political purchase to a struggle all too firmly situated within history. But beyond acting as a critique of a heterosexual developmental narrative, the endings of the Forster texts also help tonally to enrich the Foucauldian formulation through which I have read them: while the endings of these texts support Foucault’s insightful contention about the availability of the norm for anti-homophobic appropriation and resignification, their sensational violence salutarily dramatizes the toll and ambivalent pleasures which can be involved in such resistant strategies, affective complexities which the seemingly disinterested, self-assured tone of Foucault’s formulation does not adequately illuminate.

Ending this project by using Edwardian Forster to complicate the insights of postmodern Foucault through whose theoretical framework I have read all the texts in this project allows me to invert a developmental model of intellectual history, a move which satisfyingly resonates with the strategies deployed by several of the writers I examine in this project. Ultimately, however, such a gesture of temporal reversal has only a limited pay off for anti-homophobic politics. A more useful goal would be to denaturalize and try and partially displace both nostalgic and developmental accounts of sexuality.

In that spirit, let me terminate my project by returning you to the “Terminal Note” in Maurice which describes the scene at Millthorpe where Maurice was supposedly conceived. The note seems to offer us temporal certainties: “terminal” suggests that we have reached closure, and the description of the novel’s conception suggests we are being given a clear moment of origin. But in fact, it is very hard to keep past, present, and future, or forward and backward distinctly in place when we closely read that “terminal note.” On the one hand, in the note, Forster represents the touch from behind as allowing
him to advance, to develop as an artist. (Recall he writes in his diary, “Forward rather than backward”). On the other hand, the text which that touch supposedly produced is deeply nostalgic, and paradoxically Maurice’s progress involves moving backward to a conclusion in a pre-industrialized greenwood, which by the 1960s, we are told in the note, has long been lost. And yet, representationally, we have never gotten to see Maurice and Scudder share their pastoral bliss in that greenwood, so, in a sense the greenwood is as much a space that has yet to be as it is a space that has been lost. Past or present, forward or backward, immature or developed, it seems impossible definitively to adjudicate between these choices in the scene at Millthorpe. While it may be of utility in local anti-homophobic politics strategically to draw on nostalgic or utopian stories, the lesson I draw from the temporally incoherent scene at Millthorpe is that we should remember the fictiveness of these stories and the contradictory effects they engender.
Notes

1. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick theorizes the continuity between triangulated male homosocial and male homosexual desire in *Between Men* and describes the violent rupture that was effected between them in Anglo-American culture in the wake of the Wilde trials and the instantiation of the homo/heterosexual divide. The Structuralist model of mediated desire which Sedgwick both uses and historicizes is drawn from Rene Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel: Self and Other in Literary Structure*. Part of the attraction of Mediterranean and Indian cultures for Forster is that he believes these cultures allow a more seamless continuity between normative male homosocial and homosexual bonds.

2. Forster, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, 149. My reading of the confrontation between Gino and Philip as a displaced representation of sodomy is indebted to Sedgwick’s reading of similar scenes of violence between men in *Our Mutual Friend* (*Between Men*, chapter 9).

3. My description of Gino and Philip’s struggle as irreducibly supplementary to the conclusion of the novel relies on an understanding of the supplement elaborated by Jacques Derrida in *Of Grammatology*. In this text, Derrida theorizes that supplements call into question, or supplant, the seemingly self-contained structures to which they are supposedly ancillary. Although the idiom through which I read Forster’s posthumously published work is more Foucauldian than Derridean, my argument implicitly maintains that Forster’s posthumously published texts act as a supplement to the common critical developmental narrative describing his *œuvre* — that is, these works both constitute additions and fundamental challenges to the writer’s body of work as it has usually been critically narrativized.

4. This is not the only place where Leavis feminizes Forster. Contemptuously dismissing Forster’s Clark Lectures which were to become *Aspects of the Novel*, Leavis declared that, “Forster’s capacity audience consisted largely of sillier don’s wives.” He saw “the resultant book... [as] a nuisance” “since all the girls’ school English mistresses in England seized on the distinction between flat and round characters.” For Leavis, Forster’s “intellectual nullity” seems connected to his effeminacy, an effeminacy that is evidenced by the fact that he drew mainly women to his lectures and his ideas appealed mainly to schoolmistresses (F. R. Leavis qtd. in Oliver Stalleybrass’s introduction to E. M. Forster’s *Aspects of the Novel*, xi-xii).

