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KNOW YOURSELF: WRITE YOURSELF!

*Queer Subjects and the Constructions of Gender and Sexual Identity at the Turn
of the 19th Century*

POZNEJ SÁM SEBE: NAPIŠ O SOBĚ!

*Konstruování sexuální a genderové identity na přelomu devatenáctého a
dvacátého století*

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The thesis explores the constructions of gender and sexual identity at the turn of the nineteenth, and at the beginning of the twentieth centuries on the example of chosen texts of British provenience. Analysing autobiographic texts of **John Addington Symonds** (1840-93), **‘Michael Field’** [the pen name of **Katherine Bradley** (1849-1914) and **Edith Cooper** (1862-1913)], and **Havelock Ellis** (1859-1939), the thesis highlights how modernity endows gender and sexuality with new significance and turns them into identity markers.

TO KNOW YOURSELF: WRITE YOURSELF!

One admits to oneself, in pleasure and in pain, things it would be impossible to tell anyone else.¹

Examining closely the various strategies of self-fashioning/self-writing as they are performed in the autobiographic and largely auto-communicative texts, the thesis aims to disclose the ways in which the changed conceptions of gender and sexuality interact with the constructions of the self and subjectivity. The following questions are pursued: What possible strategies of self-fashioning, of identity constructions, do different selves find in the given cultural context? How do their various gender- and sexual identifications, or the identification as *queer*², interact (or interpose) with the fashioning of their identity?

There are different ways of composing a text about oneself. Thence, such texts provide the most valuable insight into the forms of subjectivity (Foucault, 1997). The analysed texts seem to respond to a pressing need to ‘write’ their identity, to define in writing ‘who they are.’ This driving motivation to give an account of one’s life (‘to write yourself’), the thesis argues, testifies to some of the changes that affect the modern subjectivity and thus represents a new type of power relation to which the modern self is subjected. The imperative to ‘know yourself’, the thesis further argues, becomes a referent to the subject’s sexuality. The ‘will to knowledge’ that subjects sexuality to a new regime of (epistemic) power, becomes the essential force shaping the modern self (See Chapter II.1.; Foucault, 1985; Foucault, 1988). The thesis draws out the ways in which the confrontation with the – as if – universal existential query – “*Who am I?*” –, attest to the workings of the imperative both to know oneself, and to speak/write about the obtained knowledge of the self. As Jana Sawicki remarks, “[p]resumably what makes the disciplinary power so effective is its ability to grasp the individual at the level of its self-understanding” (1996:162).

Regarding the autobiographic texts as effects of the conjoined imperatives to ‘know’ and to ‘write’ oneself, the thesis endeavours to provide insights into the structures of modern subjectivity, its gendered nature, and, most significantly, into the technologies of its production. In this perspective, subjectivity does not represent “an originary force, [or] an originator of speech acts and ideas, but rather constituted effect of knowledge regimes and discourses” (Erevelles, 2005). Thus, the practices of self-writing manifest that (and how) sex and gender are strategically deployed in technologies of dominance to produce a new regime of subject governance. However, if the thesis asserts that the subjects represent the product of “relation[s] of power exercised over [their] bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires” (Erevelles, 2005: 48) it does not claim that they remain utterly passive and power-less manikins. That the subject’s agency is riven with paradox does not mean it is impossible. It

¹ Foucault, (1990: 59)

² Prior to the powerful appropriation affected by the GLBTQ community, *queer* referred to that what was considered ‘strange’, ‘odd’, ‘obscure’, and essentially ‘unintelligible’. The term encompasses references to both *gender* and *sexual* identity. In fact, it is based upon their interconnectedness; *queer* activates both categories at once.

means only that paradox is the condition of its possibility. (cf. Butler, 2004). In other words, to claim that the ‘I’ who speaks about him/herself in the autobiographic texts, is always already preceded by a discourse that shapes/enables these formulations, does not equal to say that the self is not reflexive of the process of his/her own constitution.

CONSTRUCTIONS OF HETERONORMATIVITY AND ITS DISCURSIVE CONDITIONS

The critical investigation the thesis undertakes into the structures of modern subjectivity is set against the study of the discursive constructions of heteronormativity. Chapter II, *Constructions of Heteronormativity and its Discursive Conditions* – introduces key concepts, specifies thesis’s methodological background, and sets the individual chapters into broader conceptual frameworks. Firstly, *The Technology of Sex and its Heterosexual Morphology* (II.1.) discusses the relevance of studying sexuality as the way to uncover cultural, social power mechanisms that shape the modern subjectivity.

