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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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(disertační práce)

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Hereby I declare that the present thesis is a result of my own work. All sources and literature used are cited according to the standards.

Prague, 31 January 2007

Kateřina Kolářová

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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

The thesis examines the normative structures that shape and pre-determine the construction of the gender and sexual identities at the turn of the nineteenth century in the British context. The focus of the study is the critical investigation of the binary – heteronormative – logic that governs the formation of these identities. The concern with gender intelligibility (and the "matrix of 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.

Bringing together three diverse case studies – based upon the autobiographic texts of John Addington Symonds (1840-93), 'Michael Field' [Katherine Bradley (1849-1914) and Edith Cooper (1862-1913)], and Havelock Ellis (1859-1939) – the thesis explores the strategies of (gendered) self-fashioning from various perspectives. Importantly, the choice of the respective sources reflects the concern with some central issues that need to be taken into account when considering the modern constructions of sexual and gender identities. Firstly, the individual chapters reveal that the construction of the modern non-heterosexual identities has to be considered with close attention to differing discursive positions, social and other locations of the subjects. Secondly, these different subject positions will be discussed in relation to issues of epistemic privilege, as well as symbolic violence performed upon the so-called 'queers.' Thirdly, the sources present insights into different discursive constructs of gender/sexual identity, thus presenting a differentiated perspective into operations of power. Further, the thesis endeavours to provide an optics that would not minimize or even eliminate the ambivalences and contradictions manifested in the self-writing practice, or in the work of one' s identity. On the contrary, it has been my ambition to accentuate these moments and to discuss them in relation to the cultural construction of (gender and/or sexual) identity. Lastly, the study of the original manuscripts enhances the horizon of the thesis as it includes critical confrontation with the editorial practice and/or with the common line of interpretation of the respective source. In this way, the thesis hopes to provide space for considering issues of epistemology of sex and the relations perceived between sex/uality and subjectivity on a broader level of the cultural constructions of intelligibility.

Ústav anglistiky a amerikanistiky
Anglická a Americká literární studia

(Abstrakt disertační práce)

Kateřina Kolářová

Poznej sám sebe: napiš o sobě!

Konstruování sexuální a genderové identity na přelomu devatenáctého a dvacátého století

Disertace se zabývá procesem utváření sexuální a genderové identity na přelomu 19. a 20. století, přičemž její hlavní těžiště leží ve studiu sítě „technologií moci," které nutí subjekt k definování vlastní identity skrze jeden partikulární aspekt vlastní osobnosti – zde skrze touhu, sexualitu. Konstruování identity je tedy pojímáno ve vztahu k tzv. technologii sexu. Zároveň ovšem práce vychází z předpokladu, že účinky moci, které přiřazují subjekty k sexu, jsou genderově určené a rozlišené, a že navíc obdobné technologie moci přiřazují subjekty k normativním genderovým kategoriím. Formování sexuální identity nelze tedy sledovat bez vztahu k genderu a naopak.

Autobiografické texty jsou analyzovány jako text performativní povahy, v jejichž rámci se identita utváří a formuje. To znamená, že texty je možno nazírat jako produkt interakce subjektu s mocí. Na druhé straně ovšem „performativní" hledisko umožňuje sledovat neurčenost a flexibilitu formulování vlastní identity. V tomto smyslu se i normativní působení „technologie moci" jeví jako nikdy neuzavřené a nedefinitivní a poskytující prostor pro „subverzivní reartikulace".

Předkládaná disertační práce je z velké části založena na studiu a analýze rukopisných nepublikovaných materiálů, případně materiálů, které byly publikovány pouze částečně a v notně upravené podobě. Jedná se o autobiografii Johna Addingtona Symondse (1840-1893) *Memoirs*, deníky 'Michaela Fielda' [literární pseudonym Katherine Bradley (1849-1914) a Edith Cooper (1862-1913)] *Works and Days* a autobiografii Havelocka Ellise (1859-1939).

CONTENTS

I. Introduction

I.1. Know Yourself: Write Yourself!

Strategies of self-fashioning hold, Stephen Greenblatt argues, a great potential for exploring "change[s] in the intellectual, social, psychological, and aesthetic structures."[1] The autobiographic texts of John Addington Symonds (1840-93), 'Michael Field' [Katherine Bradley (1849-1914) and Edith Cooper (1862-1913)], and Havelock Ellis (1859-1939) analysed in the following thesis, bear out the shifts in these structures, inaugurated by the approaching modernity. In particular, the texts are indicative of changes brought about by transformations in concepts of gender, sex and sexuality.[2] The turn of the 19th and 20th century represents an important point in modern history when the construction, as well as the perception, of the self and identity became tightly linked to newly defined notions of sexual difference, gender and sexuality. In addition, the changes in concepts of gender and sexuality

[1] Greenblatt, Stephen. *The Renaissance Self-fashioning. From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

[2] For a more detailed discussion see chapter II.
Most importantly, the fulcrum of the modern constructions, as well as of critical debates, of gender is linked to the concept of sex/gender distinction, where 'sex' is understood in terms of the 'natural', biologically 'given', and bodily difference between the two sexes (re-)defined as 'male' and 'female'. If sex was/is understood as a matter of 'Nature', gender appears to constitute an element of 'Culture.' For a critical discussion of the gender/sex distinction see II.2.
As Thomas Laqueur shows, such concept of gender (and sex) was brought about by a radical paradigm shift due to which the pre-modern concept of a one-sex body became supplanted by the concept of two bodily differentiated sexes. Both concepts operate gendered distinction of 'male' vs. 'female'. However, if in the case of the former model, it was conceived in terms of quality and development of one body form and where the male body represented the ideal state of development and perfection, and the female body stood for its imperfect and inverted form, then the latter model poses the sex/gender distinction as a matter of essential difference. It construes two bodies, whose difference represents the purposeful and material imprint of the 'natural' need to reproduce. Cf. Laqueur, Thomas. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud.* Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1990; See also Laqueur, Thomas and Catherine Gallagher. eds. *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1987.
In a similar vein, Londa Schiebinger conceptualises the body as – to use Simone de Beauvoir's words – a "cultural situation." The assumed 'natural' and 'essential' body difference of the two genders is revealed as an effect of cultural and political discourses. In her convincing study of anatomical representations of female skeletons, Schiebinger manifests the political backlash against the first endeavours at political emancipation of women. Schiebinger argues that the attempts of the scientists at "finer delineation of sex differences; discovering, describing, and defining sex differences in every bone, muscle, nerve, and vein of the human body" should be seen as a part of the political/cultural attempts to "discover a physiological basis for female 'inequality'," thus striking back at the 18th century movements for women's equality (42). Schiebinger, Londa. "Skeletons in the Closet: The First Illustrations of the Female Skeleton in Eighteen-Century Anatomy." *Representations.* 14. 1. (1986): 42-82. For the discussion of the modern concepts of gender as based upon constructions of essential bodily difference see Fausto-Sterling, Anne. *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*. New York: Basic Books, 2000. Scott, Joan Wallach. "Millennial Fantasies: The Future of "Gender" in the 21st Century." *Gender: Die Tücken einer Kategorie. Joan W. Scott, Geschichte und Politik*; Beiträge zum Symposion anlässlich der Verleihung des Hans-Sigrist-Preises 1999 der Universität Bern an Joan W. Scott**.** Claudia Honegger and Claudia Arni eds. Zürich: Chronos, 2001.

need to be read against the backdrop of the gendered nature of discourses about modernity itself. Rita Felski demonstrates, for instance, that the self-consciousness of modernity was, to a great extent, based upon an anxiety concerning the 'feminisation' (read: decline, deterioration) of culture and civilisation. Similarly, Hannelore Bublitz points out that the discourses of 'feminisation of culture' were coupled with discourses of 'perversion.' Thus, besides the figure of the emancipated, independent and (sexually) predatory 'New woman', it is the figure of the abnormal, degenerate and perverted 'Sexual Invert' which appears to embody the major anxieties and threats to society around 1900.[3] Gender and sexuality operate as two interlinked discursive formations of so far unrecognised strength.[4] The ambition of the study focused on the strategies of self-fashioning, and of constructions of identity, is to disclose the ways in which the changed conceptions of gender and sexuality interact with the constructions of the self and subjectivity. What possible self-expressions, and identity constructions, do different selves find in the given cultural context? How do their various gender- and sexual identifications, or the identification as *queer*[5], interact (or interpose) with the fashioning of their identity?

When John Addington Symonds died in 1893, he left a parcel containing his autobiographic notes whose composition wholly preoccupied his mind during the last years of his life. 'Michael Field', the joint literary persona of Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper, produced alongside their numerous literary works at least a book of diary notes for each year of their shared life. Finally, Havelock Ellis reserved, as he claims, the most precious hours of Sunday mornings to work on his autobiography. The driving motivation to give an account of one's life testifies to some of the changes that affect the modern subjectivity. The aspect of this transformation, which I address in the thesis, is encapsulated by the fundamental question *"Who am I?"* Exploring the ways in which the three texts confront the – as if – universal existential query, and endow it with specific answers, provides an opportunity to observe

[3]Cf. Felski, Rita. *The Gender of Modernity*. London: Harvard University Press, 1995; Bublitz, Hannelore. ed. *Das Geschlecht der Moderne. Genealogie und Archäologie der Geschlechtedifferenz*. Frankfurt am Main/New York, 1998; Bublitz, Hannelore, Hanke Christine and Andrea Seier. eds. *Der Gesellschaftskörper. Zur Neuordnung von Kultur und Geschlecht um 1900.* Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2000; Showalter, Elaine. *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*. London: Virago, 1992.

[4] Cf. Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality. An Introduction*. Vol.1. New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1990. See also the chapter II.1.

[5] Prior to the powerful appropriation affected by the GLBTQ community, *queer* referred to something that 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.

gender and sexuality as contextually defined and situated discursive formations. Through this perspective, the self's identity develops specific significance that attests to mechanisms which constitute sex and gender as locations of power. The following case study illustrates the prominence of discourses of gender, sex and sexuality at this historical moment. In fact, it poses this triad as the fulcrum of the power mechanisms that form the modern subject.

I.1.1. Know Yourself![6]

On 22 February, 1912, having published a series of articles on the so-called Uranians,[7] *The Freewoman,* a progressive and pro-feminist magazine, printed a letter sent to the editorial board, signed by 'Scython'.[8] The letter opens as follows:

> I belong to the class [of Uranians] myself; although appearing superficially as a man, I am very much mixed physically, so much as that I know from experience […] a thing which no man knows. I suppose that, combining physical and psychical characteristics, I am about 80F+20M.

80F+20M*,* the somewhat mathematical code that 'Scython' gives to define h/er *sex,* exemplifies the limits of the discursive possibilities 'Scython' has in order to represent h/erself. These are narrowed to the combinations in which the F/emale – F/eminine and M/ale – M/asculine operate as the ultimate poles of contrast. The rest of the letter 'Scython' devotes to characterise h/erself as unambivalently 'feminine', a real 'woman.' As much as h/er discursive options to account for h/er embodied existence have been marked by the opposition of female/male, fashioning h/erself as a social being demands that s/he describes h/er personality along the lines of prescriptive femininity. Significantly enough, the notions of femininity 'Scython' refers to are those that relate to a gender-specific (and normative)

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[6] This imperative, Foucault argues, embodies the historical transformation in the approach to sex and sexuality. The imperative to 'know' one's sexuality and the 'will to knowledge' that derives special pleasure in the subject of sex, become, according to Foucault, the essential feature of the modern self. (See Chapter II.1.) Cf. Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality. The Use of Pleasure* Harmondsworth: Viking, 1985; Foucault, Michel. "Truth, Power, Self. An Interview with Michel Foucault." *Technologies of the Self.* Martin, Luther H., Gutman Huck and Patrick H. Hutton. eds. London: Tavistock, 1988.

[7] 'Uranian' is a nineteenth century term referring to a person assumed to be of a 'third sex,' someone with a 'female soul in a male body.' It appears, for instance, in Symonds's works on 'homosexuality' and belongs to a family of terms such as the 'intermediate,' 'third' sex and 'sexual invert.' Contextually, however, it gained currency as a denomination of a group of literary authors, especially of pederastic poetry, gathered around Oxford and Cambridge colleges between 1870s and 1930s. Cf. Smith, Timothy d'Arch. *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English 'Uranian' Poets from 1889 to 1930.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970.
Raile, Arthur Lyon, pseud. [Edward Perry Warren.] *A Defence of Uranian Love*. 3 vols. Privately printed: London, 1928-1930; Kaylor, Michael M. *Secreted Desires. The Major Uranians: Hopkins, Pater and Wilde*. Brno: Masaryk University Press, 2006.

[8] 'Scython.' "Uranians." *The Freewoman*, 22 February 1912: 291; The given name is obviously a pseudonym; it refers to an ancient myth of gender/sex ambiguous creature that figures in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

concept of female/feminine sexuality. S/he emphasises chastity, sexual purity and restraint in order to prove her being a 'true' woman.

> Needless to say the desire to mate with a woman has no meaning to me at all. But as to anything else, the mere idea of it no more occurs to me than it would to a convent-trained girl, and anything coarse or foul, in conversation or otherwise, revolts me beyond measure. Now it is useless to blink the facts. In all our instincts and feelings we [the Uranians] are women, in spite of our outward appearance. Why, because Providence has laid this cross on us, should we, one and all, be supposed to lack chastity, the one characteristic which, speaking generally, so sharply divides women from men? Women, as a sex, are chaste; men are not, though of course, there are, as all know, numberless exceptions.

