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The Hobo-Sexual: A Connective History

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Heather Tapley is a doctoral candidate in the Department of English at the University of Alberta where she is writing her dissertation, Hobo-Sexual Pedestrian Rhetorics: Recontextualizing the American City as Hobohemia. *Part of that dissertation, this piece develops the hobo-sexual as a figure of queer sex and work practices able to extend the scope of both American lesbian and hobo history. Responses may be sent to her via email (htapley@ualberta.ca).*

It was a find: popular feminist Susan Faludi's new book, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man*, in hard cover at a paperback price. But as I leaned on the counter of my local feminist bookstore, scene of numerous sales of Faludi's *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, watching my fellow dyke cashier stuff my purchase and its yellow receipt into a bag, I heard the words against which I would write this article: "Sell out. Faludi's a sell out," said she from behind me in line, a local self-proclaimed lesbian feminist sporting a professionally dyed high and tight hair cut and a leather jacket that must have made Danier smile.

I open with this anecdote not because my own research relies on Faludi's text, nor because I necessarily want to champion her shift to masculinity studies, but because the scene speaks to the dangerous rigidity of a lesbian-feminist identity politics capable of devaluing scholarship that strays from a deliberate focus on women. Such perspectives may very well lead to what Rosemary Hennessy describes in *Profit and Pleasure* as "dead identities [that] are not open to history" (228). Without promoting a complete erasure of identity politics, Hennessy calls for a reworking of identities that opens "the identity form 'I am' to history" (230). Rather than dismiss scholarship like Faludi's – scholarship that focuses on working-class

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men, for instance – Hennessy's theory of a coalition politics works to connect various identities, including the working poor male and lesbian. Hennessy traces their connections by drawing attention to the discourses of "sensation and affect" that have historically organized desire into categories of "allowed and outlawed human needs" (217). In response to such limitations, Hennessy promotes the "disidentifying subject" who practices the "process of unlearning that opens up the identities we take for granted to the historical conditions that make them possible" (229). She shows us how to imagine the possibility of forging strategic alliances by connecting differences among those groups traditionally divided and conquered under capitalist regimes. In short, she envisions a "powerful and monstrous collective opposition of all of capitalism's disenfranchised subjects" (229).

What follows is an attempt at just the kind of connective history Hennessy proposes. Adopting Hennessy's posture of disidentification enables me as an academic to begin making sense of the occasional, yet recurring, image of the hobo in lesbian literature. In "This Huge Light of Yours" Joan Nestle recounts her participation in a civil rights march on Selma, Alabama, during which she and others huddled "like hobos" (63) around garbage cans filled with fire. In *Chelsea Girls* Eileen Myles recounts her memories of "big prints of comical hoboes" (193) that littered the walls of her parents' summer rental. And Sarah Schulman makes overt references to Jack Kerouac in *Girls, Visions and Everything*. These associative images prompted me to research American hobo subcultures in the hope of locating a segment of lesbian literary history in the rich tradition of male anticapitalist rhetoric already established in American literature, from Jack London to the Beats. What caught my interest, instead, was a historical intersection of not-for-profit sex and work practices capable of exposing many of the outlawed needs of the unskilled labor force on which U.S. capitalism is built. Rather than formulate a distinct lesbian literary history, then, I 'sell out' – or suspend – my separatism (both political and scholarly) in order to produce another, connective figure through which lesbians can speak and recover a piece of their own history. I call this figure the *hobo-sexual*.

I understand the hobo-sexual as an intersection of a work ethic and a sexuality that overlap in the realm of what Georges Bataille calls "non-productive expenditure" ("Notion" 116). According to

Bataille, the right to consume, conserve, and acquire is deemed appropriate behavior, while the right to lose, or to expend without profitable goal, is rarely considered a suitable practice in any place deemed civilized.[1] The hobo-sexual, then, is a combination of not-for-profit work and sex practices that privileges outlawed needs over production and possession, a figure who has "a complete contempt for riches" and who often "refuses to work," making "life on the one hand an infinitely ruined splendor, and on the other, a silent insult to the laborious lie of the rich" (*Accursed Share* 76-77).

For my own purposes as a scholar of American literature, I have located this figure in American literary history, but in no way do I want to suggest that the hobo-sexual is solely a production of the United States, nor do I propose that the historical research that follows be considered a complete history of such a figure. In mapping the hobo-sexual, I draw predominantly on the work of Nels Anderson, born in 1889, whose own hoboing practices greatly influenced his sociological research on hobos while enrolled at the University of Chicago. Based on direct participation and observation, Anderson's *The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man*, published in 1923 to inaugurate the University of Chicago Press's Sociological Series, not only offers a wealth of information regarding hobo subculture without the prevailing moral high ground regarding sexual practices, but also concentrates on the more unfamiliar hobo who traversed the U.S.A. before the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Historicizing the American Hobo

Since its first use in the English language in 1889, "hobo" has always signified a rather uncivilized place in regard to the United States

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[1] The problems with Bataille's "The Notion of Expenditure" for this project, however, are duly noted. In his use of "potlatch" as a practice of "non-productive expenditure," Bataille emphasizes "the spectacular destruction of wealth" of a Tlingit chief who slashes "the throats of his own slaves." This "gift" is 'repaid' by his rival in the form of "the slaughter of a greater number of slaves." Bataille, then, does not emphasize slavery as a form of colonization but, instead, redirects his audience to read "the power to lose ... acquired by a rich man" as his "desire to destroy" (121-23). My use of Bataille's nonproductive expenditure, however, is located in the history of the hobo-sexual who maintains such a practice from within a site of loss. In Volume 1 of *The Accursed Share*, Bataille discusses the notion that when potlatch is given by the rich it is not necessarily a pure gift of nonreciprocity, as the giver receives "rank." Instead, "the true luxury and the real potlatch" belong to "the poverty stricken, that is, to the individual who lies down and scoffs" (76).

agenda.[2] Although historically catalogued as primarily white and male, his inability and/or[3] refusal to adhere to the map of capitalism – designed to engender career, home, and family, its emphasis on stasis and acquisition – renders the hobo a deviant of the nation he traverses.[4] Considered an asocial figure with no fixed abode, the hobo moves for the most part alone and lives deliberately by wandering and working sporadically in various cities as an unskilled laborer of predominantly ditch digging, coal shoveling, and railway construction. According to Anderson, the typical practice of the hobo is to earn simply enough wages at each urban stop for the sustenance required to maintain his wanderlust – or his pathological need to move (82-85).[5] In essence, the hobo works predominantly to eat and sleep in order to maintain his health and, in turn, his mobility; he resists the practice of the model consumer who rests and invests, as well as accumulates, in the commodified city. Rather, he usually eats and sleeps with fellow transients in the "hobo jungles," areas located on the outskirts of town, relatively free from the surveillance of the law. Here hobos share food, stories, politics, and newspapers from various states (16-20).

Of course, he does spend money. According to Anderson, "when hobos are in town with money to spend they 'go the limit' while it lasts, and then they go out to work" again (140). This practice of going the limit, however, rejects the standard custom of accumulation.

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[2] According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "hobo" demarcated the difference between the "tramp," who did not work, and the itinerant unskilled worker who did. But as Allsop reminds us, while the westward expansion of the nineteenth century required unskilled laborers, the employment advertisements note a particular preference: men of "constant employment," meaning "two years," and "with families" (Allsop, inside cover).

[3] I use the and/or construction here to denote both the inability of the hobo to remain in one place, in that, at times, he must find work for sustenance that may require him to leave, and his refusal to remain on a particular job. Both are hobo practices. See Anderson.

[4] According to Stephanie Golden, however, hobos boosted their own image in the literature they produced, including the *Hobo News*, socialist pamphlets, and writings of the road. In their own literature hobos are constructed as "flamboyant, aggressive workingmen, 'with a great sense of pride, self-reliance, and independence,' often politically radical" (Golden 135).

[5] Anderson states that there are two terms employed when authorities speak of vagrancy: wanderlust and dromomania. Both are developed as "a type of pathology of chronic wandering" (xvii).

When in the city, the hobo may very well "invest in a whole outfit – shoes, suit, and overcoat – only to sell them again in a few days when he is broke" (36). This practice of "clothing exchange" takes place at secondhand clothing stores, where "new clothes are on sale at astonishingly low prices ... Much of it is out of date and either shopworn or soiled" (35). While Anderson admits that the secondhand dealer's profit is made in the "coming and going" of the hobo, he also emphasizes that "the veteran hobo knows how to drive a bargain" in this exchange (36).

Likewise, particularly in the winter months, the hobo may choose to sleep indoors, but does so most often in lodging houses that offer a range of affordable accommodations, from "a bed in a single room for fifty cents to a location [on] the floor of an empty loft for a dime" (27). His evening entertainment consists of the "cheap playhouses of Hobohemia" that produce "the show girls who sing or dance in the cheap burlesque theaters." These performances promise "titillations" that are "vulgar and inexpensive" (141). So, too, he typically buys a bottle or two of whiskey and a long-awaited pack of cigarettes, but the majority of his day is spent walking the urban avenues, listening to fellow hobo street orators preach socialism, as well as frequenting the employment bureaus that "offer opportunity for travel" (172, 34).

It is this out-of-work or in-between-jobs hobo that proves most threatening to the capitalist city. He is the streetwalker of nonproductive expenditure, whose perceived idleness and ragpicking practices deem him a useless feature of the urban landscape. His mere ambling and inability or refusal to accumulate the newest of commodities results in his being labeled a loiterer and, in turn, he becomes the victim of vagrancy laws that either lead to his incarceration or send him out of town prematurely with the clear message that to be a United States citizen is to own property.[6]

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[6] Jack London's account of having been arrested in Niagara Falls (U.S. side) is an example of how hobos were criminalized for their lack of permanent residency. London was sentenced to "thirty days' imprisonment for having no fixed abode and no visible means of support." He reports that after having his "head clipped," his "budding mustache shaved," and his body "compulsorily vaccinated" and "dressed in convict stripes," he became a socialist while "some of his plethoric national patriotism simmered down and leaked out of the bottom of his soul somewhere" (London 100).

Mapping the American Hobo-Sexual

Not all hobos are hobo-sexuals, though. As previously mentioned, the hobo-sexual represents an intersection of both not-for-profit work *and* sex practices. Anderson states that, when he "'goes the limit,'" the hobo "may have a hundred reasons for going to town, but the major reason, whether he admits it or not, is to meet women." "Not a marrying man," writes Anderson, "the hobo has few ideal associations with women." Instead, the hobo's "sex relations are naturally illicit." Although the "fortunate" hobos find women who will take them in during the winter months without requiring "the marriage rite," the majority of hobos "are as transient in their attachments to women as to their jobs" (140) and find the "only accessible women are prostitutes" (142). Like most hobo purchases, though, this sexual practice of the hobo is an end in itself; it is based in pleasure and rarely, if ever, leads to a recurrent relationship of intimate exchange precisely because of the hobo's transience.

Further research into the hobo's sexual practices confirms that homosexual activity affects the lives of most hobos. While researchers may disagree on the number of homosexual hobos and the reasons for such a sexual desire, they do agree on a homosexual presence within the hobohemias of any city. Appendix A of Havelock Ellis's *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, for instance, is the published correspondence between Ellis and a self-identified "male invert" who claims that there is no distinction between the tramps and hobos of the United States, England, Scotland, and Wales in regard to homosexual practices. "Among both these classes," he writes, "90 percent or I even would be bold enough to say 100 percent indulge in homosexuality when the opportunity occurs" (365). Within this same appendix is a piece entitled "Homosexuality Among Tramps" by Josiah Flynt who claims that "every hobo in the United States knows what 'unnatural intercourse' means, talking about it freely, and, according to my finding, every tenth man practises it, and defends his conduct." Flynt, however, then reduces this prevalent homosexual desire, emphasizing only its ugly cousin, power-play pedophilia. "Boys are the victims of this passion," he writes and continues to explain that hobos "gain possession of these boys" who are "slum children" by seducing

them with stories of the road and "caresses." According to Flynt, the hobo and the boy are relabeled "jocker" and "prushun" once initiated into this practice, and once on the road, each "prushun . . . is compelled by hobo law to let his jocker do with him as he will."[7] Flynt further reiterates the nonconsensual power-relations between prushun and jocker with references to "terrible stories of the physical results to the boy of anal intercourse" (360-61).

A more critical consideration of even Flynt's rhetoric, however, suggests a space of homosexual pleasure. Flynt describes to his audience "one of the worst scenes that can be imagined," consisting of eight hobos who "tripped up and seduced" a boy in a slowly moving freight train outside Cumberland, Pennsylvania. The author describes the anal receiver as having "made almost no resistance, and joked and laughed about the business" (361). Flynt further asserts:

> And this, indeed, I find to be the general feeling among boys ... Some of them have told me that they get as much pleasure out of the affair as the jocker does. I have known them to willfully tempt their jockers to intercourse. What the pleasure consists in I cannot say. The youngsters themselves describe it as a delightful tickling sensation in the parts involved ... Those who have passed the age

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[7] The jocker is also known as a "wolf" in hobo speak. Likewise, the prushun is regarded as "lamb," "punk," and "fruiter." According to Allsop, these intergenerational relationships were made "edible to the public at large" in such hobo representations as Charlie Chaplin's *The Kid* of 1921. Allsop argues that the film eclipses homosexual practice by focusing on the punk as apprentice, rather than the run-away poor boy who has been accosted for the sexual pleasures of his adult wolf. The boy's actions (breaking windows) lead to the adult hobo's work (window repair), and the two share the wages. Chaplin explained this relationship in *The Kid* as one where "the kid and tramp live together, having all sorts of adventures!" In fact, when he approached Jackie Coogan's father about having Jackie play the boy hobo in such a film, Coogan Sr. said, "'Why, of course you can have the little punk.'" Allsop argues that this reference to punk suggests the "deodorized man-boy relationship" of Platonic tenderness behind which intergenerational hobo homosexual activity resides. Such readings as those of Flynt's, however, do prevail in songs that refer to the jocker tempting the boy with promises of "candy" on the road. The nonsense song *The Big Rock Candy Mountains*, for instance, is actually a "homosexual tramp serenade or at least a parody of what are known as the 'ghost stories' the accomplished seducer spins to entice a child away." See Allsop 212-25.

> of puberty seem to be satisfied in pretty much the same way that the men are. Among the men the practice is decidedly one of passion. (361-62)

Flynt, in homophobic fashion, goes on to claim that, while there are roughly fifty or sixty thousand hobos in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, only five or six thousand are into "unnatural or perverted sexual practices" and that these men practice same-sex relations only because there is "one woman for every one hundred men on the road" (360-61).

References both to force and to a lack of women as the primary causes of hobo homosexual activity are standard. Anderson, however, suggests that while isolation and force may very well contribute to homosexual practices, "these accounts serve as a defense reaction on [the writers'] part" (146-47). Considering that Flynt makes himself out to be the only "unwilling witness" (361) in the boxcar above, it is understandable that he would resort to such defense mechanisms.

What I find most intriguing about these sexual practices of the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century hobo is that they are, for the most part, eclipsed by an emphasis on the rugged individualism of the male hobo, as well as his homosocial brotherhood. In fact, one of the most popular and prolific of hobo writers, Jack London, mentions neither the homosexual nor the prostitute in his sixty-five page autobiographical "Tramp Diary," written in the spring of 1894. This exclusion of the queer sexuality attested to by historical research suggests to me a publishable, hence a contrived, focus on national homosociality.[8] Rather, London projects the bonded brotherhood of hobos, their adventures as a fraternal posse marching to Washington, being "ditched" from boxcars or, even better, outwitting the bulls of the railways to get a free ride across America.[9] Further consideration of London's rhetoric, however, reveals what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick deems an "erotic triangle."

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[8] In essence, Michel Foucault's "talking sex" (77) speaks, but apparently only within the proper genres, those of sociological and medical discourses.

[9] Of course, this same celebrated homosocial network of London's is used against the hobo by the early twentieth century. For instance, Herbert Hoover's "rugged individualism" campaign speech of 1928 is used two years later by capitalist Henry Ford. After putting 75,000 men out of work and on the road as hobos during the Great Depression, Ford argued that "it's the best education in the world for those boys, that travelling around! They get more experience in a few months than they would in years at school" (Davis 272).

Sedgwick argues that homosociality privileges male-male relations, but it is always regulated and enabled by both homophobia and misogyny (1-27). Therefore, while London's literary production may make no overt reference to the queer sexual practices of the hobo, inherent in his construction of the hobo brotherhood are the disciplinary mechanisms of a discourse on compulsory heterosexuality – the overt fears of an unregulated, nonproductive sexual expenditure – that enable male homosocial privilege.

The Gendered American Hobo-Sexual

So what of the female hobo? Has she also been erased? Are her sexual practices those of the hobo-sexual? Are they based in pleasure and nonproductive expenditure? Hobo women are, in the words of Thomas Minehan, "as supreme as old-fashioned housewives in the kitchen," performing as property, maintaining the jungle sphere, dependent on the male hobo for sustenance (139-40). Historical research suggests that one girl for every twenty boys takes to the road; Lynn Weiner notes that during the Great Depression of the 1930s, the number of female transients increased to one in every ten persons on the road (173). Hobo girls are actually used as objects of exchange in the hobo jungles, working for the male hobos much like domesticated women do – washing and mending the hobo's clothes, cooking and feeding the hobo collective, as well as making themselves sexually "available to any and all boys in the camps including adults and late arrivals" (Minehan 133-39). There is, however, one other popular option. Once these young girls age and are either no longer desired or choose to set out from the jungle on their own, they more than likely take to urban street walking to earn the money for their sustenance. In fact, Frank Laubach, in his studies of vagrancy, observes that the "female kind of vagrant" is the prostitute (71).

For my purposes, the female prostitute *can* be read generously as a woman of a hobo work ethic, who traverses the city streets of hobohemia; who intersects with the hobo in sexual practices; and who, in so doing, has the power to challenge the social, economic, and sexual construction of woman so asymmetrical to man. She *can* be read as an entrepreneur of her own body who works when she likes, the recipient of a tax-free income, and the kind of woman who defies her assigned domestic place. But these latter readings are complicated by a history of American prostitution that reveals a system

predominantly run *by* men *for* men. Stephanie Golden states that the female hobo lived with and performed a sexuality that was constantly controlled in "an objectified, externalized way: when she was not fending off rape, her body was often her working capital" (136). Whether pimp or john, policeman or law, the system seems hinged on male dominance. Even Anderson, in his inclusive hobo typology, develops the prostitute not as a distinct form of hobo, but as a means to male hobo pleasure at a price. She is the "usually forlorn and bedraggled creature" who makes the hobo susceptible to robbery and to venereal infection. The "lowest women who walk the streets," these sex-workers are allowed no pleasure, but instead represent both a means and a threat to the male hobo's wanderlust (142-43). Likewise, the female prostitute's own sexual pleasure is consistently and conveniently eclipsed in American hobo history by an emphasis on her sex work. It is as though, because sex and work collapse in the prostitute's body, she is incapable of sexual pleasure. Or, more probably, she is denied the expression of such.

Golden further asserts that female hobos are denied the "mythology" of the male hobo. While the male version of wanderlust is "elevated into folklore and myth" – its major component one of action and power in the form of an "erratic mobility [that] blended into the nation's manifest destiny" – the female hobo "is immediately and completely defined by her sexuality." She has, in other words, "no place" as a hobo "unless she can be defined as a prostitute" (138-39). Likewise, Lynn Weiner contends that women who chose the road and, therefore, "lived outside the family" in the nineteenth and early twentieth century "lost their claim" to the "respectability" inherent in domestic virtues. "For women," she argues, "the term 'tramp' came to denote not a transient worker, as it did for men, but rather a sexual outcastes [*sic*]" (177-78).

In *Sister of the Road* (1937), Bertha Thompson describes her fifteen years spent in American hobohemias beginning in 1907 when she was born on the road. She introduces her readers to her fond memories of a mother who cooked in the hobo jungles and her three siblings who all had different fathers. Bertha learned her geography and numbers, as well as her alphabet, by studying the writing on the freight trains that frequented her life. Once an adolescent, she rode the rails on her own, spending much of her time in-between rides pickpocketing and begging. She then became a pimped prostitute

who, in one single afternoon, tested positive for both venereal disease and pregnancy.

Unfortunately, "Box-car" Bertha's autobiography does not speak to her sexual pleasures while a hobo but, instead, of temporary loves external to business (which may very well be the consequence of Dr. Ben L. Reitman's editing of the narrative). Thompson's pleasures come primarily in the form of countercapitalist hobo movements and, in turn, expand the historical female presence within hobo subculture from the mere vessel of male hobo pleasure to the actual agent of hobo anticapitalist practice. In essence, female hobos have their own wanderlust, including their own transient work and sex practices that sometimes come with the risk of disease and the added "hazard" of potential pregnancy (Reitman 285). So, too, there exist other forms of nonproductive expenditure represented by "the lesbians on the road" who are also "bi-sexual ... that is, who liked both men and women and also another group who were prostitutes, selling themselves to men for money but having women sweethearts" (66). This reference to lesbians who work as prostitutes represents, at least in one latent form, the sexual pleasure of prostitutes most typically erased in male hobo literature. "Box-car" Bertha collects other data regarding female hobos that proves useful for a project in connective history. According to Thompson, women leave for the road for various reasons, including sexual desire. And under the heading of female hobo "vices," she lists the "sex irregularities – of the nymphomaniac, the masturbator, and the homosexual or pervert" (283). What classifies these sexual practices as immoral, of course, is that they *are* irregular. They consist of forms of female sexual desire that are potentially excessive in their pleasure unless regulated and, therefore, may be considered not only vices but outlawed needs.

The Hobo-Sexual of Many Myles

I suggest reading a particular urban lesbian literature as a part of hobo-sexual history and, in the process, recovering an emphasis on the female hobo's sexual pleasure denied in hobo history, as well as adding a dimension to American lesbian literary history. The urban lesbian character I am most interested in carries forward the unskilled working-class and transient sexual practices of the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century hobo and walks against the homophobia and misogyny that are used to regulate and enable the homosocial

network of privileged male relations. This twentieth-century lesbian hobo-sexual narrative disrupts the traditional emphasis on urban consumerism by revealing the foundation of outlawed social and sexual undesirables on which the profits of U.S. capitalism are produced.

Eileen Myles's 1997 memoir *Chelsea Girls* encompasses such a hobo-sexual narrative. A nonlinear account of episodic adventures that nurture a narrative style of disjunctions, digressions, and tangents, *Chelsea Girls* reinvents the American city as a hobo-sexual space of sporadic and spontaneous work and sex practices. Rather than the predictable humdrum of the capitalist machine, the emphasis in Myles's text is one of unanticipated encounters that are fueled by the need for sustenance and the desire to fuck.

In hobo-sexual style, Myles's first-person narrative moves its reader through the back alleys, bars, and bedrooms of New England and New York City. Beginning in Bath, Maine, Myles replaces the images that are traditionally employed in the selling of Maine, a state whose license plate reads "Vacationland." The author challenges the calendar photos of the restored homes of retired sea captains that few can afford, not to mention the picturesque rocky coastline used as a standard backdrop for the icon lobsterman who probably cannot enjoy his serene surroundings for all his concern about his daily sustenance. Instead, Myles tells the unprofitable tale of temporary mill-working lesbians who go on a road trip to Augusta after swallowing much alcohol and a handful of speed. She and her lesbian posse enter a gay bar and disrupt even that apparently queer space. Myles writes:

> All the men were taking their shirts off and dancing. We got mad. We wanted to take our shirts off. So we did. Everybody thought it was great. Except for the manager and a couple of fag bartenders. Put 'em on. The men don't have to put their shirts on. Just get out. You can't be in this bar with your shirts off. Put your shirts on and get out. We did. But first we took our pants off. (12)

Needless to say, one would be hard pressed to find such images in any tourist guide. But what I find most intriguing is that Myles remaps the state capital as a space defiant of legislative control. She writes against the grain of a state politics that outlaws the female body.

While in Maine, Myles works at the monotonous job of dipping wooden frames into vats of stain, but such work never dominates the

narrative. Rather than privilege work over leisure, Myles dismisses the job as simply the unfortunate means to sustenance and, in turn, pleasure. The majority of her time is spent mapping the state of Maine by way of the bars she inhabits, the brawls she finds herself in, and the jail time she serves. But what gains space is her need for sexual pleasure. From "getting all amorous in the back seat of Judy's car with Darragh, her ex-girlfriend" to, only a page later, "happily climb[ing] right on top of Judy" in her "big bed," Myles's desire is transient (12-13). And, like any other hobo-sexual, she leaves the state of Maine "glad to be going off on [her] own" again (17).

As previously mentioned, Myles's narrative is nonlinear, a fact that actually enhances its hobo-sexual practice. It is a collection of prose (much of which had been previously published) that in its anthologized form rejects chronology by disregarding linear history and travel. Readers are required to bounce from city to city, not to mention year to year, and back again, suspending their reliance both on geographical logic and on the time-line proper. But because my narrative is not hobo-sexual, I will continue in a practice of 'anal' geography that simply moves *Chelsea Girls* south to Massachusetts.

Myles's tales set in lower New England continue in the same hobo-sexual vein, but consist of an earlier history of growing up in the Cambridge area. The daughter of an alcoholic mail carrier who services Harvard Yard, Myles's first person narrator offers a different version of an Ivy League education. "The students at Harvard were rich," she states. "They were always leaving and selling things" (208-09). What then follows is a cataloguing of the results of her father's ragpicking adventures. From a hi-fi system and a collection of records, to her father's London Fog and her own drawing pad complete with charcoal pencils, the privileged excesses of Harvard students function, on the one hand, as the detritus of a privileged class while, on the other, as the unexpected treasures of the working poor.

Furthering her working-class education, Myles's narrator takes a job at Filene's Basement in Boston. For the first time, she is labeled "'a transient,'" which "sounded right to [her] because [she] had read *Grapes of Wrath*" (92). Arriving at work hung-over, she moves from counter to counter as needed and, in the process, uncovers the heterogeneous lot who frequent the store known nationwide for its marked-down, name-brand items. Her surroundings include her fellow transients, such as "the black stock clerks from Roxbury, the white

Irish high school girls, the Jewish women with beehives and big glasses and quite a few concentration camp tattoos on their arms. And they were angry" (92). These are juxtaposed by the shoppers:

> Mostly female, mostly white, the black shoppers looked like young beautiful models ... [But] there was also a significant population of gypsies and drag queens who loved to try on floor length gowns. Both of these were said to be major thieves, but mostly the detectives just liked to watch them, I think. (93)

The setting of Filene's Basement, therefore, consists of a dense transfer point of power relations. On the one hand, it is the working class of ethnic, race, and religious diversity that services the homogeneous white female shopper. Even "the black shoppers," for instance, are developed by the simile of the model that suggests like-whiteness. Additionally, it is the bodies of transient desires and work practices, both the Gypsies and drag queens, that are policed most carefully. But, on the other hand, Filene's Basement also suggests a space where the white, or white-like, female shopper must confront drag queens and Gypsies, and where the gaze of the law is reconsidered the tool of a pleasurable fear.

The narrator's own pleasure is found after hours in the "big plunger kisses" of Gus, who later puts her hand on his crotch during a beach party. She writes, "I liked how warm it felt, all kind of big and bulging. I actually really wanted to do it" (91). Unfortunately, the majority of sexual references accumulated in Massachusetts are based, like the female hobos before her, in domination and exchange. For instance, she spends most of her nights getting "finger fucked" or giving "handjobs" in order to get a ride to the local club because "boys had cars, girls didn't" (89). So, too, the Massachusetts landscape is haunted with a sexual danger hinged on male dominance. There are references to the gang rapes of Jane Coyne and of the eighteen-year-old narrator herself, a rape that Myles describes as "just a rhythm of many guys" (189).

But Myles's hobo-sexual adventures continue on a more autonomous and pleasurable note in New York City, where she works as a cocaine-dealing cabdriver, as a telemarketer, as a seller of sneakers, and as a waitress, to name only a few of her jobs.

Each ends with the attitude that is best summed up in the phrase: "I had to quit something, so I quit my job" (168). This flippant antiwork ethic, like that of the hobo-sexual of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, allows our urban protagonist to roam the city streets, where her unrestrained desires lead to various sexual pleasures. For instance, she masturbates on a bus; fucks many a lesbian; puts her hand on a man's crotch, which "reduces him to a child" (109); as well as has sex with a married couple who were both "being unfaithful at the same time" (164).

Conclusion: A Connective History

Myles's *Chelsea Girls*, therefore, can be read as a connecting point in American hobo-sexual history, a textual mapping of sporadic work and sex practices that also has the power to recontextualize the American city as a hobohemia of social and sexual undesirables. Neither Myles's sexual encounters nor her jobs suggest an emphasis on stasis or acquisition. They are, instead, the dynamics of the outlawed need of wanderlust capable of revealing both the homosexual and female pleasure formerly erased by the homosocial network inherent in a traditional American hobo history. Rather than a reappropriation or a resignification of the hobo figure, then, Myles's text actually exposes the homosexual and female presence formerly neglected in a hobo tradition that legitimized itself by mimicking an upper-class narrative of misogyny and homophobia – a homosocial network, however, deemed a national treasure only when linked to the exploitative labor inherent in westward expansion.

It is through this mapping that I hope to have added another dimension to hobo history *and* lesbian history. But in doing so, I began by making a cross-historical identification between the male hobo and the lesbian, which required, I willingly admit, an initial suspension of any allegiance to gender identity politics. It may appear, then, that all I have accomplished is yet another taxonomy that simply places the lesbian in subordination, under a canopy term of male lineage. But there is no original hobo. There is only the place of cultural-ideological production – a site that has historically favored male homosocial relations and censored homosexual and female sexual space in its construction of tradition – from which I had to start.

My intention in this article has never been to collect the hobo,

the prostitute, and the lesbian under the heading of hobo-sexual, to gather or group them into a novel homogeneity that erases their differences. Rather, I have constructed the hobo-sexual as a figure in connective history, a narrative able to articulate difference in its very consideration of relations. Embodied in the hobo-sexual are the outlawed needs of human potential that are, according to Rosemary Hennessy, unassimilable under capitalism. Transient work and sex practices are outlawed "because they cannot be brought back into capitalism without abolishing the very terms of the extraction of surplus value" (228). Instead, capitalism assigns hobo-sexual practice to the realm of the working poor and, in the process, manipulates the "basic human needs for food, housing, health care, and also for love and affection, education, leisure time" (228) by producing a surplus labor class able to discipline such potential democratic forms as unions. For as long as there is a transient work force, there exists a threat to job security and the supposed right to renegotiate wages and benefits. Rather than recognize the various needs of human potential, capitalism produces a narrative of illegitimate desires and the consequences of such *poor* choices. And it employs such a production as a disciplinary mechanism, a threat for the future, that perpetuates the anti-hobo-sexual practice of accumulation. Walking, riding, and writing against this ideology is the hobo-sexual who practices what Bataille asks: "If I am no longer concerned about 'what will be' but about 'what is,' what reason do I have to keep anything in reserve?" (*Accursed* 58).