The thesis builds on theoretical concepts of sexuality that challenge its supposed ‘naturalness’. Rather, sexuality is viewed as a historical construct, and as “a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another in accordance with a few major strategies of power and knowledge” (Foucault, 1999: 105-6).

Further, the relationship between ‘sex’ (as a determinant of the subject’s social existence and identity, and as a category placing the subject according to the divides such as man/woman, homosexual/heterosexual/etc.) and ‘sexuality’ is reversed. It is not the former determining the latter, but vice versa. The thesis draws upon Foucault (1990, 1988) and other theorists of queer (XXX) to highlight how sexuality is used to classify subjects and to attach them to specific identities.

In this sense, the thesis makes a claim about the insufficiency of adding ‘queer’ subjects to historical and literary projects. It is essential, how all the case-studies included in the thesis reveal, to scrutinize the epistemology of sex and the forms of subjectivity it produces. Moreover, the thesis also argues that it is of as much importance to scrutinize the impact this epistemological regime has upon the methodological frameworks through which we approach sexual/gender identities. All three case-studies address this question as they attempt to highlight the weak-points of methodological frameworks based upon concepts of sex/uality and those of sexual/gender identity that do not reflect and problematise their own lineage with this specific epistemic regime. The present thesis focuses upon discussing the links between concepts of sexual identity and epistemology of sex that affect, as Foucault notes, the distribution of subjects around a norm, around before-handed categories of (heterosexual morphology of) identity (cf. Butler, 1990, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c).

This is further elaborated in the sub-chapter *Sex and/or Gender: Useful Categories of Analysis?* (II.2.) which argues for the importance of applying gender and sexuality as two interlinked, and, indeed, hardly separable categories of analysis. In analogy to Scott’s ground-breaking assertion of the analytical usefulness of gender (Scott 1999), the thesis explores first how sexuality and gender operate in human – social – relationships, and what relationships the sexual and/or gender positionings enact. Second, the thesis studies the ways in which sex/uality and gender interact in giving meaning to creation, as well as to perception, of (historical) identities.

If, arguably, the notion of identity represents one of the most questioned concepts of western philosophical and literary modernity, then, this identity cannot be thought of apart from gender which turns into the very „Subjekteffekt“ of the modern self. (cf. Runte) The categories of gender represent one of the most profound sources of identification our society provides (Runte, Maihofer, Butler, cf. Smausova). Following, in the context of this thesis, gender informs the analytical perspective focused upon normative formations that determine a subject's identity. Combining gender and sex/uality, the thesis attempts to transgress the equalisation of gender with the binary notions of “sexual difference,” and/or that of ‘homosexual’ vs. ‘heterosexual.’ In addition, it is important to focus on the particular ways in which power, the normative constrictions that shape the identity position, definition of sexuality etc., operates within different discursive formations so that gender is not once again posed as a universal and undistinguished normative force. Ultimately, the variant sources at work with the thesis underwrite the importance of accentuating particular technologies, processes, and ways in which gender and/or sex/uality work within a particular discursive formations and how it subjects the concrete selves in a concrete manner.

TECHNOLOGIES/PRACTICES OF THE SELF; GENDER AS A PERFORMATIVE PRACTICE

The sub-chapter *Performative Conditions of Heteronormativity* (II.3.) discusses the ways in which categories of sex (female/male), gender (femininity/masculinity), desire and sexuality (man-oriented, woman-oriented; homosexual/heterosexual) are employed as fastly and inseparably interlinked features of subject's identity.

Further, the thesis draws inspiration from the methodological innovations brought by the performative methodologies (XXX). This reflects in the use of Butler's concept of performativity of gender, and Foucault's model of practices of the self, both of which accentuating the ‘performative’ aspects of the relationship between the subject and power (normative structures). Likewise, both concepts are valued for the possibilities to theorise moments of subversive resistance to these power structures.