Nonetheless, the concluding passage of 'Scython's letter illustrates the predicaments of h/er situation; all the self-fashioning troubles s/he takes notwithstanding, the recognition as a *woman* remains impossible for her. Concluding:

> Speaking for myself, […] I reserve my womanliness for a few friends who know me as I am, […] [T]o the rest of the world I am a reserved, passionless man, with whom it is absolutely useless for a woman to try to flirt, with little to nothing to suggest the true self concealed under the outer envelope.[9]

The (discursive) difficulties 'Scython' faces in defining h/er case are obvious. H/er becoming an 'intelligible' being, and becoming recognised (and recognisable) as a 'woman' (her wished-for gender identification), seems to be hindered by the incongruence between h/er sex (her bodily existence), h/er self-perception of h/er sex (80F+20M), her gender self-perception (feminine), and the gender/sex attributes "the rest of the world" attaches to h/er. Furthermore, not only that s/he cannot be recognised as a 'woman', due to the conflict between h/er sex and gender (as well as between h/er self-perception and the perception of others), s/he likewise fails in the gender identification (masculine/man) assigned to h/er. With dramatic clarity, hence, 'Scython's letter demonstrates that in its modern variation, the query "Who am I?" cannot be divorced from considerations of gender, sex and sexuality. Furthermore, the troubles with the limits of what is possible to express and to imagine testify the extent to which the (seemingly) obvious and commonsensical binary 'man'/'woman' imbricates with constructions of bodily difference ('femaleness'/'maleness'), 'femininity'/'masculinity', as well as social sanctions attached to sexuality and desire. In this sense, 'Scython's letter

[9] 'Scython,' "Uranians," 291.

symptomatically epitomises the historical event in which the specific "matrix of intelligibility"[10] gains power over shaping a self's (gender) identity.

I.1.2. Write Yourself! The Autobiographic Practice

"One admits to oneself, in pleasure and in pain, things it would be impossible to tell anyone else."[11]

The thesis explores autobiographic texts, however it is not concerned with autobiography as a genre. Likewise, it is not concerned with the 'Author' as the writing instance that precedes and fully controls the text, "nourishes it, suffers for it and loves it."[12] In his critique of the prevailingly mimetic approaches towards autobiography, Paul de Man disputes the notion of a simple and reliable "mode of referentiality" established between the text and a single subject, its supposed "author."[13] The preconception of the "uncontested readability of [the author's] proper name"[14] needs to be problematised, de Man argues, in order to perceive the most fascinating quality of the autobiographic writing: demonstration of "the impossibility of closure and of totalization (that is the impossibility of coming into being) of all textual systems."[15] Accordingly, the 'autobiographic' character of the text can hardly consist in providing a reliable knowledge about its author or – in case of the auto-communicative texts – reliable self-knowledge.[16] Rather, the autobiographic texts need to be regarded as outcomes of signifying processes that first bring the supposed authorial presence into meaning/being. The authorial subject is as much shaped by the autobiographic text as the text is shaped by him/her.

There are different ways of composing or writing a text about oneself. Thence, Foucault argues, such texts provide the most valuable insight into the forms of subjectivity.[17] Writing a

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[10] Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge, 1990. For a more detailed discussion of the term see chapter II.3.1.
[11] Foucault, *History,* 59.
[12] Grosz, Elizabeth. *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies*. New York; London: Routledge, 1995. Quote on page 13.
[13] de Man, Paul. "Autobiography as De-facement." *MLN. Comparative Literature.* 94.5. (1979): 919-930. Quote on page 920.
[14] de Man, "Autobiography as De-facement," 920.
[15] de Man, "Autobiography as De-facement," 922.
[16] Cf. de Man, "Autobiography as De-facement," 921.
[17] Cf. Foucault. Michel. "Self Writing."*Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984*. vol. 1, Rabinow Paul. ed. London: Allen Lane, 1997. 206-214; Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality. The Use of Pleasure.* Vol.2. Harmondsworth: Viking, 1985.

text about oneself, in fact, represents a self-writing practice through which the self fashions the relationship to him/herself. Approaching the autobiographic texts through this concept, the critical investigation shifts away from issues of genre and generic study. In contrast, it examines the regularities that appear to constitute the 'subjective' relationship of the self to him/herself and his/her subjectivity. Furthermore, disputing the mimetic relationship between the writing subject and the autobiographic text, de Man's argument also contests the position of the writing subject as the ultimate source of the (autobiographic) text's 'meaning.' Doubts about the figures of cognition that autobiography operates, provide an inspirative cue for deconstructing the belief that the 'truth' of the subject, of his/her identity is to be found in the subject him/herself. If the agenda of the question "Who am I?" implies as much, we need to analyse it as one of the defining features not only of the autobiographic discourse, but also of the modern subjectivity.

Consider now the sincerity, the earnestness and the compulsion to speak out (write out) that mark the following quote.

> *I have to speak of things* that, for a number of people will be nothing but incredible nonsense because, in fact, they go beyond the limits of what is possible.[18]

This passage from an autobiographic text that identifies Alexina/Herculine Barbine as the "nineteenth-century French hermaphrodite," highlights two moments that the thesis explores. First, the compulsion with which Barbine writes, and the inferred promise of truthfulness of her/his speech, elucidate the measure of the subject's investment in the text. Speaking of things, as his/her text exemplifies, becomes a matter of becoming recognisable as a human being, as a subject. To become a subject seems to be inextricably linked with the imperative both to know oneself, and to speak/write about the obtained knowledge of the self.

Second, the pressing question "Who am I?", to which Alexina/Herculine's autobiographic text dutifully responds, amounts to the imperative to speak about things that 'go beyond the limits of what is possible.' Barbine's words highlight that the attempts to obtain the knowledge of

[18] Foucault, Michel. ed. *Herculine Barbine: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-century French Hermaphrodite*. New York: Patheon Books, 1980. Quote on page 15; emphasis added.

oneself rely upon grasping the undisclosed, hidden or even "the unthought"[19] and the incredible. In particular, the case studies discussed in the thesis reveal that the will to (self-)knowledge that structures the autobiographic practice, is shaped by an eagerness to seek the truth about the subject in one specific "fragment of ourselves,"[20] i.e. sexuality.

Thus, if the imperative to speak about oneself might be seen as a reflection of the need to forge an identity for oneself, it also demonstrates the importance of exploring the autobiographic speech with an acute regard to relations of power. The compulsion to 'write yourself' highlights that the practice of speaking/writing about oneself needs to be examined for specific structures that attest to interaction between the individual and power. As Foucault argues, it is through the effects of power that individuals become transformed into subjects and into beings with recognisable identity. He notes that "power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorises the individual, marks *him* by *his* own individuality, attaches *him* to *his* own identity, imposes a law of truth on *him* which *he* must recognize and which others have to recognise in *him*."[21] And 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."[22]

However, further statement of Alexina/Herculine Barbine highlights that the autobiographic practice also confers particular succour to the writing subject; it suggests that the autobiographical discourse might represent a discourse of "self-restoration."[23] Barbine notes, "in the midst of the storms and errors of my life, these memoirs appeared to me like so many heavenly visions, whose sight was a healing balm for me."[24] Regarding the self-writing practice as a processual labour on oneself, we also need to render the autobiographic writing as a practice through which the subject transforms her/his relation to the world and, most importantly, the relationship to her/himself. Obliterating 'meaning' with 'doing' with 'being',

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[19] Tavor, Bannet, Eve. *Structuralism and the Logic of Dissent. Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, Lacan*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988. See pages 163-168. Quote on page 163.
[20] Tavor, *Structuralism and the Logic of Dissent,* Quote on page 163.
[21] Foucault, Michel. "The Subject and the Power." *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Dreyfus, Hubert and Paul Rabinow. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1983. 208-229. Quote on page 214. Emphasis added to mark the (falsely) generic pronoun.
[22] Sawicki, Jana. "Feminism, Foucault and 'Subjects' of Power and Freedom." *Feminist Interpretations of Michel Foucault.* ed. Hekman, Susan, J. University Park: Pennsylvania SUP, 1996. 159-179. Quote on page 162.
[23] de Man, "Autobiography as De-facement," 925.

the concept of self-writing values the potential of the autobiographic projects to engender changes in the subject. For instance, bringing the time levels to overlap, the autobiographic practice positions the subjects on their interstice and thus enables him/her to transform the relation between her/himself and her/his other (past, future) subject positions. The transformation which the writing subjects perform upon themselves resides in the interval created through the circular relations between 'the past', 'the present' and 'the future.'[25] The practice of self-writing is not only located in time, it is itself a temporal process made up from single utterances.Thus, the intertextual relations that the autobiographic texts create by incorporating excerpts from older diaries, (love) letters, notebooks etc. are suggestive of inter-subjective relations the subjects engage with in his/her other subject positions situated in different temporal locations. The temporal aspect, as Butler suggests, is one of the important facets of the tension between normativity and possible subversions.[26]

I.2. Related Research

The concern with constructions of gender and/or sexual identities situates the thesis within a broader context of feminist, gender and queer studies. The thesis takes its prime impetus from Michel Foucault's critical projects that dramatically changed studies of sexuality, directing focus to examinations of power and knowledge mechanisms. The contemporary discourses stubbornly repeat the question: "How one becomes a homosexual?" Likewise, they persistently incite answers that locate 'homosexuality' into the sphere of genetics and biology. As Volker Woltersdorff argues, both the question, as well as the answers that such discursive framework constructs, are inherently linked to the phobic rejection of 'homosexuality.' As if to know how one becomes a 'homosexual' invokes the hope it would be preventable to become one. In contrast to these discursive formations, Woltersdorff raises the question of

[24] Foucault, *Herculine Barbine,* 4.
[25] Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex.'* London, New York: Routledge, 1993.
[26] Cf. Butler, *Bodies.*

"How one is made a homosexual."[27] The thesis focuses upon highlighting the variety of ways of 'becoming' a sexual identity as they evolved in the concrete historical context. Examining the different enactments of taxonomic and normative classifications of sexuality, the thesis leans against multiple studies of that posit these as constructs bearing imprints of the political, cultural and temporal contexts.[28] Therefore, the thesis's argument is fostered upon works that study the performative nature of the epistemological categories applied to sexuality. For instance, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *The Epistemology of the Closet*[29] coins the exploration of the binary logic dividing 'homo-' and 'heterosexuality' as the figure underwriting the epistemic condition of modern signification. Sedgwick argues: "I think that a whole cluster of the most crucial sites for the contestation of meaning in the 20th century Western culture are consequentially and quite indelibly marked with the historical specificity of homosocial/homosexual definitions."[30] Moreover, Ed Cohen claims that the emergence of the 'homosexual' would virtually be incomprehensible without the construction of its twin, 'the heterosexual.' This statement underwrites, once again, the notion that the period of the late nineteenth century represents a transition-period with regards to the construction of sexual and gender identity.[31]

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[27] Woltersdorff opens his book by stating, "[e]igentlich möchte ich mit diesem Buch der altbekannten Frage: 'Wie wird man schwul?' eine andere Wendung verleihen. Üblicherweise wird sie mit dem Hintergedanken gestellt, welche die Ursachen sind und wie es sich mit diesem Wissen verhindern lässt, schwul zu werden. Demgegenüber möchte ich sie in einen anderen Sinne auslegen: 'Wie werden Schwule gemacht?' und: 'Wie machen sich Schwule?'" Volker, Woltersdorff. *Coming Out. Die Inszenierung schwuler Identitäten zwischen Auflehnung und Anpassung*. Campus: Frankfurt am Main, 2005. Quote on page 9.

[28] E.g. Cohen, Ed. *The Talk on the Wilde Side. Towards a Genealogy of a Discourse on Male Sexualities*. New York, London: Routledge, 1993; Duberman, Martin Bauml, Vicinus Martha and George Chauncey Jr. eds. *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*. New York: New American Library, 1989; Greenberg, David F. *The Construction of Homosexuality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988; Halperin, David M. *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality And Other Essays on Greek Love*. London: Routledge, 1990; Herdt, Gilbert. *Third Sex, Third Gender. Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History.* New York: Cambridge, Mass.; London: Zone, 1994; Katz, Jonathan. *The Invention of Heterosexuality*. New York; London: Dutton; Penguin, 1995; Rupp, Leila, J. *A Desired Past: Short History of Same-sex Love in America*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999; Weeks, Jeffrey. *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*. London: Quartet Books, 1977; Weeks, Jeffrey. *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800.* London: Longman, 1981.

[29] Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve *Epistemology of the Closet.* London: Penguin, 1990; See also Jagose, Annemarie. *Queer Theory*. Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 1996; Fuss, Dianne. ed. *Inside/Out. Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*. London: Routledge, 1991.

[30] Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet,* 72.

[31] Cohen, *Talk on the Wilde Side*, 7.

Numerous (historical) studies of fe/male same-sex bonding and 'gay'/'lesbian' subcultures,[32] and (literary) studies that explore the various ways in which the 'illicit' desire comes to expression,[33] have been very useful for the development of the arguments of individual chapters. However, in contrast to studies that focus upon the ways in which the suppressed, hidden and/or silenced sexual identity becomes realised and articulated, the focus of this thesis lies elsewhere. Identity is not taken for granted; rather it is conceived as a contested terrain upon which various configurations, epistemic categories and modalities of 'intelligibility' come to clash and (productive) conflict.