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Re-Configuring Agnes: The Telling of a Transsexual's Story

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> To be differently-gendered is to live within a discourse where other people are always investigating you, describing you, speaking for you; and putting as much distance as possible between the expert speaker and the deviant and therefore deficient subject.
>
> — Pat Califia (2)

In the social sciences, researchers, interviewers, and narrators of peoples' experiences present selective recordings of subjects' voices. This paper concentrates on the portrayal of transsexual narratives – with a particular focus on representations of one subject, Agnes – as they have been selectively constituted by social scientists. Agnes, a transsexual, participated in Harold Garfinkel's research in the late 1960s, making her the first subject of an in-depth discussion of transsexuality in sociology. I contend that a number of social scientists scrutinize and evaluate Agnes's and other transsexuals' narratives for 'truth', and frame transsexuality as a window into gender construction. At the same time, however, these social scientists mold Agnes's identity to illustrate particular theoretical positions and avoid examining their own investments in their subjects. As well, they neglect to consider their own ongoing reproductions of hegemonic gender relations. In this paper, I explore how social scientists might selectively record subjects' voices while remaining self-reflexive and committed to the integrity of the interviewee.

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First, I link the sociological fascination with Agnes to the discipline's interest in 'Other' sex and gender configurations, an interest that is frequently explored as a way to understand 'normal' gender arrangements in Western society. Second, I focus on how the example of Agnes is deployed, as social scientists both evaluate her self-narratives and unselfconsciously produce alternative 'Agneses' that exemplify their theoretical positions. Finally, I address ethical practice. Social scientists must recognize their investments in the examples they use. In particular, researchers need to identify and disrupt the Othering of research subjects by acknowledging everyone's implication in the production of gender. I conclude by arguing that while there is no 'true' construction of Agnes, there is a person behind the examples, with her own lived experiences, within a particular set of material and discursive conditions, who must be respected. However, my intention in addressing the above points is not necessarily to unveil the 'real' Agnes.

I too have investments in writing on this topic and these affect my own examination of the ways in which examples of Agnes are deployed. A sociologist by training, I hold deep-seated concerns with the discipline's need to categorize, to label, and to investigate the 'Other,' particularly when these practices are upheld by the epistemological premise of an objective, detached observer. As a result of these concerns, I am drawn to the flexibility of interdisciplinarity, and to a postmodern skepticism with the 'objectivity' and universalizing truth assertions of the social sciences. Examples are always invested. Thus, how we document and apply these examples is of great importance. I do not reject the potency of structured power relations, particularly since some groups and institutions – such as social science researchers within health care and educational institutions – have more authority than others in the production of discourse. These discourses in turn have material effects on people's lives. Transsexuals, as a marginal population, are particularly vulnerable to such effects. Finally, although not a transsexual, in trying to make sense of transsexuality and how it has been taken up in sociological texts, I draw on my own confrontations with the dichotomous and often rigid categories of gay and straight, butch and femme, and man and woman.

Visiting the Other

This section will focus on sociology's use of 'Others' to understand the 'normal', with a particular emphasis on transsexuality and the study of gender. First, discourses sometimes use transsexual and transgender interchangeably. I focus on transsexualism since this is the primary concern of most of the texts under review. Transsexualism is defined as experiencing a lack of correspondence between one's sense of gender and one's anatomical sex, and a response to this situation that might include sex-change surgery. Those who experience a lack of correspondence between their sex and their gender but who are not interested in sex change, and many who affiliate with a wider 'trans' movement, may define themselves as transgendered.

Some sociologists, attempting to disrupt naturalized, 'commonsense' assumptions about Western cultural traditions, have employed spatial and temporal comparisons, particularly in terms of sex and gender. There is a tradition of feminist theorists using this comparative method to point to commonalities between cultures and to foreground divergences in cultural gender roles and sexual statuses (see esp. di Leonardo; Mead; Rubin; for discussion see Atkinson; Morris). Recently cross-cultural and cross-historical instances of 'homosexual' and 'transsexual' behaviors have been deployed in the name of sex-gender scholarship (see esp. Anderson; Kessler & McKenna; Morris). Here, some anthropologists ethnocentrically build their own assumptions about gender into their analyses of other cultures. For example, Suzanne Kessler and Wendy McKenna maintain that anthropologists often interpret their observations of other cultures through the organizing concepts of their own. They expect to see two genders, each with an equivalent gender role, and therefore they do. In order to substantiate their claims, Kessler and McKenna point to literature on the berdache, a term that has been extended from North American Native cultures to many differently gendered social positions found in a number of cultures. They criticize the tendency in such literature to misdefine the berdache. For example, the terms 'transsexual' or 'hermaphrodite' are used to describe the berdache, and traits linked to the berdache are overgeneralized across cultures (see esp. Bolin; Califia). In her article "Gender: Division or Comparison?" Marilyn Strathern explores several fundamentally different cultural conceptions of gender, conceptions that complicate attempts to identify any transcultural constructions of gender. The ethnocentric search for 'other'

transsexuals presupposes that different cultures can be understood through Western categories and systems of knowledge.

Similarly, 'unusual' or 'deviant' persons and groups within Western society have attracted attention from generations of social scientists – as disruptions of cultural assumptions and testaments to human diversity. Robert K. Merton's article on anomie, Erving Goffman's *Stigma*, and Harold Garfinkel's essay on Agnes are three prominent sociological works that seek large scale social understanding by studying local, 'marginal' people. Social scientific interest in transsexualism and transgenderism often reflects this tradition of studying 'anomalies' (see Garfinkel; Hausman) based on the argument that "it is by studying how exceptions are accommodated that we can best understand the nonexceptional cases" (Kessler & McKenna 23).

Unfortunately, these studies often frame the 'Other' as essentially different from, and inferior to, its 'normal' opposite (see Garfinkel; Hausman). The sociology of deviance, for example, despite some attention to the social construction and labeling of deviance (see Rubington and Weinberg, and Schissel and Mahood for edited collections), often remains voyeuristic and framed in the interests of social control (particularly when linked to criminology). Alexander Liazos's charge that it tends to reproduce presumed categories of 'normal' and 'deviant' while ignoring the power relations behind these designations continues to be applicable today, particularly in that the life of the 'deviant' receives far more attention than questions regarding how 'normal' is defined, who designates the 'other', and what is at stake in these definitions. Transsexuality, of course, does not remain unscathed.

These concerns are not limited to the field of the sociology of deviance. Queer theory also draws on transsexuality, adopting it, with transgenderism, as "a queer transgressive force" (Prosser 23). Jay Prosser argues that such an appropriation is problematic since first, transgenderism is not inherently queer – for example, Prosser states, not all transgendered people are homosexual and many of them seek not to be performative, but simply to be – and second, because it implies a "naturalness of sex" for the nontransgendered. Ki Namaste is also critical of queer theory – and Judith Butler's work in particular – for overemphasizing textual meanings and ignoring the material or lived realities of transsexual and transgendered people. Namaste looks to

the social sciences for preferred methodology, particularly the works of ethnomethodologists Harold Garfinkel, and Susanne Kessler and Wendy McKenna, who are reexamined here. Like Namaste, I am concerned with research that undermines "the lives and experiences of the transgendered people they study" (185), but as my following discussion of Agnes suggests, I do not see social science methodologies as immune to this tendency.

Introducing Agnes

A large chapter of Garfinkel's *Studies in Ethnomethodology* is devoted to Agnes, a transsexual woman who was introduced to Garfinkel by Dr. Robert Stoller, the physician who documented and supervised treatment. While Stoller is most interested in the etiology and treatment of transsexuality, Garfinkel studies the methods Agnes uses to negotiate daily life.

According to Garfinkel, Agnes was born with male physical attributes and raised as male, yet all the while she knew herself to be female. When Garfinkel first met her, she had a penis and testicles in conjunction with secondary female characteristics such as breasts. At seventeen she began dressing and acting as the woman that she knew herself to be. She wanted to have the penis removed and replaced with a vagina. Garfinkel uses Agnes as an example for ethnomethodology. He examines the methods Agnes uses to pass as a woman, or to live successfully as a woman in a context in which there is "the possibility of detection and ruin" due to the "socially structured conditions" in which the passing occurs (Garfinkel 118). He is interested in Agnes's passing in order to examine the construction of gender and the methods individuals use to perform it. To him, Agnes's transsexualism is a mechanism through which the performance of 'normal' gender/sex can be understood. Garfinkel assumes that when a person undergoes a sex change, they must adjust to a new set of rules and behavioral expectations. To perform their new gender successfully, they must excel at the task of simultaneously learning and living a new gender. The energy that Agnes spent negotiating her own passing and appeasing her own fear of exposure illustrates the ubiquitous and threatening presence of gender as an institutionalized moral 'fact', a 'commonsense' notion that is taken for granted by 'normals,' considered the legitimate order, and policed through social sanctions.

Garfinkel's *Studies in Ethnomethodology* includes an epilogue which reports that, five years after Garfinkel's research, Agnes approached Robert Stoller with a number of changes to her personal history. As we shall see below, these changes became a site of scrutiny.

Agnes's identity has been incorporated into literatures as diverse as ethnomethodology, feminism, queer theory, and social psychology. The remainder of this paper will focus on two interrelated themes. First, I consider how some researchers respond to Agnes's changing story, particularly as they are concerned with her truthfulness and self-fashioning (and the truthfulness and self-fashioning of other transsexuals). Second, I consider how the example of Agnes is produced by such researchers in pursuit of their own theoretical positions.

Truth and Self-Fashioning

To Garfinkel, Agnes's later disclosure was simply another example to illustrate how she used "rational accountability" (288) to bolster her practical accomplishments. When activities are organized in familiar, accountable ways, then they are accepted by others (including Garfinkel). Truthfulness (or not) is secondary. For the most part, Garfinkel seems to accept Agnes's accounts, asserting that for her to live her life as she does, she must lie. Yet despite his sympathies, Garfinkel's observations foreground Agnes's dissembling.

Garfinkel twice observes that "Her accounts exaggerated the evidences of her natural femininity and suppressed evidences of masculinity" (120). Later, he states that "she was a highly accomplished liar" (174). Further, he points out seven areas that Agnes would not discuss, including any interest in boys' activities when she was young, or her possible use of hormones prior to the research (implying Garfinkel's suspicions that she was hiding information). In an ironic twist, he also states: "She wanted to know as well whether [more research] would help 'the doctors' to get the 'true facts'. I asked Agnes, 'What do you figure the facts are?' She answered, 'what do *I* figure the facts are, or what do I think everyone else thinks the facts are?'" (175). Here Agnes is fully aware of the need to self-fashion in the face of others' versions of what should be the truth.

Furthermore, Garfinkel notices that Agnes uses "anticipatory following" (147) in some of her discussions with him: he believes that she attempts to gather clues from him about what kind of answer

he seeks in order to provide him with the information that she suspects he wishes to hear. Garfinkel is aware that he may be asking leading questions but does not seem able to acknowledge that those questions might also be constructed through his role in maintaining traditional dichotomous gender relations.

Is Garfinkel judging Agnes's truthfulness? He claims to be interested only in Agnes's strategies for learning femininity while living as a woman. A less charitable reading might dwell on the implications of foregrounding strategies which suggest that Agnes and other 'gender transgressors' must lie, when both the gendering of *all* self-narratives and the anticipatory following that *everyone* does tend to remain unexamined. Certainly, in his other work, Garfinkel is interested in people's methods for negotiating daily life in a number of areas. My point is that by foregrounding Agnes's need to dissemble as she performs gender, the invisibility of everyone else's gender dissembling, including Garfinkel's, may be deepened rather than lessened.

In fact, others are much more concerned with Agnes's 'true' story. Norman Denzin is obsessed with narrating the 'truth' and consequently presenting an Agnes who lies. In reporting her story, Denzin footnotes certain 'corrections' based on her later interviews with Stoller. For example, he states: "Now another lie appears in the text: she told Stoller that she did play with boys, was excellent in sports, and thought of herself as a boy" (206). Denzin thinks that Garfinkel was fooled by Agnes, because he refused to see beyond her story to consider the role of her "wild" sexuality. According to Denzin, Garfinkel thus misses the psychoanalytic reading that his work invites. I will return to Denzin's psychoanalytic reading in more detail below. In the meantime, Denzin's interest in Agnes's potential 'lies' and in how she "had duped the doctors and Garfinkel" (203) remains significant in that dishonesty or misrepresentation constitutes an established yet hardly flattering way in which to discuss transsexuals' self-narratives.

Bernice Hausman briefly discusses Agnes in the opening introduction of her monograph *Changing Sex*. She is interested in Agnes's need to present herself as a straight, feminine woman in order to convince medical personnel that she is in need of surgery. Later, in her chapter on three 'official' transsexual autobiographies, Hausman argues that transsexuals use gender

to mask the role of technology in their subject formation. She suggests that transsexuals downplay their surgery and exaggerate childhood physical and psychological 'indicators' of their transsexualism. Hausman suggests that these autobiographies, in fact, produce transsexual experience, since they are then used to educate other transsexuals as to the appropriate life histories that must be constructed and then presented to medical allies in order to garner surgery. Hausman discusses such autobiographies as aggressive, and exhausting to read, because they "force the reader to comply with the author's experience, to begin to interpret his or her own life along the same trajectory" (156). Further, she accuses the authors of masking bodily resistances to sex-change surgery. While denying that she questions the truth behind these accounts – since she maintains that she is only showing how they are constructed within, and then produce, certain discourses – Hausman does filter these autobiographies through a hostile lens that reflects her later concern with transsexual self-engineering (136-40).

While sociologist Douglas Mason-Schrock's study of transsexuals' self-narratives does not mention Agnes specifically, it does focus on how transsexuals fashion stories for themselves. He draws on his own observations – of a self-help group for transsexuals, transsexual chat groups on the Internet, and other Internet information sources. While recognizing that all people use self-narratives, he suggests that transsexuals need particularly strong self-narratives as they undergo a radical and stressful identity change. With this premise in mind, Mason-Schrock examines the process through which transsexuals fashion new stories for themselves, a process that involves coaching and guidance from the transsexual community.

Mason-Schrock considers these self-narratives "collective creations" (186). Self-narratives are modeled (e.g., through transgender community publications), guided (e.g., by drawing out newcomers' stories in transsexual groups), and affirmed (e.g., through "um-hums," nods, and smiles during group meetings). Tactful blindness also serves to shape self-narratives: group members "affirmed self-narratives by not questioning their validity or logical coherence" (189). Mason-Schrock observes transsexual self-narratives as examples of how all people frame

their lives through narrative to structure a coherent self-identity. Nevertheless, again it is the creation of transsexuals' stories that gets attention. Mason-Schrock also neglects to contextualize the 'community coaching' to which he is a witness: transsexuals' narratives are formulated in a context where their bodily integrity requires that they be able to tell the 'proper,' narrowly defined, and rigorously scrutinized story to doctors, in order to garner hormones and surgery.

Jay Prosser also discusses transsexuals' autobiographies, although much more sympathetically, suggesting that they indicate agency through the capacity to self-represent. Prosser examines autobiography as a genre, not limited to transsexuals, that creates a coherent subject by reinterpreting the past. The narrative of the transsexual's life is key to defining transsexuality and accessing surgery. Of course, this archetype also censors other possible, legitimate, transsexual tales. Clinicians try to figure out whether a person is really transsexual, whether their stories are really true. So transsexuals must be convincing storytellers since they are evaluated for telling the 'right' story rather than narrating their personal experiences. Yet even beyond the clinician's office, Prosser argues, autobiography is indispensable as it makes the realization of transsexual subjectivity possible. For transsexuals, autobiographies provide a way to reconcile a coherent 'I' with a dramatically changing biography. Prosser stresses that his analysis does not invalidate transsexuals' gender narratives, for such narratives are the only way subjects – any subjects – can realize their categorical belonging (125). Autobiography also undoes the passing by uncovering the transsexual history that is hidden by surgery.

Garfinkel and others assume that Agnes, like other transsexuals, is more aware of the strictures of gender than are people who do not question their own sex or gender locations. To some observers, the gender awareness that Agnes is assumed to possess implies a loss of innocence, even a corruption, as she must consciously manipulate and occasionally 'lie' to maintain her appearance as a 'natural-born' woman. Thus, when Agnes is represented as having agency, she is at once read as a manipulative, untrustworthy agent (Hausman) or as being strong and self-defining (Prosser; Rogers). On the other hand, where she is said not to have agency, Agnes is framed as a "gender dupe" who reproduces traditional gender roles (Hausman) or as a

victim who is painfully caught in the rules of dichotomous gender (Rogers). When truth, selfhood, and agency are considered, transsexuals are often perceived to be complicit with traditional gender norms, invested in self-presentation and guilty of medical tinkering. Certainly Agnes's and other transsexuals' narratives are subject to scrutiny. Those who feel more at home in their sexed bodies (a.k.a. Garfinkel's "normals"), while equally complicit, more easily elude designations of 'gender dupes' who have been fooled by gender norms, or 'gender cons' who are trying to dupe the rest of us, by virtue of the very presumption that they are 'normal' and of their so-called 'natural' embeddedness in 'commonsense' gender.

Examples Are Never Innocent

In the second part of this paper, I am concerned with how transsexuals, as research subjects, are figured in social science discourses. The use of case examples, such as interviews, in sociological writing (and this essay is no exception) is not objective or disinterested: theoretical, political, academic, and personal investments influence the presentation of data. I will examine articles by Garfinkel, by Denzin, and by Rogers to discuss how Agnes has been variously deployed as a textual figure in the interests of such investments.

I have already discussed Garfinkel's interest in Agnes as an example for ethnomethodology. He uses Agnes to show both the social embeddedness of everyday practices that produce 'normal' sexuality and the methods that Agnes uses to manage her claims of being a natural female. For, unlike 'normals,' Agnes had to consciously act as 'practical methodologist,' always being prepared to account for her actions.

Garfinkel's intention is to supply an example of ethnomethodology, and yet he seems oblivious to his own methods and to the wider power relations evident in his interviews. Like Richard Hilbert, Garfinkel might defend his chapter by saying that it is about Agnes's methods and not his own: "Ethnomethods are not ethnomethodology's research methods but rather its topic of investigation" (Hilbert 264). Yet Garfinkel and particularly his masculinity are evident throughout the paper, a fact that suggests a need for him to reflect upon his own gender performance. Typical of ethnomethodology, Garfinkel does not dwell on the power relations confronting Agnes, such as the institutional forces constraining Agnes's presentation of

self or his own implication in them. While Garfinkel's stated objective is to provide a sympathetic account showing how everyone must do gender, Agnes remains constructed by the text as a freak. This is supported by detailed biological information and by the occasional doubting of the subject's own words.

Candace West and Don Zimmerman expand on Garfinkel's work on ethnomethodology and gender and also use Agnes as an example to demonstrate that gender is always present in people, since it is constantly produced within everyday activities. Agnes had to learn to be a woman while being a woman, "at a time when most people's gender would be well-accredited and routinized" (131). They use the example of Agnes to indicate how, on a day-to-day basis, sex is signified through sex category, allowing us to determine people's sex based on surface appearances. Most people do not look rigorously for indicators of sex unless given some reason to doubt. For Agnes, as long as people saw a woman, they would not think to doubt. Yet to portray a 'normal woman' she had to modify and adjust her behavior constantly.

It is curious that Garfinkel, West and Zimmerman, and even Agnes place significant emphasis on the difficulties in performing woman when one has been raised a man – that is, treating femininity as different and detached from masculinity. Yet masculinity and femininity are relational positions. Much of what we learn about performing gender comes from the interactions between men and women. In fact, as far as Agnes is concerned, her boyfriend Bill provides her with just as much information about how to 'be a woman' as women do. Further, as C. Jacob Hale observes, 'woman' and 'man' are complicated since there are many ways of being men and women, and the borders between genders are blurry. These varied gender categories change as people age. They also change contextually. Certainly, Agnes has an added threat of exposure that most women do not have. And yet at the same time, doubt in one's femininity (or masculinity) does not suddenly end with the teen years. Parenthood, menopause, 'mid-life crises,' and old age are just a few of the more obvious periods in life causing possible gender anxiety. Perhaps if gender were examined with the assumption that most of us are worried about its accomplishment, a similar study could be conducted on anyone. In this event, Agnes would no longer seem so unusual.

Ironically, it is the deconstructionist Denzin whose assertions

about "Harold and Agnes" are the most presumptuous. Drawing together French thinker Jacques Derrida's position that there is only text and Garfinkel's position that the "objective reality of social facts is accomplishment" (Garfinkel in Denzin 199), Denzin explores how texts become social accomplishments that can be deconstructed. Denzin critiques Garfinkel for failing to recognize the "radical turn" in his own work. Garfinkel accepts people's accounts of their activities as literal, and then interprets these accounts based on his understanding of underlying social patterns. While Garfinkel's text is a specific production of Agnes, Denzin's own interpretations tell an even more imaginative story.

First, Denzin asserts that Garfinkel oedipalizes his subject, regarding Garfinkel like a father (and sometimes even a mother) who leads Agnes into femininity. Denzin also considers Garfinkel in the position of Agnes's male other: "Garfinkel as author of his text has become one with his subject; they are mirror opposites of one another" (205). Denzin thus explains the way in which Garfinkel acquires the authority to tell Agnes's story, presuming that Garfinkel's "commonsense understandings of what Agnes did also constitute *her* commonsense understandings" (208).

Second, Denzin believes there to be a further psychoanalytic subtext (or "sexual underside") to Garfinkel's text that, according to Denzin, Garfinkel does not address even though it is his own creation. Garfinkel fails to "penetrate ... the world of [Agnes's] 'wild' sexuality" (209) as the earlier sociologist conflates sexuality and gender and, therefore, backs away from examining sexuality itself. This subtext is evident to Denzin in Agnes's "Strange Sexual Story" (210) in a number of ways: in the oedipal story structure underlying the text, in the importance of a sought castration,[1] in the replacement of the father with Bill (and Harold), and in transference and displacement between Agnes and the doctors. Agnes's sexuality is central to Denzin's analysis.

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[1]An entire paper could be devoted to how genital surgery is discussed. Denzin's emphasis on Agnes's castration reflects his psychoanalytic reading. However, this term suggests a lack of respect for Agnes's adamant self-identification as a girl. Agnes prefers the term "corrective surgery," supporting her position that her original sex organs were a mistake that needed to be set right. This position can be contrasted with "sex reassignment surgery" which suggests that the individual is a different sex prior to surgery.

Denzin's textual production of Agnes begs for its own deconstruction (which, to his credit, he acknowledges in a footnote). Denzin recognizes and deconstructs the imaginary separation between author, text, and subject which foregrounds authorial investments, but he overlays this analysis with his own presumptuous, nonreflexive interpretation of Garfinkel's text, including an authoritative, highly sexualized description of Agnes. Further, he discusses the constructed nature of texts, but demonstrates an ongoing concern with apprehending Agnes's 'real' story, pointing out her 'lies' and questioning Garfinkel's acceptance of Agnes's self-presentation.

In contrast, Mary Rogers reads Garfinkel's essay through a feminist lens that foregrounds the unequal relationship between Garfinkel and Agnes. Rogers sees Agnes as a young, working-class woman who had to participate in Garfinkel's research to get surgery, whereas Garfinkel was not only a professional, but an older male who had the authority to grant or to deny Agnes her operation. Garfinkel barely recognizes these differences. Further, Rogers charges that Garfinkel should be more aware of his own masculine phallocentrism (particularly as he tries to present himself as objective). Garfinkel fails to consider the importance of other women in Agnes's life. He does not express any concern about Agnes's turbulent relationship with her boyfriend. He places great emphasis on Agnes's presentation as a 'stereotypically attractive' woman. Finally, he suggests that Agnes must have gotten sexual pleasure from her penis. In sum, Rogers concludes that "Instead of consistently lifting gender beyond the commonsense understandings that produce it in everyday life, [Garfinkel's work on Agnes] often reproduces that production" (Rogers 187). Again, Agnes remains unusual, while Garfinkel passes for normal.

Rogers is one of the few authors who discusses Agnes with an eye to how power relations affect both her relations to Garfinkel and, more broadly, her day-to-day life. Clearly not all feminists have been so sympathetic to transsexual experiences. For example, Janice Raymond has been strongly criticized within the transsexual community (Califia; Stone) for asserting that transsexuals are not real, but artifical constructions that threaten women. Raymond focuses on "male-to-constructed-females" and identifies transsexuality as part of a patriarchal plot wherein "men [are] wanting to possess females' creative energies" (Califia 94). Clearly, Rogers and Raymond present

very different kinds of feminism. Rogers's provides an insightful analysis of Garfinkel's patriarchal assumptions and of the gender relations within Agnes's narrative. However, in the context of this particular essay, I wish to draw attention to Rogers's reading ofAgnes as yet another interpretation – a feminist one – of Agnes's life. For example, Rogers foregrounds Agnes's social conditions, her relation to the researchers, and her relations to women. She believes that Agnes lacks "a strong 'status shield,'" (173) and has "maternal support and fast friendships among women" (175). She interprets Bill as "a difficult presence in Agnes's life" (177). Rogers's interpretation of Agnes's story, like my interpretation, is one more interested application of Agnes.

What about Agnes?

There are multiple stories of Agnes, and Agnes's representations inevitably stand in for her in their multiple forms. Certainly the conditions and concerns of transsexuals should be studied and such studies will always come with investments. Yet the methods used, the intent of such studies, and the everyday material and discursive conditions of the lives of transsexuals require attention.

Some researchers and activists may suggest that to study transsexualism properly, one must be a transsexual (Rubin). I disagree. In fact, I suggest that assuming respect and self-reflexivity from an 'insider' is naive, in that it privileges and homogenizes one shared identity position. Other identity positions (e.g., class, race, religion, personal history, etc.) and different experiences of transsexuality may shatter assumptions of shared understanding. Further, transsexuals are not immune to 'othering,' and there is no reason to assume they should be. Certainly, the conditions and concerns of transsexuals should be studied. It is the methods used and the intent of such studies that require attention. Ethical self-reflexivity – not insider status – is the relevant precursor to research. If transsexuality is to be studied, it must be with attention to the social needs of transsexuals and the everyday material and discursive conditions of their lives (Namaste 1996).

I touch here on the work by Kessler and McKenna, who, like Garfinkel, consider transsexualism to "illuminate ... the day-to-day social construction of gender by all persons" (Kessler & McKenna 112). Yet, these researchers do not only focus on transsexuality. They

employ innovative research, such as a gender game, to demonstrate how everyone ascribes gender, and how it is done in a way that privileges certain gender markers (specifically the penis) over others.

Kessler and McKenna consider transsexuality as fashioned to fit into the 'natural attitude' or commonsense assumptions about gender. This natural attitude permeates medical, legal, and popular discourses, which shape how a transsexual must present him- or herself. Kessler and McKenna posit, in fact, that most 'gender work' is done by those perceiving gender, rather than those displaying it. Perceivers hold the natural attitude and filter behavior through the initial assigned gender. Henry Rubin has interpreted Kessler and McKenna as being critical of transsexuals for being "misguided and ill-informed" in their reaffirmation of the 'natural attitude'. He also claims that they believe transsexual experience to "lack a proper degree of feminist political awareness" (272). I disagree, for Kessler and McKenna broaden the range of 'gender dupes' considerably by showing how all people are embedded in the social. In direct contrast, to hold transsexuals like Agnes responsible for gender, as Hausman does, is much more troubling since this amounts to misdirected scapegoating.[2]

Finally, if social scientists are going to study the lives of transsexuals, attention needs to be paid to the lived experiences and material conditions of their subjects in a dichotomously gendered culture that is often hostile and discriminatory toward those who are ambiguously gendered. Namaste (1996) wonders why queer theorists ignore the daily realities of transsexuals' lives. I argue that the same can be asked of sociological research. Gender-bashing and transphobia are rarely discussed, nor are the economic and personal consequences of such discrimination. Instead, transsexuals and other so-called 'deviants' are often exoticized and 'othered' through academic texts that are privileged in knowledge production. Rather than reproducing this framing of transsexuality, and using it as a lens for understanding the nonmarginal, activist researchers must disrupt these assumptions of 'normal' and 'deviant'.

In this paper I have questioned the construction of Agnes. In

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[2]Kessler and McKenna also devote an appendix to "Rachel," a male-to-female transsexual, reproducing letters that she wrote to the researchers. Here we have access both to Rachel's self-expression and to how it is interpreted by Kessler and McKenna, thus opening up the interpretive process to readers.

particular, I have used Agnes as a lens through which we can contemplate both the process of 'othering' and the act of self-reflexivity within sociological theorizing. This paper is framed through my selective reading of the texts, one that focuses more on the examples used than the theories illustrated, for the way in which examples are framed is integral to the ethical and political implications of our theorizing.

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A Journey in Gender

AIYYANA MARACLE

Aiyyana, an award-winning multi-disciplinary artist whose work has been shown internationally, is based in Vancouver. Her current major projects include a half-hour television documentary on her work; an autobiography, Chronicle of a Transformed Woman*; and an operatic performance, with the assistance of the Banff Centre for the Arts. Alongside her artistic practice, Aiyyana (marawood@telus.net) engages herself as a speaker on issues of gender, culture, and race.*

I am pleased to have the opportunity to present a perception of gender that has existed, and continues to exist, quite apart from the prevailing Euro-North American norm epitomized by an inflexible, Christian, pseudoscientific declaration of one's being as either male or female. This immutable declaration of Western society is based on no evidence or criterion other than a single answer to the question "What are its genitalia?"

While I present this as a scholarly paper, you may notice that I hold no degrees, there are no extra letters following my name. My only 'papers proving I know something' are a few awards I have received for my work as an artist. Not to have sought a degree has been my conscious decision. Furthermore, you may notice that this paper does not necessarily conform to the accepted protocols of academic writing. This is also by choice. Native thought and logic follow another path, and I fear too much is lost in the attempt at translation. My primary qualifications are quite simply that I am a Mohawk, a Grandmother, a multidisciplinary artist, and a transformed woman who loves women. I see myself as a transformed woman who loves women, and not as a transexual, lesbian, or dyke. Though I may fit the definition of the European concept of transsexuality, as far as I am concerned, my being and transformation are based in the historical cultural continuum of North America's Indigenous people.

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I feel my choice of "transformed woman" to be a more appropriate term in that it follows the logic and structure of Indigenous languages, where things are named more by functionality or by interrelation. Also, in keeping with my cultural perspective, I make no attempt scientifically to 'prove' anything; my being and life and those of others are the evidence for my assertions in this paper. In our societies, scientific proof was derived over time in that something worked, or it did not. This plant, or these combinations of plants and/or minerals will heal this or that. We did not need to break down some herb into minute parts to 'discover' how or why it worked. We knew that it did, used it, and were grateful. We knew which particular ceremonies or prayers could influence the healing process. And we knew what kinds of social structures would lead to healthy communities. All of this was based on the premise that we are merely a part of this world, and must find our way to live in a healthy balance with those around us, in accordance with directives received from our goddesses and gods. The Grandmothers had surrounded us with all that was necessary to lead a healthy life. And we as human beings, 'the people', were charged with its perpetual maintenance. Most Native people continue to see ourselves as caretakers of our world, and not its master. If you must have more than what I offer to satisfy your requirements of proof, I may point you in the direction, but you will need to find it yourself.