   Ironically, certain defenders of Forster replicate the gendered terms of Leavis’s dismissal of Forster. In a recent study that attempts to rehabilitate Forster’s strain of liberalism as a precursor of current brands of pragmatism, Brian May opposes the “toughness and tenacity” shown by Forster’s version of liberalism in its reaction to modernism to the “precious, fey, and Wildean” reaction that is usually associated with an enervated nineteenth-century liberalism’s response to Modernism (May 3). In order to restore Forster’s reputation as a serious thinker, May predictably aligns him with qualities traditionally associated with virility, “toughness and tenacity,” and distances him from the “fey” effeminacy associated with inversion and the figure of Wilde.

5. In a *Paris Review* interview, Forster articulates his own lack of interest in developmental and degenerative accounts of authorial careers: “I am more interested in achievement than in advance on and decline from it. . . The paternal wish of critics to show how a writer dropped off or picked up as he went along seems to me to be misplaced” (Interview, 34-35). Forster’s use of the adjective “paternal” is particularly apropos to my reading of the critical developmental plot. Like good heterosexual patriarchs, many critics paternalistically (indeed, as you will see later in the essay, often paternalistically) dismiss those texts of
Forster that thematize homosexuality as immature distractions from his mature work, just as many heterosexual fathers dismiss their gay sons’ desires as distractions from the path to heterosexual adulthood. While in this interview, Forster with heartening perversity rejects this organic, familial critical narrative as “misplaced,” in his posthumously published texts, as we will see, he sometimes endorses or creates his own version of this narrative.

6. Bartlett’s gesture seems to me to have very limited utility. For in affirming texts by Forster that thematize homosexuality over those that are more circumspect, he merely inverts the critical developmental narrative, rather than displacing its terms.

7. For a useful summation of modernist attitudes toward history, see James Longenbach, chapter 1.

8. While Forster opposes writing great literature to homoerotic pleasure, he represents reading literature as offering the possibility of promoting interracial homoerotic bonds. In his talk to Indian students at Government College, Lahore, “The Enjoyment of English Literature,” Forster uses Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar to illustrate to the students that “a book is really talk . . . the words of a man . . . who has been dead for three hundred years and is trying to talk out of the immense darkness to you . . . You are men and other men have written books to talk to you” (235-236). As in David Blaize, literature in this talk becomes a medium which allows men sympathetically to make contact with other men, but unlike Benson, for Forster, the imagined link that literature promotes is between men of different nations, rather than between Englishmen of different generations.

9. For an alternative reading that sees “Arthur Snatchfold” as representing the postmodernist, as opposed to the Modernist, strain in Forster’s writing, see Alan Wilde’s Horizons of Assent, 66-71. For Wilde, what is important in Conway and Snatchfold’s encounter is its transitoriness, its lack of emotional depth. He sees the story as a celebration of surface and fragmented momentary experience as opposed to a modernist aesthetics built around intersubjective relationships and characterological depth. In order to advance this reading, Wilde has to downplay the Romantic images of time and nature that so richly inform the story. These images suggest that Forster is not celebrating atomistic, fragmented postmodern surfaces but is invested in a Romantic pastoral myth of youthfulness and its link to nature.

10. While my contention is that Forster partially transvalues the discourses he employs, I would want to distance myself from some of the extravagant claims that have been made for Forster’s subservience, claims based purely on the fact that he was gay. Martin, for instance, moves from accurately describing Forster’s perceptions of the egalitarian possibilities of male homosexuality -- “it is clear that for Forster homosexuality can lead to a greater democracy of vision, to a violation of social, racial, and class barriers” -- to endorsing those perceptions uncritically -- “Forster’s homosexuality made it easier for him to renounce the burdens of class that prevent his heterosexual characters from loving fully” (73). Perry-Levine makes a similarly sweeping claim for Forster’s openness to alterity: “Forster is more of an outsider than we had realized. . . Self-aware and self-critical, seeking to connect not only the prose and the passion but also the public and the private, his art pays homage to the redemptive possibilities inherent in the love of the totally other, one who must be reached by stepping over the chasm of class or race” (87). Apart from the extravagance of the “redemptive possibilities” that Perry-Levine sees to cross-class or cross-racial homosexual relations, her formulation worrisomely resembles The Life to Come in mystifying non-Western and working-class people as “totally other.”