Concluding, the autobiographic texts examined in the thesis provide two important insights into the ways in which subject's gender and sexual identities are fashioned at the turn of modernity. The critical investigation of the normative structures that shape and pre-determine gender and sexual identities and of the binary – heteronormative – logic of their formation, represents the first framing concern followed in the thesis. The concern with gender intelligibility reflects the thesis's critical engagement with the technology that subjects the possibilities of identification, and in fact forms of subjectivity, to logic of specific governance. The second overarching concern of the thesis represents the attempt to encompass the diversity of the practices that the individual *queer* selves devise in the process of self-writing and making sense of themselves. In this way, the thesis wants to contribute to the process of developing knowledge of “how [...] sexually ‘ec-centric’ subjects lived out their dispositions, let alone how they made sense of them.” (Cohen, 1995: 84-5)

TECHNOLOGIES AND EPISTEMOLOGIES OF THE ('ABERRANT') SELF.
JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS: "WHAT HE REALLY WAS"?

John Addington Symonds (1840-93) belongs to the so-called eminent Victorians, and when he "penned his memoirs [...] he ranked among England's foremost men of letters" (Pemble, 2000:7). and was regarded as one of the major English men of letters. Symonds published literary studies and reviews, essays, travel books as well as volumes of his own poetry, and his 7-volume *Renaissance in Italy* is often paralleled with Burckhardt's *History of the Renaissance in Italy*. Nonetheless, it has not been his voluminous publications that have revived interest in his personality after he – together with other "eminent Victorians" – had been rejected by the modernists. It was the publication of his *Memoirs* in 1984 that led to an increased interest in his figure.

The manuscript of Symonds's autobiography – *Memoirs of John Addington Symonds Written by Himself* –, represents a gesture of an insistent desire to leave an imprint, to be found and represented in history. Therefore, Symonds's autobiographical effort can be contextualised as an act of "auto-archiving" (Marcus, 2005) and as a very important move of a queer subject towards self-representation and representation of a sexual otherness within the heteronormative context. If the self-representation of a queer subject is in no way freed from the disciplining effects of the dominant discourses and epistemologies of sex, Symonds's *Memoirs* reveal that the performative nature of the autobiographic self-writing provides several openings for 'queer' agency.

Symonds's acute concern to compose a "truthful autobiography" reflects an intriguing example of the intersecting effects of the two impulses to 'know oneself' and 'to speak out' (to write out). The following concerns are defining for the chapter's discussion: What relations of power does Symonds's autobiographic practice reveal? And what self-relation does the disclosure of his sex, and sexuality prompt? How does the specific 'knowledge' that becomes established in/through the practice of self-writing determine what experience can (and cannot) become part of the self's autobiographic retrospective? Thence, the chapter explores what possibilities of self-fashioning, on the one hand, and what limitations, on the other, are engendered by Symonds's drawing the (self-)knowledge from his knowledge of his 'sex.' The exploration of Symonds's practices of 'self-disclosure' and/or 'self-invention' allows us to explore the identity work Symonds does on himself in terms of a specific discursive practices, revealing the price the self has to pay for becoming recognisable as 'something.'

It is, however, not possible to limit Symonds's *Memoirs* to a virtual speech act of 'homosexual' confession, or a forerunner to modern coming-out narrative. *Memoirs* embody also a textual and a narrative attempt to reconcile Symonds's 'normal' masculinity with the 'abnormal' sexuality. They are, in this sense, also a textual performance of Symonds's masculinity. The study of the original manuscript of Symonds's autobiography makes it possible to trace the difficulties Symonds experiences when confronted with the constrictions of the epistemological definition of his self/sex, and to discuss them in relation to the prevailing concepts of bourgeois masculinity. In this sense, *Memoirs* also document the conflict and tension the disclosure of Symonds's sex enacts in regard to the narrative structures of (male) autobiography.

Eventually, the chapter addresses the ways in which the professedly (sexually) 'aberrant' subject turns the signs of his own 'perversion' into the means through which he is capable of

conjuring a new loving and desiring relationship to himself, as well as in to the means through which he forces the potential reader/audience into a new engagement with queerness.