This paper's alternative perception of gender cannot be properly understood outside the context of Native social structures and sense of spirituality. When Europeans (and I include North Americans in this) view Native cultures, it must be remembered that it is not the same as when Europeans view the differences in their own respective cultures, with their common Christian history and essential worldview. The worldviews of Europeans and Indigenous peoples are indeed worlds apart: how we see our position in relation to everything else that makes up our world; how we view spirit and spirituality; how these primary perceptions translate into societal structures and practices. A majority of North America's original inhabitants were matrilineal, where familial lineage was traced through the women. Marriage, and its formalization and dissolution, was drastically different from its European counterpart. Household structure and organization in Native societies in the main were built around a clan system, and not around a nuclear family of a father, mother, and two

children. A wonderful elaboration of the foregoing can be found in Paula Gunn Allen's *The Sacred Hoop*. In the chapter "Hwame, Koshkalaka, and the Rest" (245 -61), she lays out a matrilineal social structure with its interrelationships in order to establish that there were bondings between some women (that were akin to lesbianism), as well as unions between women and men, and men and other men. While her intent was to establish that, historically, Native people have acknowledged that there was sexuality beyond heterosexuality, I would respectfully go further to say that Allen refers to gender as much, if perhaps not more, than sexuality.

The primary source and voice in this paper is myself, although I do occasionally quote from or refer to other writers' works.[1] I have difficulty with the notion of 'objectivity' that colors so much of the social scientific research on Indigenous people, particularly in earlier work (before 1950). These earlier works' notion of 'objectivity,' to varying degrees, has continued to influence both recent and present work regarding Native people. This 'objective' point of view not only supposedly removes and distances one's self from the object of study to a place of dispassionate observation, but also removes the passion or energy – the spirit – from the subject being observed. While I readily recognize that in 'accepted scientific research' one does not normally use one's self as the subject of a study, this *journey in gender* is quite outside of normalcy. As well, for anyone outside of this reality to hope to understand what the experience is, its raison d'être, I believe that the words and information must come from those of us brought to being through this phenomenon. As Mao is famous for saying, "To know a pear, is to eat the pear." As for the existing literature regarding Indigenous people generally: since much has been written about us and, until recently, very little by us, I am not only compelled to add my voice, but am also honored to inject another sensibility into the discussion of gender. The inclusion of Indigenous peoples'

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[1]At this point, I would like to acknowledge the body of work around issues of gender created by lesbian/feminist scholars over the past three decades. However, as much of it is written from a European perspective, I found nothing particularly useful toward this discussion, even within the literature by women of color, including: Makeda Silvera's *Piece of my Heart*; Gloria Anzuldúa's *Making Face, Making Soul*; Carole S. Vance's *Pleasure and Danger*; Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell and Sharon Thompson's *Powers of Desire*; Valentine Moghadam's *Identity Politics and Women*; and E. D. Nelson and B. W. Robinson's *Gender in the 1990s*.

writings into the canons of North America has been a most necessary step in the need for non-Native peoples to understand who Indigenous people truly are, as part of our mutual quest to come to an equitable settlement of a grievous history, and to find a more humane way to coexist on this land. In this same vein, I offer this contribution to an emerging public discourse on issues of gender identity outside of or beyond the male/female dichotomy.

What I wish to posit here is, for most readers, an alternative way of perceiving and understanding gender beyond the current polarized notion of male/female. I refer to this as an Indigenous sense of gender: a perception of gender that would seem to be considerably more humane and holistic, perhaps, than the antiquated, moralistic conception dominant within Western society. This gender I refer to remains largely intact as a global Indigenous sensibility, spanning many cultures, with varying manifestations, but greater commonalities. This perspective is really but another social construct whose foundation is very much based in Native peoples' sense of spirit, with concordant social positions created to acknowledge and honor those who were female/male, yet were neither, nor both, but outside of, or beyond.

For a very long time prior to the colonial and postcolonial periods (this little blip on the trajectory of our history), Indigenous peoples brought into being and practiced a social organization that viewed gender in the same continuum, with the same sense of circularity and integral interrelations which we attached to everything else in life. For virtually all societies, whether European-based or Indigenous, the female/male, heterosexual model has been predominant, mostly for the rather obvious reason of procreation. However, there is also a reality among all humanity, that for various, quite intimate reasons, sometimes an individual does not strictly adhere to this thing called man or woman; they feel neither completely, yet are made of both, and maybe something more. How different races and societies through time have approached this human reality has fundamentally shaped our worlds individually and collectively.

One's determination of gender is among the first few cognitions an individual makes. Without negating existing research and writing on this subject, for the purposes of this paper I would like to offer my simplified version. We are born; we begin to gain awarenesses of our world and the people in it. These are not so much moments of

conscious awareness as they are perhaps innate understandings, semi- or unconsciously brought to light through interaction with our world. I need to breathe. I need to eat. If I cry, someone will feed me. If I cry like this, someone will clean me. I am a person, a human being. Kind of like these people around me who care for me. Different from these furry, fuzzy, four-legged creatures. Different from those other little creatures that sing so prettily, then fly away. And somewhere early on in here in the first few years, this awareness of gender clicks in, bit by bit. There seem to be two different kinds of people: one who mostly cares for me, talks and coos softly to me, feeds me from her breast, while the other one (who is not always there) does not seem able to feed me, but is bigger, even the voice, which is also somewhat lower. Amid all this, the question dawns, and the search for affinity begins. Where do I fit in? Do I belong to this world of women, or of men? Minus the intrusion of dictates from outside, the answer to that question does not come from the child's understanding of anatomy, but from its spirit. I am a girl-child. I am a boy. And usually that is as far as it goes. Problem solved. But once in a while, this boy-girl thing does not fit somehow, the body and spirit are out of sync. And here is the crux of this cultural rift between us. How does society respond? What choices does society offer this special child?

For the great majority of North America's original inhabitants (Lakota, Hopi, Navajo, Cree, Anishnabe, Haudenosaune, Shoshone, Sac and Fox, Timucua, Zuni, Crow, Paiute, Tolowa, Heiltsuk, Salish, Kwakuitul, to name a few), the answer to the determination of gender comes in large part through our sense of spirit. We maintain the belief that those among us who are different are the way they are as a result of a special gift from The Grandmothers. It matters not whether that difference is from birth or brought about through a revelation, or in a vision. For most Native people, choice is a sacred thing. There is the freedom, the right to choose, in all matters relating to our being. So that things remain in balance, there are also social responsibilities attached to these 'human rights'. Gender, as the keystone in the foundation of everything else that we are, must of course be the determination of the individual – it can be made only by that child. Truly, no other can know until that individual publicly expresses an affinity for whichever gender they know themselves to be. In many instances this determination of gender occurs during early childhood. However, in keeping with our sense of spirit(uality), if later in life

one experiences a vision, a message from The Grandmothers, then a person is free to adopt another gender role at whatever point they deem appropriate during adulthood.

Among Indigenous people, in their acknowledgment of these other genders, various social positions were created for these people who are neither woman nor man. These special people were recognized as having all the knowledge of these genders and more, so by and large the roles of these special people were ones where mediation between man and woman and spirit was required. In ceremony, physically and metaphorically, our place was between the women and men. We were healers, people of medicine, we were storytellers, seers and visionaries, artists and artisans – we were among the keepers of the culture. Our counsel was often sought. To quote John Lame Deer, from his book *Lame Deer, Seeker of Visions*:

> Winkte are people who dress like women, look like women, and act like women. They do so by their own choice or in obedience to a dream. They are not like others, but are Wakan, the Great Spirit made them Winktes and we accept them as such. To us, a person is what nature, or their dreams, makes them. In our tribe we go to a Winkte to give a newborn child a secret name. They have the gift of prophecy, and the secret name a Winkte gives to a child is believed to be especially powerful and effective. [Black Elk, Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, all had these secret names.] ... Tribal councils would decide almost nothing without consulting Winktes. (97)

These special people occupied revered positions among the people. We did not so much hold power in the community, as we had influence. By this I mean that while we held no decisive authority in the community, our counsel was often sought, both by individuals and by the collective, before decisions were made. Gifted by The Grandmothers with a 'sight' beyond that of most, people wished to know how we saw the world so they could plan their own course.

In North America, it was well into the twentieth century before this situation changed substantially. Not to deny the rapacious violence and self-righteous racial superiority which characterized and underlaid the colonization of the Americas, but this thing that had so enraged the initial conquistadors, missionaries, alleged explorers, and settlers, this thing that really was at the root of their declaration of us as immoral, was our perception of gender. In the European mind,

dressing in a half-naked manner made Native people uncivilized; our practice of gender, and the sexualities derived from these genders, made us immoral. And yet this understanding of gender has survived reasonably intact in spite of the devastations of a few centuries of colonialism on our cultures, land, and being. In many Native communities, these special people have been subjected to hiding and homophobia for only two or three generations. For a few, such as the Rotinonhsyonni (Six Nations), the repression has taken place over seven generations. Quite a few peoples (those more geographically removed) have survived with less damage. The length of colonial contact and/or the length of the imposition of the church, as well as proximity to major settler populations, have been the determinants of the moment when the genders beyond male and female went underground. My own research over the last eleven years, my discussions with my gender peers and with the elders among the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, of the South Pacific Islands (particularly Australia and New Zealand), and of parts of South East Asia tells me that this pattern holds relatively true for a vast majority of Indigenous people. (In my research, I made no attempt to gather statistics. Initially, my interest was purely personal and extended only to verifying my speculation that most Indigenous peoples held concepts of genders beyond male and female.)

In 1990, the Maori Writers and the New Zealand National Library hosted a delegation of seven Canadian Native writers and publishers that included myself. They showed us around the North Island for five weeks, on and off their mareis[2] in both urban and rural settings. The tour was planned around spending the middle week at the Queen's marei and attending the Third International Conference on Indigenous Education. Throughout our time in New Zealand, it was refreshing to experience the natural acknowledgment of the varied sexualities I observed among our hosts and the many other Maoris we met in various social contexts. The question of men-loving-men or women-loving-women did not exist. And for the first time, I heard references to a couple of trans women, spoken of with respect and something more than affection. The social/sexual pairings or inclinations of these different people seemed to be regarded with no more interest than

[2]A marei is not quite like a reservation as we know it; it is more like the cultural center for the community.

whether someone wears their hair long or short, is thin or hefty, is tall or not. Over the next few years, at various venues across North America, I would occasionally see a couple of Maori elders who I had previously met at two of the Indigenous Education Conferences. Along with their elder status in the Maori hierarchy, they held a number of degrees, had many years of teaching experience, and even more of dealing with the cultural bureaucracy of the New Zealand government. Having met them initially while I was still living as a man, they accepted my change of gender with no great surprise. For them, I was woman, but not, yet more, and they treated me so, with respectful deference, making no comment on the change until I broached the subject. From their own cultural understanding they recognized and acknowledged me, telling me that the Maori also had people like myself. I explained my understanding of what I termed as "this Indigenous sense of gender" (much as it is laid out in this paper), and they concurred. On a forthcoming trip to New Zealand and Australia, again as an artist/cultural worker, only now also as a trans woman, I look forward to being able to further my understanding of these other, different genders.

On the flip side is my experience among my own Kanyen'kehaka (Mohawk) people. I will cite one representative experience. A few years ago, while I was a rising star in Vancouver's theater scene, I would occasionally be approached by another Mohawk woman also living in Vancouver. This particular woman, who worked within Vancouver's school system, had brought some students to see a play I had directed. Over the three months after our initial meeting we had exchanged a couple of casual phone calls, until one day she called to invite me for breakfast. She had just returned from her summer break, part of which she had spent back home on our reserve. She told me that she had spoken to her dad about me. Her dad is regarded as a very knowledgeable, traditionally oriented man, and is well respected. His response was, "We didn't have people like that." He then told her that, in keeping with 'tradition,' (for him, the Code of Handsome Lake), in following 'the good business,' "We should treat all people well," implying that she should be polite to me, humor me, as it were. Apparently, she was somehow to treat me well, while denying the essence of who I am, to herself as well as to me. And, understandably, she did so, because her father, a knowledgeable traditional man, a follower of Handsome Lake's Code, had said so. Just as

understandably, and with as much respect, I have great difficulty with his declaration of a polarized, immutable gender system among our people. Having heard this and similar statements from other sources (including my very Christian father, loud in his unspokenness), I could, as my friend the dutiful daughter did, unquestioningly accept this. However, this would mean denying my existence. And I can no longer do that.

To resolve this dilemma for myself, I needed once again to reexamine history as it has been presented. As Six Nations (also known as Iroquois) people, we are among the longest colonized nations in North America. Although many of the eastern nations did not survive the first century of contact with Europeans, the Iroquois survived that initial period relatively intact. This can be directly attributed to the fact that, unlike the other smaller Native nations in eastern North America, geographically and militarily (and thus economically), the Iroquois were of the utmost importance both to the French and to the British in laying the foundations of their colonial endeavors. The French and the British both considered the Iroquois, and Mohawks particularly, to be the most formidable warriors they had encountered in the New World. To further their own colonial ambitions, these two European powers in turn curried favor with the Iroquois, seeking alliances. These alliances contributed to the development and maintenance of favorable relationships with the powers of Europe which lasted throughout the initial colonial process. However, the ensuing period of expanded settlement under the British, the European Seven Years War, the British assault on the French-Canadians at Quebec, and the American Revolution left the Iroquois devastated by military defeats, the loss of lives to war and disease, and the dispossession of land.[3]

We were dispossessed not only of the land of our ancestors, but, perhaps more importantly, also of something less tangible: the sense of who we were, to whom we owed allegiance and loyalty in the political, social, and spiritual realm. Thayendanegea (and most Mohawks, Oneidas, and Tuscaroras) had already adopted Christianity (and its attendant social mores) long before being forced to move north into Canada. The Code of Handsome Lake, which is the basis

[3]For an account of modern Mohawk history, see Brian Maracle, esp. 21-22.

of the 'traditional religion' of the Mohawk, is itself based on the visions Handsome Lake had as the seventeenth century became the eighteenth, and the Iroquois became who they had to be to survive in the rapidly changing circumstances of those times. Already, through intimate association both with the French and with the English, we were a profoundly changed people from who we had been only a couple of hundred years earlier. Yet few would admit it, then or now. And again, in relative terms, in the colonial scheme, we were treated quite well at first, with a rare acknowledgment of equality. But maybe that was the root of the problem, these profound unseen changes: the acceptance of the invitation to a superior position over other Native peoples in the eyes of the Europeans and their colonial scheme.

A bit of a digression here to the personal: for a good part of my life, I have pondered over the awesome changes my great-grandmother saw occurring in the world around her. She was over 100 years old when she departed in 1978, a devout Christian woman, matriarch to a few hundred souls that were her family. She witnessed tremendous change in her world, within her lifetime. Yet my great-gramma's lifetime was just a quarter of the time that Six Nations people have been engaged with colonialism. Change, conscious and not so conscious, voluntary and not so voluntary, occurred at a rate that is hard to imagine. And then there were my parents (veterans of World War II), who were forced to leave the reserve in 1951 when it was determined by the Indian Agent of the day that my father really was not an Indian after all; hence, he could not hold title to land at Six Nations. His name did not appear in the register, so therefore he could not be part of Six Nations. Though my mother's name did appear in the register, since she had chosen to marry this non-Indian, she no longer was part of Six Nations either. "And your kids too!" Simple as that. I did not learn of this, or many other relevant facts about us, until much later. When I was growing up in my parents' house, mostly in urban settings, their determined pursuit of what appeared to be an assimilationist lifestyle, replete with Christianity, made no sense to me. Their even greater determination to instill these values in their children made even less sense to me. I actively resisted. Now, as an adult with hindsight, their choices do make sense (for them in their time). It is not so difficult to see that for my parents, at that time, and under the circumstances of finding themselves dispossessed, it seemed the avenue of survival.

And here I create my heresy. In my thirties, when I first heard the Code of Handsome Lake recited, I was disturbed. It felt rather Christian. I had felt the same way earlier when I had only heard of Handsome Lake's code, having listened in on some conversations where it was being discussed. There was something in the language: some clever subtleties, some not so clever, other more blatant things. Feeling too young and rather like a traitor, I held my tongue and told myself it was coincidence, perhaps just similarities. After hearing it a few more times, and certainly after seeing and reading the popular translation, that disturbed feeling only intensified, though I did not attempt to articulate it. In order to ground myself culturally for this journey in gender, and to be able to address the declaration that "Mohawks didn't have people like that," I found myself returning to Handsome Lake and his visions. Here I defer to my brother Brian Maracle's words:

> The way I see it, it can be compared to the difference between catholics and protestants – one group old and unchanged, the other new and "improved." The Mohawk traditionalists believe only in the religious teachings stemming from the Kayanernen'tsherakowa (the Great Law). The traditionalists who attend the various longhouses (the longhouse people) believe in the Kayaneren'tsherakowa just as much, but they also believe in the Karihwiyo (literally, the Good Business, popularly known as the Code of Handsome Lake).
>
> Skanyatariyo (Handsome Lake) was a Seneca war chief who began preaching a "new and improved" religion among the Mohawk after he had a vision in 1799. In it, he was met by three angelic beings who said that they had been sent by the Creator to ask Handsome Lake to preach against the sins of drinking, witchcraft and abortions. In later visions, Handsome Lake met Jesus Christ and George Washington and toured the Hell-like domain of the Punisher, a place of eternal torture for sinners who refuse to repent and abide by the Karihwiyo.
>
> The longhouse people revere Handsome Lake and have stopped just short of proclaiming him a saint. When they recite the Thanksgiving Address, for example, they offer thanks for all the blessings of Creation, including a special acknowledgment for Skanyatariyo and the Karihwiyo.

> The Mohawk traditionalists, however, thoroughly hate Handsome Lake and his code. They sneer contemptuously at the mention of his name and call the longhouse people "Lakers." They point out that Handsome Lake had his first vision while he was recovering from an extended drinking binge. They complain also that Handsome Lake was influenced by the Quakers and object to the new religious elements he introduced. (149-51)

This story begins to suggest the complexities of arriving at a single conception of Iroquois truth. In trying to retain a semblance of who we had been, while making compromises to accommodate living in this new state, surrounded by the 'civility' of the European settlers in their increasing numbers, it is possible – even likely – that any 'queerness' in gender and/or sexual identities that may have existed among the Iroquois was simply covered up. The Iroquois succumbed to the need to retain their image as a civilized, moral people, to retain a semblance of who they were. For the Christians among the Iroquois, whose beginnings were steeped in and loyal to Victorian mores, denying homosexuality and any gender apart from male and female was part of their doctrine. For the followers of Handsome Lake, denying and condemning 'abnormalities' in sex or gender in their 'new and improved' religion would certainly have made sense at the time. But this does not necessarily mean that "We never had people like that." Am I to believe that, unlike in every other culture and race among humanity, I am the first trans person to have ever appeared among the Mohawk people in their thousands of years? I do not believe this any more than I can believe that it is because "I hang around with all those white folks," and that it somehow rubbed off, or I picked it up like some kind of communicable social disease.

The other alternative for me to consider is that the Iroquois were among the few Native cultures that have always suppressed the notion of fluidity in gender and sexual identities. I find this implausible given the egalitarian nature of Six Nations society and political organization, which was based on consensus, and has long been noted and lauded by many other cultures throughout the world. Consensus did not simply mean getting together, tossing around a few ideas, and coming to agreement in the interest of the common good. It was part of a system that not only encouraged the discussion of differing ideas, but indeed obligated everyone to participate. It was a matter of

balancing informed choices. So, if you had a vision, or found a new way of doing or looking at things, you were obliged to pursue that line of thought either until it proved fruitless or pointless, or until it was agreed by all the people that this was the course now to follow. It is difficult for me to believe that this egalitarian, matriarchal society which so encouraged the exploration of difference would repress the expression of gender or sexuality beyond the binary of a heterosexual male/female model.[4]

From here on, I will assume that Iroquois, like most of the other Native nations of the Americas, held gender and sexuality as fluid concepts, and that this view has been one of the victims of our colonization. I believe queerness may have existed among the Iroquois. I am uncertain of the existence of any documentation on this human phenomenon among the Mohawks before 1800. I (and a few others) most certainly believe that we who move through genders have always been here among the Iroquois, distributed in much the same way as we are throughout the rest of humanity.

So what genders are there? This requires a bit of a leap. Rather than seeing male and female as the end points on a straight line, try looking at male and female as fixed points sitting opposite one another on a circle. From here, one can imagine an infinite number of points or possibilities between male and female, on this continuum of gender. And I think we would find, along with 'absolute woman' and 'absolute man', man-woman, woman-man, woman-with-man's-heart, man-with-woman's-heart. This much resembles the diversity of the present day. But I would go one step further to suggest that perhaps most of what are presently considered differences in sexuality are not at the same time also differences of gender. A false equation has been

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[4]Very recently, I was speaking with an elder Miq Mak woman, a friend and colleague. While telling her about this paper and my position, my outlook on 'the Mohawk question', a puzzled look grew on her face that became tinged with sadness. My friend told me that, during her own travels in the 1960s, she met a friend from her reserve who was living at Kahnawake. Her friend, a lesbian, was experiencing difficulties with this aspect of herself. She wandered the major urban centers of the eastern seaboard looking to come to terms with her lesbianism. A couple of elder women at Kahnawake recognized this in her and took her in. They told her of a secret society among the Mohawk that was made up of special people like herself, and arranged to have her inducted into this society. My friend does not remember the society's name in Mohawk, but it translated into something like "there are few of us."

allowed to entrench itself in the popular consciousness: that sex and gender are somehow synonymous. For most people, on some level, there is a recognition that this equation is not accurate. But when it comes down to it, there is a tendency – even among some learned folk – to treat sex and gender as though they were the same. Sex is a visual, biological term, as conveyed in the questions, "What are its genitalia?" and "Which sex organs were you born with?" These are simply physical paraphernalia. The sex act can be physical, mental, and/or spiritual. But by no means does sex determine gender: "Who am I as a person?" Who we are as people certainly has an influence on the object of attraction, on the ultimate choice of sexual partner, or on the desire to engage in sex at all. There is no natural law that says this gender must have sex only with that other gender. Given this, can one really say definitively that these different classifications of sexuality (lesbian, homosexual or gay man, bisexual) are about sex, and not about gender? Would homosexuality still carry the stigma it does now, if it were considered in the context of a multigendered society? So how many genders are there? I say quite a few.

Native people of North America have noticed that, as they have attempted to revive many aspects of their cultures and return them to public life, it has not been enough simply to transpose what once was onto how and who they are today. For people and culture to survive, they need to evolve continually. What we as Indigenous people need to do is scrape off the stagnated scum from the culture in which we presently find ourselves immersed, pick up the residue of our historic cultures, and reblend the cultural pattern of who we really are today by following the roots inherent in the laws, values, and principles embodied in the old ways. This we need to do so that our grandchildren may find their way through to tomorrow with their humanity intact.

I note that the essence of what I have stated so far is in part documented in a number of publications by various contemporary anthropologists and ethnographers, though, I think, rather clumsily and incompletely. Some examples of flawed documentation relating to Native North Americans' perception of gender are *Third Sex, Third Gender*, edited by Gilbert Herdt (in particular the chapter "How to become a Berdache"), and the well-read *The Spirit and The Flesh* by Walter L. Williams. As in most social sciences, the documentation is the result of an observer's perceptions of the visual and oral materials received, filtered first through their European/Western

sensibilities.This tends to give way to making pseudoequations and faulty extrapolations as they attempt to force the cultural information received to fit a preconceived European/Western framework.

As far as Herdt's and Williams's books are concerned, I first have to say that most of their observations are almost on track, and that these books do have some use-value. However, these texts are more telling for the limitations of the authors' perceptions, for how they interpreted what they looked at and what they were told. The faulty equations and extrapolations which they have made in trying to understand a phenomenon with which they had no connection have led, more often than not, to skewed conclusions. I have to say that probably the greatest disservice they have done is declaring us "Berdache," for this is the closest equation they can make from the world they know. This fundamental flaw – one that has colored their every view of us – established the sexual act as something primary. Their misunderstanding of our social organization and sense of spirituality lies at the root of the questionable extrapolations made from their observations. Everything else that rests on this faulty foundation must be suspect. Here I should like to quote Dr. NapeWasteWin Schutzer, a Blackfoot/Lakota psychologist based in England, who has an established European practice specializing in the treatment of transsexualism. She is also, like myself, a transformed woman, a Winkte in her language and culture. In the text of one of her videos, *Winyanktehga, Two-Souls Person* (which she uses in workshops as part of her practice), she says:

> An old Lakota word, "Winyanktehga," has today been contracted to the simple word "Winkte," meaning "two-souls-person." I am "Wakan." To my people I am sacred and mysterious, I am a spirit person. The Grandfathers tell me this. I have my feet rooted in the earth of my ancestors and my spirit soars with them in 'the land above the pines'. The anthropologists call me "Berdache," but this is wrong, this word has come a long way from its beginnings in Arabia. It means "kept boy" ... that I am not. The Western medical community calls me "transsexual," but this is not entirely true either. I am Winkte, a gender-crosser. My people see me as multidimensional and I do not have to fight for a place in my society to be accepted. I already have a place, a very special and sacred place. In my culture I represent a profound

> healing, a reconciliation of the most fundamental rift that divides human from human: gender ... My gender transformation was called for by the Spirits.

The major problem with the research and conclusions of the texts by Herdt and by Williams is that the focus of their study is men who take on the social role of women and who have had men as partners. Because of their inability to view these people as anything but men – homosexual men – their research and was hugely compromised from the start. It led them to the presumption that the phenomenon they were observing was based more in sex or sexuality than in gender. Sex and gender are once again treated as synonymous. To their credit, they do at least make passing reference to this phenomenon in relation to women transformed to men. According to Paula Gunn Allen, in the Lakota language these women are referred to as Koshkalaka.[5] Since Herdt and Williams make no mention of a transformed woman taking another woman as partner, or of a transformed man with another man, one is left with the impression that this type of pairing just did not happen. Of course, this is inaccurate. Though some peoples may have proscribed mating of this sort, it did happen, albeit less commonly. Simply because the authors were unable to locate such examples does not negate the existence of such individuals. Their analysis (one of a few with which I am in agreement) was that such situations occurred much less frequently, so there were fewer subjects to study, and when located they were less responsive. Herdt and Williams seem to have adopted the attitude that if it did not jump out at them, they were not going to pursue it. In choosing not to pursue this line, they again limited the comprehensiveness of their study of alternative gender. The one bright spot of this research is that it at least 'proves' (in European/North American eyes) the existence of various longstanding cultural practices that recognized genders existing beyond or outside of the male/female dichotomy of Western civilization. And they do provide photographic 'evidence' of the continuation of this phenomenon well into the twentieth century.

Two similarly problematic examples are a short essay by Will

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[5] Winkte and Koshkalaka are Lakota words for their differently gendered people. Among the Cree they use the word Iskwew; with the Navajo it is Nadle. From my understanding and research, these words describe or name the same phenomenon. As well, the social positions accorded these special people among the various cultures were essentially the same.

Roscoe titled "Living the Tradition: Gay American Indians" and Kenneth Steffenson's research paper *Manitoba Native Peoples and Homosexuality*. In most respects, they have less to do with my discourse than do the previous two writers. They perhaps best serve to illustrate some of the inherent problems with how data concerning Native gender and sexuality has been interpreted thus far. They are a bit more dangerous in that, looking at much the same information as above, they purport to portray *the* fundamental aspects of queerness among contemporary Native people. Yet, trans people are not considered; we are not part of their equation. These papers are both predetermined to focus solely on homosexuality, without really considering implications of gender beyond the male/female binary. The intent of Roscoe's essay is to document and make known the emergence of homosexual Natives in the United States and the establishment of the Gay American Indians 'movement,' and for this it is useful. However, at the time of writing, neither Roscoe nor gay American Indians considered trans people as being part of the equation.

In my view, these works contribute to the reinforcement of previous faulty scholarship on the subject and do nothing to further the discussion of gender. These works deal exclusively with predetermined male/female and gay/lesbian binaries, as if there were nothing else. Contrary to the stated aims of Steffenson's research, "to improve conditions," unfortunately, it serves rather to exclude and further marginalize those Natives beyond the labels of male, female, gay, and lesbian, as not being 'traditional.' Here again, I stress that just because these categories were all that the researchers/writers could perceive does not necessarily mean that this is all there is. Some of the Native people he classifies as homosexual are likely trans-gendered.

One last work I would like to acknowledge is Dr. Beatrice Medicine's pioneering paper "'Warrior Women' – Sex Role Alternatives for Plains Indian Women." Hers is the first 'authoritative' contemporary Native voice to speak on these issues. A preliminary version of Medicine's article was presented as a paper in 1973. While, as the title suggests, this work looks primarily at Plains Indian women, Medicine also refers to 'berdache', in a comparative commentary. I believe her point of view relates to my assertions. She argues that

> the whole idea that sex role reversals, for either women or

> men, constituted deviant forms of escapism from "normal" behavior is open to question. Instead of looking at sex role reversals as a form of "deviance" derived from "incompetence" in the roles associated with a person's gender, it might be more productive to examine them as normative statuses which permitted individuals to strive for self-actualization, excellence, and social recognition in areas outside their customary sex role assignments. In this light, changing sex role identity becomes an achieved act which individuals pursue as a means for the healthy expression of alternative behaviors. (268-69)

Medicine's scholarship, by not proceeding from a proscriptive focus on gender dichotomies, allows for the possibility that, though unseen, we trans people formed an important and diverse aspect of Plains Indian society. As she puts it, "the rich complexity of female gender roles and the variety of relations between women and men has been largely obscured" (276).

In the existing documentation, after the 1920s and 1930s in North America the issue of Native people who cross genders seems to evaporate. To explain this I must return to history. As colonization proceeded westward during the period from the late 1700s to the late 1800s, North America's Indigenous people were either exterminated, relocated, and/or "reserved" (the act of being forced onto often small areas of land called reservations). By and large, once reserved, we were ignored and left to our own devices, to survive or not. A semblance of Native peoples' cultural practices managed to continue, largely underground and hidden. Few practices remained in the public realm. In direct relationship to our proximity to expanding settler populations and to incursions by the church, the phenomenon of differently gendered people was driven underground. Throughout the course of the Depression, as destitute (white) men traversed the country in search of food and any kind of employment, many hundreds found themselves taken in by Native families on reserves, where they were fed and cared for. At that time, most Native people were still self-sufficient, with minimal connection to the settlers' monetary system. The great majority of Native people in North America did not experience the Depression as the rest of the populace did; we were largely unaffected. Chagrined and somewhat humiliated by this realization, I argue, the colonizer's push for assimilation went into

high gear. Concerted efforts to pull Native people into the mainstream and to tie us to their economic system began in the late 1930s. Increasingly restrictive hunting and fishing laws were instituted; land-use policies on reserves became onerous to the point where many were forced to give up their agricultural pursuits; and the land lay dormant for maybe two generations. When welfare was extended to Native people – almost ten years after it was available to white folk – virtually all initially refused to go along with the plan. Picking up on a trick from the missionaries (who would target either the 'chief' or the 'medicine man' for first conversion), as I see it, the government agents went after The Grandmothers in the communities, bringing them gifts, cajoling them, to convince them that welfare was a good idea. It took a few years, but it happened. As a result, we became an unproductive people, forcibly removed from the production of our own necessities of life. Now, after almost five decades of an unproductive dependence on welfare, a shift of large numbers of Native people to urban areas, and the conscious or unconscious adoption of Christian tenets, it is small wonder so many of us suffer from a lack of self-esteem and shaky cultural identity.

It is against this backdrop of a massive assault on our cultural ways of being in the twentieth-century, an assault even greater than that of the preceding centuries, that alternative genders disappeared or went underground. In Canada, speaking generally, in the east there has been maybe three generations of active homophobia in Native communities. Among the generation of my grandchildren, we have yet to see what is to come. In the west and north, where intensive colonization occurred later, homophobia can be traced back only within one or two generations. The silver lining here is the possibility of reversing this trend and repairing the damage, a change which is likely to happen in a far shorter time than ridding Western society of its genderphobia and homophobia in general, which have entrenched themselves over the last few hundred years.