Bringing together three diverse case studies, the thesis addresses the strategies of (gendered) self-fashioning from various perspectives. Importantly, the choice of the respective sources reflects the concern with some central issues that need to be taken into account when considering the modern constructions of sexual and gender identities. Firstly, the individual chapters reveal that the construction of the modern non-heterosexual identities has to be considered with close attention to differing discursive positions, and to social and other locations of the subjects. Secondly, the different subject positions need to be discussed in

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[32] For explorations of male homosociality and/or same-sex bondings see: Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. *Between Men. English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985; Further, see for instance, Cocks, H.G. *Nameless Offences: Homosexual Desire in the Nineteenth Century* London: I. B. Tauris, 2003; Craft, Christopher. *Another Kind of Love: Male Homosexual Desire in English Discourse, 1850-1920*. Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 1994; Dellamora, Richard. *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Caroline Press, 1990; Dellamora, Richard. ed. *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1999; Katz, Jonathan. *Love Stories: Sex Between Men Before Homosexuality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001; Losey, Jay and William Brewer. eds. *Mapping Male Sexuality. Nineteenth Century in England*. London: London Associated UP, 2000.
For structures of man to man relations in different class settings see: Houlbrook, Matt. *'A Sun among Cities': Space, Identities and Queer Male Practices, London 1918-57*. University of Essex: Doctoral Thesis, 2002.
For studies on female same-sex relationships see: Castle, Terry. *The Apparitional Lesbian. Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993; Doan, Laura. *Fashioning Sapphism: The Origins of a Modern English Lesbian Culture*. New York: Columbia UP, 2001; Faderman, Lillian. *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present*. New York: William Morrow, 1981; Newton, Ester. "The Mythic Mannish Lesbian: Radclyffe Hall and the New Woman." *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past.* Vicinus, Martha, Duberman, Martin and Chauncey, George eds. London: Penguin Books, 1991. 281-293; Vicinus, Martha. *Independent Women. Work and Community for Single Women 1850 – 1920*. London: Virago, 1985; Vicinus, Martha. *Intimate Friends. Women who Loved Women. 1778-1928*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. See also: *Inventing Ourselves. Lesbian Life Stories*. Hall Carpenter Archives Lesbian Oral History Group. London: Routledge, 1989; *Not a Passing Phase: Reclaiming Lesbians in History 1840-1985*. Lesbian History Group. Women's Press, 1989.

[33] Bravmann, Scott. *Queer Fictions of the Past. History, Culture and Difference*. Cambridge University Press, 1997; Bristow, Joseph. *Effeminate England: Homoerotic Writing after 1885*. London: Open University Press, 1995; Bristow, Joseph ed. *Sexual Sameness: Textual Differences in Lesbian and Gay Writing*. London: Routledge, 1992; Bristow, Joseph. ed. *Wilde Writings: Contextual Conditions*. Toronto. Toronto University Press, 2003; Buckton, Oliver. *Secret Selves. Confession and Same-sex Desire in Victorian Autobiography*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1998 Dowling, Linda. *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford*. Ithaca, N.Y., London: Cornell University Press, 1994.

relation to issues of epistemic privilege, as well as symbolic violence performed upon the queers. Thirdly, the sources present insights into different discursive constructs of gender/sexual identity, thus presenting a differentiated perspective into operations of power. Further, the thesis endeavours to provide an optics that would not minimize or even eliminate the ambivalences and contradictions manifested in the self-writing practice, or in the work of one' s identity. On the contrary, it has been my ambition to accentuate these moments and to discuss them in relation to the cultural construction of (gender and/or sexual) identity. Lastly, the study of the original manuscripts enhances the horizon of the thesis as it includes critical confrontation with the editorial practice and/or with the common line of interpretation of the respective source. In this way, the thesis hopes to provide space for considering issues of epistemology of sex and the relations perceived between sex/uality and subjectivity on a broader level of the cultural constructions of intelligibility.

I. 3. Trajectory of the Argument; Synergy Effects

Constructions of Heteronormativity and its Discursive Conditions (II) – introduces key concepts, specifies thesis's methodological background, and sets the individual chapters into broader conceptual frameworks. Firstly, it presents the study of sexuality in its relevance to the study of social and power mechanisms that inform the ways in which the modern self is construed/constructed (II.1.) Secondly, gender and sex/uality are discussed as categories of analysis (II.2.). Thirdly, the section *Performative Conditions of Heteronormativity* (II.3.) discusses the ways in which sexuality and gender are deployed to produce specific normative structure which again, in reverse effect, regulates gender (and sexual) identification of an individual. The concept of this normative framework is then juxtaposed with the discussion of specific technologies and mechanics through which power interacts with its subjects. Further, Butler's concept of gender as a performative act and Foucault's model of practices of the self are brought together to emphasise the 'performative' aspects of the relationship that binds the self and power (normative structures). Likewise, both concepts are valued for the possibilities to theorise moments of subversive resistance to these power structures. Chapter III – *Set of*

Questions – summarises, as the title indicates, the key questions and concerns that inform the focus and the objective of the thesis.

Inspired by the Foucaultian concept of the power/knowledge conglomerate, chapter IV, *Technologies and Epistemologies of the ('Aberrant') Self,* explores the workings of the epistemology of sex. Focusing on the original manuscript of Symonds's autobiography – *Memoirs of John Addington Symonds Written by Himself –,* the chapter analyses the discursive structures of Symonds's subjectivity. Also it investigates the possibilities, as well as limits, the (self-)knowledge based upon knowledge of one's 'sex' engenders for self-expression, and for self-relation. The identity position(s) that Symonds takes to occupy in the text are explored with the view to practices of 'self-disclosure' and/or 'self-invention.' This 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.' This chapter raises, among others, the following questions: 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? 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. 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.

Chapter V presents 'Michael Field', the pen-name and pen-figure of Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper. Like the previous, this chapter is also based upon the study of manuscripts: the private notebook of the two women titled *Works and Days*. 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. How does it reflect the women's literary collaboration, as well as their cohabitation? (How) does it bear out each woman's desire for one the other? Simultaneously, this chapter focuses on the self-

writing strategies that Bradley and Cooper devise as they are confronted with their gender (and/or sexual) queerness and 'unintelligibility.' In a critical dialogue with the scholarship that situates the 'lesbian desire' into larger context of women's communality, and that of "lesbian continuum,"[34] the present study of 'Michael Field' attempts to outline the ways in which (the preconceptions of) femininity enabled, or contrarily constricted, bonding between women.

Chapters IV and V provoke significant points of reference. First, the confrontation of the two culturally simultaneous sources highlights the degree to which sexuality intersects with normative definitions of gender. If, on the one hand, both studies bring evidence to the shaping force of the heteronormative matrix, they simultaneously document the different possibilities Symonds, as opposed to Cooper and Bradley, has to negotiate and interact with this matrix. Second, the ambition behind the comparison of Symonds's with Cooper and Bradley is to document that concepts of 'homosexuality' ('sexual inversion'), or of sexual difference, enact different and gender-specific positionalities, different self-fashioning strategies, and further to examine what these different possibilities are.

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 *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. Specifically, it explores the ways in which the self-fashioning of the heterosexual man relies upon strategies of othering and representation of the 'lesbian'. In

[34] Cf. works of Martha Vicinus, and Lillian Faderman. The term "lesbian continuum" was coined in an influential essay by Adrienne Rich. Rich introduced the term – along with "lesbian existence" – as an alternative to the pathologising and stigmatising term of "lesbianism." "Lesbian continuum", in particular, challenges the notion of 'natural heterosexuality,' and debunks it as repressive institution imposed upon women to hinder any supportive contacts between them that could potentially subvert the male dominance of patriarchal structures. "Lesbian continuum" arguably encompasses the entire range of a woman-identified experience. Hence, it includes contacts and relationships between women that are not necessarily defined as sexual and/or erotic. In this way, Rich formulates "lesbian continuum" as an umbrella term for women's 'own' culture. Cf. Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." *Blood, Bread, and Poetry.* Norton Paperback: New York, 1994.

analogy to the two other chapters, chapter VI also poses questions related to the epistemology of sex, and explores the knowledge of sex incited by discourses of heterosexuality. It further explores how the epistemology of sex underpins positions of epistemic privilege. In this way, chapter VI challenges the common-place, taken-for-granted, and ideal(ised) position of 'heterosexuality' which posits itself as virtually 'invisible'[35] debunking it as inherently dependent upon a multilayered scheme of dominance.

Concluding, the material examined in the thesis provides two important insights into the ways in which the 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 (and the "matrix of 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.

[35] Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. *Tendencies*. Durham: Duke UP, 1993. See pages 10-11.

II. Constructions of Heteronormativity and its Discursive Conditions

II. 1. The Technology of Sex and its Heterosexual Morphology

> From childhood I have been unusually introspective. I began to keep a diary at the age of fourteen, and have continued it up to past the age of forty almost without intermission. Even my earliest diaries dealt with the phenomena of my sexual life, so that in general I have had to keep them under lock and key.
> The third physician from whom I sought a cure for my sexual abnormality have me to understand […] that my case was a remarkable one. This pronouncement incited in me still further to keep a record of what life brought me with a view to writing an autobiography some day.[1]

The opening paragraph from *An Autobiography of an Androgyne* demonstrates how in the practice of self-writing the observing subject merges with the observed one. The text also exemplifies the import the act of revealing "the phenomena of sexual life" has for writing (reading) about oneself. It is the concern for one's sexual life and/or one's 'sexual abnormality' that motivates the introspection, to which the writing figure subjects oneself, as well as the attempt to comprehend and to construe a relationship to oneself.

The intentness with which modern society explores sexuality and the sexual lives of its individuals is no doubt striking. In *History of Sexuality,*[2] Michel Foucault notes,

> Perhaps one day people will wonder at this. They will not be able to understand how a civilization so intent on developing enormous instruments of production and destruction found the time and the infinite patience to inquire so anxiously concerning the actual state of sex; people will smile perhaps when they recall that here were men – meaning ourselves – who believed that therein resided a truth every bit as precious as the one they had already demanded from the earth, the stars, and the pure forms of their thought.[3]

Foucault's theoretical concept of sexuality challenges the modernist views that deem sex the "natural libido yearning to break free of social constraint."[4] Consequently, *History of Sexuality* divorces from the notion that it is necessary to free sex and recuperate it from the oppressive silence and pretentious morality.[5] According to Foucault, sex and the (modern) forms of

[1] Earl, Lind. *Autobiography of an Androgyne.* Amsterdam: Fredonia Books, 2005 (1st ed. 1918). Quote on page 1.
[2] Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality. An Introduction*. Vol. I. New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1990. In the original, as well as in other translations, appeared with the subtitle "Will to Knowledge."
[3] Foucault, History, 157-8.
[4] Rubin, Gayle. "Thinking Sex. Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality." *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader.* Abelove, Henry, Barale, Michèle Aina and David Halperin. eds. New York, London: Routledge, 1993. 3-45. Quote on page 10.
[5] For discussion of the modernist sexology see e.g.: Robinson, Paul. *The Modernization of Sex*. London: Elek, 1976.

sexuality must be explored against the historical and temporal context. Human sexuality cannot be comprehended in purely biological terms no more than "the belly's hunger gives no clues as to the complexities of cuisine."[6] Concepts that essentialize sexuality as a performance of biological, instinctive and – by definition – pre-cultural drives, cannot explain the role of the structuring, organizing and disciplining apparatuses in construction of human sexuality. Therefore, as Foucault argues, sex needs to be given history.

> [Sexuality] is the name that can be given to a historical construct; not a furtive reality that is difficult to grasp, but 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.[7]

Simultaneously, in the context of modern western culture, sexuality represents "the most meaning-intensive of human activities,"[8] and raises most acutely questions of power.[9] Wary of the modernist sex-liberation project, Foucault makes a powerful move to analysis which examines the intersections of sexuality (understood as a power imbued and context dependent construct), the self/(subject), and modern subjectivity. "In the space of few centuries, certain inclination has led us to direct the question of what we are, to sex."[10] In effect of which, sex has been transformed into "the unique signifier and the universal signified," […] an imaginary point […] that each individual has to pass in order to have access to *his* own intelligibility."[11] In order to comprehend what power relations mould the modern subject, and in fact to understand what we are in our modern subjectivities, the following questions are to be raised:

Arguing that healthy sexual relations precondition healthy existence, Havelock Ellis's series *Studies in Psychology of Sex* represents this modernist concern with sex and sexuality. Also, Edward Carpenter in *Love's coming of Age* and John A. Symonds in *The Problem in Modern Ethics* argue to the same effect. Therefore, it is not the "chronicle of […] increasing repression" (Foucault, *History* 293), that marks the modern approach to sex and sexuality, but rather institutionalised "incitement to discourse" on sex. Rather than attempting to *silence* sex, this restrictive economy bound sex to speak and to reveal its details. "[T]he agencies of power [were determined] to hear [sex] spoken about, and to cause it to speak through explicit articulation and endlessly accumulated detail" (Foucault*, History* 302). Hence, Foucault argues that the careful confinement of sexuality into homes, and the "monotonous nights of the Victorian bourgeoisie" (*History* 292) have to be seen in simultaneity with an previously unknown variety and multiplicity of 'sex'. "The nineteenth century and our own have been, rather the age of multiplication: a dispersion of sexualities, a strengthening of their disparate forms, a multiple implantation of "perversions". Our epoch had initiated sexual heterogeneities" (*History* 316).
Carpenter, Edward. *Love's Coming-of-Age*. A Series of Papers on the Relations of the Sexes. Labour Press: Manchester, 1896; Symonds, John Addington. *A Problem in Modern Ethics*. Being an enquiry into the phenomenon of sexual inversion, addressed especially to medical psychologists and jurists. London, 1896.

[6] Rubin, "Thinking sex," 10.

[7] Foucault, *History,* 105-6.

[8] Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. *Tendencies*. Durham: Duke UP, 1993. Quote on page 23.