‘MICHAEL FIELD’

Chapter V presents ‘Michael Field’, the pen-name and pen-figure of two women authors: Katherine Bradley (1849-1914) and Edith Cooper (1862-1913). They collaborated over thirty years as the poet ‘Michael Field’ and their collaboration amounts to twenty-five tragedies, a masque, and eight volumes of verse. Apart from that, there are unpublished manuscripts, personal letters, and thirty volumes of their jointly written journal titled *Works and Days*. The present thesis undertakes an analysis of these unpublished and so far neglected journals. The whole of Bradley and Cooper’s journal covers a long period between 1888 to 1914. My reading focuses on volumes spanning the years 1889 – 1896, while the major ambition of the chapter is to explore the different facets of the relationship between Bradley and Cooper as they are fashioned, and as they reflect in the journal and in the practice of its writing. The textual space of the journals represents a polysemous field upon which the intimate dialogue with each other takes place, where their relationship is both being articulated and represented. Thence, the thesis explores the following aspects: How does the journal reflect the women’s literary collaboration, as well as their cohabitation? (How) does it bear out each woman’s desire for one the other?

Furthermore, the journal-writing represents a self-writing practice through which the subject is being dynamically (re-)constituted. In the context of the diary-writing, the speaking *I* takes on the role of the subject as well as that of the object of its own speech. Lejeune argues, “[b]efore becoming a text, the private diary is a practice. The text itself is a mere by-product, a residue” (1999: 187). In this perspective, the diaries challenge the mimetic relationship between the self and the text, and provide strong textual material for exploring the performative (and processual) nature of the self-writing project. *Works and Days* embody a composite text/practice as more subjects become articulated within its textual space. The two different *Is* move and slip fluently between I/Katherine/‘Michael’ and I/Edith/‘Field’. Moreover, both of these *Is* are moulded and expressed through/in their mutual relation, or as the *We*. Further, the *We* of *Works and Days* is never an unproblematic instance of a shared, harmonious voice. Rather, it should be comprehended as an assemblage of various and possibly conflicting fictions about the *We*. The cautious deconstruction of the *We* is necessary in order to observe and explore how Bradley and Cooper construe their relationship with regard to constituting themselves as gendered (and sexual) subjects. The way Cooper and Bradley construe and reflect upon their subjectivities (the relationship of the *I* to *Myself*) is necessarily situated upon the interface of complex relations of *I – She – We*.

In this sense, *Works and Days* abounds in polysemy, producing a constant deferral of meaning. On the one hand, the journal provides both women with a space to articulate their erotic desire for each other. The journal-writing is a declaration of love. The practice of writing conveys desire, “[t]he text you write must prove to me that it desires me. This proof exists: it is writing” (Barthes, 1975 qtd. in Meese 1992: 84). However, it is the simultaneous (over-)emphasis Cooper and Bradley place on the unity of their voices that serves as a suggestive reference to a troublesome nature of their relationship. The unity of the *We* only accentuates the conspicuous ellipsis of a direct, explicitly dialogic, exchange between Cooper and Bradley. Though *Works and Days* comprise a multi-layered space of communication, the dialogic play never takes the form of a direct discourse between the *I* and the *You*. This ellipsis of a direct address does not constitute an empty space of utterance. There is not a simple binary between the said and the silenced. The ellipsis of the *I – You* exchange in the journal does not represent a space of no-utterance or

silence but, rather, a space of tension producing emission(s) of other utterances that are to fill in, cover, and compensate for the unarticulated. The accumulated tension of the equation of $1+1=1$ that Bradley and Cooper use to describe the tight unity of their relationship, necessarily refers back to what remains unarticulated. Thus, the journal-writing – as practice of the self – is also remarkably shaped by the troublesome nature of the cooperative and erotic relationship between two women. If the journal serves as a space for self-reflexive writing practice, we can also assume that the practice of journal-writing engages Cooper’s and Bradley’s confrontations with normative categories of gender and sex, and that it likewise presents their (changing) awareness of the fact that their experience is not culturally intelligible.

In contrast to the other texts analysed in the thesis, the two women that embody ‘Michael Field’ do not – to paraphrase Foucault’s words – step forward to confess what *t/be/y* are. Neither Edith Cooper’s nor Katherine Bradley’s self-reflections generate a notion of the self/identity that Butler describes through the equation of “sex – substance – self-identical being” (Butler 1999: 25). The two women are not (explicitly) concerned with constituting a homogenous and coherent (sexual) identity that would define what they are (not). On the face of this, the chapter discusses, among others, following questions: Does the fact that neither Cooper nor Bradley pose the question of her (their) (sexual) identity, or the fact that they do not explicitly relate themselves to their (‘other’) sexuality, imply that they were exempt from the technology of sex and the heteronormative matrix of intelligibility? What does the fact that the journals hardly ever refer to intimacy and relation of the two women in overt sexual terms suggest? Does this silence mean that Cooper and Bradley were not subjected to the regulatory regime that forced Symonds, and even the avowedly heterosexual Ellis, into confessions about their selves/sexuality? However, if we follow Sedgwick’s suggestion and do not consider silence as non-utterance, an empty space of signification, or a lack of meaning, but conversely as an utterance of its own kind (1990), silences of ‘Michael Field’, and their distribution, might reveal insights into the epistemic relations that emerge on the body of a woman’s shared sexual desire/journal writing.