From my point of view, little of any worth has been written by European or North American social scientists regarding Indigenous gender. I believe more Native writers need to grab the essence of who we were. We need to pick up the laws, values, and principles from the old stories, these things that have made us who we are and have supported and guided us through many millennia, and transform them into new stories, dance, and music that reflect this new people

we have become. Then we might know where we are going and with whom we are moving forward. And so it is with myself and this gender for which I no longer have a name in my mother tongue. Being reasonably well-rooted culturally and historically, I am much more concerned with who we Winkte, we Iskwew, we Nadle, we Koshkalaka, we transformed people are in the here and now.

I am, and I am not, the same woman I would have been a few centuries ago. I am still a woman of some medicine. I create art. I have even been known to "prophesize with my pen" (thank you, Mr. Dylan). There have been Western surgical procedures available to augment my journey. Some may find this position a bit contradictory, perhaps citing that Native people historically had no comparable surgery available. I would assert that in the past, my powers of medicine and magics would have been much greater than what I possess today, and these would have allowed me to make a complete physical transformation. I offer myself as my own proof and defence: the initial development and growth of breasts, the rounding and softening of my body and face, and the change in my voice all came about from my knowledge and use of herbs in conjunction with my spirit. I dress to reflect my position just as I would have then, except that the materials and accessories have altered. And I still hold some influence as a gender warrior for today. A dear friend of many years, who is Iskwew, in seeing me dressed as a woman for the first time, had this to say: "You've always been [a warrior]; now, you're simply a warrior in a skirt." I have a vested interest in seeing how we special people are represented today by ourselves, to ourselves, and in mainstream society. Again I find myself in a place mediating between women and men and different cultures and worlds. Rather like in the past.

Throughout my journey in gender, and in writing this paper, I cannot help but be struck by the sameness between this discussion and what I have had to say and write about for some thirty years in relation to race. Indeed, from my experience, the genderphobic reactions I was subjected to in the early years of my transformation felt disturbingly similar to the racist shit directed at me as a Native man for so many years. Fear of change and conscious ignorance of difference are the breeding grounds of genderphobia, homophobia, sexism, racism, and xenophobia. Nowadays my life is relatively free from overt discrimination. This is relative to my previous life, relative

to the subtle or blatant racism still directed at Native people, relative to the genderphobia and violence directed at transsexuals in North America. Perhaps the reduction in the discrimination I face is due to the fact that nowadays I can pass so well. But passing leaves me feeling ambivalent. Going out into the world over the last few years, I am seldom seen as Mohawk or even as Native. Rather, I tend to be viewed as an interesting-looking woman of indeterminate race, probably raised in the upper classes (I suspect this is because Native people are still largely regarded as being inarticulate, with poorly developed social skills). To pass as a woman is the great aspiration of almost all male-to-female trans people. However, for me, and for many others who came of age in the 1950s and 1960s, to pass racially has always implied betrayal and denial and thus represents a place I have never chosen to go. So nowadays I find it quite odd that I elicit more surprise from the revelation that I am Mohawk, than from the fact that I have not lived my whole life as the woman I have always been!

For the most part, Indigenous cultures have allowed for and encouraged difference. For us, it is simply one of the many natural elements necessary for the continued health, vibrancy, and well-being of (our) society. In my mind, queerness, oddity, is a desirable trait. It is by reconciling the differences in life that humanity moves forward. How societies choose to deal with difference attests to their level of humanity. It is not enough to tolerate patronizingly; we must learn acceptance of others' difference as a natural and necessary part of this wondrous pantheon known as humanity.

With this vision in mind, I contribute these thoughts on gender. If some of this may appear contradictory, perhaps it is. The natural world itself is full of contradictions. However, please make no mistake that my lack of academic credentials in any way lessens the validity of my position. I have spent half a lifetime pursuing these threads from our past, in order to make sense of the places I have had to travel in my personal journey to discover gender in its wholeness, and my place within it.

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Conservative, Liberal, Radical: Three Ways of Understanding Gay Issues in Church and Society

J. CLARK SAUNDERS

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Much has been said and written about "the Issue," as it came to be called in 1988, in the United Church of Canada – the issue being whether or not to ordain and commission "self-declared practicing homosexuals" to ministry in Canada's largest Protestant denomination. The issue polarized the United Church in a way that was perhaps unprecedented in the church's experience. Various attempts have been made to understand the reasons for the deep divisions and to analyze their origins. One approach has understood the 'conservatives' on the issue as being concerned primarily with morality, while the 'liberals' saw the issue primarily in terms of justice. Conservatives were reluctant to agree to ordination and commissioning because they were unsure of what range of moral behaviors they were being asked to affirm. Would they be condoning a minister living with a same-sex partner in the manse, for example? Would they be saying yes to promiscuity? Some even wondered whether they would be opening the door to pedophilia. The liberals, on the other hand, pointed out that the church had never before explicitly excluded any group of people from consideration for ordered ministry and that to do so now would be patently unjust. Issues of justice would have to be settled first; discussions about personal morality might come later. In addition to the conservative and liberal perspectives, there was a more radical stance adopted by

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some gay and lesbian people and their supporters, but which was not discussed very widely. The characteristics of a radical approach to gay issues – together with a development of conservative and liberal understandings – are explored in this paper.

A few words of caution are in order at the outset. First, it needs to be said that my ideas have been influenced primarily by the writings of gay ethicists, by conversations with gay men, and by my own experience. It seems likely that much that follows will resonate with lesbian readers – and, in fact, lesbians have often affirmed these ideas in discussion at workshops – but direct reflection on lesbian experience is largely absent. I would welcome further lesbian contributions to the discussion.

Second, while the three basic approaches which I identify (conservative, liberal, and radical) may be found in society at large, I am concentrating on expressions of these views as found in Christian circles. This means, for example, that biblical and theological references are included. But many of the social attitudes that are found in the church can be found elsewhere as well.

Finally, although readers (of whatever sexual orientation) may find themselves identifying consistently with one of the three approaches, it may be that they will move back and forth from one to another, depending on the topic, and may even locate themselves somewhere between two positions. Some may find their position changing and evolving over time. When I first started to think about these issues I would probably have located myself uneasily between a liberal and a radical stance. As time goes by, I find myself shifting perceptibly toward a radical position.

Although I have tried to be both critical and respectful of a range of points of view, elements of caricature may have crept into the way a purely liberal or essentially conservative or stereotypically radical viewpoint is expressed. I hope not. In any case, my aim is to outline a range of mindsets with sufficient clarity that their consistency with themselves and their distinctiveness from one another may be apparent.

1. Scripture

Christians often like to begin with the Bible. Certainly, when it comes to gay issues, some Christians who rarely cite chapter and verse onother subjects can be seen using scripture as a weapon against the

enemy. In any case, approaches to scripture provide a useful initial illustration of the ways proponents of the three respective positions see things.

The Christians whom I would describe as conservative tend to take a fairly – although, their archcritics would say, a *selectively* – literal approach to scripture. They range from those who subscribe to the idea of the verbal inerrancy of scripture to those who, while understanding the Bible as divinely inspired, have a somewhat looser understanding of this. Conservatives will be found in larger proportions in such evangelical denominations as Baptist, Alliance, and Pentecostal churches. They will be found in smaller proportions in mainline denominations like the United Church, although in 1988 their ranks were swelled by people who might not have been as familiar with the Bible as those who are consistently conservative on a range of issues, but who found that a more literal approach to the texts about homosexuality tended to support their attitudes.

For purposes of comparison, we may isolate perhaps the clearest Hebrew scripture or Old Testament text on the subject of homosexuality: Leviticus 20:13 ("If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them").[1] This passage, like nearly all biblical references to homosexuality, singles out male homosexuality.[2] To a similar prohibition in Leviticus 18:22, this text adds the death penalty. The selective literalism of most conservative Christians might make them shrink from invoking the death penalty for homosexual acts in contemporary society, but the text's use of the word "abomination" to describe homosexual behavior would still be seen as a clear sign of God's disapproval. Based on this understanding, gay men would be regarded as unsuitable leaders and role models in the church and would therefore be denied ordination. And same-sex couples would be denied the church's blessing in the form of a holy

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[1]The Scripture quotations contained herein are from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

[2]Limitations of space prevent a detailed exploration of the reasons for this, although it might be useful to begin with the fact that Israel was a patriarchal society in which homosexual behavior did not advance the allied social concerns of procreation and the passing on of property.

union or covenanting service.

A liberal approach to the same text would emphasize issues of context. Following the historical-critical method, liberals would point out that the levitical prohibition is part of a holiness or purity code,[3] many aspects of which are not taken literally by Christians today – the eating of pork, for example, or the wearing of cloth made of two kinds of fabric. They would explore the meaning of "abomination" and claim that it is a term that is used in the Bible to describe any practice that is characteristic of an alien culture or religion (Millward 12).[4] Hebrews, for example, are an abomination to Egyptians because they are shepherds (Gen. 46:34). Further, liberals who abhor the death penalty for any crime or practice might argue that its invocation in Leviticus 20:13 calls the applicability of the entire verse into question.

Stepping back further from the specific text, liberals might point out that, in the whole range of scripture, homosexuality takes up only a minuscule amount of space, that it is often dealt with in the context of a particular concern (temple prostitution, for example, or – in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah – homosexual and heterosexual rape and the obligations of hospitality), and that there is no record of Jesus himself ever having spoken about it. To these considerations liberals might add that, while homosexual acts might have been known in ancient Israel, our ancestors in the faith did not have the benefit of modern sciences and social sciences and therefore did not have a clear understanding of homosexuality as such. All of which, in the liberal view, makes scripture an unreliable guide and an unhelpful source when it comes to making judgments about homosexuality today. When it comes to issues like ordination and same-sex unions, liberals are guided more by their sense of Christian love and justice and by their own common sense than by scriptural texts.

A radical approach to Leviticus 20:13 differs from a liberal position in that it refrains from providing cultural excuses for such an injunction. American theologian and United Church of Christ minister Gary David Comstock argues that the very existence of such a verse suggests that homosexuality must have been perceived

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[3]For three contrasting analyses of the impulses underlying Israel's purity laws see Comstock (85-68), Countryman (61-64), and Helminiak (43-54).

[4]See also Helminiak who explores the sense in which "abominable" means "unclean" (48).

as a threat to patriarchy (39). To those liberals who say that the Bible prescribes stoning for gays only once in all its pages, Comstock asks, "How many times and in how many ways do we have to be told that we should be killed before we take it seriously? Is not once enough?" (39).

Just as some radical feminist writers see the Bible as a patriarchal document which deserves to be discarded or, at the very least, approached with what Elizabeth Scheussler Fiorenza[5] describes as a "hermeneutic of suspicion" (15, 19-20), some radical gay thinkers see the Bible – to the extent that it deals with homosexuality at all – as a homophobic document which deserves similar treatment. Some radical feminist scholars read the Bible as literature that needs to be searched for subversive texts or signs of suppressed or marginalized writing and story-telling in an effort to recover elements of women's experience. Similarly, some radical gay thinkers search the Bible for remnants of suppressed stories of same-sex bonding (e.g., Naomi and Ruth, David and Jonathan, Jesus and the beloved disciple).

The difference in the ways that liberals and radicals read the Bible shows up as well in the way in which they understand Jesus' relationship to the hermeneutical task. Liberals are inclined to try to discern the mind of Christ, asking what Jesus would say or do 'if he were alive today'. Radicals like Comstock point out that Jesus has been co-opted by a multiplicity of groups – liberals included – to endorse their theology and their programs and is not free from our tendency to project our interests onto him (93). While Canadian Lutheran Ralph Wushke sees the positive in this and encourages us to search for a "queer Jesus" who will speak to queer experience,[6] Comstock himself suggests that we "leave Jesus" and imagines Jesus saying, "Don't look to me for answers; you're on your own ... Look to each other; don't look to me" (99).

2. Christian Anthropology

Moving a step beyond the Bible, the three viewpoints can be found to differ when it comes to theology – and particularly when it comes to their understanding of human nature and of God's intention for humanity.

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[5]Goss (87-111) is one who acknowledges his debt to Scheussler Fiorenza.

[6]Goss provides an exploration of the idea of a queer Christ and a queer Christology (77-85).

Conservative Christians tend to understand humans to have been created as heterosexual beings.[7] Their view is heterosexist in the sense that heterosexuality is understood as the proper standard against which other sexual orientations are measured. According to this standard all other orientations must be considered perversions.

On this reading, homosexuality is seen as being 'unnatural' – contrary to what nature (and God) intended. As a departure from nature, homosexual practice and homosexuality itself are seen as sinful – a rejection of God's plan and intention. While some might see the element of sin as willful on the part of the homosexual (in which case repentance is the appropriate response), others tend to look on homosexuality as a sickness or disorder from which the individual should be delivered by means of a cure. Both variations of the sin/sickness model inform the 'ex-gay' movement[8] by which persons are encouraged to reject their homosexuality in favor of heterosexuality – or at the very least are counseled not to act on their homosexual impulses.[9] Gay men who themselves espouse a conservative Christian anthropology are more likely than liberals or radicals to heed this counsel.

Liberals, on the other hand, understand humanity to be sexually diverse. They base their sense of what is 'natural' on what is found in nature and point to animal species which exhibit signs of bisexuality and homosexuality.[10]

For liberals, human diversity – racial, ethnic, sexual, etc. – is often cited as a value. However, as we will see later, heterosexism may still

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[7]Drawing on a typically conservative reading of the second creation story in Genesis they are fond of pointing out that God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve.

[8]Faris, a conservative United Church minister, supports the value and validity of a 'cure' (103-16), although the studies which he quotes in support of his argument have been judged unreliable by liberals and radicals.

[9]In some denominations – the Anglican Church, for example – a clergyperson's sexual orientation is not in itself at issue. However, ordained persons of whatever orientation are expected to practice chastity unless they are married. (See Ferry for one gay clergyman's experience of this policy in the Anglican Church as well as for an outsider's view of developments in the United Church.) For conservatives, the oft-quoted formula for ordained and unordained alike is, "Chastity in singleness; fidelity in marriage."

[10]It is interesting to note a conservative response to this perception about nature. I recall Anita Bryant once affirming that homosexuality was unnatural because it was not found in animal species. When it was pointed out to her that homosexuality had indeed been observed in nature, she shifted her ground – 180 degrees – and argued that humans should reject homosexuality on the grounds that to engage in it would level of animals.

inform a subtle prejudice that continues to affirm a kind of hierarchy when it comes to the variety of sexual patterns of behavior. Though more subtle (or insidious, according to one's viewpoint) than the conservatives, liberals tend to see heterosexual social models as the best ones for all people – regardless of sexual orientation – to follow. Gay relationships that seem to follow a straight model tend to have their endorsement. Consequently, liberals may be found supporting the idea of blessing same-sex unions in church and advocating for same-sex partner benefits as a matter of social policy.

Whereas liberals, after scratching at the surface of their arguments, may be found to be merely tolerating diversity while clinging to a traditional hierarchy of value, radicals may be seen to celebrate that diversity. In fact, some radicals go beyond affirming the more-or-less equal values of different sexualities and almost overstate the value of homosexuality and its contribution to humanity in general. At the very least, radicals are unapologetic about the idea that the sexual diversity found in nature and in human nature is a sign of God's good creation rather than a sign of the Fall (conservative) or even a morally neutral fact of life (liberal). And while conservatives might tolerate gay clergy who live a chaste life, and liberals might tolerate gay clergy who live in a stable, monogamous relationship with a partner, radicals would put no such conditions on the suitability of gay people for ordination.

It would probably be agreed by all three groups that, in terms of Christian anthropology, sin is failure to fulfill God's intention for us. Where would each of these groups locate sin in the case of the subject under discussion? As we have seen, conservatives identify sin with homosexuality itself. Radicals counter by accusing conservatives of the sin of homophobia – and gay conservatives of *internalized* homophobia. Two hallmarks of traditional liberalism are tolerance and a rather optimistic view of human nature. Theological liberals tend to downplay the significance of sin and call on both conservatives and radicals to adopt a more tolerant and less judgmental attitude toward each other.

3. Body and Spirit

A related theological concern has to do with the way the three groups view the relationship between body and spirit. The Judeo-Christian tradition is a checkered one and provides source material for a variety

of approaches.

Conservatives tend to draw on those traditions (e.g., the Apostle Paul) that see a dichotomy between body and spirit. There is a great divorce between the two. Spirit is good; body is bad. Our true, essential selves, the selves we are to aspire to being, are spiritual. The body and its appetites represent a lower, physical plane of being that we are to overcome and subdue.

It is perhaps not surprising that this view of humanity has been put forward primarily by men. It represents an inner conflict that reflects the experience of many males. Some years ago a book appeared on the subject of women's bodies. It was called *Our Bodies, Our Selves*. When a volume for men in similar format came along, it was called *Man's Body: An Owner's Manual* (Nelson 106). The suggestion is that women, with their natural bodily rhythms, identify more closely with their bodies. Men may be more inclined than women to see their bodies as an element that often seems disobedient, out of control, and alien to their spiritual aspirations – something to rise above. Certainly, conservative Christians tend to be suspicious of the physical and to distrust the body's sexual instincts. They limit the legitimate expression of this powerful drive to one setting only: heterosexual marriage.

Liberal Christians tend to have a more ambiguous attitude toward our physical being. A report on human sexuality prepared in 1984 for the United Church of Canada (which many consider a largely liberal denomination) reflected this ambiguity in its title, *Gift, Dilemma and Promise*. Although the report upset conservatives by its questioning of rigid rules when it comes to sexual behavior, there is still the sense that our bodies present us with difficult problems.

There is, on the other hand, a tendency among radicals (e.g., J. Michael Clark, who follows the work of such writers as Beverly Harrison and James Nelson) to erase the boundary between body and spirit. Taking a more holistic approach (and drawing in some cases on Judaic tradition), some radicals speak of our "bodyselves" (Nelson 30-31) and claim that we *are* our bodies – or, at least, that we cannot be known apart from our bodies. The goal of morality for them is not that spirit should win in the battle against body, but that each bodyself should become an integrated whole. As part of this approach, bodies are to be affirmed, as is the pleasure they can experience – pleasure that, for both gays and straights, may not be

limited to the marriage bed. Rather than the traditional term "incarnation," radicals sometimes use the word "embodiment" to describe the physical presence of the divine in human life.

4. Integration vs. Distinctiveness: Defining the Difference between Gay and Straight

Linked to some of the theological and social assumptions which the three perspectives make is a range of opinion as to just how different gay people are from straight people. Are gays and straights essentially alike except for 'what they do in bed'? Or do the differences run deeper than that?

Conservatives tend to talk about 'the gay lifestyle' in a way that suggests, first, that there is only one way to be gay and, second, that being gay involves a whole package of social behaviors, attitudes and political ambitions. Gays tend to be anathematized – or even demonized – as degenerate, predatory, and promiscuous. Conservatives tend to speak of the 'gay agenda' which in their view involves securing not *equal* rights (as liberals might call them), but *special* rights. These would include the right to marry (or have their relationships legally recognized in some other way) and the right to adopt children. Conservative biblical and theological assumptions render such claims unacceptable. In conservative thinking, the differences between gay and straight are profound. Gays are seen as inherently morally inferior.

Liberals tend to emphasize the areas of similarity between gays and straights. The only essential difference, according to this view, is the sex to which one happens to be attracted. Gay aspirations (according to both gay and straight liberals) are seen to be largely the same as those of straight people: the satisfaction of long-term relationships, the carrying out of meaningful work, the opportunity to have families, the ability to make a contribution to mainstream society, etc.

However, some have seen an implied heterosexism in some expressions of liberal attitudes. The impression that is sometimes given is that gay people can be 'just as good as' straights. Straight standards, however, are tacitly – and sometimes explicitly – assumed to be the norm. As a liberal gay-positive pamphlet called *What the Bible Says to Homosexuals* puts it, "As the relationship between homosexuals becomes recognized as parallel to a heterosexual

relationship, it becomes possible to apply to a homosexual union the discipline expected in a heterosexual marriage" (Millward 10). Minority experience, it seems, is still to be interpreted in the light of majority culture.

Radicals, on the other hand, tend to agree with conservatives that there is more to being gay than just how people have sex. Gayness is bound up with an entire culture. It involves a distinct sensibility and a distinct kind of socialization.[11] To obliterate the line between gay culture and heterosexual culture would mean a loss, not only to gays, but to straights as well. Mainstream society benefits from the contribution that a distinctively and discernibly gay presence can make to it.[12]

In comparing liberal and radical attitudes, a parallel may be seen with viewpoints expressed about race in the era of the civil rights movement in the United States. Liberals were inclined to say that the only significant difference between blacks and whites – and the basis of prejudice – was the color of their skin.[13] A more radical approach identified (and celebrated) many differences between black and white culture – and led to the establishment of departments of Afro-American Studies at universities all over the United States. In Canada, a comparable issue might be the historical debate about whether it is in the best interests of aboriginal peoples to be assimilated into the predominant culture or to remain a distinct social entity. When an emphasis on difference leads to discrimination, of course, the challenge is to preserve and celebrate what is life-giving about the

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[11]Charles Kaiser refers to two well-known secular writers who dissent from this radical viewpoint and line up with the position I am describing as liberal. He writes, "Gore Vidal, a child of the fifties, has always insisted 'there are no homosexual or heterosexual persons, only acts ... I never in my life accepted that these two categories existed. And when they began on 'gay sensibility' back in the sixties and seventies, I said, 'Well, if you think there is such a thing, what does Roy Cohn have in common with Eleanor Roosevelt?' Other than they liked their own sex" (Kaiser 96).

Kaiser continues: "The novelist, essayist, and biographer Edmund White is similarly skeptical about the notion of gay sensibility. 'What we can discuss ... is the gay *taste* of a given period,' he wrote in *States of Desire*. 'A taste cultivated (even by some heterosexuals) or rejected (even by many homosexuals).'" (White 259)

[12]For a lively discussion of the pros and cons of the assimilation of gay culture into mainstream culture, see Harris.

[13]Even Martin Luther King, in his "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, dreamed of a day when his own children would be judged, not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

differences without using them as a justification for imposed segregation or unequal treatment.

The contrast between liberal and radical approaches to 'difference' can be illustrated by their attitudes toward gay marriage. In a letter to the editor of the *Edmonton Journal*, writer and energy consultant James Kennedy upholds what I call a radical view and critiques what I call a liberal position. Kennedy, who self-identifies as gay, argues against marriage for gays. Gays and "straight liberals" are misguided, he says, when they understand equality to mean equal access to marriage. He questions whether equality must take the form of "*suburbia universalis*," and suggests that gay people need to guard against "the power of dominant cultures to assimilate." Gays need to reflect on their own experience and to develop their own social institutions rather than borrowing from a different culture. "Our fight for civil rights," he says, "should be about substantive equality, not about appropriating labels developed by other cultures for their own use." The flaw in the obsession of "middle-class liberals" with extending the marriage franchise is that their efforts will have the effect of assimilating "a distinct minority into the mainstream ... Distinct religions, attitudes, languages and patterns of thought vanish into the stultifying abyss of mainstream culture. What unique contribution we might have made as an accepted (yet independent) voice is lost, and in its place we are offered full participation in someone else's culture." The radical position – and its contrast with that of the liberals – could hardly be better put.

5. The Element of Choice

Essential to the moral positions adopted by the three perspectives are their assumptions about the role of choice in matters of sexual orientation. Obviously the question of whether sexual orientation is 'given' or chosen has a bearing on the degree and kind of moral responsibility which follows.

Whether or not conservatives see all sexual orientation as a matter of choice, most seem to believe that homosexuality (and its inevitable 'lifestyle') is chosen. Those who see room for repentance clearly believe that another choice can be made. Even those who adopt the sickness/healing model believe that individuals can choose to seek healing for their condition. Healing may take the route of response/behavior modification in the form of aversion therapy. Or it may

address a perceived deficiency in childhood bonding with one or both parents. Even so, homosexuals, regardless of the degree of choice involved in their orientation, are seen to bear moral responsibility for choosing to remain in their current state or choosing to pursue wholeness.

Liberals, on the other hand, understand sexual orientation to be a 'given.' Although its origins may still be a mystery (whether caused by genetics or conditioning), it is not a matter of choice. While some may try to value homosexuality equally with heterosexuality, others look at gays with compassion. ('They can't help being the way they are; after all, given the way they are persecuted, who would willingly *choose* to be gay?') In either case, moral responsibility takes on a different form than it does for conservatives. Gays may not choose their orientation, but they can still make behavioral choices, and the best choice is long-term, monogamous relationships analogous to the 'best' heterosexual relationships.[14]

Radicals debate among themselves the relative merits of 'essentialist' and 'social constructionist' models for understanding sexual orientation.[15] Essentialists – who would appear to be in the minority – suggest that gayness is essentially the same from one society to another and from one era to another. Social constructionists emphasize the ways in which they see sexual orientation – or at least its expression – as being culturally conditioned.

Radicals at the essentialist end of the spectrum – those, in other words, who suggest that sexual orientation is not chosen – may be alarmed at the way in which some conservatives and liberals discuss the implications of a possible discovery of a gay gene or studies that suggest a link between the size of a man's hypothalamus and his sexual orientation. Liberals may rejoice in discoveries that seem to support their idea that sexual orientation is inherent rather than chosen. Yet their sense of compassion (and implied superiority) and an inclination to feel sorry for those who bear the burden of homosexuality might lead them to conclude that if homosexuality is

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[14]This is the liberal position espoused by Bishop John S. Spong (who has often been called a theological radical) and expressed in an address to the Diversity Conferences of Alberta Society at Knox-Metropolitan United Church, Edmonton, Alberta, on May 3, 1999.

[15]For a discussion of social constructionism and its limitations, see Stein.

congenital it may also be preventable, and steps should be taken to eliminate the gay component from humanity. Conservatives who might be open to the idea that sexual orientation is inherent if it could be used in a way that would advance their antihomosexual position might also – though for different reasons – advocate measures to prevent people from being born gay.

Those who see sexual orientation as a social construct argue for an element of choice in our sexual self-understanding. One person, for example, may self-define as straight or bisexual in his twenties, but as gay in his forties. Another may find over time and through experience that a same-sex relationship meets deeper needs than an opposite-sex relationship. Still another may be attracted now to a man, now to a woman, and yet eschew traditional labels of sexual orientation.

In his book *The End of Gay*, Bert Archer argues for a fluid understanding of sexual orientation – and for more room for the element of choice. Archer sees gayness as a social construct that had value in the second half of the twentieth century for defining an identifiable group that was in search of social and political recognition. However, he claims that it is time to move on to new understandings of sexuality. Not surprisingly, many men for whom being gay is an 'essential' part of their identity were outraged by Archer's proposition.

Although many social constructionists might not go as far as Archer, it is interesting to find that some radicals agree with conservatives in seeing an element of choice in sexual orientation – at least as it is lived out. But what the conservatives call bad, radicals call good. And, unlike some liberals, most radicals argue for valuing all orientations equally. Liberals – at least those who say of gays that they cannot help it – still operate out of a heterosexist hierarchy. Heterosexuals do not have to justify the way they turned out, but homosexuality – along with other minority orientations – has to be justified or explained or excused.

6. Ethics

Attitudes toward gay lifestyles and ethical behavior parallel some of the subjects that have already been examined. For conservatives, for whom any sexual activity outside marriage is regarded as sinful, chastity is the only option for homosexuals who may be unable to change their orientation. For liberals, as we have discussed, a hierarchy

of options tends to put relationships analogous to heterosexual marriage at the top of the heap. Relationships or arrangements that are not committed, long-term, or monogamous are judged – as are heterosexual relationships that lack these characteristics – as inferior.

We have also seen that radicals tend to question the assumption that heterosexual values should be applied to homosexual life. To begin with, some point out, heterosexual values may not be working even for heterosexuals. In practice, heterosexual marriage is often much less than it is supposed to be. It is said that fifty percent of North American heterosexual marriages are not permanent; many marriages are not characterized by sexual fidelity; "traditional families"[16] can be scenes of power inequities, domestic violence, oppression of women, etc. Furthermore, some changes in the meaning of sex for heterosexuals have undermined some of the grounds for criticism of homosexual activity. For example, straight couples who decide not to have children but still engage in sex cannot pretend that sex is justified solely or primarily as the means of procreation. If sex means something else – commitment, for example, or caring, or sheer pleasure – for straight people, then what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Sex may mean any or all of these things to homosexuals as well.

Some radicals question the value of monogamy, saying that it may (or may not) be appropriate for straights but need not be applied to gays. Some gay men, for example, may rejoice in whatever truth they find in the stereotypes proclaimed in the old double dactyl: "Higgamus, hoggamus, / Woman's monogamous; / Hoggamus, higgamus, / Man is polygamous." Monogamy, they might say, is a heterosexual value which sets out to domesticate straight men and tame their polygamous impulses. But gay men without family commitments should not be constrained by the same value (Long 23, 40).

Other (less extreme) radicals may not reject the 'value' of fidelity but may reinterpret it as implying a different kind of faithfulness than literal monogamy might require. For example, J. Michael Clark

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[16]With regard to the well-worn phrase "traditional family values," conservatives see homosexuals as a threat to these values, while liberals try to offer reassurances that homsexuals are not a threat. Radicals, on the other hand, agree that homosexuality does challenge traditional family values and claim that these values deserve to be challenged.

takes a principle enunciated by Carter Heyward and builds on it. "We must be real with one another, really present," writes Heyward (131). Clark takes this principle as a foundation for a fidelity that is neither bound by monogamy nor restricted to the purely sexual aspects of a relationship. Clark understands fidelity as something that is expressed in honoring and not abusing the feelings of a partner, in listening well, in speaking honestly and from one's depths, in a willingness to be vulnerable (75-76). Clark's recipe for fidelity – though it may not include sexual exclusivity – is certainly not without rigor. In a litany of moral imperatives, he goes on to insist, "We must also be faithful to our values within our relationships, we must cherish openness and honesty and we must trust one another deeply; we must be committed not only to our individual growth as persons but also to the growth of our relationships themselves" (76).

Further reintepretation of the concept of fidelity might mean honesty between friends as well as between lovers. It might mean consideration for the feelings and the well-being of others. Questions might be raised as to whether we are to be faithful to rules or to persons, to a legal agreement or to a relationship.

As conservatives tend to be literal in their understanding of scripture, they tend to be literal in their adherence to rules. In fact, their lives are given structure by those rules that are understood to reflect God's intentions for humanity. Like the writer of Psalm 19, they see the existence of rules as a sign of God's care for humanity and of God's willingness to provide people with guidance and direction: "The law of the LORD is perfect, / reviving the soul; / the decrees of the LORD are sure, / making wise the simple; / The precepts of the LORD are right, / rejoicing the heart; / the commandment of the LORD is clear, / enlightening the eyes" (Psalm 19:7-8). Good rules, according to this view, are intended to be not a burden but a blessing. They are designed for human benefit.

An ethic of rules, however, tends to eliminate tolerance of diversity. Liberals are more inclined to be relativist (rather than absolutist) when it comes to moral decision-making – more likely to see shades of gray, more apt to see value in situational ethics, more open to the possibility that rules may have their exceptions, more tolerant of differing points of view. Liberals question whether an ethic of rules that sees a bad heterosexual marriage as better than a good homosexual relationship is an ethic that can withstand scrutiny.