[9] Foucault states, "[s]exuality is not, in relation to power, an exterior domain to which power is applied, […] on the contrary it is a result and an instrument of power's designs" (*History* 152).

[10] Foucault, *History,* 78.

[11] Foucault, *History* , 154-155. The emphasis is added to mark the (falsely) generic masculine pronoun.

"What is this injunction? Why this great chase after the truth of sex, the truth in sex?"[12] What power transforms us, the human beings, into "confessing animals"[13] that cannot restrain the incessant flow of speech about sex?[14] What makes human beings into self- and sex-inspecting "homo narrans"[15]? And most importantly, in what ways does this power transform us? Into what kind of subjects does this power mould us? What relations and what practices of self-relation does it engender?[16] The methodology of the study of sexuality that Foucault proposes leans against a dual basis. The history-conscious, "archaeological" involvement with the concrete and contextually defined forms of sexuality is combined with the "genealogical" concern that studies how the imbrications of sexuality, power and knowledge/'truth' shape the modern subject. The study of the epistemic enquiries into sexual matters engages – Foucault argues – one of the most significant modes of objectification through which human beings are made into subjects.[17] Therefore, the study of sexuality has the ambition to equal the study of modern subjectivity itself, and, as E.L. McCallum phrases it, to embrace "the political history of the production of 'truth.'"[18]

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[12] Foucault, *History,* 79.
To illustrate his point, Foucault retells Diderot's humorous tale of "the good genie Cucufa," who discovers at the bottom of his pockets tiny silver ring. Its stone makes the sexes of people speak. In the tale, the ring ends on the finger of a sultan who – as we may imagine – amuses himself and/or threatens his dependents by allowing their sexes speak their secrets. "Our problem is to know," states Foucault, "what marvellous ring confers a similar power on us, and on which master's finger it has been placed; what game of power it makes possible or presupposes, and how it is that each one of us has become a sort of attentive and imprudent sultan with respect to his own sex and that of others" (79).

[13] Foucault, *History,* 59.

[14] "The confession has spread its effects far and wide. It plays a part in justice, medicine, education, family relationships and love relationship, in the most ordinary affairs of the everyday life, and in the most solemn rites; one confesses one's crimes, one's sins, one's thoughts and desires, one's illnesses and troubles…" (Foucault, *History* 59).

[15] Plummer, Ken. *Telling Sexual Stories. Power, Change and Social Worlds*. London and New York. Routledge, 1995. Quote on page 5.

[16] Cf. Foucault, Michel. "The Subject and the Power." (Afterword) *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Dreyfus**,** Hubert and Paul Rabinow. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1983. 208-229; Foucault, Michel. "Truth, Power, Self. An Interview with Michel Foucault." *Technologies of the Self.* Martin, Luther H., Gutman Huck and Patrick H. Hutton. eds. London: Tavistock, 1988; Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality. The Use of Pleasure.* Harmondsworth: Viking, 1985.

[17] Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 208.

[18] McCallum, L.E. "Technologies of Truth and the Function of Gender in Foucault." *Feminist Interpretations of Michel Foucault.* Hekman, S.J. ed. University Park: Pennsylvania SUP, 1996. Quote on page 85.
Foucault himself claims that his objective in studying sex was to "follow a [fine] thread: the one which has linked in our societies for so many centuries sex and the search for truth."
Foucault, Michel. "The End of the Monarchy of Sex." *Foucault Live: Interviews, 1966-84.* New York: Semiotexte, 1989. Qtd. in McCallum, "Technologies of Truth," 85.
On the imbrications of power, truth and the subject see "The Subject and Power" and his essays in *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth.* However, some critics argue that Foucault overvalues the power discourses have over the individual's life, over intimate relations and his/her subjectivity. Likewise, it has been argued that Foucault overestimates the power of the medical and forensic discourses in shaping notions about sexuality and sex outside the well-educated and well-to-do population. Arguably, the knowledge of these discourses was accessible only to limited numbers and privileged classes. Cf. For instance Hunt, Lynn. "Foucault's Subject in History of Sexuality." *Discourses of Sexuality: From Aristotle to AIDS.* Stanton, Domna C. ed. Chicago: University of Michigan Press, 1992; Giddens, Anthony. *The Transformation of Intimacy. Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992.

Thus, as a result of the discursive effect that Gayle Rubin dubs "the fallacy of misplaced scale,"[19] sex and its truth "bec[ome] something fundamental."[20] As discourses of medicine, *scientia sexualis*, and political theories of population establish sex as the fulcrum and the organising principle of all other discourses, sexuality becomes the major power of the social organisation.

> Sex is the alleged object which unifies our modern discussions of sexuality, making it possible to group together anatomical elements, biological functions, comportments, sensations, knowledges, and pleasures. *Without this deep, hidden, and significant 'something' all of these discourses would fly off in different directions.*[21]

So far, *sex* and *sexuality* have not been approached as distinct – if interconnected – concepts. Foucault's own term "sex/uality" graphically highlights the complexity of their interrelation[22]. Nonetheless, the following questions need to be raised. If sex is the ultimate truth of the subject, what is this sex? And how does it relate to sexuality? What is the organizing logic that pre-shapes these concepts? And finally, why is it that "sexual acts are burdened with an excess of significance?"[23] The 'common sense' logic that informs the modern understanding of sex and sexuality, posits sex to precede sexuality, figuring sex as its point of origin. Supposedly, it is *sex* that defines us as 'female'/'male', and 'woman'/'man' respectively.[24] 'Naturally', it thus seems, sex (pre-)determines the forms our desire takes and the sexual practices in which we find pleasure. In this way, sex functions as the figurative of truth to our personality, and/or sexual identity. It signifies what/who we 'really' are. Nothing of our total composition stays unaffected by our sex. "It [is] everywhere present in [us]: at the root of all [our] actions because it [is] their insidious and indefinitely active principle."[25] Simultaneously, sex functions as the assumed point of origin, and 'natural' explanation (or justification) of certain sexual patterns. Sex installs a fiction of unity between "artificial anatomical elements, biological functions, conducts, sensations and pleasures."[26] However, this hierarchy of superimposing *sex*

[19]Rubin, "Thinking Sex," 11.
[20] Foucault, *History,* 154.
[21] Dreyfus, Hubert and Paul Rabinow. *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1983. Quote on page 177; emphasis in the original.
[22] The thesis applies this graphic form only in few instances where it is especially important to denaturalize the seemingly indivisible and natural complex relationship of sexuality and sex. It is used to draw attention to specific 'regimes of truth,' to power relations acting through systems of knowledge that posit sexuality as a key to one's sex, and one's self.
[23] Rubin, "Thinking Sex," 11.
[24] For discussion of sex in relation to concepts of gender see below.
[25] Foucault, *History,* 43.
[26] Foucault, *History,* 154.

over *sexuality* is erupted by Foucault's forceful inversion.[27] He asserts,

> We must not make the mistake of thinking that sex is an autonomous agency which secondarily produces manifold effects of sexuality over the entire length of its surface of contact with power. On the contrary, *sex is the most speculative, most ideal, and most internal element in a deployment of sexuality organized by power in its grip of bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations, and pleasures.*[28]

Via this inversion, Foucault debunks the discursive density around sexuality as regulated by the specific *technology of sex,* new rationality, as well as new regime of knowledge (and power). When sexuality inaugurates this new system of management, sex becomes a subject of science, *scientia sexualis* and other modes of objectification. The pleasures of sex are henceforth governed by specific power – the *bio-power* – and are subjected to the logic of (reproductive) utility and managerial disciplination, which regulates its uses and banishes all unproductive sexual activities, sanctions perversions, and annexes sexual irregularity to mental illnesses.[29] The invention of sexualities in children, adolescents, and hysterical women, as well as the emergence of a plethora of sexual abnormalities and perversions illustrate how the deployment of sexuality produces (and regulates) its 'own' sexual bodies, its 'own' sex "inserted into systems of utility," to be "regulated for the greater good of all," and "made to function according to an optimum."[30] In effect, human beings need to be known, classified and "distribut[ed] around the norm."[31] In peculiarity and/or abnormality of his/her sexual desires, every individual has to be known and assigned his/her sex. The texts analysed in this thesis indicate that becoming known through his/her sex/uality, the self inscribes an individualised relation to power that 'takes care' of, even 'protects' his/her life.[32]

On the face of these processes, Foucault terms sex as the effect of a specific technology of deployment of 'sexuality.' Sexuality itself, hence, represents only "a result and an instrument

[27] See also Butler's *Sexual Inversions* which critically develops Foucault's theoretical move.
Butler, Judith. "Sexual Inversions." *Feminist Interpretations of Michel Foucault.* Susan J. Hekman, ed. University Park: Pennsylvania SUP, 1996. 59-75.
[28] Foucault, *History,* 155. Emphasis added.
[29] Foucault, *History,* 150-155.
[30] McCallum, "Technologies of Truth," 307.
[31] Foucault, *History*, 144.
[32] To accentuate its apparently caring nature, Foucault terms this early form of power produced by the deployment of sexuality as "pastoral." Pastoral power looks after every individual. It is individualising, oblative, coextensive and continuous with life. Its focus is the well-being, salvation and security of its subjects. It takes care, protects, and spreads into the whole social body. In order that the subject can be protected, however, they have to let the power 'know' them, it is the 'truth' about the human beings that makes them into subjects of the caring, pastoral power. And as Foucault convincingly argues, the truth of people is located in their sex (Foucault, "The Subject and the Power," 213-215). Foucault also discusses other forms of power produced through the strategic deployment of sexuality. In particular, see the closing essay "Right of Death and Power over Live," where he confronts the issue of eugenics and its strategic deployments for the 'race-cleansing' project of fascism.

of power's designs."[33] The fact that with the event of modernity diverse 'perversions' became incorporated into the new systems of individuals' specification and into the new rationality of government represents then only a further manifestation of the regime of knowledge/truth. By analogy, the historical event of the birth of 'the homosexual', through which *he* "became a personage," an epitome of "a past, a case history, and a childhood," marks the work of the distinct epistemology of sex. Within the logic of this epistemology, practices that fall outside of the regime of productive sexuality (i.e. sexuality 'utilisable' in the demographic management of the population) need to be assigned a specific "type of life, a life form, and a morphology,"[34] a specific 'sex.'[35]

To sum up, if Foucault links the newly emerged bio-power to its purpose of keeping power over life,[36] it clearly governs life to certain effects. Judith Butler develops Foucault's concept to argue that the life that is produced by the modern strategic deployment of sexuality is governed by "heterosexual morphology." "It would not capture Foucault's meaning to claim that there are humans who are marked by sex," she asserts. "The point is much stronger: to qualify as legitimately human, one must be coherently sexed. The incoherence of sex is precisely what marks off the abject and the dehumanized from the recognizably human."[37] To be coherently sexed, and to be 'intelligible,' means to embody a harmonious relation between one's sex and sexuality.[38] Conceptualising modern sexuality, as well as the categories of sexual identity, as the outcome of the life-maximising bio-power, enables us to contest the binarism of *sexual difference* (male/female), as well as that of *homosexual/heterosexual difference,* which

[33] Foucault, *History,* 152.
[34] Foucault, *History,* 43.
[35] To emphasise the difference between the occasional, need-determined, alcohol and/or drug induced (sic) and the 'essential homosexuality' marking a new type of person, became a standard argument for the sexological works. For instance, Krafft-Ebing writes: "Es ist also festzuhalten, daß die Perversion ein Zustand ist, die Perversität hingegen einen Tathandlung, bezw. eine Reihe oder Kette von Tathandlungen. Auch Moll hat darauf hingewiesen, daß Perversion des Geschlechtstriebes nicht mit Perversität geschlechtlichen Handels verwechselt werden darf. Nicht die Perversität, also die Tathandlung ist dafür bestimmend, ob eine Perversion vorliegt oder nicht, denn der perverse Akt kann auch gelegentlich bei durchaus normalen Personen vorkommen, z.B. unter Einfluß von Alkohol oder aus Laune oder bei hochgesteigertem sexuellen Empfinden. Das Gleiche gilt dort, wo aus äußeren Gründen (Gefangenschaft, Kasernierung usw.) der normale Geschlechtsakt nicht stattfinden kann und perverse Akte – Perversitäten – der Sexualnot entspringen." Krafft-Ebing, Richard von. *Psychopathia sexualis*. Zürich: A. Müller, 1937. Quote on page 47.
For similar arguments see works by John A. Symonds, Edward Carpenter, Havelock Ellis and others.
Interestingly, the most recent statement of the Pope with respect to ordaining 'homosexuals' as priests documents that this distinction remains in operation.
<http://vira.kluci.cz/vh-vatikan/20051129_grocholewski.phtml> (last visited 9 Nov 2006)
[36] Cf. Foucault, *History*, 133-161; Judith Butler points out that presently in the phobic reaction to AIDS, when male gay sexuality is paralleled with HIV infection and AIDS, sex operates newly also in service of death.
Butler, "Sexual Inversions," 63.
[37] Butler, "Sexual Inversions," 67.
[38] See section II.3.

transpire as effects of the heterosexual morphology and as imprints of specific matrix of 'intelligibility'[39]. Thus, Butler argues, sex has always already been defined by a particular system of difference, i.e. particular (hetero-)gender. And vice versa, this (hetero-)gender that masquerades as 'natural' sex has always been involved in normative definitions of sexuality. Judith Butler:

> [G]ender is […] a normative institution which seeks to regulate those expressions of sexuality that contest the normative boundaries of gender, then gender is one of the normative means by which the regulation of sexuality takes place. The threat of homosexuality thus takes the form of a threat to established masculinity or established femininity; although we know that those threats can reverse their direction, enabling precisely the occasions for the proliferation of what is to be prohibited.[40]

[39] The concept of intelligibility, or the "matrix of intelligibility," as Butler articulates it in *Gender Trouble* focuses predominantly on the critical discussion of gender's normative function. As such, Butler sees the intelligibility of gender deeply ingrained in the logic of heterosexualism. Butler argues that the deployment of sexuality inaugurates a specific normative, i.e. 'heterosexualised' 'grid' that determines a subject's identity/intelligibility.
Cf. Butler, "Prohibition, Psychoanalysis, and the Production of the Heterosexual Matrix." *Gender Trouble,* 45-100. However, discussing the relation between gender and sex, Butler's later study *Bodies that Matter* encompasses further aspect of discursivity, that is the aspect of materialisation and material existence of a gendered subject. The discursive materialisation of sex, hence, represents the attempt to conceptualise the productive power of discourse to bring subjects to specifically shaped – and most significantly gendered – material existence. See also below section II.3.1.