MY (HER) LIFE

Chapter VI, *My (Her) Life*, effects a conversion and an extension of the thesis’s optics. Examining the dual auto/biographic scheme of Havelock Ellis’s (1859-1939) autobiography *My Life*, the argument shifts the attention away from ‘queers’ to the self-writing practices that underpin discursive constructions of (sexual) ‘normalcy’. To do so, the chapter juxtaposes two intersecting narrative lines of *My Life*: the autobiographic self-reflection of Havelock Ellis, the sexologist, and the biographic representation of his wife Edith, the reputed ‘lesbian’. Focusing upon the tension between the autobiographic and the biographic strategies of the narrative, the chapter makes a statement about the interdependent significations of ‘heterosexuality’ and its ‘homosexual’ other. In this sense, Ellis’s *My Life* corresponds to Rosi Braidotti’s assertion that the masculine self depends on subjection and/or appropriation of that which is construed as its inherent other, i.e. the feminine self. “[I]t’s on the woman’s body – on her absence, her silence, her disqualification,” Braidotti declares, “that phallogocentric discourse rests. This sort of ‘metaphysical cannibalism’ [...] positions the woman as the silent groundwork of male subjectivity – the condition of possibility of his story” (1994: 134).

Ellis’s autobiography is a text in which both a ‘woman’ as well as an ‘invert’ (‘lesbian’) are manoeuvred “as categor[ies] of meaning” (Martin, 1998:14) to produce the binary oppositions that underpin the heterosexual masculinity of Havelock Ellis. The establishment of these binaries, i.e. ‘man’/ ‘woman’ and ‘hetero’/‘homosexual’, is a matter of

epistemological endeavour that relies on the process of separation of the 'normal' from the 'abnormal' and asserting the 'naturalness' and primacy of the heterosexualised/heteronormative order.

Here, the concept of the process of other/ing as developed within the post-colonial critique serves as a helpful conceptual tool for understanding the dynamics of the autobiographic text that associates Ellis with the 'natural', 'normal' and superior pole of the binary. The 'Other' (or 'other') might be defined as follows, "[t]he ambivalence of colonial discourse lies in the fact that both [...] processes of 'othering,' [in which the subjects are] interpellated by the ideology of the maternal and nurturing function" and subjected to the enforced dominance of the colonial order/ symbolic order occur at the same time, "the colonial subject being both a 'child' of empire and a primitive and degraded subject of imperial discourse" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2000: 132-134). Correspondingly, Edith Ellis ('the invert') is being subjected both as a 'child' to her husband – both literally and symbolically –, is nurtured and taken care of and simultaneously made into the subject whose assumed (and constructed) 'otherness' i.e. symbolical inferiority constitutes the necessary background against which the dominance and superiority of Havelock Ellis (the heterosexual masculinity) is construed and asserted.

Further, the chapter investigates the dynamics of cognition upon which the knowledge/epistemology of sex is grounded. I argue that the dual auto/biographic focus of *My Life* affects the performative act of 'outing' of his 'inverted/lesbian' wife. In this respect, the chapter explores what Ellis's naming his wife *Edith* 'an invert' does to *his* self, *his* own gender performance, and the effects it has over the representation of *Edith* as well. Another concern with categories of meaning and of cognition that the discussion of Ellis's *My Life* follows, is the representation of the 'Lesbian' as an epistemic impossibility. Ellis's auto/biography manifests tensed inability to contain *Edith's* figure within the *difference of a woman* or within the *otherness of a 'lesbian'*; *Edith* remains "representationally vacant, epistemologically arousing placemaker" (Sedgwick, 1990: 95). The 'lesbian' is an impossible figure; the means of her characterisation and description necessarily remain scant and inconclusive. The *impossibility* of her figure manifests, the chapter argues, in the fact that the strategies *My Life* employs to represent *Edith* are at variance with each other. On the one hand, through the repetitive speech acts of disclosure, *Edith* is construed as an 'invert'; while 'invert' operates in the narrative as a category of meaning, and through its structural and symbolic deployment as the binary counterpart to 'heterosexual'. On the other hand, the characterisation has to remain as vague as not to incapacitate the representation of Ellis's heterosexual masculinity and as not to incapacitate *Edith's* containment within other narratives that are to underpin Ellis's masculine self-fashioning. Nonetheless, the ubiquitous tension that results from the obvious contradictions prevails to threaten the narrative with collapse.