Radicals may take this one step further. Some, seeing an impossibility in doing ethics in an objective way, argue that ethics must be done in the subjective context of individual experience and cultural diversity. This means, for example, that one group cannot do another group's ethics for them (e.g., straights for gays), and that gays themselves cannot borrow any but the most general ethical constructs from other cultures but must develop their own. Although gay men may have a diversity of life experiences and interpret those experiences in a variety of ways, many share an emphasis on an 'ethic of relationship' rather than an 'ethic of rules.' They have found that rules have been used, by and large, to oppress them, and therefore they have to find other expressions of value.

It should be added that a radical argument for the value of a gay element in society is that, historically, queer folk have served the usefully subversive purpose of destabilizing society by providing alternative lifestyles and by asking awkward questions. Conservatives who value stability in society may experience this challenge as an unwelcome threat and feel that society would be better off without it. Liberals, while not actually sharing counterculture values, might still understand them as a useful addition to the societal mix and, within limits, would tolerate them.

Conclusion

Whether we are consistent in our outlook or not, it should be apparent by this point that the approaches to gay issues which I have characterized as conservative, liberal, and radical each have a certain consistency within themselves.

Those whom I have described as conservative tend to be literal (or at least selectively literal) in their reading of the Bible and in their adherence to biblically inspired rules. They see the subjugation of bodily appetites as one of our spiritual goals. They understand it as God's intention that human beings should be heterosexual and therefore perceive departures from this norm as sinful or unhealthy and as bad choices that may be corrected. The ordination of 'practicing' homosexuals and the blessing of same-sex unions are inconsistent with conservative understanding. In churches that have a conservative ethos, gay men and lesbians are not made to feel accepted as they are.

Liberals, drawing on their heritage of tolerance and a positive

and progressive view of human nature, bring a degree of ambiguity to the subjects under discussion. Seeing shades of gray, they try to refrain from being judgmental but look for common ground somewhere in the middle. They soften the harsher injunctions of scripture by emphasizing the factor of context. They see sexual orientation as a given and minimize the differences between gay and straight. Nevertheless there is sometimes subtle, sometimes overt heterosexism in many of their expressions of value which implies acceptance of only a limited range of human diversity and a limited range of sexual behaviors. Gay church members – ordained and lay – are accepted with conditions attached.

Radicals celebrate the diversity that liberals merely tolerate. They are disinclined to defend scripture when it seems to them to be indefensible. Their radical critique of what they regard as unhealthy traditions includes a rejection of the body/spirit split and a call for bodyself integration. On some issues, essentialist radicals find themselves lining up with the liberals (on the issue of choice, for instance). But social constructionists – surprisingly perhaps – find themselves agreeing with conservatives on the matter of choice and in emphasizing the things that distinguish gays from straights. Rather than accepting the heterosexism of conservative judgments or of liberal tolerance, they seek a positive ethic developed *by* gay men *for* gay men, an ethic that would provide appropriate guidance for gay Christians – clergy and lay – in their intimate relationships.

Is it possible for these three groups to talk to one another? Some despair of the possibility. In fact, many gay Christians say, for example, that they are tired of debating the biblical texts. They have been over that ground too often and find that few people are persuaded to budge from their position – whatever it may be – by the sheer weight of argument. If the pro-choice and pro-life camps on the abortion issue cannot begin to have a conversation because they disagree on such a basic matter as a definition of the moment at which life begins, those who disagree about fundamental aspects of homosexuality may also find chances of a fruitful exchange of views to be rather slim. Nevertheless those who have sought changes in denominational policies on the acceptance of gays and lesbians have had to consider which tactics are most likely to effect such changes.

The dynamics can be interesting. At first sight, radicals and conservatives can look like two solitudes, with liberals attempting to

bridge the gap. Positive results, however, can be meager. At some denominational gatherings – the worldwide Anglican Communion's Lambeth Conference of 1998, for example – statements about points on which consensus has been found often have little to say that is substantive and are reduced to vapid platitudes. Some radicals, sensing that conservatives might be more open to a liberal approach than to a radical one, soften their position – and may at times even misrepresent themselves – in order to persuade conservatives that their fears of difference are unfounded. If conservatives could accept the idea that sexual orientation is not chosen and that gays and lesbians want to live a lifestyle that is similar to the one espoused by most straight Christians, it is felt that the road to acceptance may be made easier.

Other radicals have found, however, that they can have a more significant conversation with conservatives if they stick to their beliefs rather than masquerade as liberals. A radical, social constructionist, lesbian member of Affirm United (the United Church's unofficial organization for gay and lesbian members and their supporters) once told me that she found conservatives easier to deal with than liberals because, although they disagreed in their positions, they at least agreed about what was at issue. They agreed, for example, that there was an element of choice in sexual orientation, although what conservatives call a bad choice radicals call good. They agreed that there is a lot more to being gay than the sex of the people one happens to be attracted to, although again what conservatives call bad – lifestyle choices, political agendas, and the rest – radicals call good. By minimizing issues of difference and choice, liberals – much as they might like to find common ground – have a harder time finding it either with conservatives or with radicals because the things conservatives and radicals consider significant liberals regard as relatively unimportant.

The dilemma for conservatives and radicals in particular is whether to see as their goal the transformation of their opponent's viewpoint or simply the clear articulation – and ultimate victory – of their own position. When lines are drawn so firmly, a softening of one's opponent's position may be effected only by a lack of candor about one's own. Frankness about one's own views may simply produce agreement to disagree and a return to battle positions in which the enemy is frequently demonized.

In the United Church, liberals hoped to keep everyone together both before and after 1988. At the General Council of that year, liberals

even sought a compromise that everyone could live with. In the event, many conservatives in the church saw the General Council's decision to open ordered ministry to self-declared homosexuals as a defeat for them and withdrew their membership; others were loud in their protests but stayed in the church. For radicals, the decision was a step forward. However, for the next decade it was a liberal call for a time of healing that prevailed and, for the most part, kept matters of human sexuality off the church's official agenda. In this atmosphere it was not until the General Council of August, 2000 (the fifth General Council since 1988) that the national church returned to a significant discussion of gay issues. The measures adopted at that meeting dealt a further blow to conservatives in the United Church.[17] In the debate that preceded decision-making, those liberals who argued for compromise or deferment were overruled. In the end, it was the radicals who gained the most ground.

In 1988 the surface issue was whether or not gay men and lesbians should be ordered ministers. The underlying issue was whether or not gay men and lesbians were welcome in the church as they are. By 2000, the United Church's General Council was ready to address those underlying issues more directly. Specifically, the General Council of that year renounced a statement of the General Council of 1960 in which homosexuality was described as a sin and replaced it with the statement that "lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered as well as heterosexual orientations are gifts from God, part of the marvelous diversity of creation" (Beck 2). In renouncing the earlier declaration, the General Council clearly rejected the conservative position. The language of the new resolution – by affirming and celebrating sexual diversity rather than merely tolerating it – comes closer to a radical stance than to a liberal one.

Following the practice already adopted by a number of

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[17]For purposes of comparison, it is of interest to note the actions of the United Church's sister denominations in the United States. During the same summer in which the United Church of Canada was enacting measures that dealt further blows to the denomination's conservatives, conservative positions were triumphing south of the border. The United Methodist Church (the second largest Protestant denomination in the United States) ruled against the ordination of practicing homosexuals, while the Presbyterian Church (USA) extended a moratorium on the discussion of sexual standards for ordination. Both denominations, along with the Episcopalian (Anglican) Church rejected attempts to legitimize same-sex unions.

congregations, the General Council also decided to "affirm lesbian and gay partnerships" and to "recognize them in church documentation and services of blessing, and actively work for their civil recognition" (Beck 2). This action clearly marked another defeat for conservatives in the church. But was it a victory for the liberals or for the radicals? Liberals might be happier than radicals to see the church sanctioning partnerships that approximate heterosexuals' pairings. But avoidance of the word 'marriage' – though it may have been based on tactical considerations – would meet with the approval of most radicals.

Another measure adopted by the General Council seems to reflect liberal values. Following renunciation of the position that homosexuality is sinful, General Council decided to encourage the various levels of church councils and the church's membership "to learn ways to offer healing for the damage inadvertently caused by the historic stance of our church on homosexuality" (Beck 2). The statement reflects a liberal view of history that minimizes the harm done and takes a relatively benign view of human nature and human failings. Radicals might be less inclined to see the harmful results of institutional homophobia in church and society as inadvertent. Suspecting that harmful motives and actions cannot be easily excused, radicals might be less sanguine than liberals about the ease with which healing may be effected.

In concentrating on General Council's decisions, it is possible to overlook the long and lively debate that led to them. A variety of points of view can still be articulated clearly in the courts of the church. It may also be possible to forget that, on matters of sexuality at least, General Council has a history of moving more quickly than the general membership. Perhaps what the majority of church members have found to be acceptable is a liberal version of gay realities. At the grass-roots level, the radical perspective of those realities is a long way from general acceptance.

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Rolf Thiele's Film Version of Thomas Mann's Homotext *Tonio Kröger*: A Reconsideration

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Thomas Mann's 1903 novella *Tonio Kröger* continues to fascinate readers with its account of a young artist whose doubts about his initial success as a man of letters send him journeying homeward. Here he relates once again to the commonplace world of his father with a mixture of ironic distance and loving affection that promises to quicken his work as a mature writer. Yet the 1964 film version of the story, with Rolf Thiele directing a screenplay by Erika Mann and Ennio Flaiano, enjoyed only a brief flurry of mixed reviews (Seitz 453-62) before falling into virtual neglect. Since Gabriele Seitz's 1979 commentary, it has been accorded at best scant, and usually negative attention by scholars (Berlin, "Audiovisual Aids" 25; Kurzke 31; Renner 800). This development is intriguing in the light of the attention that is still accorded Luchino Visconti's 1970 film version of *Der Tod in Venedig*, and the relative neglect proves questionable when, on reviewing, the earlier film shows itself to be an interesting companion piece to Visconti's illustrious offering. Reconsidered, Thiele's film suggests a reading

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of Mann's text that is in line with recent critical directions that concern – in combination with the text's ironic self-reflection on the artistic narrative's triumph over adversity (Bennett; Kurzke 100-03; Wetzel) – the way it treats the theme of homosexuality (esp. Böhm; Busch; Detering; see also Bridges; Feuerlicht "Homoeroticsm"; Hayman; Heilbut; Jones; Martin; Murfin; Reich-Ranicki; Tobin). I shall support this revised assessment of the film by pursuing two theses regarding two major areas of alteration and invention that the film has undertaken with Mann's text. This will involve consideration, first, of changes that convey more emphatically the original text's subtle hints about the close relationship of the fictive narrator and eponymous hero and, second, of additions that make graphically explicit the original text's indications that homosexuality plays a decisive role in Tonio's struggles as an artist.

Alterations and inventions are a given where film versions of literary texts are concerned. Most discrepancies between the strategy of a filmmaker and a recipient's reading of the original can be assigned to the category of personal taste and pursued mainly to highlight omitted or altered features that might foster new interpretive perspectives. Thiele's film is no exception. Many readers of *Tonio Kröger* might have welcomed an attempt to capture Thomas Mann's opening with a crane-shot descending through the dismal wintry weather and obscured sun to show Tonio in the Lübeck schoolyard. This might have retained the text's twisted evocation of the classical Homeric epic that the later scenes in Denmark recall when the eponymous hero arises to greet the rosy dawn and go on to his reaffirmation of his position at the edge of life's dancing "sea" (TM 326).[1] Other viewers may regret the relative abbreviation of Tonio's sea journey to Denmark, above all since it omits the apparently minor detail of the circus that travels along on the voyage (TM 318). Graphic reference to the "polar bear" and "tiger" that together, from deep in the ship's hold, bellow out against the storm just as Tonio bursts forth with his lyric greeting to the sea (TM 321-22), might have aided the film's efforts to intimate both Tonio's move to harmonize the

[1]References to Tonio Kröger are to volume VIII of Mann's *Gesammelte Werke* (see "Works Cited") and are indicated throughout the text by "TM" plus the page number(s) from that volume. Quotations have been translated into English according to the translation by David Luke.

conflicting voices within himself and the narrative's tendency to such emphatically poetic trumpeting of its own felicitous turns.

Thiele's film also involves instances of streamlining that, while they might strike many as necessary to prevent the film from bogging down in abstract verbosity, are likely to invite critical attack nonetheless. Gabriele Seitz illustrates the degree to which much of the third chapter's commentary on Tonio's progress through immoral adventures to artistic fame has been "compromised" by the film's editorial liberties (432-34). Yet others might be pleasantly surprised by the cuts to Tonio's long exchange with his confidante, the Russian painter Lisaweta Iwanowna, in the fourth chapter. Many might regret the way the concept of "erledigen" (to deal with, take care of) – so important from the fourth chapter onward in enunciating the story's self-ironic perspective on the capacity of the art work to apply an illusory face to complex problems – has been dropped from the story's lexicon of recurring phrases. Yet despite these changes, the film's rendition even of these two dense chapters has preserved some significant phrases. It retains those that refer to Tonio's tendency to "Ausschweifungen" (deviations, eccentricities) in thought and behavior, for example, and others concerning the suspect masculinity of artists (TM 299). These and other changes combine to foster a better understanding of how Mann's text reflects self-ironically on the possibilities and problems of artistic existence arising from the homosexual male's experience of alterity. They shed light on the way the text reflects on its own genesis as the homosexual male's attempt to narrate, with an ironic eye both to the possible missteps and illusions that attend an artful account of real problems and to his own development and triumph as an artist.

Critics have noted two major respects in which Thiele's film departs from the original text. They point out, on the one hand, that events from Tonio's boyhood are presented in the film as flashbacks from the perspective of the mature hero, with several invented scenes added to the portrayal of young Tonio and of the thirty-year-old writer (Seitz 431, 453-62). The sequence depicting young Tonio's walk home with his classmate Hans Hansen has been augmented by scenes in which Tonio interacts with his father and mother. The episodes involving Ingeborg Holm and Monsieur Knaak's dance class are followed by a scene in which the same group of youngsters is shown skating on a lake. As well, the two flashback sequences are embedded

in invented portrayals of Tonio's southern experiences that, after the narrator has commented on the young man's immoral adventures, involve his interaction with various female figures.

Critics note on the other hand that the film has altered Lisaweta and Tonio's relationship to her. It makes her not only more glamorous but also possessed of romantic feelings for him (Seitz 431, 441-48). This point is made evident in an invented sequence in which Tonio, left alone in Lisaweta's studio while she dashes off to the artists' ball with other bohemians, discovers the cache of sketches that she has made of him. The film also adds a sequence in which Lisaweta bids farewell to Tonio at the train station as he sets out on his journey north, via Lübeck, to Denmark – a cinematic trope suggesting a romantic involvement that travel can only postpone and that only death can prevent. As well, Tonio decides upon this journey immediately after Lisaweta has judged him to be "a bourgeois on the wrong path," and not, as in the text, after a summer of pondering and planning (TM 305). The film's closing sequence takes up this thread of a romance between Tonio and Lisaweta by adding scenes in which Tonio, at peace with himself after the Danish dance sequence, imagines what it would be like if Lisaweta were with him. He imagines this possibility acted out in scenes in which he and Lisaweta embrace on a Danish beach, and she is then shown painting him and debating the various possible personas she should emphasize. Tonio insists that she give him a look of happiness that springs from humane feelings. A dream sequence then shows Tonio dancing with Lisaweta, she in a chiffon negligee, the two of them whirling in a way that recalls the film's rendition of Inge Holm's dance. The last of the imagined Lisaweta episodes has her curled up barefoot on a divan in Tonio's room as he reclines on his bed, smoking. She has just read his manuscript and delivers a critique that he finds too much like that of a wife. The entire imagined reunion sequence ends with Lisaweta suggesting that perhaps Tonio wants her as a friend to whom he can write his perfect letters, not as a vulnerable woman. With this, the 'dream' ends, the image of Lisaweta gone with a gust of wind that also blows Tonio's manuscript pages out the window. He remains on the Danish beach alone, drafting in his mind his letter to Lisaweta. The film ends, like the original text (TM 338), with the lines about the good humor, affection, and innocent bliss that, among other things, fill his living heart.

These two main areas of change and invention might strike any viewer as a willful misreading of Mann's text as a sentimental love story, meant to attract a public whom the filmmakers deem unwilling to forego the usual boy-girl romance. First, leading up to Tonio's return to Munich and Lisaweta, the flashback structure and invented scenes of male-female interaction seem to portray Tonio developing through adolescent confusions and toward a romantic commitment, a direction from which Mann's text deviates. Second, from the Lisaweta dialogue onward, the film seems to bracket its loyal rendition of the Lübeck, sea-journey, and Denmark sequence with stations in a contrived liaison between Tonio and Lisaweta. Yet closer consideration of these two major alterations fosters this article's two theses defending the project as a valid interpretation of *Tonio Kröger* as a self-reflexive homotext.

This article's first thesis holds that the film enhances the original text's ironic intimations about its own narrative authority by emphasizing that the narrator and Tonio are kindred spirits to the point of being identical – and thus that the entire account of felicitous growth is also a self-valorizing account of artistic development to which the third-person conceit lends an illusory aura ofobjective truth. At first glance, this might seem to be a radical departure on the film's part. Mann's text presents young Tonio's development from the perspective of an apparently omniscient narrative authority. The narrator is sympathetic to Tonio and, like him, an artistic type with close ties to the bourgeois world of Lübeck. Yet he remains outside of Tonio, approaching him from on high, filling in exposition, seeing him and his world from the perspective of a sympathetic fellow citizen, although able to reveal and explain the boy's inmost feelings and thoughts. This detachment gives events the sense of unadulterated truth unfolding unmediated before the reader's eyes, conveyed not as an involved figure's artfully embellished recollection, but as the events themselves, rendered with objective immediacy. Not so the film. The events of the text's first two chapters come to the viewer as the recollections of the mature Tonio as he recalls the episodes centered on Hans and Inge. While attending a performance of Giuseppe Verdi's *Don Carlos* in Ravenna, he looks back on his school-day walk with Hans and his boyhood enthusiasm for Friedrich Schiller's portrayal of the weeping king. A subsequent passage shows the adult Tonio drawn to a prostitute's room, where a gesture she

makes initiates his inner replay of scenes with Inge at the dance class and the skating pond. Thus what the text at first seems to offer as the objective truth of Tonio's early stance as a reverent outsider, the film presents as the older Tonio's retrospective reading of his youth, his own nostalgic take on his early stance as an outsider-artist.

Far from distorting Mann's text, however, the film in this way establishes clearly what the original unfolds in subtle detail. It emphasizes the near or total identity of Tonio and the narrator as artists who enact their art's grand but at times illusory triumph over the complexities of life. The closing pages of Mann's text hint emphatically that Tonio has grown to acquire the views, vocabulary, and style of the narrator in the early chapters. When Tonio comes to realize in the eighth and penultimate chapter that he may have "taken the wrong path" (TM 332, gone off "in die Irre") because he had no "right way" (TM 332, "rechten Weg"), he is almost quoting what the narrator had said in the third chapter about young Tonio having "followed the wrong path" (TM 288, "wenn er irreging") because for some individuals there is no "correct way" (TM 288, "richtigen Weg"). When, on the last page of the novella, Tonio ends his letter to Lisaweta with a sentence defending his love of life, he is repeating verbatim, save for the change in verb tense, what the narrator had said at the end of the first chapter about young Tonio's affection for the burghers of Lübeck: "His heart was alive in those days; in it there was longing, and sad envy, and just a touch of contempt, and a whole world of innocent delight" (TM 281, Luke 143; cf. TM 332, Luke 192). By ending with a Tonio who has arguably grown into the narrator who tells his entire story, Mann's text merely gives a parting thrust to its many hints at the narcissism and illusion involved in the narrator's project. Repeatedly, if subtly, the original invites readers to ponder the kinship of Tonio and the narrator and to behold the way they subject complex facts to beautifying transformation. In the opening sequence, the narrator gradually introduces young Tonio as a miniature version of himself, likewise capable, even as a lad, of artistic flights that triumph over the pain of life. The narrator's opening sentences intimate divisions and rifts quite at odds with the untrammeled Apollonian beauty of the Homeric epic that they evoke – the references to sunshine, to the tunic, belt, and footwear of the heroic son, to his relationship on the assembly grounds to the reverent elders deferring to his father's renown clearly allude to the second book of

the *Odyssey*, "The Hero's Son Awakens." Yet to that riven world the narrator's art can still impart mythic elements. The sun that shines down here upon the heroic son may be a wan ghost of itself (TM 271), a shadow of the splendor that shines down upon Homer's heroes, its light filtered by a mix of snow and ice that forecasts Tonio's indeterminacy. Yet by the end of the second paragraph, the mythical tie is regained with the description of the teacher's Jovian beard – and augmented by that of his Wodan's hat – while the two heroic "sons" march through the adulatory throngs and into sunlight. Having thus exhibited his own capacity to make sense of the dismal and diverse, the narrator then depicts a Tonio who does likewise even as a boy. Pained by his unrequited love for Hans, Tonio produces not subjective outcries but a well-turned maxim – "Whoever loves the more is at a disadvantage and must suffer" (TM 273) – to convey the "hard and simple truth" of life perceived. Melancholy and alienated, he retreats to his room to fashion well-formed art out of his feelings. He progresses through the Dionysian intimations of music and sea, through his garden vision of nature nurtured and formed, to his verses (TM 273-74). Much as the narrator resorts to Homeric allusion to transform the dismal day of his opening page, Tonio turns to the scene of the betrayed king in Schiller's *Don Carlos* (TM 277), or to the sleep-versus-dance dilemma of Theodor Storm's poem "Hyazinth" (TM 285, 334), and later still to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (TM 300) or to the Bible (TM 338) as sources of comparisons or phrases for describing his situation. Like the narrator, he is ever ready with an artistic turn or structure to impart an aura of poetic beauty and sense to the suffering he experiences.

Besides emphasizing the similarity of these two archly poetic realists, these allusions and citations also intensify the doubts that the original invites about the efficacy of their art. The literary references with which both the narrator and Tonio construct their narratives often evoke precisely those problems that the two would adorn with artful beauty. Contradictions and conflicts of this nature frequently occur between the discourse and story levels of the novella, often in a way that intimates problems of sexual diversity lurking behind the appearance of felicitous development. This is so when the text's allusions to the Bildungsroman tradition also call attention to its title-figure's failure to achieve the

heterosexual integration that conventionally defines that subgenre. It is evident as well when Tonio's approval of the pure vitality and healthy humor of Scandinavian literature (TM 306) is countered by the text's evocations of Hermann Bang, Hans Christian Andersen, and Henryk Ibsen that focus more on the problems with which Tonio struggles.[2] Young Tonio's own turns to other works and texts are consistently self-subversive in this respect. His citations of Schiller, Storm, and the Bible, for example, involve, behind their foreground message of his aesthetic skill, signals of the illusory "Erledigung" that covers up the preferably unspoken homoerotic origins of his artistry (TM 299; cf. Detering 309; Wysling, "Dokumente" 58-59). On his homeward walk in the first chapter, Tonio urges Schiller's drama *Don Carlos* upon Hans Hansen as a work full of political intrigue and gripping scenes. Yet he himself focuses on the weeping king betrayed in an all-male love triangle, thus raising his own suffering with Hans to tragic heights (Böhm 262; Busch 164; Heilbut 161; Tobin 159, 169). In each of the two symmetrically placed dance episodes he recalls the same line from Theodor Storm's poem "Hyazinth": "I long to sleep, to sleep, but you must dance" (TM 285, 334-35). This implies a link between his experiences and the heterosexual longing of that poem. Yet the cited verse and its context apply only tenuously to Tonio's situation (Detering 311-12). He longs to abandon the 'dance' of socially

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[2]Benjamin Bennett notes the novella's many evocations of the Bildungsroman – in particular Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (cf. Seitz 108-13) and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. These allusions self-subversively call attention to a point on which the novella's hero deviates from the traditional pattern by not, in contrast to Hegel's definition of the subgenre, 'getting his girl.' Similarly, the narrative's evocations of things Scandinavian as the essence of vital good health refer to works or authors linked to the problems that the story would adorn with art. So it is, for example, with the extended allusion in the dance lesson of the second chapter to the openly homosexual Hermann Bang's *Her Royal Highness* (esp. Eddy 123-25). Mann's text echoes an episode in Bang's novel, but turns the original's clumsy female dancer into a male dancer so inept that he stumbles "amongst the ladies" and is ridiculed by all as "Miss Kröger" (Detering 311-13). This is also evident in allusions to Hans Christian Andersen and Henryk Ibsen. Tonio's resolve in the eighth chapter to hold to the dangerous "sword-dance of art" (TM 334) recalls Andersen's tale of *The Little Mermaid* (Maar; Detering 314), readable as the Scandinavian author's literary reflections on his own struggle with sexual otherness. And of all possible ways to pay homage to Ibsen, Mann's text elects to use the questions from the late drama *When We Dead Awaken* about the artist's capacity to participate fully and lovingly in life as a man (TM 296; cf Vaget 107).

acceptable interaction and pairing, also to escape the 'dance' of socially acceptable art that preserves and glorifies that conventional sphere, yearning instead to give himself over to the 'sleep' of desires that draw him away from heterosexual interaction. Even Tonio's magnanimous Bible citation in his closing letter to Lisaweta involves a similar, albeit more esoteric, subtext. He backs up his resolve to love all mankind by quoting *I Corinthians* 13, 1: "one may speak with the tongues of men and of angels and yet be a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal" (TM 338). Mann often cited Goethe's use of this same Bible passage in his conversations with Johann Peter Eckermann (25 December 1825) to distance himself from the "loveless" though splendid poetry of the homosexual writer August Graf von Platen (Böhm 263; Busch 126; Kurzke 102-03), a link that renders Tonio's biblical citation a veiled reference to critical deliberations about how a homosexual man should write. Thus in addition to being kindred spirits as artists bent upon making beautiful art of diversity and alterity, Mann's narrator and title-figure are also involved in similar efforts to create narratives that veil homosexuality.

The film emphasizes this close identity of the narrator and the protagonist from early on, repeatedly signaling what the original text nurtures subtly until its final thrust. The film's chronological restructuring of the original text's first three chapters is only the first and most obvious of the means by which it signals that the story about Tonio Kröger unfolding on the screen is in fact Tonio's own third-person account of his moral and artistic triumph over the errant living and questionable aestheticism born of his peripheral position, and thus that the depiction of an artist's conciliation is a self-valorizing fiction of narrator and hero alike. Several additional details portray Tonio to be narrating his own development, writing a story about his life from the perspective of an omniscient third-person narrator in order to give his autobiography an aura of objective authority. No first-time viewer possesses the auditory acuity or foresight to note that the voice of the offscreen narrator who introduces Tonio in Italy is in fact that of Jean Claude Brialy, the actor who plays the mature Tonio. Yet this identity becomes evident in hindsight, hinted at by other details in the film. Once noted, it drives home the correspondence that the original text implies in its closing sentence (see above). The film's opening credits roll against the backdrop of a page from the manuscript of Mann's novella. While otherwise barely

decipherable, it is clearly about 'Tonio Kröger' and very likely an early version of the passages in the third chapter about Tonio's life in the south. Unfortunately, the final cut of the film deletes from the screenplay a brief shot showing the mature Tonio in his room in Ravenna at work on precisely that page of manuscript. Yet by using the manuscript page at the start, the film announces the existence of a written text about Tonio Kröger, and later scenes remind the viewer that Tonio is making his way from Ravenna back north while working on a manuscript about himself. The film's closing episodes verify this. There, the invented sequence in which Tonio imagines Lisaweta visiting him in Denmark has her reading the manuscript and commenting on how it exposes his life and problems. As well, an intervening scene alters the original in a way that links the same manuscript specifically to Mann's *Tonio Kröger*. This occurs during Tonio's return to Lübeck, in the episode where the hotel manager and police officer suspect him of being a fugitive embezzler. The filmed version of this episode follows the original text (TM 315-18), with the police officer seizing Tonio's manuscript as proof that he is a writer named Tonio Kröger. Yet in contrast to the original, the film has the police officer read out a sentence of the manuscript. The passage that he reads is identical to the passage in the original text's third chapter that notes how the maturing Tonio came to see in life naught but "comedy and misery" (TM 289-90). This alteration forces the viewer to recognize that the manuscript that Tonio is completing is in fact the story of 'Tonio Kröger' that the film is depicting. Thus the account that he offers of his struggle as an artist back to the productively loving alterity of his early years is also revealed to be a self-valorizing tale that borrows objective authority from its third-person conceit.

This article's second thesis holds that the film's invention of scenes portraying Tonio's adventures in Italy and its alteration of his relationship to Lisaweta clarify what the text implies about Tonio's problems in matters of love and sexuality. Above all, these changes enhance the original text's intimations that homosexuality is at the base of the otherness that motors Tonio's turn to art and that guides his efforts to find an artistic stance that makes that alterity aesthetically and morally productive. The film invents scenes and highlights passages retained from the original in a way that raises questions about Tonio's relationships. It then answers them in a way that

supports readings of the original text as Mann's portrayal of a homosexual male who turns to art to make his status as an outsider function in a creative way. Critics were long inclined to find Tonio's outsider status in his artistic nature. By taking the Inge Holm episodes to signify his passage through a pubescent crisis of homoerotic attraction to Hans Hansen and toward adulation of a young woman and to subsequent romantic adventures as an adult, they were able to liberate the novella from the category of homotext.[3] Yet the text shows that Tonio's homosexual struggle precedes and determines his artistic activity, and it intimates that this struggle continues to trouble him during his years in the south as a successful man of letters. It also makes clear that the scenes involving Inge Holm, far from signaling a heterosexual turn, instead illustrate how he relates to the 'dance' of proper social relationships as a clumsy misfit prone, as young Tonio in fact does during Monsieur Knaak's lesson, to slip out of place as "Miss Kröger" (TM 285; cf. Detering 306-13).

The restructuring to which the film subjects the scenes of Tonio's early years establishes these points. The Lübeck sequence recalls the tendency of Tonio and the narrator in Mann's text to evoke art works and plot lines that apply a misleading face to the situation. The scene in the opera house has Tonio lost in thought while listening to the aria in Verdi's *Don Carlos* in which King Philip laments his loveless marriage (see Seitz 435) and then flirting with the beautiful female companion of an elderly man. These heterosexual signals are countered, however, by the fact that Tonio's thoughts take him back to his own unrequited love for Hans Hansen and the way it had recalled the male love triangle of Schiller's play. Clearly, the night at the opera fits not so much into the context of the opera-lover in search of heterosexual romantic adventure, as into that of a mature Tonio recalling the pain of unrequited love that had once fed his creativity.

The events unfolding at the opera might also appear to show a mature Tonio who has moved past his pubescent homoeroticism to

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[3]Detering (291) criticizes Joachim Campe's rationale for exluding *Tonio Kröger* from his anthology on "homosexuality in German literature" and also faults Karl Werner Böhm's view (111, 204, 259-60) on the significance of Tonio's turn to Inge. James W. Jones uses quotation marks to qualify his admission that Tonio "outgrows" his attachment to Hans (285). The terms "homosexuality" and "homotext" originate with Jacob Stockinger to describe literary texts authored by homosexual writers or depicting homosexual figures (cf. Jones 13-14).

become an adept player of the romantic field. The young lady in the loge lets fall her kerchief. Tonio picks it up, sniffs it approvingly, and tucks it away in his coat pocket. The next scene has Tonio in the church, apparently about to rendezvous with that flirtatious young woman, who kneels nearby in prayer. Yet Tonio summons her through a mediary. He has another man use the altar as a romantic trysting place and make the surreptitious contact with the dark lady. This he has done so that he himself need only return her kerchief with a silent and delicate gesture. Exotic and erotic adventures there may be in Italy for Tonio – so claims the narrator – but this is not to be one of them. Tonio's interests are directed not at this woman, but rather at another aspect of the *Don Carlos* drama and at virgins to be worshiped at a distance through art.