[40] Butler, Judith. "Against Proper Objects." *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*. 6.2-3. (1994): 1-26. Quote on page 24.
Consequently, texts discussed in individual chapters of the thesis substantiate that at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, subject positions are engendered by a complex interplay of two dispositifs: the dispositif of sex and the dispositif of gender. For the discussion of the dispositif of sex, see Foucault, *History*, vol.1; for the discussion of the intersection of the two dispositifs, see: Bublitz, Hannelore. "Zur Konstitution von 'Kultur' und Geschlecht um 1900. *Der Gesellschaftskörper. Zur Neuordnung von Kultur und Geschlecht um 1900.* Bublitz, Hannelore, Hanke Christine and Andrea Seier. eds. Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2000. 19-87.

II. 2. *Sex* and/or *Gender*: Useful Categories of Analysis?[41]

Although an immense impetus to the study of sexuality, Foucault's *History of Sexuality,* as a significant number of feminist theorists and historians point out, overshadows the *differences* involved in this "fictional unity" of sex.[42] Emphasising the "unifying" power of sex, *History of Sexuality* appears to produce a universal master narrative of how the (sexualised) subject has been constructed in modernity.[43] Working with the notion of power as a "genderless functional operation,"[44] as both Naomi Schor and Lynn Hunt argue, the presupposition of neutrality produces "the discourse of indifference/pure difference."[45] Inflicted with gender myopia, one of the substantial weaknesses of the Foucaultian concept of sex/uality is that it does not account for the different ways in which the technology of sex affects the individual selves.[46] Even if *sex* enwraps the subject in a fiction of unity, where every single trait of one's body, every single move of desire, as well as the features of one's personality, operate as signifiers of this unity (i.e. sex), it is vital to differentiate the ways in which the power mechanism operates on different bodies and in different subjects. It is crucial to bear in mind that sex, "in its grip on bodies and their materiality, their forces, energies, sensations, and pleasures"[47] (Foucault,

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[41] Here I allude to Scott's inspirative analysis. Scott, Joan Wallach. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. 28-53.

[42] Foucault, *History,* 154.

[43] The variety of critical response to Foucault's work among feminist critics is best illustrated by several collections of essays. See for instance, Diamond, Irene and Lee Quinby. eds. *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988; Hekman, Susan. J. ed. *Feminist Interpretations of Michel Foucault.* University Park: Pennsylvania SUP, 1996. For an informative overview of the convergences see e.g., Farkašová, Etela, Marianna Szapuová. "Foucault očami feministických filozofiek." *Aspekt* 1 (2002): 247-256. For instance, Foucault's conceptualisation of subject/ification (subject/ization) that grows out of his critique of the 'Enlightment' notion of a self, as a timeless, universal, autonomous and rational being category has found convergence in feminist reformulations of the self as a contextual, historical and social construct. Further, the deconstruction (even 'death') of the rational self offers a common ground for an epistemological critique directed at the Kantian notions of rationality and cognition. As McNay summarises, "A potential point of convergence can be established between Foucault's critique of meta-narratives and the feminist rejection of what are understood to be the phallocentric concepts of universal reason and autonomy." McNay, Lois. *Foucault and Feminism. Power, Gender and the Self*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992. Quote on page 91.

[44] Hunt, Lynn. "Foucault's Subject in History of Sexuality." *Discourses of Sexuality: From Aristotle to AIDS.* Stanton, Domna C. ed. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1992.

[45] Schor, Naomi. "Dreaming Dissymmetry: Barthes, Foucault, and Sexual Difference." *Coming to Terms: Feminism, Theory, Politics.* Elisabeth Weed. ed. New York: Routledge, 1989. Qtd. in McCallum, "Technologies of Truth," 86.

[46] While she does not dispute the importance of a gendered analysis of sex/uality, McCallum does read Foucault as a promising way to think gender without the danger of falling into the trap of essentialism and as a concept that transgresses the binary opposition of male/female, masculine/feminine and even the normative binarity of heterosexuality/homosexuality. McCallum infers, "[r]evealing the contingent foundation of sexualities, as Foucault's move does, renders [the gender differences] much more complex than the 'difference' of sexual difference, precisely because they now extend beyond the 'hetero'sexual binarism that, by naturalizing and essentializing them, kept these differences in place" (81). She also accentuates that Foucault's concept effectively slashes the apparent unity of sex and sexuality. In this way, she argues, Foucault's analysis brings in – if in implicit way – gender. "The essence of technology is thus what enables technology to happen – the needs it serves and the means it employs. It seems that the notion of gender likewise necessarily governs the networks of power and their effects that Foucault labels "sexuality" and "sex" even if Foucault seems to choose not to foreground this" (84).

[47] Foucault, *History,* 155.

History 155), is always already **not** difference neutral.[48] In this sense, the gender (and other) differences engender the specific modes in which the individual subjects ideate and live their desires, and their sexuality. Likewise, gender shapes the different (discursive) possibilities of response/resistance to the subjectifying power of sex.[49]

Intersections between *sex* and *gender* as categories of analysis are important for the present thesis from another methodological perspective. Gender (especially as employed in the bifurcated pairing of gender/sex) lead in some contexts of women's and gender studies to reinforcement and cementation of the concept of sexual difference rather than to the destabilisation of the female/male binary.[50] In response to these tendencies, Gayle Rubin famously argued for shifting the attention from gender to sexuality.[51] The separation of sexuality from gender (and sex) offers, in Rubin's view, the potential to challenge the impasse of unsurpassable binarism. Re-focusing on the diversity of possibilities epitomised by the differing combinations of sexual practices, sexual object choice, sexual identifications and desires, should help to collapse the (falsely) assumed unproblematic unity between gender identities and anatomical sex that flawed some of the feminist critical work.[52] The causal relationship between gender, sex and, most importantly, sexuality needs to be recognised, Rubin argues, as the effect of the heterosexist and misogynist frames.

Likewise, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that sexuality inaugurates a pole of ambivalences

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[48] Here, gender is not understood merely in terms of the male/female binary, or in terms of an essential entity, a 'naturally/biologically' given fact of 'difference,' rather it is conceived as a system of differentiation that acutely raises questions of power, agency, social technologies, 'naturalisation' effects of the discourse etc. Therefore, it is an imperative to take gender into account when examining constructions of sexuality/sexualities.
Discussing the gendered disproportion in the construction of sexuality, Teresa de Lauretis argues that majority of the Western concepts of sexuality operate through persistent differentiation and a contrast of 'male' vs. 'female' sexuality.
De Lauretis, Teresa. *Technologies of Gender. Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction*. London: The Macmillan Press, 1987. Quote on page 14.

[49] Hunt has argued that the gender neutral concept of power that Foucault presents is uncomfortably juxtaposed with "a profoundly gendered concept of the individual as adult male subject." The practices and techniques that Foucault envisions for the interaction between the "individual" and power are, according to Hunt, implicitly gendered and gender-specific (84).

[50] If the sex/gender distinction leads to a conceptualisation of gender as the cultural construct, sex – on the other hand – is then viewed as the 'natural', 'bodily' given, the ground upon which the cultural construction of gender is based. Thus, in reverse effect, gender becomes essentialised as a 'construct' that, however, has to correlate with the naturally given of biology.

[51] In *Thinking Sex,* Rubin sets the analytical agenda for the feminist study of sex and sexuality. For a comprehensive overview of the debates see Butler, "Against the Proper Objects"; see also the talk between Butler and Rubin, in which Rubin outlines once again the reasons for initiating an analytical move from the category of gender to sexuality. Butler, Judith. "Sexual Traffic. Interview with Gayle Rubin." *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*. 6.2-3. (1994): 62-99.

[52] Cf. Martin, Biddy. "Extraordinary Homosexuals and the Fear of Being Ordinary." *Femininity Played Straight. The Significance of Being Lesbian*. London: Routledge, 1996. 45-71; Butler, "Against Proper Objects."

that gender, if conceived in terms of an unproblematic female/male, feminine/masculine binary divide, does not, and in fact, cannot.[53] "Virtually all people are [from birth] publicly and unalterable assigned to one or the other gender," she maintains, "[whereas] sexual orientation, with its far greater potential for rearrangement, ambiguity, and representational doubleness […] offer[s] the apter deconstructive object."[54] By analogy, discrimination nor the inequalities produced through the disciplinary mechanisms directed at sexuality can be approached (or resisted) through the theorising of gender.[55] Furthermore, Sedgwick asserts, the focus on sexuality and desire encompasses a much broader spectrum of interacting elements and therefore offers a broader scope of both possibilities for de/constructive work, as well as for envisioning lines of flight outside the constraints of heterosexuality. "An essentialism of sexual choice is far less easy to maintain, far more visibly incoherent, more visibly stressed and challenged at every point of culture, than any essentialism of gender."[56] Illustratively, in *Tendencies,*[57] Sedgwick discloses the simple and seemingly capsular category of sexual identity that every individual is forced to settle for her/himself as a truly heterogeneous and incoherent collage of:

> Your biological (e.g., chromosomal) sex, male or female;
> Your perceived gender assignment, male or female (supposed to be the same as your biological sex);
> The preponderance of your traits of personality and appearance, masculine or feminine (supposed to correspond to your sex and gender);
> The biological sex of your preferred partner;
> The gender assignment of your sexual partner (supposed to be the same as her/his biological sex);
> The masculinity or femininity of your preferred partner (supposed to be the opposite[58] to your own);
> Your self-perception as gay or straight (supposed to correspond to whether your preferred partner is your sex or the opposite);
> Your preferred partner's self-perception as gay or straight (supposed to be the

[53] Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. *Epistemology of the Closet.* London: Penguin, 1990. See axiom 2: "The study of sexuality is not coextensive with the study of gender; correspondingly, antihomophobic inquiry is not coextensive with feminist inquiry. But we can't know in advance how they will be different" (27).

54 Sedgwick, *Epistemology*, 34.

[55] Sedgwick exemplifies this claim, "a variety of forms of oppression intertwine systematically with each other," in consequence of which "the person who is disabled through one set of oppressions may by the same positioning be enabled through others […] a woman's use of a married name makes graphic at the same time her subordination as a woman and her privilege as a presumptive heterosexual" (32).
Cf. also Rubin, "Thinking Sex," 10.

[56] Sedgwick, *Epistemology*, 56.

[57] Sedgwick Kosofsky, Eve. *Tendencies*. Durham: Duke UP, 1993.

[58] Here, Sedgwick insert the following footnote: "The binary calculus I'm describing here depends on the notion that the male and female sexes are each other's opposites, but I do want to register a specific demurral against that bit of easy common sense. Under no matter what cultural construction, women and men are more like each other than chalk is like cheese, than ratiocination is like raisins, than up is like down, or than 1 is like 0. The biological, psychological, and cognitive attributes of men overlap with those of women by vastly more than they differ from them" (7).

> same as yours);
> Your procreative choice (supposed to be yes if straight, no if gay);
> Your preferred sexual act(s) (supposed to be insertive if you are male or masculine, receptive if you are female or feminine);
> Your most eroticised sexual organs (supposed to correspond to the procreative capabilities of your sex, and to your insertive/receptive assignment);
> Your sexual fantasies (supposed to be highly congruent with your sexual practice, but stronger in intensity);
> Your main locus of emotional bonds (supposed to reside in your preferred sexual partner);
> Your enjoyment of power in sexual relations (supposed to be low if you are female or feminine, high if male or masculine);
> The people from whom you learn about your own gender and sex (supposed to correspond to yourself in both respects);
> Your community of cultural and political identification (supposed to correspond to your own identity); and again – many more.[59]

This lengthy (and potentially even longer) list of elements, covered up in the composite fiction of unitary "sexual identity," illustrates in a concrete way the unifying effects Foucault and Butler uncover in sex. Again, sexual identity transpires as a product of the (heterosexist) deployment of sexuality that unites most diverse elements into the 'meaningful' whole of sex. This collage, proving the in-essential character of our sexual choice and identity, foregrounds the need for a critical engagement with the constructions of sex, sexuality, desires and sexual identifications.

Nevertheless, the list itself clearly demonstrates that the operative force of sexuality as the prime category of deconstructive and critical engagement is marred by gaps unless considered alongside of other co-effective categories. The diagram with which Sedgwick works here, exemplifies how much any sexual position is simultaneously based upon (and thus potentially having a potential to subvert and/or deconstruct) assumptions of gender position. For instance, the erotic choice of insertive vs. receptive sexual practice shows perhaps most blatantly the extent to which sexual practices, sexual desires, as well as negotiations of one's sexual identifications, interplay with gender meanings and with normative gender allocations. It is also precisely for its gendered significations that sexual practices and desires have the potential to confer sexual gratification. And, as Sokolová states, "the question of sexual orientation [has] quite often more to do with the social categories of gender than with the sexual practice itself."[60] In addition, as I was arguing above, gender remains an important aspect for studying

[59] Sedgwick, *Tendencies,* 7-8.
[60] Sokolová, Věra. "Representations of Homosexuality and the Separation of Gender and Sexuality in the Czech

the strategic deployments of sexuality, its social organisation. If the thesis posits sexuality as a form of a new rationality and a power governing individuals via assigning them to their sexes/genders, gender, as an analytical concept, follows the differential forms, as well as possibilities, of interactions between the subject and this rationality.