11. At a biographical level too, Forster seems to have enjoyed challenging and inverting the developmental narrative. For Forster, a crucially transformative moment occurred in his life
when he met Mohammed el Adl, his Egyptian lover, and realized his physical desire for the first time. Writing to Florence Barger, he described this experience in terms of attaining adulthood: “It isn’t happiness; it’s rather (offensive phrase) -- that I first feel a grown-up man” (Forster quoted in Furbank, 40). Note how Forster both deploys the developmental narrative and distances himself from it by qualifying the term “grown-up man” with the parenthetical “beasty phrase.” While el-Adl allowed Forster to attain maturity, Furbank suggests that their erotic life was framed in terms of childlike fun: “In bed at night, they [Forster and el Adl] played the fool like children” (50). Both statements are consistent with Forster’s inversion of the developmental narrative: in travelling away from the “adult” world of England to the “childlike pleasures” of el-Adl and Egypt, Forster imagines paradoxically that he is able to become a “grown-up man.”

12. But the maternal occupies a complicatedly split position in Forster’s mythology. On the one hand, Forster often represents the mother as enforcer of cultural prohibitions who thwarts the realization of male homosexual desire. Thus, Mrs. March in “The Other Boat” is represented as the prohibitive voice of her son Lionel’s conscience -- “From the great blank country she inhabited, came a voice condemning him [Lionel] and all her children for sin but condemning him most. There was no parleying with her -- she was a voice”(LC, 193) -- and as a would-be castrator -- “The scarf covered [Cocaanut, Lionel’s lover]. For, it was one of his many superstitions that it was dangerous to lie unclad when alone. Jealous of what she sees, the hag comes with her scimitar, and she ... “(LC 192). In this sense, his mythology is “gender separatist,” “to use Sedgwick’s term (Epistemology of the Closet, 85-88),” for it envisions male homosexual desire as being thwarted by the feminizing maternal constraints of the law. On the other hand, as we have seen, he also associates realizing male homosexual desire with a flight back to the maternal, chthonic powers of the greenwood.

At a biographical level too, this split in Forster’s figuring of the maternal is evident. He writes to his friend J. R. Ackerley, “Although my mother has been intermittently tiresome for the last thirty years, cramped and warped my genius, hindered my career, blocked and buggered up my house, and boycotted my beloved, I have to admit that she has provided a rich subsoil where I have been able to rest and grow” (Forster quoted in Summers, 28). In this formulation, Forster both associates his mother with thwarting his homoerotic desires, which he figures in characteristically anal terms -- her boycotting of his beloved is alliteratively linked to the blocking and buggering up of his house -- and with providing him with a vitally generative “rich subsoil” -- a phrase whose fecal connotations also indirectly evoke anal pleasure. Thus, in this description, Forster figures his mother both as an obstacle and a vital facilitator to his homoerotic desires.

13. My focus here is on Forster’s posthumously published texts. However, other texts of Forster, most famously A Passage to India, also dramatize the sense of homosexual desire as something which cannot be realized in the present but which is held out as a tantalizing, shadowy ambivalent promise for the future. A Passage to India ends with Fielding and Aziz being separated by the very landscape of India -- “‘Why can’t we be friends now?’ said [Fielding] holding [Aziz] affectionately. ‘It’s what I want, it’s what you want.’ But the horses didn’t want it -- they swerved apart, the earth didn’t want it, sending up rocks through which riders must pass single file; the temples, the tank, the jail, the palace, the birds, the carrion, the Guest House ... they didn’t want it, they said in their hundred voices, ‘No, not yet,’ and the sky, ‘No, not there’” (322).
Bibliography


---


---


---


---


---


---

*Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk.* London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1919

---


---

*My Days and Dreams.* London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1916

---


---


---


---


---


---


---


---


---


__________. *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. 1905. Penguin English Library, 1984


____________. *Diaries, Volume 1.* Harpercollins, 1996


__________________________


__________________________


---------. *Horizons of Assent: Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Ironic*