The turn suggested here from heterosexual adventure in favor of reverent observation of its aesthetic mediation is also signaled by the treatment of scenes that the screenplay had woven into this sequence, yet dropped from the final version. One of them, immediately preceding the church rendezvous with the opera beauty, has Tonio admiring Antonio Coreggio's painting of "Zeus and Ios," thus acting as charmed observer while a voluptuous female nude is embraced by an ethereal cloud of divine origin (Seitz 425). The reencounter in the church was then to be followed by a sequence in which a brief scene with the woman from the opera stretching out her arms longingly to Tonio is flanked by scenes in which, on the one hand, he looks on as a procession of men kiss an "ecstatically blissful" virgin by Giovanni Bernini and, on the other hand, a Maria procession is preceded by a scene depicting Tonio among other formally attired gentlemen in an establishment populated by lounging courtesans reminiscent of Vittore Carpaccio's paintings (Seitz 425). The lack of information about how Tonio's third brief encounter with the opera flirt was to proceed or what was to happen with the hall full of lounging courtesans makes the speculation about scenes dropped from a work's final version tenuous. Yet the rationale of the changes seems to be directed toward a final version that moves Tonio into a position of observation where conventional erotic adventures are in swing, while also enhancing his tendency to relate to such matters more through the mediating veil of art.

The sequence centering on Tonio's adoration of Ingeborg Holm even more blatantly counters the expectation of conventional romantic

activity. Tonio is drawn from his work when a gust of wind blows a page of his manuscript out the window of his Ravenna lodgings and into the square below. Retrieving it, a hesitant Tonio is drawn to a female prostitute who leads him to her nearby room. There, the camera centers on her as she sheds her dark dress to leave herself in white chemise and slip. Yet it shows Tonio reflected in the mirror that hangs on the wall beside her as he sits watching from across the room. He is a study in defensive reserve in his three-piece suit, arms folded, legs crossed. Only as the young woman bends to attend to her footwear does he loosen up and lean toward her and the mirror. Yet this sympathetic and open gesture on his part is directed not at the prostitute, but at the recalled images of Inge and the dance lesson triggered by the young woman's gesture. As she bends over to remove her shoe, Tonio sees in the mirror beside her young Inge in a similar pose before the lesson.

The ensuing flashback involves particularly genial inventions. From dance lesson to skating party, Tonio is shown worshiping Inge from afar, focusing on her face from a distance, yet never in contact, never courting or wooing, never conversing. As in the text, this is quite in contrast to his total 'embrace' of Hans Hansen. In this, the film corresponds to readings of the scenes in Mann's original that, despite the narrator's attempts to camouflage the facts with claims about adolescent Tonio's growth beyond the silly fixations of his boyhood (TM 281-82), note the relative intensity of his attraction to Hans in contrast to his detached reverence for Inge (Detering 292-95). The film's two scenes show Tonio hovering ever nearer Inge, yet ultimately unable to connect, left passive and reserved even in the intense moments of intimacy when he adjusts her skate.

By contrast, the dance scene in the film builds a convincing bridge from the mature Tonio's earlier flirtation at the opera to a denouement of his prostitute adventure that drives home his distance from the arena of straight sex. En route to the young hero's dancing faux pas as "Miss Kröger," the film enhances the mirror relationship between Tonio and the flamboyantly third-sex dance master (Martin 60). Knaak offers the youngsters instruction in graceful comportment and the waltz, and then quizzes two boys, the second of them Hans. He then turns to Tonio, the camera following him along the line of boys and drawing in to a closer shot of Knaak and Tonio, face to face. Yet rather than questioning Tonio about the dance, Knaak enacts what

seems a cryptic ritual of mutual recognition and acknowledgment. As he starts to turn to Tonio, Knaak says to Hans in his affected accent: "Und Ihre Freunde [*sic*] Kröger, hm, hm" ("And your friend Kröger, hm, hm") – whereby the grammatically incorrect endings on the masculine noun "Freund" seem to assign Hans Hansen a slightly effeminized "friend." Knaak then faces Tonio and, turning away, continues: "Tonio, n'est-ce pas, ... wenn ich mich nicht irre" ("Tonio, n'est-ce pas, ... if I'm not mistaken"), thus verifying Tonio to be, like himself, and likewise by name, a hybrid of the German bourgeois and the exotic, foreign, effeminate – and also prone, perhaps, to "go astray" ("sich irren").[4]

The scenes that follow develop this relationship between Tonio and Knaak further, with inventions that enhance the original's use of leitmotifs and symmetries. When Knaak chooses Inge to help him demonstrate the proper waltz, Tonio looks on longingly, imagining himself in Knaak's place as Inge's partner. The camera focuses on him as he watches the two, but then shifts to replace Knaak. This conveys Tonio's fantasy of himself taking Knaak's place in Inge's embrace. At the same time it identifies him with the queer Knaak. That identity is emphasized when the dance ends with a vignette that recalls the mature Tonio's opera adventures and drives home their signals about his peripheral relationship to heterosexual activity. As the waltz ends and Tonio's vision fades, Inge drops her handkerchief. Tonio steps forward to retrieve it, a move that recalls the flirtation at the performance of *Don Carlos*. Yet at the last second, Knaak swoops in to snatch up the young lady's property, return it, and send her over to line up with the other girls. Thus Knaak brings about an echo of the mature Tonio's kerchief-incident in Ravenna. In rapid sequence, Tonio's earlier retrieval and return of a young woman's kerchief is repeated by his revealing mirror image, Knaak.

After the episode with Inge's faulty skate, the clamor of the youngsters in Lübeck blends with the sounds of children playing in the courtyard outside the prostitute's room in Ravenna. The film's return to the mature Tonio seems at first to speak for his move from

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[4]Knaak's "sich irren" here can mean "to be mistaken" or also "to go wrong, go astray." It may have been chosen to evoke later passages in the original text where the narrator (TM 288) and then Tonio himself (TM 332) use similar phrases (see above) to refer to Tonio's errant or deviant ways.

clumsy youth to adroit masculine adulthood. Yet events unfold again in a contrary direction, with the film evoking the original text's motifs of sleep and garden-bound art with some effective inventions. Hours at most have passed since Tonio watched his young companion undress and began to recall Inge. The siesta-hour stillness is disrupted by the children below, and that brief time with the prostitute appears to have been given over entirely to sleep. She is still dressed in slip and chemise, while the dozing Tonio has shed only his vest and jacket, which he retrieves to make a hasty retreat. He tucks a few banknotes under the pillow to recompense the young woman for her time, if not for the intended services. He then avoids further confrontation by scrambling out the window and down into the graveyard. He saunters away, taking pleasure in the classical statuary with its sculpted renditions of sensuous human forms. A brief encounter with the dark beauty of the opera episode drives home the direction of Tonio's interest. It doubles his turn away from the living allure of sultry women and toward the dead or frozen. As she stands at the mausoleum wall, Tonio strides past her, unfazed by the amorous gaze she sends his way before she lowers her veil and places flowers in a niche.

By sleeping through his prostitute encounter to dream of Inge and Knaak, the filmed Tonio evokes the original text's use of the line from Theodor Storm's poem "Hyazinth": "I long to sleep, to sleep, but you must dance" (TM 285, 334). That citation, occurring twice, eventually clarifies how Tonio retains his excluded but loving proximity to the 'dance' of social propriety and acceptable art despite his inmost desire to abandon himself to the 'sleep' of his desires. With his doubled escape from male-female interaction – first from the prostitute, then from opera beauty at the mausoleum – he calls to mind the young Tonio's flight to the violin reveries in his bedroom where he had dreamed of the endless sea and, as a prelude to his verse-making, pondered the garden and fountain visible below (TM 274). Thus what the complex narrative and lengthy dialogue of the original text's third and fourth chapters imply about the deviance of Tonio's sexual adventures and about impulses that might have fostered and informed his turn to art, the film conveys by drawing attention to an absence and then offering visual hints at what fills it. In Mann's text, the third chapter's comments both about Tonio's lack of a right path (TM 288) and about the culpable immorality of his adventures of the flesh (TM 290-91; Detering 295-96) awaken doubts that his

homosexual tendencies ended with adolescence. Tonio himself fosters such doubts in the fourth chapter. He does so implicitly when he laments his lack of a "friend" (TM 303). That longing evokes, in addition to Thomas Mann's own comments of this time regarding Paul Ehrenberg (Detering 293-94), the similar yearning expressed by King Philip in *Don Carlos* (Tobin 169). These questions about the orientation of Tonio's mature passionate adventures find still more emphatic support in the original text when he responds evasively to Lisaweta's probing questions about his own first-hand experience with "shocking" aspects of the aesthetic life (TM 299). On the verge of divulging what he knew about some artists whom he had seen thronged by "women and boys," Tonio stops and merely comments that one can learn the most remarkable things about "the origins, accompanying phenomena, and preconditions of artistry" (TM 299). When Lisaweta asks if he has made such remarkable discoveries only about other artists – or also, her question implies, about himself – Tonio retreats into thoughtful silence. But the assumptions or suspicions that, in Mann's original, the narrator's comments in the third chapter, Tonio's admissions (TM 299, 303), and Lisaweta's probing question (TM 299) subtly invite, the film emphatically fosters. It has Tonio as the narrator commenting on his own immoral activities in the south, and then it shows such adventures not to involve women. As well, it shores up those assumptions with visual signals that enhance the text's hints at Tonio's ongoing mirror-relationship to the Knaak type. It suggests his lingering preference for relating to conventional sensual pleasure only from a distance and through the mediating veil of the aesthetic.

The escape from the prostitute and, with it, Tonio's entire Italian adventure end with the film's invented confrontation between him and the little girl sorting wild flowers as she sits on the graveyard wall. Tonio passes the girl but then stops and turns. He makes eye contact, nods, and bows, gesturing as if in request. The child tosses him a long-stemmed flower. He picks it up, a dropped offering now retained, and, cropping the stem, fits the flower into his buttonhole before swinging jauntily down the hill, on his way northward to Munich and Lisaweta, and ultimately to his hometown Lübeck and then the Danish coast. With this invention, the film follows the original text's penchant for repetitions and symmetries. And it does this in a way that further hints at how Tonio's relationships to female figures

is directed not at romantic or erotic adventure, but rather toward realizing his need to regain the status of loving outsider that had quickened his early artistic efforts as a youngster back in Lübeck. By inventing this scene, the film brackets Tonio's conversation with Lisaweta between two encounters with similarly foreign, dark-haired women: on the one hand the flower girl in Ravenna, on the other hand the Danish lass in the eighth chapter's dance episode in whom Tonio sees the echo of Magdalena Vermehren from his early days in Lübeck, his female kindred spirit as a verse-lover and inept dancer, another clumsy "Miss" who had best quit the dance floor (TM 285 and 335; Detering 313-16). The resulting symmetry effectively counters the initial romantic appearances of Tonio's return to Lisaweta by showing how the entire sequence of communicative encounters with women (the flower girl, Lisaweta, the Danish dancer) is meant to involve, rather than the romantic liaisons that the readers of a conventional narrative of Bildungsroman might expect, Tonio's productive awareness of his peripheral relationship to that sphere. Accordingly, while the initial appearance of this flower-girl encounter might suggest that Tonio notes her resemblance to Lisaweta as a dark-haired foreign beauty and thus sets off for Munich, the entire sequence suggests another reading. It evokes Tonio's ties to his father, that pale, fastidious, north German businessman who, in the original text, brought a dark, exotic wife back from southern climes but subsequently lived on in dutiful melancholy, his inclination to the beautiful reduced to the wildflower in the buttonhole of his proper bourgeois suit (TM 274). The Tonio whom the film shows here in full flight from the sultry prostitute and the dark beauty from the opera house mimics his father in this scene. He is once again fastidiously clad and, tucking the flower in his own buttonhole, is likely recalling nostalgically the artistic productivity of that bittersweet distance from the life of his father's sphere. Thus Tonio's prolonged pantomime with the flower-girl graphically intimates insights that come to expression when the clown-clad Lisaweta supplies the essential phrases to spark Tonio's readiness to revisit and reconsider his status as a "bourgeois on the wrong path" (TM 305).

The last six chapters of Mann's text portray Tonio's move to reconciliation with his father's world as an outsider resolved to portray that simple life with angelic tongue and loving heart. They show that development unfolding under the aegis of the woman painter Lisaweta

Iwanowna. Like Tonio, she is an outsider in the company of German bohemians, and likewise, by her very name, a hybrid of masculine and feminine. She is at first the sympathetic confidante of Tonio's searching deliberations in the fourth chapter, and her "Erledigung" of him plants the seed of his decision to rekindle his closeness to his origins. She is then the recipient of the conciliatory and hopeful letter that marks the end of his story. The film too brackets Tonio's closing turn with episodes centering on Lisaweta and, despite some initially disarming changes, manages to remain consistent with the reading of the original text supported by the changes and inventions discussed so far.

The alterations involving Lisaweta follow the pattern initiated by the scenes that portray Tonio's southern adventures. They pose still more urgently – but then even more provocatively negate – the possibility of a heterosexual relationship. The scenes of flirtation and sexual liaison that accompanied the flashbacks to Hans and Inge had invited expectations of such a direction only to refute them. The changes to the Lisaweta relationship even more emphatically conjure up possibilities of a love interest. Yet these possibilities too the film pursues to a conclusion that is essentially consonant with the original. That Tonio's appearance at Lisaweta's might signify his return to an old flame and thus a further step in his move toward a heterosexual relationship is a possibility that recipients of Mann's text are likely to have forgotten by the time they have completed a first reading. Yet the text plays parodically with romantic stories of Mann's day, echoing their promise of a sexual liaison only then to leave it unfulfilled (Busch 149-51). The film makes much of the romantic reading of the Lisaweta relationship by casting Nadja Tiller as what one commentator has described as a "distractingly beautiful" Lisaweta (Howard), by having her romantically focused on Tonio and then turning up in the closing dream sequences as a possible partner. Having posed this possibility, however, the film then proceeds to refute it. With Lisaweta, the film extends the move from Hans, to Inge, and to the Italian romances that at first glance had suggested a heteronormative progression. Yet it continues to leave such expectations unfulfilled. The central episodes corresponding to the original's third and fourth chapters show Tonio, as in the original, in doubt about his unmanly and deviant inclinations and, in the two mirroring dance-episodes that bracket that center, moving to reaffirm the creative function of this position

apart from that 'dance'.

As the film moves from Lisaweta's studio to Denmark, it enhances the passages in the original text in which critics have found indications of Tonio's struggle with the taboo nature of the same-sex inclinations at the root of his turn to art. It establishes a progression from the first dancing episode to its echo in Denmark and places them symmetrically around a version of the Lisaweta-dialogue that highlights Tonio's doubts about the "maleness" of artists and their proximity to the castrati (TM 299). With this context established, the enhancement of Lisaweta's imagined role as lover or wife can hardly function other than to pose that reading for the purpose of refuting it and driving home Tonio's deviation from that path. As Tonio imagines this reunion with Lisaweta, he envisions himself as her partner and sees that pairing to be a case of illusory thinking reminiscent of his other turns to art. This is signaled when the Lisaweta whom Tonio imagines painting his portrait responds doubtfully to his desire to be depicted as cheerfully "humane." Doing so, she appropriates a line from Schiller's *Don Carlos*, suggesting that Tonio is painting a picture of good fortune that he never would or did accord her (see Seitz 446). By adding this Schiller citation, the film contributes to the original text's tendency to pointedly artful symmetries. It also emphasizes the distance of Tonio's own visions from the actual state of affairs in a way that implies a link to his homosexuality. Even the imagined Lisaweta doubts that she will be a part of the warmth that Tonio is ready once more to show toward life. In Tonio's mind, she makes the point by evoking the Schiller play whose male love triangle had occupied Tonio's interest during the days of his friendship with Hans Hansen.

Tonio's ensuing visions of the dance and the bedroom scene emphasize this distance from a romantic liaison. The dance episode recalls the whirling Inge in Knaak's arms, another instance of added symmetry. This time Tonio is positioned differently than before. Then, at the dance lesson, he had imagined himself replacing Knaak to dance with Inge, the camera positioned to capture his perspective as her partner, embraced by Inge and beholding her face as she whirled in his arms. The film thus forces the viewer to identify with Tonio as he imagines his own identity with Knaak. The dance with Lisaweta, however, he imagines from outside, seeing himself as her partner. The shift suggests a detachment on Tonio's part from the vision of

his dancing with Lisaweta. His dream observes their dance from outside, without, as with Inge, positioning Tonio as her embraced partner. This change also suggests his focus in this late dance episode to be more on himself as a possible dancing partner rather than on the female object of his adulation. The bedroom scene that follows evokes a traditional pattern that, by moving from embrace-scene to post-embrace boudoir conversation, implies the unseen sex-scene between the two. Yet this scene too veers away from that direction when the reference to wifely-sounding criticism leads to Lisaweta's termination of the bedroom liaison with remarks that imply the unlikelihood of her enduring a relationship with Tonio that would remain on the intellectual level. Accordingly, the film ends more like the original text than in contrast to it. More emphatically than the text, it raises the possibility of a romantic relationship. Yet it does so to underline the distance from that path that is essential to Tonio's alterity and that he now once again is able to make aesthetically productive in a way morally well-disposed to the conventional world.

Limited resources and, in 1964, a still greater reticence about the role of sexual diversity in Thomas Mann's works appear to have combined to hinder critical recognition of how, with the two main areas of change that this paper has outlined, the film *Tonio Kröger* captures the original text's use of sexual otherness as a point of departure for reflecting ironically on the artist's capacity to make sense of the ineluctable antitheses of human existence. The film was made just when specialists were beginning to discover and respond to documents indicating that Mann's own struggle with homosexuality left their mark on his 1903 text (Böhm 31; Detering 293-95). Erika Mann was involved in those revelations while she was making her contribution to the film. On the one hand, she consulted with Ennio Flaiano on his Italian screenplay, and she is credited as the major writer on the German version (Seitz 415-16). On the other hand, she was editing, for the Fischer publishing house, the 1965 edition of her father's letters that for the first time included, as an appendix, the long unknown letters to Paul Ehrenberg that concern Mann's homosexual attraction and at times resemble passages in the novella. This coincidence does much to explain why the film adds episodes and highlights others in a way that emphasizes the hero's deviation from the typically masculine and heteronormative, the way it poses the possibility of conventional romance only to counter it with

indications of a different orientation. The changes reflect the discovery of this aspect of the text's genesis and background. Unfortunately, however, the film appeared at a time of still greater public aversion to discussing homosexuality or attributing it to a revered author. As well, it lacked the high-profile star power, the directorial cachet, and the production values (Seitz 416) to guarantee, as those elements have repeatedly done for Visconti's *Death in Venice*, the process of recurring critical reconsideration that might have established its significance as an early document of Mann-reception's response to the new revelations about the genesis, context, and text of *Tonio Kröger*. Consequently, the meaningful changes born of Erika Mann's involvement both with the screenplay and with the Ehrenberg letters were passed over in silence, never revisited, and the film was thus consigned to an oblivion from which neither Gabriele Seitz's study, nor the video release of 1983, nor the occasional cinephile (Howard) have been able to rescue it. It long remained one of a group of events since the1960s that produced a brief public sensation about Thomas Mann as an erotic author of scandalously deviant bent, yet found little resonance in the secondary literature (Böhm 31).[5] Nevertheless, the growing tendency since the late 1980s to address the sexual problems of the original story's genesis and text clearly justifies the reconsideration of the film proposed here.[6] For noteworthy indeed is the way that the film's two main areas of change and invention combine to retain a loyalty to the original text's focus not simply on the diversely

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[5]This would include the Ehrenberg letters and the 1965 revelations from the unpublished notebooks (Wysling, "Aschenbacks Werke"), the 1965 film version of the Wälsungenblut ("Blood of theWälsungs"; also directed by Rolf Thiele), the 1964 opera *Death in Venice* involving the collaboration of Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears, the discovery in 1965 of Wladyslaw von Moes as the real Tadzio (Doegowski), and the 1971 film version of *Death in Venice*.

[6]In his 1982 article, Ignace Feuerlicht finds the position of his 1966 monograph too cautious in light of the subsequently published letters and notebooks. He goes on to criticize the tendency of Mann's critics and biographers (e.g., Peter de Mendelssohn) to evade the topic of homoeroticism in the face of those documents, a sentiment that Ronald Hayman intensifies in his 1995 biography (63; cf. Tobin 226). The ensuing contributions by Böhm, Bridges, Busch, Detering,Gullette, Härle, Hayes/Quinby, Jofen, Jones, Maar, Martin, Oosterhuis, Reich-Ranicki, Tobin, and Wysling/Schmidlin constitute a positive response to these calls for change. None of them addresses the *Tonio Kröger* film.

sexual nature of the protagonist's alterity but also on the capacity of his artistic activity to make that problem productive. Like the original text, the film foregrounds an idealistic view of the conciliatory potential of the artist's peripheral position. Yet by portraying Tonio as the author of his own success story the film echoes the text's acknowledgment of its link to the facile "Erledigung" that Tonio criticizes at his turning point. It resembles the text by depicting an unusual male protagonist whose story mimics, yet alters the pattern of the Bildungsroman. Yet at the same time it signals the high degree of poetic embellishment, the prominent role of self-valorizing narrative and facile aesthetic dispatch to which that solution owes its artful existence.

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"Sweet Dolly Sodam": Narrative Drag in Djuna Barnes's *Ryder*

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Bonnie Kime Scott has compared *Ryder* to the "Oxen of the Sun" chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses*: "a nightmarish version of a graduate comprehensive exam" (159). Despite its loose sense of chronology, its convoluted and often disturbing storyline, its range of primary characters, and above all, its basis in "a succession of literary styles" (163), Djuna Barnes's first novel, published in New York in 1928, was a brief bestseller (see Herring 143; Kannenstine 33). Not surprisingly, the link Scott makes between *Ryder* and a male-centered literary canon is a prominent feature in contemporary evaluations of the novel. In her "Paris Letter," Genêt (a.k.a. Janet Flanner) compares *Ryder* to Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, pointing to the novel's "historical richness and tradition" (37). The reviewer C. D. F. from *The Nation* hears echoes of Laurence Sterne and Henry Fielding in Barnes's text (639). Ernest Sutherland Bates links Barnes to Aristophanes, Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson (376). The reviewer L. B. in the *New Republic* points out the similarities between Barnes's writing and "the King James version" of the Bible (282).

These critics emphasize not just the "versatility" of Barnes's style (Bates 376), but also her "masculine approach" to writing (L. B. 282). Eugene Jolas actually suggests that the character of Wendell Ryder

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"will go down in American literature as the archetype of the swashbuckling super-male" (282). Barnes becomes the woman writer who writes with or as the best of the men. However, her use of different styles results not just in admiration, but also in confusion regarding the identity of the author and her status in the text. As a result, critics from the 1920s to the present day attempt to locate Barnes in specific gendered positions as if to stabilize her shifting persona in *Ryder*. Such readings of Barnes and her novel are generally based on a series of binaries and focus on the significance of the disjunction between the masculine literary tradition and the woman who refers to it.

These critical reactions to Barnes's work relate to the gendering of the canon but also to the trope of writerly authority and readerly deference, where the woman and the reader have often been placed at the margins of the canonical text. By approximating the voices of venerable male authors, Barnes foregrounds the instability of such hierarchical and heterosexual approaches to literature. I propose, then, that an alternate way to figure Barnes's stylistic experimentation is based in the idea of narrative drag, a kind of literary cross-dressing that plays with the assumptions which inform traditional views of the canon. Barnes assumes the position of canonical male authors by appropriating aspects of their style, including diction, narrative structure, and imagery. She derives authority for her writing through her imitative references, where her critics relate the value of *Ryder* to the value of the writers and works to which she alludes. At the same time, her ironic performance of writerly identities results in a critique of the gendered system by which that value is erected. In this sense, Barnes does not 'pass' as the canonical male author; rather, she passes through this identity as well as the identities of narrator, illustrator, editor, and censor. Barnes presents in *Ryder* an excess of signification through a layered performance of personae that cannot be contained by the binaries of male or female, reader or writer, writer or editor, author or critic. The result is a reterritorialization of authority in her text – not a consolidation of textual control, but instead an indication of its provisionality.

The subversive potential of narrative drag relates to the literal cross-dressing that Barnes presents in her work. Barnes challenges the naturalized or originary status of the masculine literary tradition by foregrounding in her texts ways in which bodies and voices resist essentialist heterosexual signification. For example, Evangeline

Musset in *Ladies Almanack* is described as having

> been developed in the Womb of her most gentle Mother to be a Boy, when therefore, she came forth an Inch or so less than this, she paid no Heed to the Error, but donning a Vest of a superb Blister and Tooling, a Belcher for tippet and a pair of hip-boots with a scarlet channel ... she took her Whip in hand, calling her Pups about her, and so set out upon the Road of Destiny. (7)

In *Nightwood*, Robin Vote wears "boy's trousers" (169) and Doctor Matthew Mighty-Grain-of-Salt Dante O'Connor entertains an unexpected Nora Flood wearing makeup, a wig of "golden ... long pendent curls" and "a woman's flannel nightgown" (79). Doctor O'Connor also appears in *Ryder* where in chapter 32 he confesses to Father Lucas: "I've done it again, and this time it was with Fat Liz, him as keeps bar in a gophered boudoir cap, and smelling all zig-zag of patchouli" (174). Signifiers are dislocated from their traditional signifieds in these examples. As Judith Butler points out, the dislocation of sexed body and sign of gender can work to expose "the failure of heterosexual regimes ever fully to legislate or contain their own ideals" (237). In the case of drag, or the incongruous appropriation of gender norms, this can produce what Marjorie Garber calls the "category crisis," or the "failure of definitional distinction" (16). The reader of the text of the body, faced with the challenge to gender boundaries, attempts to stabilize the slippage between signifier and signified and is thus tempted to look "*through* rather than at the cross-dresser ... to want instead to subsume that figure within one of the two traditional genders" (Garber 9).

Not surprisingly, the readers of *Ryder* tend to look through the text to its male-authored precursors, and thus rely on the binaric systems of male and female writing to situate Barnes and her work. Contemporary reviews indicate the anxiety that surrounds the apparently natural estate of masculine writing, an anxiety demonstrated in such ambiguous statements as "'Ryder' is certainly the most amazing book ever written by a woman" (Bates 376) and "a book that absolutely baffles classification, but surely is a most amazing thing to come from a woman's hand" (Calhoun 12). There is a certain amount of confusion in these reviews and it centers on Barnes's approximation of an apparently masculine style: how can a woman write in such a manly way? Of course, this is a question that the

reviewers cannot actually pose. Not only might it lead into a reconsideration of the terms 'man' and 'woman,' but it might also threaten the stability of the canon that is based on distinctions between the two. If there cannot be a norm without an abject or a center without a margin, then there cannot be masculine authors without what Jolas calls "feminine scribblers" (326). According to this logic, contemporary reviewers emphasize the gaps between Barnes's novel and the canonical texts from which she borrows. Her failure to assimilate the styles of her precursors – to embody the patriarchal norms of authorship – becomes a frequent theme. Thus, where the dust jacket of *Ryder* suggests that the novel can be read in terms of the picaresque, the reviewer C. D. F. from *The Nation* states that "it fails of the true picaresque quality" (639) and L. B. in the *New Republic* argues that Wendell Ryder "is hardly a picaresque figure" (282). On one hand, Barnes outperforms the men through the sheer excess of her stylistic references; on the other hand, she can never be the male writer. As a result, Barnes's approximation of the masculine voice in the novel is labeled as inauthentic.

Feminist critics argue, however, that Barnes's project is based precisely on this kind of incongruous imitation, where a masculine genre is subverted by Barnes's focus on the subject of women's experience. Sheryl Stevenson suggests that by casting Barnes as a masculine writer, reviewers have missed "the feminist direction" of her work and the fact that "*Ryder* is not derivative but analytic: a reseeing of carnivalesque writing from the woman's angle" ("Writing" 81). Marie Ponsot points out that the stylistic experimentation of *Ryder* allows Barnes not to avoid, but to address some of the realities of a domestic sphere: "childbed; rape; miscarriage; missed abortion; sexual activity wretched or pleasant; incest and threat of incest; vague implications of bestiality; child abuse" (111). The woman's world is thus presented in the man's style; the picaresque is seen through the other side of the mirror. Barnes's ironic deployment of the techniques of her precursors is thus more a critique than a celebration of patriarchy, wherein she demonstrates the failure of the father's text by examining the previously elided status of the (m)Other.

One of the issues that arises from these readings is the heterosexism of the system according to which *Ryder* and its author are interpreted. *Ryder* has been read as if Barnes the woman is 'passing' as a man. This imitation has been viewed as an earnest if

flawed citation in which Barnes is "a disciple of James Joyce and T. S. Eliot" (Kannenstine x). Alternately, it has been seen as an ironic move, where *Ryder* "mocks its oversexed, all-fathering hero and parodies numerous male writers" (Stevenson, "Contraception" 97). Both readings are restricted by the same system that informs the gendering of the canon, however, and I suggest that both are undercut by the excess of signification that Barnes's authorial cross-dressing involves. To borrow from Marjorie Garber, the power of the figure in drag "inheres in her blurred gender, in the fact of her cross-dressing, and not ... in *either* of her gendered identities" (6). According to her polyvalent position in *Ryder*, Barnes slips through a system where, on the one hand, the sense of the masculine canon depends on the nonsense of women writers, and on the other, the sense of women's writing depends on the nonsense of the masculine canon. Instead of focusing on making this kind of 'sense,' Barnes emphasizes how texts come to mean. She explores and challenges traditional views of male-authored works by approximating various literary styles both seriously and parodically. *Ryder* becomes a novel that centers on the possibility of inferring meaning according to multiple and often conflicting positions of textual authority.

Narrative drag is thus a form of resistance where the author traverses identities and indicates the provisionality of control over his or her text. It is a strategy that can be linked to Monique Wittig's provocative reading of Barnes and her work:

> Taken as a symbol or adopted by a political group, the text loses its polysemy, it becomes univocal ... Doubtless this is why Djuna Barnes dreaded that the lesbians should make her their writer, and that by doing this they should reduce her work to one dimension. (63)

I contend that Wittig's argument is ironic. She exposes significant aspects not only of Barnes's writing but of the ideology of the society into which that work was and is received. Though Barnes chose not to self-identify as a lesbian (see Field 101), her troubling of patriarchal paradigms indicates that what she rejects is not her sexuality, but rather the terms used to define it. In resisting definition, she resists the system into which she and her work would be placed, the system that labels the lesbian as one-dimensional, the system that assumes that language, narrative, and sexuality are all *heterostable*. Narrative drag is the way she subverts these assumptions, since the place of

Barnes in the text shifts according to the gendered roles and voices that she adopts for herself.