Gender, as I will be arguing to greater detail in the following section, represents one of the most profound sources of identification our society provides.[61] If, arguably, the notion of identity represents one of the most questioned concepts of western philosophical and literary modernity, then, as Annette Runte argues, this identity cannot be thought of apart from gender which turns into the very „Subjekteffekt"[62] of the modern self. Runte sums this up in the following manner, "[d]as Mann- bzw. Frausein ist kulturell fast allerorten hochgradig *identitätsrelevant*, es lässt sich als ‚Nebenrolle' schwerlich abwickeln und wird statt dessen typisch so massiv zugemutet und persönlichkeitsstrukturell angeeignet, dass man es mit 'Haut und Haaren' *ist.*"[63] 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.

Before discussing the intersections of gender and sex/uality in the ways the selves make sense of their own identity, there is one more aspect of the gender vs. sexuality discussion that must be addressed. The optimism attached to sexuality as a new and more potent category of critical work has weaknesses, especially so in terms of gender politics. Biddy Martin, for instance,

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Republic Before and After 1989." *Systems and Definitions of Gender Roles.* Ann Katherine Isaacs, ed. Pisa, Italy: Edizione Plus, Universita di Pisa, 2001. 273-290. Quote on page 274.

[61] Cf. Runte, Annette. *Biographische Operationen. Diskurse der Transexualität*. München: Fink, 1996. Quote on page 41.

[62] Cf. Runte, *Biographische Operationen,* 42.
Runte claims, "(Selbst-)Identität [ist] eines der befrachtetsten Philosopheme abendländischen Denkens und literarisches Leitmotiv der Moderne" (41).

[63] Runte, *Biographische Operationen,* 42. Emphasis in the original.

observes that the critical evaluation of sexuality and, conversely, the dismissal of gender translates into feminist politics. "Lesbian and gay work fails at times to realize [gender's] potential for reconceptualising the complexities of identity," Martin argues.[64] It "conceiv[es] gender in negative terms, in the terms of fixity, miring, or subjection to the indicatively female body. [In consequence,] the escape from gender, usually in the form of disembodiment and always in the form of gender crossings, becomes the goal and putative achievement."[65] Sedgwick's essay "White Glasses" exemplifies Martin's critical point, thus revealing the specific *gender trouble* that Sedgwick's attention to sexuality entails. In "White Glasses," chronicling her erotic and emotional identifications with her gay friend, as well as with the gay (male) community at large, Sedgwick relishes in her pleasurable and exciting erotic, as well as emotional, cross-identification(s). These, nonetheless, seem to be shattered by her experience with breast cancer. Her erotic/sexual/gender (cross-)identifications with gay men come to a sharp clash once she is diagnosed with this 'female disease.' The overwhelmingly gendered discourse makes her acutely aware (once again) of the normative definitions of femininity, female sexuality and sexual identity. She remarks, "[o]ne of the first things I felt when I was facing the diagnosis of breast cancer was, '*Shit*, now I guess *I really must be a woman.*'"[66] In its expressiveness, the last sentence of this exclamation makes obvious that it is (once again) the body that defines 'femaleness'/ 'femininity,' collapsing gender back to the old biological sex.[67] Hence, as Martin elaborates, it is (once again) 'femininity' that qualifies a dead-lock and an overtly normative position. The marked tendency among 'queer theorists' to distance themselves from feminist theorisations[68] seems to be enacted in Sedgwick's recognition of her own gender ascription, which clashes sharply with her envisioning of the erotic/conceptual pleasures she associates with queer. She states: "Queer for me just pushes all the buttons that make me recognize myself. For me it [feels] very liberating and productive to undergo the uncertainties and vibratingness of the space of denomination…"[69] However, in their elaborate and subtle discussions, both Butler and Martin reveal the ways in which the fluidity and flexibility of 'queer/ness' is often construed upon the "ground" of presumably stable and

[64] Martin, Biddy. "Sexualities Without Genders and Other Queer Utopias." *Femininity Played Straight. The Significance of Being Lesbian.* New York; London: Routledge, 1996. 71-97. Quote on page 73.
[65] Martin, "Sexualities Without Genders," 73.
[66] Sedgwick, "White Glasses." *Tendencies*, 252-267. The quote on page 262; emphasis added.
[67] See also Sedgwick's discussion of gender and sexuality in *Epistemologies of the Closet*. There as well, her attention to sexuality and its methodological promises leads to a rather quick dealings with gender, which in effect becomes the same distinction as 'sex.'
[68] While "queerness," and queer theorisation of sexuality, is construed as a "vanguard position that announces its newness and advance," feminism with its emphasis on gender is superseded as "now anachronistic" (Martin, "Sexualities without Genders" 72; Martin, "Extraordinary Homosexuals"; Butler, "Against Proper Objects").
[69] Chinn, Sarah, DiGangi, Mario and Patrick Horrigan. "A talk with Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick." *Pre/Text. A Journal of Rhetorical Theory*. 13. 3-4. (1994): 79-95. Quote on page 81.

coherent categories – most notably: gender, race and the lower-class.[70] The possible shortcomings and dangers of such positions are more than obvious. Therefore, "the division of gender and sexuality as two separate thematic locations," Věra Sokolová argues, "*is both problematic and illusory.*"[71]

[70] Martin, "Sexualities without Genders," 80.
[71] Sokolová, "Representations of Homosexuality," 274; emphasis added.

II. 3. Performative Conditions of Heteronormativity

II.3.1. (Heteronormative) Constructions of the Intelligible Subject

One of the aspects under which this study operates the category of gender encompasses the study of the (normative) sources of identification, and the modes of its inscription upon the subject. In this way, gender is examined as the *"constitutive constraint"*[72] that shapes a subject's existence. Gender signifies both the process of a subject's becoming – *doing*/(*being done*) – that might be truly enabling in the identificatory possibilities it offers. Simultaneously, gender marks the limits for a subject's viable (and intelligible) social existence, marks the impossibilities of 'its' existence or more precisely 'its' experience of *undoing*/(*being undone*).[73] "Obviously," Lois McNay remarks, "the social constraints on gender compliance and the taboos connected to deviance are so powerful that it is difficult to exist as a socially meaningful extent outside of gender norms."[74]

In order to illustrate how gender works as this constitutive constraint of one's self-identification, as well as to illustrate how gender and sex/uality intersect in these processes, it might be helpful to turn once again to 'Scython's letter quoted in the introduction. As I was arguing above, the motivation that fuelled the composition of h/er letter to the editorial board of *The Freewoman,* is a representative example of the effect of two co-operative imperatives: *to know oneself* and *to write oneself*. As we have seen, 'Scython' becomes an individual, a recognisable social being by inscribing herself to concepts of femininity, femaleness, and a specific sexuality deemed as female (and in fact feminine). Apparently, h/er letter is incited by the debates about the so-called Uranians, a euphemistic way to refer to sexual 'abnormalcy', 'perversion', "sexual inversion." Hence, we might say that 'Scython's becoming subject (an inscription into normative categories) is produced and reinforced through disciplinary acts of "interpellation," "hailing." In these, the subject finds him/herself addressed at any random moment by (a representative of) the social structure and challenged to define his/her 'name'/identity. Of course, this address is not carried out by any concrete person, and/or does not have to be performed by a direct innuendo. It is the imaginary, non-tangible, and yet very

[72] Butler, *Bodies*, xi.
[73] Butler, Judith *Undoing Gender*. New York, London: Routledge, 2004.
Butler herself complicates the notion of *undoing/being undone* by/through gender. On the one hand, she acknowledges the potential of normative constructions of gender to undermine, undo the self's social existence and the livable life (or in fact, the potential of these norms not to allow its emergence in the first place), on the other hand, she claims that "[o]ther times, the experience of a normative restriction becoming undone can undo a prior conception of who one is only to inaugurate a relatively newer one that has greater livability as its aim" (1).
[74] McNay, Lois. *Foucault and Feminism. Power, Gender and the Self*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992. Quote on page 72.

'real' power that operates here.[75] 'Scython' is trapped in a self-defining response – "I belong to the class [of Uranians] myself" – by the powerful discourse of *scientia sexualis*. Butler claims that in the interpellative address, the act of (self-)recognition becomes the act of a subject's constitution, and that it is the interpellative address that animates the subject into existence.[76] Then, however, it is the association with 'abnormality' and/or 'queerness' that functions here as the interpellative impetus that brings 'Scython' to speech/to existence. It is this challenge to h/er (gender) status as a *woman* that has to be countered and opposed before s/he can claim a viable subject position for her/self. Gender, therefore, appears as specifically apt for the power inscriptions.

Second, it is clearly one of the letter's ambition to organise the apparently incoherent and dissonant elements (both physical and psychological) into a(n illusory) harmony so that s/he emerges as coherently and plausibly gendered, and – briefly put – intelligible as a woman. Nonetheless, it is only through the workings of specific optics that the symptoms of dissonance of her body/psyche (and h/er 'abnormality') may emerge. This represents another aspect of the interpellative and normative force of gender. Organising several disparate elements (body, psychical identification, sexual desire etc.) into a seemingly meaningful whole, it then forces individual subjects to embody and live out this conglomerate in a harmonious way. Butler argues, "'[i]ntelligible' genders are those which in some sense institute and maintain relations of coherence and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice, and desire."[77] As 'Scython's existence is marked by incoherence in these determinants, to "the rest of the world" s/he remains a "developmental failure or logical impossibilit[y]."[78]

'Intelligible' gender, describes a very specific kind of gender caught in a double bind. On the one hand, the intelligible gender (and hence also those genders that are unintelligible and inevitable unviable) is a retro-product of the power technologies that construe 'good,' 'productive' sexuality, that is "compulsory heterosexuality."[79] On the other hand, the

[75] Foucault's concept of power and its discursive production, does not presuppose the existence and dominance of only one dominant discourse, or normative structure. On the uses of concept of interpellation for gender (and anti-homophobic) analyses see Butler, *Bodies that Matter*; Butler, Judith. *Excitable speech. A Politics of the Performative*. New York and London: Routledge, 1997; Volker, Woltersdorff. *Coming Out. Die Inszenierung schwuller Identitäten zwischen Auflehnung und Anpassung*. Campus: Franfurt am Main, 2005.

76 Butler, *Bodies*, 121; Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 25.

[77] Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge, 1990. Quote on page 23

[78] Butler, *Gender Trouble,* 24.

[79] Butler says, "There's a very specific notion of gender involved in compulsory heterosexuality: a certain view of gender coherence whereby what person feels, how person acts, and how a person expresses her sexuality is the

intelligible genders uphold the regime of this sexuality. In this way, Butler's concept of the *matrix of intelligibility* accentuates the many-layered and circular process of gender identifications. This is its simplified schema: subject becomes 'intelligible' as a woman or as a man, if: body that is 'recognised' as female 'embodies' the attribution of femininity; desires (makes love) to subject who is both male and masculine and who desires (makes love) to the same or other female/ feminine subject who desires male/ masculine lover and so on so forth. This is how the (vicious) cycle of heteronormativity keeps reproducing.

Furthermore, Butler makes clear how much the normativity of gender identities ('the intelligible genders') correlates with the sanctioned and idealised form(s) of 'heterosexuality.' "In this sense, the initiatory performative, 'It's a girl!' anticipates the eventual arrival of the sanction, 'I pronounce you man and wife.'"[80] Genders that do not coincide with the logical and natural chain of the triadic identifications *sex – gender – desire* appear as "spectres of discontinuity and incoherence."[81] To put it in a more forceful way, gender constitutes a condition of a subject's humanness. Butler:

> To claim that the subject is itself produced in and as a gendered matrix of relations is not to do away with the subject, but only to ask after the conditions of its emergence and operation. […] In this sense, the matrix of gender relations is prior to the emergence of the 'human.'" [82]

This statement of Butler's is a troublesome one. It professes gender as the central criterion of becoming a subject, of becoming a human being. Therefore it is crucial to understand the

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articulation and consummation of a gender. It's a particular causality and identity that gets established as gender coherence which is linked to compulsory heterosexuality. It's not any gender, or all genders, it's that specific kind of coherent gender."
Butler, Judith. An Interview with Peter Osborne and Lynn Segal. Osborne, Peter and Lynn Segal. "Gender as Performance. An Interview with Judith Butler." *Radical Philosophy.* 67.1. (1994): 32-39. Quote on page 36. The term "compulsory heterosexuality" has been coined by Adrienne Rich. Cf. Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." *Blood, Bread, and Poetry.* Norton Paperback: New York, 1994.

[80] Butler, *Bodies,* 232.
The correlation of the birth and wedding scene that Judith Butler enacts here makes a very complex statement. First, in its succinct manner, it illustrates poignantly how the constructions of gender on the one hand and of sexual identity on the other, overlap and support each other.
Second, setting the initial performative statement in the seemingly 'inevitable' relation to the latter pronouncement, Butler suggests how much the material body and corporeal embodiment of gender is governed by the point of arrival and its 'objective.'
Third and most important, taking the examples of such paradigmatic performative speech acts, Butler also makes a statement about the normative nature of both gender/sexual identity. In both cases, it is the external instance that pronounces the subject as to belong and to be in accordance with the legitimized positions. Likewise, it is the same external and impersonalized instances that operate as the interpellative force overseeing the subject's fulfilment of the roles attached to her/him in the performative act declaring him/her woman or man, heterosexual husband/wife.