Eventually, the chapter discusses Ellis's self-fashioning as a private man, as a husband and a partner to his wife. In light of the urgency with which Ellis attempts to countersign the implied assumption that his private life does not meet up the expectations, and in light of his need to explicate, justify and bring proofs that the marital bond was a successful one – whatever this might mean – it transpires that the motif of his marriage plays an important role within Ellis's gender performance. It is particularly interesting that Ellis attempts to reassert his questioned masculinity via the narrative of personal, intimate relations and self-fashioning in the role of husband. Ellis's portrayal of the marriage is discussed together with Butler's notion of heterosexuality as "an impossible imitation of itself" (Butler 1993a: 313). Of course, the denial outlawing other than heterosexual forms of desire, love and bonding that Butler includes in her concept of heterosexuality as inevitably a comedy is also highly relevant for the present discussion.

The thesis's interest in the subject's reflection over the process of his/her own constitution manifests in the exploration of the *how*, and also *at what price*, the gendered self-positionings, sexual identifications and/or desires are articulated. As to the former aspect, the view to the different subject positions, and different self-fashioning strategies of the subjects, the accessibility of different 'words'/discourses to individual subjects is brought to the fore of the discussion.

The juxtaposition of the varied textual material and of the varied utterances manifest that with regards to sex and sexuality, the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century represents a moment of dense discursivity. Composing his autobiography, John Addington Symonds, for instance, finds access to several differing discourses and discursive formations that allow him to express his desire for male lovers (IV.1.2). The parallel study of 'Michael Field' indicates, nonetheless, that these discursive possibilities are not accessible to women living in the same-sex erotic and emotional bonds (esp. V.2.2. and V.4). Further, Symonds's autobiographic practice, and most importantly his remarkable critical reflections over this practice (IV.2.3.), highlight also that different ways of formulating his desires and 'sexual proclivities' have differing potential to provide him with the answer to the question of 'Who am I?'. Havelock Ellis's self-writing strategy, based upon ventriloquism of his wife's sexual difference, accentuates the (gender-specific) epistemic inequality as much as it sets out – from another perspective than Symonds's self-writing practice does – the measure of epistemic violence involved in certain kinds of knowledge of the self (VI.2.1.).

Furthermore, the thesis argues that the 'words' and means through which the gender and/or sexual positionalities are articulated, are utterances of a performative nature which have a real and tangible effect upon the subjects, their relation to themselves and to the surrounding world. The analysis of the self-writing practices that are to produce a 'truthful' representation of the self demonstrate the subject's agency 'riven with paradoxes'. In some cases, the construction of identity is paid for by a submission to certain and, for that matter, constricting (self-)knowledge. The price paid for becoming the (type of) person Symonds becomes, encompasses, for instance, devaluating a whole range of experience and emotional bonds, as well as a severe conflict in his self-perceived gender identifications (IV.3.). However, Symonds's politics of developing practices of shame (IV.4.) draws out the "reparative" potential entailed in the subversive rearticulations of the suppressive structures (cf. Sedgwick, 1997). Similarly, the strategic distribution of silences that gives shape to *Works and Days*, exemplifies the contingent nature of the practices of the self. The silences, the deferrals of meaning, might be effects of specific regulations directed towards sexuality. And yet, the sexual interdictions cannot foreclose that the strategic silences and evasions of meaning become deployed for queer projects of desire and bondings (V.4. and V.5). *My Life* again brings in a different aspect, illustrating the different enactments of power relations installed by the statements of the 'truth' of oneself. The dual auto/biographic focus of the text reveals that producing the account of one's (sexual/gender) identity might involve not only subjecting oneself to the disciplining technology of sex but also enforcing this technology upon others. Hence, the agency in formulating the 'truth' about oneself might involve taking the agency away from others reduplicating the dominating structures.