Barnes plays most overtly with these different positions and voices in chapter 10 of *Ryder*,"The Occupations of Wendell." Wordplay becomes a key to Barnes's imitative strategy in this chapter, where she resists identification with any one position – gender or authorial – by emphasizing the provisionality of the language that defines such positions. Joseph Allen Boone has indicated that "Barnes's prose style is 'queer' in multiple senses, but particularly in its refusal of any easy coupling of the label and the labeled" (240). I relate this to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's suggestion of what "'queer' can refer to":

> the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't* be made) to signify monolithically. (8)

The excesses of Barnes's writing foreground the performative nature of narrative as well as the discursive status of the named and sexed body. Barnes challenges the patriarchal guarantee of the Symbolic in chapter 10 of *Ryder* by estranging words from their contexts and by undercutting the assumption of stability that informs traditional readings of signs, especially in canonical literature. This strategy lies behind her ironic presentation of the act of naming, for instance, where the tension between sign and referent indicates the contingent nature of language. The biblical names of Wendell Ryder's cows echo his position as a new Adam who sets forth and multiplies by disseminating his philosophy of free love and by labeling the world he inhabits. The irony here, of course, is that it is Barnes who refigures the connection between world and word, and who redefines the relationship between signifier and signified. The names of the cows themselves – "*Sweet Dolly Sodam*" and "*Gamorra*" (71) – involve a range of referential contradictions and ironic possibilities, and point to a society that might be lived by the phallus but not necessarily governed by it. Are the allusions to Sodom and Gomorrah straight? Do they imply bestiality as well as sodomy? And is the farm, Bull's Ease, not a new Eden after all, but rather an abomination in the eyes of the Lord? Or is the impact of the religious allusions undercut by the *Sweetness* of Dolly, where sin is neutralized by childlike innocence or justified by enjoyment? The scene is further complicated by the ambiguous gender status of the two calves. While Andrew Field

discusses how "Wendell's cows, Sweet Dolly Sodam and her twin Gamorra, are festooned with jewelry like his women" (184), Barnes's text also mentions that the cows have "newë waxen horns, more in than out" (71). The uncertainty of their sexual status is complicated by potentially conflicting signs of gender, just as the significance of their position in the text is complicated by Barnes's use of wordplay.

The anachronistic tone of the chapter is another way in which Barnes challenges the very idea of linguistic, gender, and textual stability. When Barnes approximates a medieval literary voice, she indicates that authorial identity is itself a fiction capable of being reinhabited and refigured. Similarly, the twentieth-century context of the Middle English signifiers affects the apparent stability of their signifieds. The archaic diction of chapter 10, its authenticity supposedly attested to by the footnotes she provides, thus highlights Barnes's playful use of language as well as of writerly personae. A notable example is the name of Wendell Ryder. The Middle English term "wend" – meaning to go, or "to make one's way" – is joined up with a seventeenth-century term "dell" – meaning "wench" – and coupled with a homonym for "rider," thus together emphasizing the central figure's sexual jaunts into the countryside. But Barnes does not just dabble in the language of medieval texts; she also parodies our expectations of the scholarly apparatuses that accompany modern editions of older literature. By including her own footnotes, she impersonates the identity of the academic as well as the writer and philologian. The combination of text and footnotes provides a minihistory of developments in the English language. The change from strong to weak verbs is signaled in the translation of "shope" as "Shaped" (70). Metathesis is figured when "brin" is glossed as "Burn" (77). Barnes indicates the shift in the position of negatives where "nold I falsen" is explained as "I will not lie" (68), and shows the etymological progressions of words such as "reck" which is footnoted as "Reckon, think of" (78). In addition to the Middle English diction, she defines scientific terms. For instance, "pylorus" is decribed as "Opening from stomach into duodenum" (81). Words are lent a medieval twist – the anachronism "tipë-toes" is an example – and some words whose meanings seem obvious are glossed unnecessarily: "erse" is explained as "Arse" (70) and "rashly" as "Hurriedly" (84). Correspondingly, terms that are not translated become open to interpretation. Is "villain" (74) intended to mean a simple rustic

character, a boor, or a perpetrator of evil deeds? Barnes pokes fun at the reader's reliance on the footnotes and so foregrounds the authority that the reader accords the editor. But the various gaps, inconsistencies, irrelevancies, and ironies undercut this apparent assertion of control over the meaning of words. Barnes's citation of authorial and editorial voices thus multiplies the levels of signification in the text and disrupts meaning instead of locating it according to the writer's identity.

The Middle English diction, rhyming pentameter, fifteenth-century imagery, and layered narrative structure are what prompt critics to read *Ryder* as a Chaucerian work (see Field 183; Herring 141-42; Kannenstine 37; Scott 163; Stevenson, "Contraception" 97). In keeping with the irony and narrative structure of Barnes's chapter, I suggest the more specific intertext is Geoffrey Chaucer's "Tale of Sir Thopas" from *The Canterbury Tales*. It is the ambiguity of Barnes's approximation of Chaucer's identity that results in much of the critical confusion that surrounds *Ryder*. One of the reasons is that narrative drag, like irony, is based on an "intimacy with the dominant discourses it contests" (Hutcheon 30). Barnes cites not just Chaucer's work but, inevitably, his status and prestige. As Carolyn Dinshaw notes, Chaucer's poetry "has come in the anglophone West to signify Literature itself" (80). His stature and his influence are attested to by the reviewers who point out that the Chaucerian style is a strength in the novel. At the same time the significance of Chaucer, or rather the hegemonic norm of literary masculinity that Chaucer represents in the canon, becomes reterritorialized when Barnes, a twentieth-century woman writer, performs his voice and persona.

The fact that Barnes uses Chaucer's work and style in *Ryder* signals her challenge to the naturalization of the canonical text as masculine. Not only does she imitate Chaucer's voice; she imitates his narrative structure and the content of his tale. "The Occupation of Wendell" and Chaucer's "Tale of Sir Thopas" share a similar diction, a similar rhyme scheme, a *mise-en-abîme* structure, and multiple levels of narrative control. In terms of content, both texts center on a romantic figure, Sir Thopas and Wendell Ryder respectively. Both men even venture out into the world riding large horses. But where Chaucer-the-naive-narrator focuses on the piously romantic aspects of his hero, Barnes focuses on the bodily realities of hers. Where Sir Thopas dreams of "An elf-queene" and decides that "in this world no womman is / Worthy to be my make" (214),

Wendell Ryder has two wives at home and ventures into the countryside to "wench – where he could" (69). Where Sir Thopas is armed with "a launcegay" and "A long swerd by his side" (214), Wendell Ryder carries on his "pommel" a "sponge" for postcoital cleansing (77).

Barnes's hypermasculine refiguration of Chaucer's hero is obviously an ironic commentary on the gendering and performative nature of literary voice. However, she also explores issues in "The Occupations of Wendell" that Chaucer presents in his own texts, especially surrounding the apparently stable and reliable position of the author. In this sense, Barnes's parody of the romance hero pertains to Chaucer's own parody of the romance genre. This shared satirical intent is enabled by the multiple levels of narration in both works which produce sites of irony and disrupt the reader's sense of the writer's place in the text. In *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer-the-author frames Chaucer-the-naive-narrator who introduces and tells the romance of Sir Thopas. In chapter 10 of *Ryder*, Barnes-the-author frames Barnes-the-naive-narrator who comments upon and frames Wendell Ryder's tale of Pennyfinder the Bull. This layering leads to the self-reflexive commentary present in both authors' works. Chaucer-the-narrator's performance of an unsophisticated minstrel romance is a parody of bad poetry, signaled when the Host of the Inn where the pilgrims have stayed stops the tale and tells its narrator that "Thy drasty rymyng is nat worth a toord!" (216). Chaucer's self-dramatization in the scene allows him to present an ironic judgment of his own recitation of *The Canterbury Tales*, and thus to satirize the writer's authority over his clearly hostile audience. In a similar move, Barnes indicates her awareness of the difficulty that the language of chapter 10 poses to her reader, first by inserting footnotes to explain the diction, and second by naming chapter 11, written in straightforward prose, "However, for the Reader's Benefit" (86). Like Chaucer, Barnes emphasizes through irony the limits of textual authority according to the position of the writer and reader in question.

A traditional interpretation of Barnes's allusions to Chaucer's text would maintain that the author, style, and structure of *Ryder* indicate a series of incongruous imitations: a modernist mimics a medievalist, a woman novelist models her work on a male poet, a marginalized lesbian writer emulates a canonical heterosexual author. While the obvious discrepancies among these identities inform

Barnes's subversive use of his style and subject, more recent readings of Chaucer indicate the queer aspects of his work and trouble conventional views of his presentation of sexuality. These are aspects of Chaucer's writing that I suspect Barnes recognized in her use of the "Tale of Sir Thopas." Barnes does not just borrow Chaucer's irony or narrative structure; she also capitalizes on the gender confusion that surrounds *The Canterbury Tales*. In this sense, the Chaucer she cites in her literary cross-dressing is not only that seminal figure in the history of Western literature, but also an author who himself represents a challenge to heterosexual readings of canonical works.

Chaucer's examination of 'othered' sexualities is connected most often to his depiction of the Pardoner, whom Chaucer-the-narrator describes as "a geldynge or a mare" (34). The "feminized" body of the Pardoner is subsequently linked to the "wayward" nature of his spiraling tale (Burger 161-62). His slippery performance of both gender and narrative is, however, cut short by the Host's violent interruption, an interruption which Steven Kruger reads as an indication of "the violent force needed to contain the queer" (138). In an echo of that interruption, Chaucer-the-narrator's "Tale of Sir Thopas" is also halted by the Host. The Host's policing of the narratives relates to his policing of the bodies of Chaucer and the Pardoner, where text and voice must be identified as properly masculine in order to signify. Chaucer-the-narrator is presented, like the Pardoner, as an insufficiently masculine man. He is described by the Host as "smal and fair of face," a man who "seemeth elvyssh by his countenaunce" (213). The daintiness of this Chaucer and the otherness that he embodies place him as a far less threatening version of the Pardoner. Thus "the 'father of English poetry'" (Burger 160) becomes no longer a man but instead a doll: "a popet in an arm t'enbrace / For any womman" (Chaucer 213).

I suggest that Barnes is the woman who embraces the possibilities that these episodes and their author present. To use Judith Butler's phrase, both Barnes and Chaucer question "heterosexuality's claim on naturalness and originality" (125). They both present and approximate positions that are labeled as abject and indicate the ways in which such identities are policed according to cultural normatives. Chaucer signals the discursive and performative nature of gender by emphasizing the Host's power over both the Pardoner and Chaucer-

the-narrator, and thus signals the instability of a system that needs such policing. However, he also reasserts the power of the Symbolic order in his presentation of the issue. As the authority behind his text, Chaucer has the father figure of the Knight, for example, force the Pardoner and the Host to kiss *as brothers*. In contrast, Barnes resists such closure and focuses on how the law is undercut even where it is cited when she inhabits the position of Chaucer. As a woman, Barnes becomes an ironic embodiment of Chaucer's "effeminate" textual persona (Burger 160) and her narration emphasizes the instability of gendered authorial identity. At the same time, she indicates the limits to her performance of and control over that voice by alluding to the "Tale of Sir Thopas" and to the Host's impatience with inauthentic narratives and inaccurate portrayals of gender. Ironically, it is an allusion that foreshadows the reception of her work by contemporary reviewers. By playing with the possibilities of Chaucer's voice and text and by expanding upon their significance, Barnes produces neither a feminist condemnation of Chaucer, nor a straight imitation of his style, but a combination of the two that undercuts univocal interpretation. Like the juxtaposition of verse and footnotes, or the combination of narrative voices, the multiple layers of textual authority and the slipperiness of the gender of the narrator confound a search for the writer who will guarantee the significance of the text, or who will pin down the meaning based on his or her sexual or canonical identity.

Where Barnes signals her use of Chaucer's voice and text by approximating his distinctive style, her use of narrative drag elsewhere in "The Occupations of Wendell" is less overt. Even so, it connects both to Barnes's focus on the process of interpretation, as well as to the possibility of reading resistantly those works and authors she cites. In her own text, this relates to the multiple layers of signification which challenge the binaric hierarchy of writer and reader. Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* becomes an important story in the chapter for this reason, especially in terms of Alice's encounters with the slipperiness of language and with the often threatening figures of adult authority. Carroll's overtly satirical presentation of literary classics and of scholarly exegesis connects to Barnes's ironic performance of Chaucerian diction and academic footnoting. The significance of the male-authored canonical text and of Chaucer's influence on *Ryder* is also undercut by Barnes's use of popular

children's literature. Barnes alludes specifically to Alice who "went in Wonderland astound" (69), where the girl's journeys ironically reflect both the travels that Wendell Ryder makes in the New York countryside, as well as Sir Thopas's abbreviated quest in Chaucer's romance. The allusion to Alice thus provides another view of the romance hero, here an identity that is approximated by a young woman.

Barnes's literary cross-dressing in *Ryder* revolves primarily around Carroll's parody of scholarly inquiry and his challenge to assumptions regarding the transparency of language. Like Carroll, Barnes hinders and thus critiques the process of literary interpretation with her use of unstable language, where sliding frames of reference disconnect signifiers from their usual signifieds. Her play with anachronistic diction echoes her interest in double entendre and puns, where language becomes estranged according to a shift in context and is thus opened to the wider inference of meaning. Similarly, in *Through the Looking-Glass*, Carroll foregrounds the vagaries of the English language when Alice is forced to grapple with new terminology in order to negotiate the Looking-glass World. For example, instead of the metaphorical Butterfly, she is introduced to the literal Bread-and-butter-fly: "its wings are thin slices of bread and butter, its body is a crust, and its head is a lump of sugar" (Carroll 160). Alice also struggles to make sense of the diction of "Jabberwocky," the epic poem that she finds in a Looking-glass book. The archaic nature of the text relates obviously to Barnes's own chapter, and Alice's attempts to decipher its form and language mirror the reader's experience with *Ryder*. While Alice gathers from her reading that "*somebody* killed *something*" (Carroll 142), the language makes little sense. Eventually, Alice asks Humpty Dumpty to explain the content of the words to her; but instead of stabilizing meaning, his textual commentary indicates the duplicity of language: "Well, *'slithy'* means 'lithe and slimy.' 'Lithe' is the same as 'active.' You see it's like a portmanteau – there are two meanings packed up into one word" (Carroll 198). Like the figure in drag, two signifiers are combined in one term, and that term is more than the sum of its parts. Humpty Dumpty's analysis leaves Alice unsettled and frustrated because of the excess of signification signaled by the portmanteau nature of language. The meaning of the word overflows the boundaries that are erected in order to contain it. Thus the interpretation and the

authority figure who provides it are deemed "unsatisfactory" (Carroll 203).

Barnes echoes Carroll's parody of the academic pedant in her use of archaic diction and subversive footnotes and, like Carroll, stresses the confrontation between the reader and the text. Both authors attempt to satirize the gendered hierarchy of scholar and student. But where Barnes capitalizes on the subversive potential of Carroll's writing, she also remains at a critical distance from the position of authority that Carroll assumes in his text, especially as it relates to his construction of Alice. Carroll uses the youth and innocence of Alice to critique the absurdity of the grown-up world and the pomposity of adults like Humpty Dumpty or the Red Queen. At the same time, however, Alice is marginalized throughout the text, abjected by the characters but also by the author himself in his Preface to the story. Thus, while Carroll satirizes the figure of Humpty Dumpty whose control over language is linked to vanity, Carroll's own control over the main character of his text relates him to those adult figures who maneuver Alice through the story like a chesspiece.

Barnes explores some of the ramifications of Carroll's use of Alice through the character of Wendell Ryder. The two men are implicitly compared according to imagery surrounding the game of chess and the deck of cards, and according to their use of children. Ryder is the father figure who is likened to a gambler in his desire for children: "Nowise he was content till fifty-two / Were shapen each to go as cardës do" (Barnes 68). The sons and daughters that are produced by Wendell and the women of his world are figured as pawns in a patriarchal society, their lives determined by forces beyond their control. They will for "many a yearës round – / As Alice went in Wonderland astound, – / Play on the earthës checkerboard a pace, / Till death y-kiken long into their face. / And in the wrath of sleep, put forth her claw / And draw them in, to play not anymore" (Barnes 69). Here Barnes alludes specifically to Alice's position as a chesspiece in the Red Queen's chessboard garden, where she says "I wouldn't mind being a Pawn, if only I might join" (150). More importantly, Barnes indicates the fiction of Alice's autonomy and independence in *Through the Looking-Glass* by referring to the social reality that Wendell Ryder's children experience. Instead of Carroll's presentation of Alice as an active and powerful figure, Barnes points to the girl's lack of agency and lack of voice both in the world of fiction and in

the everyday world.

Here, Barnes's citation of Carroll and his work relates to the process by which his authority as the writer is naturalized in his text. The Preface of *Through the Looking-Glass* represents a subtle 'othering' of the female child according to which Carroll assumes a position of privilege. The first lines establish Alice's significance in the text by establishing her relation to the author: "Child of the pure unclouded brow / And dreaming eyes of wonder! / Though time be fleet, and I and thou / Are half a life asunder, / Thy loving smile will surely hail / The love-gift of a fairy-tale" (Carroll 123). Alice is situated as the innocent and naive child to whom the older and wiser author directs his narrative. Carroll's power is asserted before the story even starts, according to this description of the child-as-reader, and according to his scripting of her exemplary reaction to his work. Like his pseudonym, the Preface indicates Carroll's control over his textual identity, here established according to hierarchical binaries: male and female, author and audience, old and young. Barnes's performance of Carroll's privilege as the writer thus undercuts these binaries. Djuna Barnes reflects the gender and social status of Alice, or Alice Liddel, more than she reflects the position of Lewis Carroll, or rather Charles Dodgson. The female reader against whom Carroll establishes his authority in the Preface comes to inhabit the position of the writer. In effect, Barnes refigures Carroll's challenge to Humpty Dumpty's authority by turning the critique upon Carroll himself. She thus makes explicit the performative nature of the masculine narrative by emphasizing the marginalized audience that guarantees its naturalized status and by inhabiting the position of power herself.

Barnes's Foreword to *Ryder* stands in contrast to Carroll's assertion of authorial control in his Preface to *Through the Looking-Glass*. Where Carroll's story will be received by a smiling, inexperienced girl, Barnes's novel has already been received by her publishing company. Barnes was required to make substantial changes to *Ryder* by Liveright, and the Foreword stands as a testimony to the role of censorship in the publication of the novel. It indicates the limits of Barnes's authority over the text and over its audience, where her status as the writer is undercut by the power of her editors. For instance, several of Barnes's illustrations were deemed "too risqué" for Liveright and were viewed as a threat to sales (Herring 142). Barnes and her editor, Donald Friede, also cut a number of textual

passages from *Ryder*, especially those dealing with sex and with "bodily fluids" (Field 127). But where text was deleted from the novel, Barnes inserted asterisks to indicate the effects of censorship. While she associates this act with "the better part of valour" (Barnes, *Ryder* xi), the asterisks, along with the prefatory material, act as visual cues, indicating the disruption of narrative logic that accompanies the censorship, and highlighting the tension between the author's vision of the text and the version approved by the publishing company. As Barnes states in her Foreword:

> Hithertofore the public has been offered literature only after it was no longer literature. Or so murdered and so discreetly bound in linens that those regarding it have seldom, if ever, been aware, or discovered, that that which they took for an original was indeed a reconstruction.
>
> In the case of *Ryder* they are permitted to see the havoc of this nicety, and what its effects are on the work of the imagination. (xi)

Barnes's reference to the "original" work of literature and to its "reconstruction" becomes ironic in the context of her performance of other literary voices in the text. Again, she traverses identities, where she not only approximates the styles of various male authors but recognizes that her own work has been approximated in the publishing process. And though Barnes inhabits the position of the censored writer, she also editorializes that censorship in her text. Thus, while the Foreword indicates the provisionality of the writer's authority, it also asserts the limits of textual control on the part of the editor.

As a commentary on the act of censorship, which Barnes suggests is "as indiscriminate as all such enforcements of law must be" (xi), the Foreword links two very different novels of 1928, *Ryder* and Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*. But where the latter was banned in England for its depiction of "inversion" (see Brittain 89), the former was published by the American Liveright despite its 'licentious' depiction of bodies. The density of Barnes's narrative and its experimental nature may have obscured much of the 'immoral' content of the novel. Certainly, the language of *Ryder* caused some confusion for the censors. In June of 1928, for example, the U. S. Post Office held up distribution of the novel in order to examine in more detail the Chaucerian language of "The Occupations of Wendell"

(see Herring 142). More important than its complex style, however, is the fact that the intertexts of *Ryder* and the literary techniques that Barnes cites are coded as masculine. Barnes's approximation of voices from the canonical literary tradition results in the novel being read according to its presentation of heterosexual bawdiness. As a result of looking through rather than at Barnes's narrative, the gaze of the censor, like the eye of the reviewer, appears to have been drawn toward the stability of the straight aspects of the text rather than to Barnes's references to gay, lesbian, and 'othered' sites of sexuality. The political significance of *Ryder* is thus limited according to its ambiguous citation of literary voices, where the efficacy of the text's presentation of queer sites of identity depends on the position of the reader. Nevertheless, Barnes's invocation of a range of apparently incongruous styles indicates her resistance to the law which polices texts and imitations of texts, as well as gender and the performance of gender, according to heterosexual paradigms of value.

Barnes emphasizes the discursive nature of authorial identity in her citation of male-authored works, where narrative performance becomes linked to gender performance in the context of her deployment of the canon. One of the effects of her narrative drag in *Ryder*, then, is to foreground the process of textual production and reception that results in the naturalized and originary status of the masculine literary tradition. Barnes challenges the stability of this textual gendering by challenging the stability of authorial identity and control. She presents a range of apparently conflicting voices where she assumes the persona of Chaucer's narrator, critiques the gendered power dynamics of Carroll's work, reterritorializes the signifiers of Middle English, and footnotes her own diction. In the context of the editing of *Ryder*, Barnes emphasizes and protests the censorship of her novel in her Foreword, and affirms both her authority and its limits. Barnes's negotiations with authorial identity, and her assertion and abdication of authority, result in a novel based on instability and on confounded hierarchical oppositions. *Ryder* becomes a text that, according to its author's ambiguous position, calls out for interpretational certainty, for policing by reviewers, by censors, and by well-meaning readers.

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Images, Book 1

BLAINE MARCHAND

Ever since I began writing as a child, my poetry has explored the themes of solitude, love, and death. Lurking under my adolescent scribblings was the question of sexuality, which came to the fore in my fourth book, Bodily Presence. *Increasingly, my poetry and my prose is preoccupied by differences – cultural and linguistic – in Canada and between Canadians and people they encounter in other parts of the world. This poem is from my current poetry manuscript* The Craving of Knives. *(blainemarchand@hotmail.com)*

"J'aime presque les images autant que la musique?"
(Claude Debussy to Edgar Varese)

1. Reflets dans l'eau

We are only permitted impressions
as the Docklands Light Rail
pulls out of Tower Hill,
past the sallow tenements
where, through a window, I glimpse
one man, arm raised, clutching
a tea cup while another turns
away. Your fingers staccato on my wrist,
point to the distance,
the autumn darkness clots, ink
stain against hundreds of lights,
festooning the mast of a ship,
the highest building in the British Isles
you say. I am only half listening,
my attention still snagged on that passing scene
in the kitchen. Would he set the cup
down on the table, the other man

just come in? Or, is he about to
chuck it, the other ready to duck?
The train glides around a curve,
lights at the water's edge
stitch the basin's loop. The cars stop
in the concave of station: Canary Wharf.
You lean forward, watch office workers,
collars unbuttoned and ties askew,
rush off escalators, push through opening doors,
cram into aisles, onto seats.
I think of the headlines back home
– this developmental folly almost sinking
the family whose fortune
shores up my country.

You recount how your ship docked here
that first time you arrived from Durban
to study, launch your career.
Even after so many decades away
your voice betrays the liberty,
your feet pressing down
onto the gangway as it bowed
under passengers' weight,
the air brisk in your mouth,
your heart pounding, ignited
by desire as porters shoved
your steamertrunks into the boot
of an uncle's waiting car.

The beat of your fingers against my knuckles
draws me from my reverie.
Your voice fills the shape of my ear.
South Quay. We must disembark
switch lines, go deep underground.
I follow you through
the doors onto the platform, let
you walk ahead through moorings
of light into shadow.
You are still so elegant at eighty-one,
your height full-drawn.

Your turn toward me, your lips
discretely curved to a kiss.

2. Hommage à Rameau

The paths are rutted deep in the earth
as they arc, crisscross among unkempt grass
around the oak stands of Hampstead Heath.
I listen to your ragged breath
as you mount a small incline.
It is not so easy as it once was.
You turn to wait as I catch up.
You speak of death,
as you have done several times
in the last few days.
Sometimes seriously,
sometimes joking, ready with a scenario
– a sudden tumble onto Oxford Street
coming out from the Underground,
courteous shoppers pausing,
but not too long, weighted down with shopping bags
they must move on. Never realizing,
I add, you once brought
London to its feet
in Wigmore Hall. So long ago,
you say. So long ago.

But today the music you made is invigorating
as autumn's air. The movements
of branches those notes
in the drawing room before we set out
as we listened to tapes of performances broadcast
across Europe, in Africa. I ask how you drew
these sounds from inside? What deep recess
like tap roots your fingers reached?
You smile at my insistence, my imagery,
quietly say: "practise."
I persist. Before you began,
did you fuse emotion to an image?

Did you follow the sheetmusic note-perfect?
Was it already arranged inside
your head the way you have memorized
every stop on the Piccadilly and Victoria lines?
You laugh with such ease.
There's talent, you know.
Occasionally inspiration." Over your shoulder,
along the Heath's edge, a white stallion
vaults over a fallen tree.
I think of the way my heart leaps
when I look at you, ask why?
Is this a search for a father?
"Sometimes I just let go, follow instinct."

You point the way
along the path, through a clearing
to the roadway, the house.
We walk side by side in silence,
past couples on benches unwrapping
sandwiches, thermos of tea. You unlock
the front door, we pause
in the vestibule uncertain
whether to go in or embrace here
in the enclosed space, unsure
what holds us together despite living
in different hemispheres, generations apart.
A low moan quakes your cousin's house.
The tube speeds on its way to Golders Green.

3. Mouvement

Belsize Park. Chalk Farm. Camden Town.
Tottenham Court Road to Leicester Square,
past Charing Cross and Embankment.
Our bodies sway with the rhythm of the coach,
the movement of our thighs this morning.
We touch and then roll away from each other.
The powdery scent of your skin on my fingers.
A tattooed couple in the seat across the aisle

watch us intently. His lips move to her ear.
A gloved hand covers her crimson mouth;
at her wrist, thick loops of chain spill out.
The two stand, leave. I watch your eyes
follow in their wake. We, like them,
believe the truth behind
our relationship remains subterranean.
Each day I have travelled with you beneath this city
past stations with names I know chiefly
from movies and books – Knightsbridge, Earl's Court,
conjured images vague as waking dreams.
For you, they are the fabric of youth.
Depart here and just around the corner,
the church where you staged your first recital;
or here, pass under the subway,
two blocks down, the bedsitter you
and your first lover shared before the Blitz.

Is our love this? A passing in and out
of view, time distilled, remnants trapped inside
the head or heart, a reflection, my face
in the window, thin
membrane that separates us
from dug out earth as we roll
onto Highbury & Islington. This station
we enter and then leave behind,
the route we have chosen
not so straightforward, emotion
close to hand as the folded map
I always carry, refuse to put away.
I trace and retrace our journey
certain only where we've come from,
wanting to anticipate but unable
to follow the announcer's voice
garbled through the speaker.

Tell

CAITLIN FISHER

Caitlin Fisher is an Assistant Professor of Fine Arts/Cultural Studies at York University. Research interests include hypertext, feminist theory, and narratives about childhood. Caitlin has a longstanding interest in integrating autobiographical and critical writing and is a member of the Stern Writing Mistresses collective, based in Toronto. Her hypertext about girlhood and sexuality, These Waves of Girls, *has been shortlisted for the 2001 Electronic Literature Awards for fiction.*

I always knew, early on, it's a cliché, I know, but it's also true – skipping in the alleyways with my friends, including Bobby Ruskin sometimes, and boy could he skip ... we never made fun of him, but, come to think of it, no one kissed him during no rules tag, either – back then, it's true that I knew, just knew, that I liked girls instead of boys, knew in a way that meant more than just not wanting to kiss poor Bobby Ruskin. I held this secret to the soundtrack of the strange skipping songs and the dull, rythmic thwack thwack of third grade ever-enders – "Back Door Suzie miss a beat you're out, Backdoor Suzie miss a beat you're out ..." We were so good, even with only two or three skippers, that we sometimes had to sing that song a hundred and fifty times, an all-out furious running zazen, screaming running meditation, opening all sorts of strange chakras, before we made a mistake. I was good at "Had a Little Car, 1948," but dreaded the stupid wind song. That gentle lovely one that finishes with the nasty fast whipping and you end up with your true love, or not. "The wind the wind the wind blows high, blowing Susan through the sky, he is handsome she is pretty, she is the girl from the golden city, they go marching one-two-three, may I ask you will you marry me? – yes no maybe so ..." Before you started, you were supposed to tell everyone the name of your true love. How could I tell them it was either Madame Renault or Cindy Ashford? I often searched the

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eyes of the other girls but none ever seemed conflicted or anxious, the names of boys running off their tongues through giggles without effort or regret – Kevin! Neil Sunderland! Gavin McKnight! I mostly stuck to my old standby – Micky Dolenz from the Monkees, or, later, one of the Bay City Rollers (not the blond guy). In my head I'd whisper the True Name, but I always felt I was cheating the skipping oracle and could never count on the answer to "yes no maybe so" being true.

At home sometimes I'd tie one end of the skipping rope to the water tap in the driveway and turn the rope for myself (you aren't allowed to do skipping songs just holding both ends and doing single skipping) but I couldn't turn pepper like that and, by that time, I was such a good skipper at more gentle speeds that whispering "Cindy" and doing yes no maybe so meant I never tripped up, just had to choose my answer and stop. Yes. I decided the oracle would hate me forever unless I pledge never to trick it again.

Knowing the truth went beyond skipping. Cindy held her grade six party in her recroom ("It cost my dad ten thousand dollars to remodel it and he had the money!") and her older sister Pamela held dancing contests, which mostly meant she smoked out the tiny sliding window and chose Julie Kazer who took jazz dancing on Saturdays at the community center. Cindy was a good dancer, too, but couldn't really expect her own sister to pick her at her own birthday party – so I would say things like, "You're such a great dancer, Cindy, really, you should win," and even in grade six she had a fantastic hair flip thing she'd do and her hair was like Golden Curling Hair Barbie and she would spin away and ignore me. I decided, then, that I was the type of girl who was better at watching other girls dancing than dancing myself. I ask myself now – do I look weird, there in the recroom, as I put my hands to my sides in defeat, no chance of winning this contest, feet barely shifting on the floor, moonily staring at Cindy Ashford? What does the terribly sophisticated Pamela – now in high school, French inhaling in my direction – think when she hears me say to her little sister, "No, really, you're the best dancer here. And ... your hair smells good."

Cindy is dressed in a sea-green chiffon party dress. I am wearing stretch jeans with rivets on the pockets, brown oxfords and a Charlie's Angels t-shirt. I know Cindy deserves better as she twirls to the center of the room for "Dancing Queen" and I head for the chip table.