[81] Butler, *Gender Trouble,* 24.

[82] Butler, *Bodies*, 7-8.

relation Butler conceives between the subject/ the humanness and gender. If Butler's statement were to posit gender as a universal category of 'humanness', it would in consequence deprive gender of its analytical strength. To argue that gender is a *universal* condition of existence would only reintroduce gender into the shackles of the essentialised, a-historic and in fact *ontic* entity it has once been.[83] However, the matrix of gender relations that Butler poses to precede the emergence of the "human," and to constitute the condition of her/his emergence, is not conceived as a substantialised entity, but as a discursive construct that needs to be regarded in its relation to historicity.[84] Butler, in analogy to Foucault, conceives of gender and sexuality in terms of objectifying/subjectifying mechanisms[85] that produce its own subject, its own 'human being.'[86] The *gender,* the specific discursive effect Butler analyses, institutes specific subjects as effects of very particular mechanics and relations of power, which in the given temporal and cultural context originate from strategic constellations of sex, gender, sexual practice and desire.[87]

Butler's dramatic re-thinking of concepts of 'construction' and 'construct' shows her attentiveness to the issue of historicity and dynamic nature of power relations. Treading the difficult line between positions of the relativist constructivism, on the one hand, and of essential determinism on the other, Butler argues that with respect to (political) effectiveness of the deconstructive approach, the discussions cannot end with stating that the subject is constructed by impersonal forces such as "Culture or Discourse or Power."[88] Such a position would move these forces to the site previously occupied by the rational subject, and in effect, Discourse/Power/Culture would be transformed into a personified point of origin, while "in [this] personification the metaphysics of the subject is reconsolidated."[89] Saying that gender is a construct, that it is constructed by discourse and/or the matrix of intelligibility, Butler attempts to devise such a model that would keep both the subject (i.e. the effect of the matrix), as well as the discursive matrix itself, in a mobile, flexible and non-reified status. *"Construction is neither a subject nor its act, but a process of reiteration by which both*

[83] Cf. also Šmausová, Gerlinda. "Proti tvrdošíjné představě o ontické povaze gender a pohlaví." *Politika rodu a sexuální identity*. Sociální Studia 7.1. (2002): 15-29.
For Butler's anti-essentialist critique on the 'constructivist' approach, as well as for her reformulations of this position, see below.
[84] Cf. Hauskeller, Christine. *Das Paradoxe Subjekt: Widerstand und Unterwerfung bei Judith Butler und Michel Foucault*. Tübingen: ed. Diskord, 2000.
See particularly the chapter "Geteilte Ausgangsthesen Butlers und Foucaults," 43-49.
[85] Cf. Dreyfus, Rabinow, *Michel Foucault.*
[86] For the discussion of Foucault's claims that the mechanics of power produces its own subject, see below.
[87] Butler, *Gender Trouble,* 24.
[88] Butler, *Bodies*, 9.
[89] Butler, *Bodies*, 9.

'subjects' and 'acts' come to appear at all. There is not power that acts, but only a reified acting that is power in its persistence and instability."[90] As follows, her concept of a subject construed in and through specific matrix of intelligibility remains open to theorise acts that would cha(lle)nge the matrix itself.[91]

II.3.2. Gender as a Performative Practice

To say that the matrix of gendered relations produces its own subject means to credit this matrix with specific potentiality to engender, to create; it endows it with *performative* capacity.[92] The example of 'Scython's letter highlights how the confrontation with it the gender norms defines the self's process of identification. Now, consider the two following statements:

"It is a girl!"[93]
"One is not born a woman but rather becomes one."[94]

According to Butler, the former illustrates metaphorically that the moment of a subject's recognition equals the initial moment of her be(com)ing[95]. To be recognised as a woman, and moreover to be pronounced so by an authority, (as it occurs in the birth scene), inaugurates a

[90] Butler, *Bodies*, 9. Emphasis added.
Clarifying her view of the constructive power of discourse, Butler accentuates that also discourse derives its power to construct and to produce 'matter' only through series of reiterations; its power is also only "reiterative" and "derivative." The performative capacity of discourse is derivative, it is "a form of cultural iterability or rearticulation, a practice of resignification," however not creation ex nihilo (*Bodies* 107).

[91] Furthermore, Butler proposes to think of construction in its relation to 'matter,' or more precisely to think about the process of construction as encompassing the material/embodied existence. Theorising the modality of subject's materialisation, i.e. conditions under which certain subjects come to materialise, she also focuses on the normative effects of power that exclude some types of (gendered and/or sexualised) bodies and/or embodiment from materialisation. Therefore, such a line of argument changes the status of 'construction' and by extension of gender as a construct, construction. Bringing together the (seeming) opposites, the 'construct' and 'the matter', Butler makes clear that to think of a construct as of something of no 'real' and 'tangible' existence and thus of something in contrast to 'matter' is a faulty line of though that leads to a dead-end. "Construction is […] not the same as artifice. On the contrary, constructivism needs to take into account the domain of constraints without which a certain living and desiring being cannot make its way" (*Bodies*, 94).

[92] Theories and concepts of performativity build upon speech act theory as coined by J.L. Austin. In the last decades, they have become so influential so as to perform a paradigm change in the social and human sciences comparable to e.g. "Linguistic turn." "Performative turn" (Peter Burke) develops on notions of the constituting potential of language, speech acts for the so-called 'reality', social rituals, bodily acts and collective events.
On the so-called "performative turn" see e.g. Burke, Peter. "Performing History: The Importance of Occassions." *Rethinking History*. 9.1. (2005): 35-52.
For concepts of performativity, see for instance: Sedgwick, Kosefsky Eve, Parker, Andrew. *Performativity and Performance*. New York; London: Routledge, 1995; Fischer-Lichte, Erica. ed. *Praktiken des Performativen*. Berlin: Akademisches Verlag, 2004; Fischer-Lichte, Erica. ed. *Theorien des Performativen*. Berlin: Akademisches Verlag, 2001; Fischer-Lichte, Erica. *Performativität und Ereignis.* Tübingen: Francke, 2003; Wirth, Uwe. ed. *Performanz. Zwischen Sprachphilosophie und Kulturwissenschaften*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkampf, 2002.

[93] Butler, *Bodies,* 232. See above.

[94] De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. London: Vintage, 1997, (c1949).

[95] Note also that this model situation exemplifies the difficulty of welcoming an arriving human being without being able to assign him/her to existing gender categories. Again, becoming a human being appears simultaneous to becoming a woman or a man or some other gender being.

certain imperative, a certain set of expectations that shapes and interacts with the possibilities of becoming. In this sense the act of being pronounced an identity equals a moment in which an identity is being enforced upon the subject, who since is bound to become what she was named. The latter statement, on the other hand, the well-known quote of Simone de Beauvoir, posits conversely that identity is not 'an immediate given', an inborn characteristics but that it has to be achieved through a processual labour of becoming. The seeming contradiction between the two statements in fact illustrates the double bind into which the subject is caught by the productive, performative relations of power. To become a subject means to work on one's own subjection to the power that has incited the act of becoming, as well as pre-determined its conditions. To be pronounced a woman, inaugurates one's work on becoming one. Being a woman, depends upon practice, upon a series of performative acts, where the doer does not (and cannot) pre-exist the deed, which constitute "the identity it is purported to be."[96]

Here, the Butlerian gender takes recourse to the Foucaultian concept of the subject as the surface effect of power and of disciplinary, prohibitive and normative practices. Butler says, "the ground of gender identity is the stylised repetition of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity"[97] Thus the identity and the gendered existence presupposes *doing gender,* a series of performative acts, or "stylistics of existence."[98] Furthermore, Butler argues that gender identificatory acts need to be understood as contextually defined "strateg[ies] of survival," and as acts with "punitive consequences."[99] The emphasis upon *doing* opens the way to theorise performative acts with respect to their 'existential,' constricting and normative dimension, as well as their 'transformative' potential. Thus, the notion of performativity introduces a new productive tension into the concept of gender.

Being an act that is not, as Butler remarks, one's act alone, gender conceived as a performative act bridges the level of personal and individual experience with the collective one, and more importantly, contextualises the individual against the background of the normative effects of social and cultural sanctions and its prescriptions. To illustrate her observation, Butler uses the metaphor of a theatrical performance. "The act that one does, the act that one performs, is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrives on the scene. Hence, gender is an act

[96] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 33.
[97] Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomemology and Feminist Theory". *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*. Case, Sue-Ellen. ed. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990. 270-283. Quote on page 271.
[98] Foucault qtd. in Butler, "Performative Acts," 272.
[99] Butler, "Performative Acts," 273.

which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it."[100] Of course, there is no space that can be seen as outside of the gender performatives. "Actors are always already on the stage, within the terms of the performance."[101] Nevertheless, a subject's involvement with the performance is hereby not made negligible. To develop the theatre metaphor further, every performance needs a script, an actor's involvement, as well as his/her interpretation of the script.[102] Gender, as an act that is enacted and performed within a specific cultural context, cannot rely merely on personal and individual choice of the act. Simultaneously, however, it involves a subject's individual negotiations of both the constraints and the leeway provided within the given context. By analogy, gender, does not represent an entity, or a steady construct of permanent duration, but likewise an effect of a series of performative acts, an effect of (embodied) practice.

If, as follows, the subject is (only) the effect of mechanics of power and dominating technologies not fully within his/her reach, how is it possible to conceptualise a subject's agency or resistance to this dominating force? Maintaining that gender and its technology represents one of the most powerful interfaces of the mechanisms of normalization and subjectivization,[103] how is it possible to conceptualise the (gendered) practices of the self, self-fashioning in relation to negotiating one's experience, and developing ways of survival? And how can we give any credence to individual self-accounts of sexual experience, if these represent – arguably – only effects of the imperative "Know yourself", and of power, that in its various forms permeates the whole of the subject's existence, in every niche of our existence?[104] Foucault says:

> When I think of the mechanics of power, I think of its capillary existence, of the extent to which power seeps into the very grain of individuals, reaches right into their bodies, permeates their gestures, their posture, what they say, how they learn to live and work with other people.[105]

Bringing together Butler's with Foucault's concepts of normativity and power (relations)

[100] Butler, "Performative Acts," 276.
[101] Butler, "Performative Acts," 277.
[102] The script Butler speaks about here, can be taken as a metaphor of cultural intelligibility that regulates what can/cannot be said, imagined, experienced, understood at the given moment of cultural context and on different (social, racial) locations within the context. Furthermore, it can also serve as a fitting metaphor for regimes of un/sayability attached to different genres of literary expressions.
[103] The technologies of domination that Foucault envisions to constitute the self amount, as he believes, to a certain specific (idea of a) 'man' (sic) or even humanity as such. Cf. Martin, Biddy. "Feminism, Criticism, and Foucault." *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance.* Diamond, Irene and Lee Quinby. eds. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988, 3-20. Quote on page 10.
[104] Cf. Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. London: Penguin, 1979.
[105] Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writing.* Gordon, Colin. ed. New York: Pantheon, 1980. Quote on page 80. Qtd. in Martin, "Feminism, Criticism, and Foucault," 6.

indicates several different ways of conceptualising a subject's agency, as well as allowing for the theorising of differing locations of counter-discourse or subversive resignifications. First, both Foucault and Butler, if in different ways, deconstruct notion of power as an abstracted, unified and in fact essentialised force. Foucault accentuates its being located in concrete "relations of power" and in the specific 'mechanics,' 'technologies,' and 'practices' through which individual subjects are moulded. Butler likewise emphasises that power does not exist prior to the moment of interaction with its subject.

Second, to perceive the potential locations of the self's subversive interactions with the power of the (gender) matrix, it is necessary to abandon the (modernist) project of ultimate liberation and/or emancipation. It is essential to re-consider the whole concept of power as an antidote to freedom. If, as both Butler and Foucault presuppose, the subject is never capable of reaching a power-free or a discourse-free space of 'autonomy' or 'authenticity,' and even if s/he is always (already) governed by various intersecting kinds of power, and subjected to technologies of domination, it does not forestall occasions of 'freedom'. As Foucault accentuates, "people are much freer than they feel."[106] In fact, power and freedom, as he argues, are not mutually exclusive, but rather mutually constitutive.

> One must observe also that there cannot be relations of power unless the subjects are free. If one or the other were completely at the disposition of the other and became his thing, and object on which he can exercise an infinite and unlimited violence, there would not be relations of power. In order to exercise a relation of power, there must be on both sides at least a certain form of liberty.[107]

Foucault's concept of the practices of the self[108] grows out of this conception of a power to freedom ratio. Being part of the 'technological' structures that subject the self to "matrices of practical reason,"[109] practices of the self differ from these, in the sense that they

> permit individuals to effect, by their own means, or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom…[110]

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[106] Foucault, Michel. "Truth, Power, Self. An Interview with Michel Foucault." *Technologies of the Self.* Martin, Luther H., Gutman Huck and Patrick H. Hutton. eds. London: Tavistock, 1988. Quote on page 10.
[107] Foucault, Michel. "The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom." *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984*. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. vol.1, Rabinow, Paul. ed. London: Allen Lane, 1997. Quote on page 292.
[108] Alternatively, Foucault terms those as the technologies of the self. Cf. Martin, Gutman and Hutton, *Technologies of the Self.*
[109] Foucault, *Technologies,* 18.
[110] Foucault, *Technologies,* 18.