Cindy and I do have a secret, though. When she comes to my house we sing "Don't Go Breaking My Heart" – that duet by Elton John and Kee Kee Dee – about a million times. She's Kee Kee Dee and I'm Elton John, of course, but even when I'm singing "Don't go breaking my heart" and she's singing "I couldn't if I tried" ... and then we both sing the part that goes "Ooh-ooh, nobody knows it. Nobody know-ooh-ohs. But right from the start, I gave you my heart. Wow-wow, I gave you my heart ..." I know it's not a secret for her the same way it is for me.

More ABBA! The six grade girls are going wild. It's "When I Kissed the Teacher." Oh no. Our teacher is Madame Turcotte now, and though I still like Madame Renault my allegiance has shifted. We have no male teachers for our class, and, really, for guys there's just the principal and one grade four teacher for the whole school. Cindy says she'd like to kiss Pamela's math teacher – she saw him at River High School's grade nine drama night. So would Mariko (she was there, too). Everyone seems to have a male teacher in mind ... like they've been missing kissing him for ages. It doesn't make sense. I'm trying to come up with a name, but can't. During these anxious minutes I realize I'd be happy to kiss almost every teacher in the school – Mlle. Summers, Mrs. Olivette, even the kindergarten teacher with adult braces and the librarian who also works at Dairy Queen, in addition to Madame Turcotte. They're all girls. Although it totally fits with the song, I think, I vow silently never ever to tell about the dream I used to have about Madame Renault just before I went to sleep where she was in bed with me – well, really, I was sneaking into her bed and under the covers – and she looked at me and said, "But Susan, you're a girl!" and I said, "Who cares?" And we slept all curled up together until morning. I don't kiss her in the dream, but it's fair to say it's still kind of a kissing dream. I know telling them about the dream wouldn't be a good idea. Think! Even Julie, whose mother doesn't let her go out except to that stupid community center, comes up with a name: "I like Smitty." Smitty!? Smitty's the janitor. How can it be worse to like a girl than the janitor who has food stuck in his moustache and is always asking us to scratch his back? But it is. The girls are screaming-delighted with the Smitty answer. They turn to me expectantly – "Me, oh, I don't know, I guess I'd kiss Mr. Lewis." The principal. But I wouldn't, no way.

I always knew, early on, to keep my mouth shut. At Lincolnwood

playground, swinging full out and letting our heads drop back toward the ground, staring at rushing sky, Cindy sings the "Lez-be-friends" song. I don't say anything, just swish back and forth. I know Cindy's gold hair must be sweeping the sand by now, back and forth, and that she's singing about lesbians. I don't say a single, single word. Swoosh. "Oh, I'm just kidding," Cindy says. She starts to sing a song in mock-baritone instead: "Strangers in the night, exchanging rubbers. This one is too tight, let's try another. This one is too loose, I'm losing all my juice. Da, da!" I'm not sure I know what a rubber really is. I know what a lesbian is.

Lesbians live in Dalewood, near our school. Libby Watley says two of them live in a house near her and do we want to throw ice balls at the house? I'm not sure. Everyone throws ice balls at the house. Eggs, too. Libby tells us all to run fast, fast past that house and I do. "What are lesbians?" I ask Libby. "Girls who hold hands." "But we hold hands." (I've done more than hold hands, but not with her). Libby shakes her head, "No, not like that. They don't like boys and they're grown up." She tells the story. The lesbians were holding hands in the park, well, right by the park, and Steven Brown's mother said if she ever saw them near that park again she'd call the police – she would! And-come-away-Steven-you-too-Libby-Good-Lord. I nod. I wonder where the lesbians will walk now since their house is so close to the park. While I wonder this, other people wonder out loud if the lesbians have a cat because that would be so sad for a cat ... to have to live with that. Plans are made to kidnap the cat. If there is one. I need to decide – am I the kind of person who will throw iceballs and steal someone's cat, or will I have iceballs thrown at me and have my cat stolen?

The next year I am in junior high and all grown up and everyone that year is gay and stupid faggot and in junior high almost all of our teachers are men and we have different subjects in different classrooms and the homeroom teacher for 7B is Mr. McFagan but we call him Mr. McFaggot. One day I'm waiting for the city bus to take me to the school and I'm at the transfer point near the woods and a bus comes by the other side and the art teacher gets out – Mr. Vogel, the one who goes to Swish Chalet with Mr. McFaggot. He motions me to get on the bus. I pretend I don't see him. He gets the driver to wait. "Susan? Are you coming to school? Hop on!" Oh-go-away, Mr. Gay-Art-Teacher-who-will-probably-abduct-me! But there are dozens of

people on the bus waiting for me to make up my mind, so I cross over and get on the bus with him. He tells me it's a special express bus and much faster than waiting there and asks me how am I liking school. I stare at him hard because I know all about him, how he bakes cookies in the pottery kiln and how he took Richard Blake and lots of other boys into the little back art supply room after school or during art detention and made Richard kiss him. And I know how he's in love with Mr. McFaggot and they deserve each other and thank god I'm not in 7B. But I'm not abducted and it's the right bus after all, and I wonder if Mr. Vogel could tell, all the way from across the street, from a bus, that I'm a lesbian.

Gay Caballeros

DAN RUBINSTEIN

Dan Rubinstein is the news editor of Vue Weekly, Edmonton's urban alternative newspaper, and a freelance writer who's never met a story he didn't like. Anybody with questions or comments about this article can reach him at drubinstein@compusmart.ab.ca. And he's always looking for story ideas.

Hank is torn. In theory, he should adore k.d. lang for coming out proudly and defiantly in rural Alberta. But Hank, a gay man who ranches on the province's east-central plains, has other priorities. "I won't buy her CDs anymore because she stopped buying beef," he says. "I think she'd enjoy the rodeo, though."

Growing up 30 kilometers down the highway from the 4,000-acre cattle ranch where he lives today, a few miles from lang's hometown, Hank was a frequent rodeo competitor. That's what prairie kids did. Bulls and bucking broncos were left in the pasture, however, when he ran off to college and grad school; he figured he'd become a city slicker.

Then, in 1992, Hank attended his first gay rodeo in San Antonio, Texas. "That was where I felt, 'Oh my god – I'm not alone!' There's a whole community."

From its hardscrabble origins in Reno, Nevada in 1976 – local ranchers refused to rent livestock to organizers in 1975 – the gay rodeo circuit has swelled into a flourishing Can-Am tour with as many as two dozen stops in peak years. In mid January, the Road Runner Regional Rodeo in Phoenix kicked off the 2001 calendar, which will feature 18 rodeos, including unlikely destinations like Salt Lake City and Little Rock as well as the seventh annual Canadian Rockies International Rodeo in Calgary – the "international" dimension of the parent International Gay Rodeo Association.

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A veteran of all six Cowtown rodeos, Hank (no last name, please) is already jacked about this summer's late-June hoe-down. With its three-day schedule of dances, prime-rib-and-baked-potato dinners, concerts by country stars like Chris Cummings, a total attendance approaching 2,000, and a full slate of traditional rodeo events, from chute dogging to barrel racing, plus camp events like the wild drag race devised to encourage beginner participation, the gay rodeo is a celebration of western heritage with an inclusive, machismo-free twist.

"There's such a sense of freedom," says Hank, 44, who refused to go to his boyfriend's aunt's wedding last summer ("maybe if it was her first wedding") because it was the same weekend as the Calgary rodeo. "I'd experienced that feeling before at the Gay Olympics in Vancouver," he continues, "but these are my people, people from a rural background who happen to be gay. If you're young, gay, and rural you don't have to run off to the city and become a hairdresser."

To engage part-time, wanna-be cowboys, gay rodeos generally feature a wide range of events guaranteed not to cripple participants. (For instance, goat dressing, which involves, naturally, dressing a goat in a pair of jockey-style underwear.) But overall, with bucking half-ton bulls to be conquered, events are challenging enough for professionals. "It's not a sissy rodeo," says Robert (not his real name), a gay rodeo regular who was raised on a farm north of Calgary. "You've got to be tough. You're working with real live animals. There's danger in it – I've seen quite a few people get injured and packed out."

Accordingly, the greater the danger, the greater the stakes. A handful of old-school cowboys who make the gay rodeo rounds, travelling from the Southern Spurs Rodeo in Atlanta to the Sierra Stampede in Sacramento, earn a living from their winnings. Of course, they have to supplement earnings by competing in mainstream rodeos – which is one of the reasons why The Roost, Edmonton's largest gay nightclub, is packed when the Canadian Finals Rodeo swings through town every November. Much of the extra business can be attributed to the thousands of tourists in the city to watch the CFR, says Roost manager Carl Austin. But if there are closeted gay men playing in the NHL, then pro rodeo world, one of the twenty-first century's last bastions of machohood, is certainly no exception.

For Robert, 37, the gay rodeo circuit has offered Stetson-capped

salvation. Still dealing with his recent homosexual awakening, he's found community and acceptance on the tour – and won some prize money, too. He was last year's all-around Canadian champ in Calgary and he almost broke into the Top 10 against some tough American competition in Phoenix in January.

Not bad for a guy who, as a teen, watched from the sidelines while friends and family members competed. "It was very intimidating," he says about the traditional rodeo atmosphere he was surrounded by while growing up. "I didn't feel comfortable there. I had all the opportunities in the world – my closest friends and neighbours rode rodeo, so it wasn't that I didn't have the right connections. I just didn't feel comfortable."

Two years ago, when he came out to his family, a lot of things changed for Robert. He began attempting to reconcile his rural background and demeanor with a sexual orientation considered (at least stereotypically, and in North American pop culture) to be very urban. Support from his family helped; after Robert explained to his mother that he was gay, his mom told his father, who surprised Robert by saying "nothing's changed. You're still the same person you were before. We accept you the same as we always did." But there was still that disconcerting rural-urban hurdle to clear. And taking in his first gay rodeo after stumbling upon the scene through a friend has been a tremendous confidence booster for Robert.

"I'm more at ease with myself now," he says, reflecting on his fledgling stint on the tour, which began last year at the annual Las Vegas extravaganza. "I don't feel as intimidated by other people. I'm more sure of myself."

Organizers of the Calgary rodeo, held on a private ranch on the outskirts of the city, are sure of themselves, too. Even in Alberta – the province that launched Stockwell Day and was admonished by the Supreme Court of Canada for not protecting the rights of fired gay teacher Delwin Vriend – the rodeo has faced surprisingly minimal controversy since its debut.

Current rodeo director Kevin Murray remembers a photo of a man wearing a wedding dress appearing in newspapers across the continent in Year One, an unfortunate representation because most competitors were clad in jeans and plaid shirts. There were also some protestors that summer – animal rights activists.

Hank, in fact, considers the Alberta countryside a tolerant

environment. As long as you're a contributing member of society and rein in the outlandish behavior, he says it's relatively easy to be a gay rancher. "I'm not going to walk down the road holding my boyfriend's hand and kissing him," he says, "but my neighbours don't walk down the road kissing their wives, either. People are accepting of you as long as you carry your own weight. Don't put rural people down. Most have satellite TVs and they get *Will & Grace*."

South of the border, there have been a couple of homophobic incidents. Some yahoo fired off a few rounds outside the Corona Ranch in Phoenix a couple years back, according to Murray, and organizers of a rodeo in Washington state's bible belt once received a telephone threat. "It was a wonderful setting," laments Murray. "There were beautiful hills. But there might have been snipers in the hills." (Last year's Calgary rodeo also sparked some controversy: members of a Denver-based gay clog dancing troupe say they were harassed and denied entry into Canada by customs officers at the Sweetgrass border crossing after a vehicle search turned up wigs and female clothing that female impersonators planned to wear while performing at the rodeo.)

Yet those anecdotes are exceptions. Heck, at the inaugural Salt Lake City rodeo in Mormon-soaked Utah last year, the mayor served as the grand marshal and media coverage was positive. "If Salt Lake City can host a gay rodeo and be wildly successful, there's nowhere we can't go," says Doug Graff, the IGRA's California-based spokesperson, 1999's "Mr. Gay Rodeo" for fund-raising purposes, and a talented bull rider who'll be back in the saddle whenever his torn rotator cuff heals. "That's our mission," he continues, "to support country-western heritage and lifestyle in the gay community."

"I can't tell you how many times I've gotten choked up about doing what we're doing and loving it so much," Graff adds, describing a transcendent moment in Albuquerque where a rider from Utah rode a bull that had never been tamed before with jaw-dropping grace and beauty.

With Bud Lite on board as a sponsor, gay rodeo is growing, another example of the mainstream world accepting the legitimacy of gay culture and the gay dollar. "We've worked with some major redneck stock contractors," says Graff, "but thank God for the almighty green dollar." Even in Alberta, in conservative, oil capital Calgary, it's a good sell. "Calgary is all about making money," offers

Hank. "They really don't give a shit about anything else."

Case in point, the Calgary Stampede. It's one of the largest rodeos in the world, an organization one might expect to be overly cautious about its image. Yet Stampede officials have agreed to rent one of their indoor arenas to the Alberta Rockies Gay Rodeo Association should they land the IGRA finals rodeo later this decade. "Our sales department is always looking for new uses for our facilities – we do not discriminate at all," says Jodi Johnson, the Stampede's media and publicity manager, calling the gay rodeo just another potential business partner.

"As far as we're concerned, business is business," Pat Bell of the Calgary Convention & Visitors Bureau responds when asked about the rodeo's impact on Cowtown. "The cash register has no opinion."

Neither do the bulls.

Book Reviews
Les Comptes rendus

Readers wishing to review books should consult the list of Books Received on the *torquere* website (http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/~torquere), and contact the Book Review Editor, Katherine Binhammer, at Katherine.Binhammer@ualberta.ca.

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Jim Egan. *Challenging the Conspiracy of Silence: My Life as a Canadian Gay Activist.* Compiled and edited by Donald W. McLeod. Toronto: The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives and Homewood Books, 1998. 159pp. Includes preface and afterword (by McLeod), photos, bibliographical references of Egan's correspondence, index. ISBN 0-9683829-0-8.

RICK H. LEE (Rutgers University)

The late Jim Egan was an important figure in the history of Canadian gay and lesbian activism: he counter the homophobic views of articles appearing in national publications in the 1950s, organized and presided in discussion groups in Toronto in the 1960s, and in the 1990s, he and his partner Jack Nesbit were involved in their Supreme Court challenge of the Old Age Security Act's discriminatory policy excluding same-sex couples from receiving spousal benefits. Given that "[T]he result of the May 25, 1995 Supreme Court decision in Jim Egan/Jack Nesbitt [*sic*] same-sex spousal benefit case ... embodies the ambiguous and contradictory character of the current legal situation facing lesbians and gays in Canada" (Kinsman 5), Donald W. McLeod's *Challenging the Conspiracy of Silence* is indeed a timely contribution to Canadian gay and lesbian historiography. For the book offers not only a portrait

of its subject's life narrative, but equally interesting, an ethnographic and historical study of the homophobic sociocultural context in which Egan found himself embedded and against which he struggled.

In his preface, McLeod begins by recounting a personal anecdote. As a participant during the annual pride celebrations in Toronto in June 1997, McLeod joins his colleagues from the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives in carrying around banners that read: "Keeping our Stories Alive" (9). He recalls that day:

> By the time we get to Yonge and Wellesley, the crowds have taken over most the street ... Hundreds of thousands of people ... have pressed into a few blocks to celebrate gay pride. I feel overwhelmed. I ask myself, "How the hell did I end up here?" and ponder the more important question, "How did gay people in Toronto end up here?" (10)

McLeod's strategy in recalling this anecdote is especially pertinent: for he sets the stage for the entry of Jim Egan, the social actor who is the subject of *Challenging the Conspiracy of Silence*. McLeod, convinced that "the best way to tell Jim Egan's story would be for him to tell it himself, in his own words," usefully clarifies in his preface that "this work is in fact an oral history of Jim Egan," an extended and amalgamated transcript of "a series of taped interviews conducted over a period of ten years" between Egan and McLeod and others (13).

The experience of reading *Challenging the Conspiracy of Silence* illustrates the book's success in preserving the quality of its subject's speech and thought processes, as Egan negotiates himself through the recesses of his memory, recalling both the important and quotidian events in his life. The 'transcribed' prose reveals Egan to be a sensitive and modest yet determined man, highly self-reflexive in the act of recounting his past to his various interviewers. Consider the following passage as Egan recalls his childhood:

> I was extremely fortunate compared with some young gay males. Mind you I'm not saying I had any intimations of being gay at the age of nine. I didn't. But I certainly had that feeling that many gays have that I was somehow different than the other boys. I had only the faintest notion of that, but I did feel different. I felt somewhat alienated from them, but I was fortunate in that I was never what could be described as a sissy. I got along quite well with the other boys on the

> street. We chummed around together. But they were interested, eventually, in playing baseball and I never, ever, had the faintest interest in that sort of thing. And so it developed, in a perfectly natural way, that I became very much of a loner, which didn't bother me in the least. (17)

Passages like the above (and there are many) are wonderful and vivid not least because they are able to retain the nuances inherent in Egan's simultaneous acts of speaking and remembering. Egan is here captured in a moment of honest and genuine reflection: he articulates the extent to which his childhood sense of alienation from other boys and his eventual acceptance of being self-sufficient have equally contributed to shaping his identity as a gay man.

The book's conversational tone, moreover, convinces its readers of Egan's abilities as a great storyteller. Such skills are most evident in Chapter 5, entitled "Gay Personalities of Old Toronto," where Egan shares his "random memories of a few of the personalities and characters who were active in [Toronto's] gay community" in the 1950s and 1960s (70-78). In less than ten pages, Egan introduces his readers (and listeners?) to a cast of men as varied in their personalities as they were in their wardrobes. Here we meet, among others: George Hislop, who later formed the Community Homophile Association of Toronto (CHAT) in December 1970 (70); Jimmy Roulton, who played the piano at the Chez Paree Restaurant, once a meeting place for gay men in Toronto (72); Frances and Geraldine, two interracial friends who dressed in drag – the former, "a black guy who weighed two hundred pounds at the absolute minimum and was always plastered with makeup, including green eye shadow and lipstick," the latter, "also about two hundred pounds but with porcelain features and makeup galore" (72); Miss Jeffries, "an absolutely fragile little creature ... sort of pretty, in a refined kind of way, and [who] always wore these vinyl jackets" (73); and Alex Bakalis, who was murdered by a male hustler in May 1960 (77-78). Egan's brief but colorful character sketches of random acquaintances and close friends alike foreground not only the diversity of the emerging gay community in postwar Toronto, but also the ways these men's lives intersected with each other's. Egan's descriptions illustrate the extent to which these men, despite their differences, once indeed inhabited (literally and metaphorically) the same geography of desire.

The book's strength – namely, its success in preserving intact

Egan's conversational tone – is also, however, at particular moments, its greatest weakness. While McLeod no doubt means well in attempting to replicate the idiosyncrasies inherent in Egan's act of verbally recalling his past, he could have taken a bit more editorial liberty at the level of 'form' without necessarily sacrificing the integrity of the 'content' of his subject's life story. Put another way, he could have drawn more concrete connections between formative moments in Egan's life in order to provide a more substantive and even reading experience of his book. For example, consider the book's treatment of Egan's voracious reading habit during his life:

> I gradually became an omnivorous reader [as an adolescent]. A lot of my reading was not necessarily intellectual. I read everything by H. Rider Haggard and Conan Doyle and Verne and Dickens and most of H. G. Wells. I read all the Saintstories by Leslie Charteris, the Charles Chan books, Agatha Christie ... and everything that Edgar Rice Burroughs ever wrote. *And many biographies and autobiographies*. I used to buy the old *Doc Savage* and *The Shadow* magazines every month ... I simply gobbled up books in the library, at the corner of Danforth and Pape avenues.
>
> As I became aware of my own interest in males, I found that in those days, of course, there were few references to homosexuality in any of these books. There was Whitman, when I finally discovered him, and Housman, whom I discovered when I was sixteen or seventeen, but even then I still knew very, very little ...
>
> The work that really triggered gay awareness for me was my quite accidental discovery of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, by Oscar Wilde. And although I was probably fifteen when I read that book I instantly recognized myself as Basil Hallward. (18-19; emphasis added)
>
> I must say that when I was writing and researching my articles and letters [in the 1950s] I did feel sometimes that I was working in a vacuum. But I wasn't completely alone. My omnivorous reading habits continued unabated throughout this period, and I read all the gay classics I could find. I was particularly interested in the historical and philosophical aspects of homosexuality, and read works by

> Magnus Hirschfeld, Havelock Ellis, John Addington Symonds, Edward Carpenter, and others. I read the classic works of Wilde, Proust, and Gide, and kept up with the latest gay literature, from Vidal ... and others. (57-58)

The wide-ranging inventory of titles in both of these passages clearly reveals Egan as both passionate and resourceful in his reading habits. From his accidental discovery of Wilde's *Dorian Gray* to his later interest in reading works of sexologists, Egan recalls the ways in which reading has shaped his understanding and acceptance of his sexuality throughout his life. Yet the first passage appears in Chapter 1, entitled "Beginnings"; and, the second, in Chapter 4, entitled "Challenging the Conspiracy of Silence: Jim Egan's Emergence As a Gay Activist during the 1950s." While these passages intimate an important connection in terms of content, their separate appearances in the book leave that very connection tenuous at best. To what extent was Egan's reading of, say, sexological case studies as an adult informed by his reading of "many biographies and autobiographies"? And, in turn, to what extent does this shape his desire to narrate his own life story? In short, as an interviewer, McLeod could have asked much more pointedly leading questions of his subject. Likewise, as an editor and compiler of those interviews, he could have drawn more concrete connections when the evidence warrants them.

Paradoxically, however, readers such as myself who gently fault some of McLeod's editorial decisions must necessarily also commend him for his obvious sensitivity toward, and his genuine respect for, his subject and evidence. For, in the end, McLeod has indeed produced "an oral history of Jim Egan" (13), as well as provided an extensive bibliography of Egan's correspondence between 1950 and 1964 in the book's several appendices. Even though the book focuses mainly on Egan's life in Toronto during the 1950s and 1960s, McLeod's afterword and the chronology in Appendix A provide useful and thorough documentation of Egan's later years in British Columbia. *Challenging the Conspiracy of Silence* will attract a wide range of readers, academic institutions, or local community archives interested in any or all of the following: autobiography and life narrative, the early history of Canadian gay and lesbian social activism, and the history of postwar Toronto. Those already familiar with Gary Kinsman's *The Regulation of Desire* will find *Challenging the Conspiracy of Silence* an especially wonderful companion text: for

the latter offers a more elaborate and intimate glimpse of Jim Egan, an important figure whose life story helped to shape the larger narrative of gay and lesbian history in Canada.

Given that members of LGBT and queer communities often "do not have the institutions for common memory and generational transmission around which straight culture is built" (Warner 51), *Challenging the Conspiracy of Silence* reminds us of the necessity to honor and embrace what we have inherited from the past, least of all as means with which to make intelligible the present historical moment and to shape the future. As Egan eloquently reminds us, "Gay people today have no idea what it was like being gay in those days. Homosexuality was not discussed openly in polite society. There were no positive gay role models" (86). To the extent that the book's publication coincides with two anniversaries – the fiftieth anniversary of Jim Egan and Jack Nesbit's relationship (23 August 1998) and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (September 1998) – readers of *Challenging the Conspiracy of Silence* are invited to celebrate our role models and the keepers of their stories.

Works Cited

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Warner, Michael. *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life*. New York: Free, 1999.

Catherine Lake, ed. *ReCREATIONS: Religion and Spirituality in the Lives of Queer People.* Toronto: Queer Press, 1999. 192pp. $14.95 (Cdn) ISBN 1-895564-06-9.

JOANNE WOTYPKA (University of Alberta)

At first, *ReCREATIONS* seemed destined to join the ranks of other anthologies on queers and religion which often chronicle the unfortunate experiences had by many gays and lesbians at the hands of organized religion. Happily, this presumption of mine

was a mistake. As the title indicates, *ReCREATIONS* deals not only with religion as constructed by society, but with spirituality as developed by the individual and with how the two interact in the lives of queer people. Unfortunately, as some of the contributions to the book show, these facets of life sometimes clash. For other contributors, the needs of the spirit were able to overcome the problems with organized religion, allowing for fulfillment either in the birth religion, or in a spiritual system chosen later in life. This is not to say that there is something called the 'queer religious experience' any more than there is something called the 'queer experience.' While this book as a whole illustrates the ongoing conflict between religion and sexuality, it also reflects the diversity of spiritual questing within the multifaceted queer community.

It is precisely this diversity that gives *ReCREATIONS* an edge over other collections. Not only are diverse sexual orientations represented, but a great variety of religious experiences as well: the spiritual transformations recounted range from Christian to Pagan, from Mormon to Quaker. Some contributors stayed within their birth traditions (for instance, Jewish, Catholic, Muslim), and others, in embracing their queerness, found a meaningful spiritual system outside organized religion, including everything from an omni-religious spirituality to Wicca to the Radical Faerie movement.

The book's diversity is facilitated by the method of organization. Eschewing divisions by gender, orientation, or religious affiliation, editor Catherine Lake instead chose the three broad categories "Witness," "Exile," and "Sanctuary." Each section contains offerings in prose and poetry that are loosely based on each theme.

"Witness" records the experiences of those who coped and are coping with the attitudes of their religions. Many of the pieces are "coming out" stories: both coming out as queer to self and to family, and coming out as religious. Harreson T. Cebiliak covers an itinerary of his daily grade ten experience which included not only questions of sexuality, but also bullies, drugs, and a dysfunctional family torn apart by alcoholism. Despite this, Cebiliak writes that "remaining true to my soul's evolution has allowed me to magically transform as a dance with the Divine," revealing the strong spirituality that enabled him to survive his childhood (19). In "My Human Revolution," Kate Greco describes her journey from married Catholic to lesbian Buddhist, asking the question that many spiritual seekers have

pondered: "is it the actual practice that brings about results, or is it the faith in the practice?" (57). With the selective use of certain Scriptural passages deployed as frequent weapons against the queer community, such a question is often on the mind of the queer religious practitioner: is it the institution or the experience of the Divine that one follows? Often, sadly, the two are very far apart. Frequently, the message of love and compassion mysteriously morphs into one of hatred and exclusion when issues of queerness are raised. It is this issue that is explored in the next section.

Certainly, for some contributors to "Exile," both the institution and the religious experience preclude queerness. Daniel Curzon's "Why I am an Ex-Catholic" speaks to the utter alienation many queer people have experienced at the hands of organized religion. Though at some points flippant about his ordeal – "I can't honestly understand why any gay people would want to have anything to do with the Catholic Church, except to picket it. (Or maybe get a job in it.)" – his "roaringly anti-Catholic" mindset speaks to the breadth of the gap between the queer and the religious (104, 103). Unlike Curzon, several of the writers did find their way out of their birth religions and into a system that allowed them to be both gay and religious or spiritual. Yoruba priest Aswad discusses his journey from his Southern Baptist roots to African traditions, via Islam, Witchcraft, and Shamanism. For him, and others of nonwhite heritage, homophobia combined with questions of color, leading led him to pose the questions: "Why is God white?" "Why does God hate Blacks?" and "Why does God hate gays?" (94).

"Sanctuary," the final section, celebrates spirituality that embraces, rather than excludes, the queer experience. Brian Utter recounts his confusion in having to choose between hetero- and homosexuality as the only two choices allowed by his Catholic upbringing, with only one of those two being correct. Embracing his bisexuality meant breaking with all polarities, including those taught to him by the Church, and experiencing spirituality as something individual, "as intricate and entangled as the life I've experienced" (145). Like Greco's musings on religion and religious practice, Utter's experience led him to a belief that spirituality "emphasized living well [rather] than practicing correctly" (145). Some writers did find homes within organized religions. Transsexual Mikki Maulsby turned to Wicca ("a custom-made suit") after trying out several varieties of

Christianity ("one-size-fits-all"), finding a link between the persecution of witches and of queers (147). The joy of being a solitary practitioner was also part of the allure: without the need to have the approval of others, Maulsby is free to experience noninstitutionalized spirituality that transcends prejudice.

One of the most interesting examples of the examination of how prejudice plays itself out in mainstream religion is Avi Rose's "Deconstructing Leviticus." Growing up in a devoutly Jewish family, Rose went from insider to outsider when he came to terms with his homosexuality. Leviticus, which contains those quotes most often used against queer people (18:22 and 20:13), became a focus for Rose's integration of sexuality and spirituality until eventually he "became angry with the text for denying [him] the right to be the human being and the Jew that [he] was" (118). By deconstructing the text and examining the history behind its construction, Rose has not only aided his own quest, but provided logical arguments for use by people dealing with those who use Leviticus as a weapon.

In addition to the prose texts cited above, each major section contains poems which speak to the authors' experiences as eloquently as any of the other entries and add to the overall diversity of the anthology. Cynthea Masson's "Conversion Class" tells of being with her partner in "a room / Full of heterosexual couples / Anticipating huppah" and wondering whether they are fully accepted or merely tolerated (42). In "Growing Up Religious," Brian Day recalls images from his Christian youth of having to reconcile his queerness with the message of the Church: "From the church we had the glass / of a text, the grace / of language. For that other / there was no writing we knew. / Fag jokes were a relief / from the burden of silence, the blank / pages that kept us closed."

The heterogeneity of *ReCREATIONS* makes it difficult to represent the texture of the anthology. I have not mentioned Frank Hull's account of being a gay Mormon who also has cerebral palsy, nor Ace's recollections of growing up Roman Catholic in New York in the 1950s and 1960s as a no-op Female-to-Male. To fully appreciate the work's scope, it must be read as a whole. *ReCREATIONS* is a valuable addition to the body of work concerning the intersection of sexuality and spirituality.

Information
Les Renseignements

torquere

Journal of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Studies Association / Revue de la Société canadienne des études lesbiennes et gaies

torquere is published by the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Studies Association / *torquere* est l'organe officielle de la Société canadienne des études lesbiennes et gaies.

Aims and Scope

torquere seeks to publicize scholarly and creative work on topics concerning queer aspects of Canada and its social, political, material, and textual culture, or on queer topics outside Canadian Studies by scholars conducting queer research in Canada. We welcome a diversity of approaches from a wide spectrum of areas – from Sociology, History, Political Science, Anthropology, Education, the Sciences, Business, Law, English, French, Modern Language Studies, Cultural Studies, Native Studies, Women's Studies, Philosophy, Drama, Film and Media Studies, Religious Studies, Religion, Music and the Fine Arts. torquere also welcomes previously unpublished creative writing and visual art by and about Canadian queer, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people. We are particularly interested in work that seeks to play with conventional forms and genres in ways that are innovative and challenging.

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torquere se propose de publier des articles scolaires, des nouvelles, des poèmes et des dessins et photos portant sur les dimensions sociales, politiques et textuelles de la culture queer au Canada. On publiera également des articles écrits par des chercheur(e)s en études lesbiennes et gaies aux universités canadiennes mais qui travaillent dans des domaines de spécialisation autres que les études canadiennes. On est ouverts à des approches diverses venant de toute une gamme de champs, tels que la sociologie, l'histoire, la science politique, l'anthropologie, la pédagogie, les sciences, le commerce, le droit, les études culturelles, les études autochtones, les études féministes, la philosophie, le théâtre, le cinéma et les média, les sciences religieuses, la musique et les beaux arts. On aimerait recevoir aussi des textes de création et des photos et dessins qui n'ont pas encore été publiés ailleurs et qui présentent un point de vue queer, lesbien, gai, bisexuel ou transgender. On s'intéresse surtout à des oeuvres innovatrices.

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