The practices of the self enable the subject to self-work for the transformation of him/herself. However, the "state of happiness, purity, wisdom" s/he is capable of achieving needs to be understood in terms of the "subject position" that does not evade the relationships of domination and subjectivization. Hence, these practices embody "practices by which subjects constitute themselves within and through systems of power."[111] They represent "a series of techniques that allow individuals to work on themselves by regulating their bodies, their thoughts and their conduct."[112] Rather than relapsing to notions of a pre-discursive 'autonomous' subject, we need to conceptualise the practices of self-creation and self-(re)invention as a deployment of the "patterns that [the individual] finds in *his* culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on *him* by *his* culture, *his* society, and *his* social group."[113] Thus, the exploration of freedom shifts towards the question of what amount of personal agency do practices of the self grant the subject?[114] In the words of Stephen Parker and Rodney Fopp, "what is contentious is the extent to which the so-called technology of the self indicates degrees of personal agency to change various aspects of their lives."[115] Or alternatively, the question is how to deploy the practices of the self and utilize strategies of power to affect the 'state of happiness'?

To recognise that technologies and practices of the self enable certain empowerment precisely (and only) within the discursively set framework of power, means to acknowledge that the subject cannot sidestep the limits of a normative regime.[116] The practices of the self and self-creative work can no longer be considered from perspective of an in/authentic relationship to a self that remains external to such practices. Identity cannot be perceived as a 'truth' which is in some sense external to the subject him/herself. Conversely, it is always shaped by the subject's

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[111] Mittell, Jason. "Technologies of the Self." <http://www.theory.org.uk/ctr-fou6.htm> (last accessed 22 Nov 2006)

[112] Webb, Jennifer. "Technologies of the Self." <http://www.theory.org.uk/ctr-fou6.htm> (last accessed 22 Nov 2006)

[113] Foucault, "The Ethics of the Concern of the Self," 291. Emphasis added.

[114] Also, we have to ponder how the potential agency that particular practices of the self might offer to individual subject depends upon other defining factors such as gender, social position, access to knowledge etc.

[115] Parker, Stephen, Fopp, Rodney. "'I'm the slice of Pie that's Ostracised…' Foucault's Technologies, and Personal Agency, in the Voice of Women Who are Homeless, Adelaide, South Australia." *Housing, Theory and Society.* 21.4. (2004): 145-154. Quote on page 148.

[116] Niko Kolodny captures the tension in Foucault's concept between the apparent cultural determinism and the notion of freedom in the following way: "[T]his does not make ethical self-constitution a tragic resignation to determination by culture or history. Such resignation would follow only if Foucault conceptualized freedom in the form of absolute self-determination: if he held that the only freedom worth the name were freedom from every conceivable social constraint. […] [T]he freedom Foucault has in mind is instead the relative freedom – marked by the fluidity, reversibility and mutability of relations of power – that individuals in one society enjoy relative to another. Kolodny, Niko. Unpublished thesis. Qtd. in Sawicki, Jana. "Feminism, Foucault and 'Subjects' of Power and Freedom." *Feminist Interpretations of Michel Foucault.* Hekman, Susan, J. ed. University Park: Pennsylvania SUP, 1996. 159-179. Quote on page 175.

practices of the self. Consequently, with respect to theorizing the relationship of the subject to him/herself, the critical potential of the concept of technologies/practices of the self leads us away from 'self-discovery' to a more promising notion of a creative self-invention. Foucault is not so much concerned with the "*man* that goes off to discover *himself, his* secrets and *his* hidden truth", but with the "*man* who [is] compelled to face the task of producing *himself."*[117]

Thus, Foucault's concept of the indivisible relation of power (domination) and 'freedom,' embedded in the concept of the practices of the self, allows us to explore the moments in which individuals operate the practices of power to which they are subjected – to change, or at least challenge, various aspects of their lives and/or of their self-perception. One of the aspects that furnish the transformative potential of these practices is the fact that subjects are always construed across a range of discourses and practices. It may seem paradoxical, but the indissoluble closeness of the inhibitory to generative practices that Foucault presupposes, implicates that the *transformative* (or *subversive*) practices originate from the very same site as the disciplining ones. "There are […] always interstitial possibilities for self-production." Nonetheless, rather than being a means of revolutionary emancipation and liberation, the alternative practices of the self generate the possibility of (constant) resignification and reinvention, of "an ongoing agonistic with the potential for radical change."[118] Against this background, it is important to ask if it is possible to localise (and if so, where) moments of

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[117] McNay, Lois. *Foucault and Feminism. Power, Gender and the Self*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992. Quote on page 89; emphasis added.

Therefore, the potential of the practices to construe new forms of subjectivities has to be seen in the moment when the practices become *allied to critique.* It is then that the practices of the self can generate sites of contestation over the meanings and contours of identity, and over the ways in which certain practices are mobilized. Mona Lloyd identifies a "twin politics" to run through Foucault's critical work. The first stream of his political thinking, Lloyd coins as the "politics of refusal," the second has been recognised to shape "politics as an ethics." The former encompasses political gesture of rejection of 'what we are,' and attempts to jettison the "subjectivity that has been imposed upon us for centuries" (Foucault, *Power and the Self* 216). Most important for his political stance is, Lloyd notes, that Foucault attempts "refusal founded upon a self-conscious and critical disavowal of the parameters of discursive constitution." This involves the construction of an "'historical ontology of ourselves': a critique, that is, of what we are saying, thinking and doing" (Lloyd 244). This form of "liminal analysis" that contests, as Lloyd insists, "the boundaries of discursivity" engenders a ground upon which "thinking with attitude" (Foucault) can incite subjects into challenging their identities. This, hence, constitutes the latter twin of Foucault's political project. While as Lloyds summarises, "the first task of critique is to instigate a genealogical inquiry, the second is to pit that inquiry 'to test of reality'" (Lloyd 245). Loyd, Mona. "A Feminist Mapping of Foucauldian Politics." *Feminist Interpretations of Michel Foucault.* Hekman, Susan. ed. University Park: Pennsylvania SUP, 1996. 241-263.

Theorising alternative practices of the self, Foucault thus moves away from the double archeological/genealogical concern with morality and the disciplinatory structures, and engages with envisioning aesthetical projects of the self. The recognised intersection of ethics with aesthetics, the "aesthetics of existence" constitutes the core-strategy of his "politics as an ethics," where aesthetics (as well as politics) is understood as a dimension of a deliberate care paid to one's existence.

Cf. Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality. The Use of Pleasure.* Vol.2, London: Penguin, 1987; "Self-Writing", "The Ethics of the Concern" and "Friendship as a Way of Life" all essays in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984*. vol.1, Rabinow Paul. ed. London: Allen Lane, 1997.

[118] Both quotations Lloyd, "A Feminist Mapping," 247.

critical engagement with power in texts that are so closely bound to the epistemic regime of self-inspection and self-discovery. And within this analogy, how does the practice of self-writing, so closely linked to the disciplinary imperative of "Know yourself," allow the agency to utilize these strategies of power for construing and articulating a position with attitude, or that of a counter-discourse?

From another perspective, Butler also takes the productive and performative nature of power as the point of departure for theorising possibilities of resistance to normative structures. Again, her considerations centre on issues of production of – and conversely resistance to – specific (types of) gender and sexuality. The relations of power being, above all, productive, Butler argues, "the interdiction, the refusal, the prohibition," represent their limits, "the frustrated or extreme forms of power."[119] Against this backdrop, Butler theorises prohibition and/or restriction to produce – as its reverse operation – the occasion for a "public contest that may inadvertently enable, refigure, and proliferate the very social phenomenon it seeks to restrict."[120] In this vein, the constraints that enforce the abjection of 'other desire' into the realm of unthinkability and/or unendurability, do not simply reinstall the normative and ideal position of the norm, i.e. heterosexuality. As this restriction has to be (re-)enacted time and again, the (performative) encounters between the subject and the normative matrix provide positions for "subversive rearticulat[ions]."[121]

Thinking of repetition (acts of reiterations and citation) in terms of "potential displacement,"[122] strengthens the claim about the unessential nature of 'heterosexuality,' and makes it possible to theorise the (subversive) potentialities of non-heterosexual positionings. Furthermore, conceiving performative acts as reiterative practice, it is also the position of the norm (as an assumed original) that becomes problematised and challenged. Butler notes, "in other words, it is precisely through the infinite deferral of authority to an irrecoverable past that authority itself is constituted. That deferral is the repeated act by which legitimation occurs. The pointing to a ground which is never recovered becomes authority's groundless ground."[123] Thus,

[119] Foucault qtd. in Butler, *Bodies,* 109.
[120] Butler, *Bodies,* 109.
[121] Butler, *Bodies,* 109.
[122] Butler, *Bodies,* 45.
[123] Butler, *Bodies,* 108.
Butler's model of drag is the best know example of parodic reiterations of norms related to gender, race, class and sex/uality. Butler defines drag's possible (but not necessary) subversiveness in the following way: "In this sense,

heterosexuality itself becomes a position that necessitates continual reworking and reinforcement, it becomes itself only a copy, an imitation of the idealised and yet unattainable original.[124] The prohibitions, the phobic abjection of all forms of non-heterosexual desire and/or sexual practice into the realm of the unthinkable and/or unendurable, and the frustration of the norm, illustrates that heterosexuality is always in the act/process of elaborating itself; this proving the possibility that it might become 'undone.'

> Precisely because it is bound to fail and yet endeavours to succeed, the project of heterosexual identity is propelled by an endless repetition of itself. Indeed, in its efforts to naturalise itself as the original heterosexuality must be understood as a compulsive and compulsory repetition that only produce the *effect* of its own originality; […] compulsory heterosexual identities, those ontologically consolidated phantasms of "man" and "woman", are artificially produced effects that posture as grounds, origins, the normative measure of real.[125]

Concluding, though developing this dynamic view of performative acts that situate gender at the interstice between *doing* and *undoing*, Butler manages to conceptualise normative and/or punitive character of gender as simultaneous to its instability and needed (re-)signification. If agency conceived (only) in terms of intentional resistance to power and domination appears somewhat shackled against the background of both Foucaultian and Butlerian conceptualisation of subject, concepts of gender performatives and practices of the self do not foreclose the possibility to engender positions of resistance. Focusing upon the conflation of *meaning/doing/being*[126] affected by/through performative practices, the incessant deferral and shifts in meanings and signification, achieve central importance to the interpretation of texts in the context of this thesis. With respect to the outlines of an individual's agency, the constitutionally dual nature, "both intentional and performative," of gender performatives is important.[127] Therefore, it is the process of signification itself, the "shy-gap,"[128] opened up in

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drag is subversive to the extent that it reflects on the imitative structure by which hegemonic gender is itself produced and disputes heterosexuality's claim on naturalness and originality" (*Bodies* 125). On the intricacies of the drag and the dangers it brings to the one who parodies see her reading of the documentary film "Paris is Burning," *Bodies.*

On parody of gender as a political strategy see *Gender Trouble*.

[124] In *Imitation and Gender Insubordination,* Butler remarks, "In this sense, the 'reality' of heterosexual identities is performatively constituted through an imitation that sets itself up as the origin and the ground of all imitation. In other words, heterosexuality is always in the process of imitating and approximatizing its own phantasmatic idealization of itself – and failing."

Butler, Judith. "Imitation and Gender Insubordination." *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader.* Abelove, Henry, Barale, Michèle Aina and David Halperin. eds. New York, London: Routledge, 1993. 306-320. Quote on page 313.

[125] Butler, "*Imitation,"* 313; emphasis in the original.

[126] Cf. Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. "Queer performativity. Henry James's The Art of the Novel." *GLQ*, 1.1. (1993): 1-16.

[127] Butler, "Performative Acts," 273.

the encounter between the normative with its individual reiterations, that will be examined for its potential (yet not necessary) disrupting effects on the seemingly unequivocal matrix of intelligibility.[129]

Butler conceptualises the performative as to carry the double-meaning of 'dramatic' and 'non-referential' (*Performative Acts* 273), while again it is the 'non-referential' that arguably carries the strongest inspiration for critical work. Here, it might seem that Butler contradicts herself arguing first that performative acts are based upon referential activity such as "citations" and/or "re/iteration". Nonetheless, the above discussion should have made clear that she in fact transforms this seeming contradiction into a strong backbone of her gender concept. It is precisely the interface of the performative referentiality and 'non-referential' nature of individual performances and/or performative acts that allows for the space for (critical) re-signification to emerge. To simplify greatly, Butler makes her point in showing that intention can never exhaust the process of signification.

[128] Sedgwick, "Across sexualities," 71.

[129] Again the following model situation should suffice to illustrate that the focus will not be at the intention – even if this also plays significant role, however in completely different theoretical and conceptual frameworks, as on the effect that performances of gender produce. Nelson summarises Butler's point about the political leverage of parody, mimicking and comicality. Watching a gay man mimicking a butch lesbian, or a straight wealthy woman from New Jersey, Nelson assumes, is disruptive of dominant sex/class/gender identities because the performer's supposedly 'natural' identity does not match the signs produced within the performance. By disrupting the assumed correspondence between a 'real' interior and its surface markers (clothes, walk, hair, etc.), drag balls make explicit the way in which all gender and sexual identifications are ritually performed in daily life.
Nelson, Lise. "Bodies (and Spaces) do Matter: The Limits of Performativity." *Gender, Place and Culture*. 6.4. (1999): 331-353. Quote on page 339.

III. Set of Questions

With regard to the practice of self-writing, the notion of gender intelligibility needs to be discussed in a twofold sense. Firstly, the discourses and significations that shore up the heterosexual matrix inaugurate specific 'regimes of speakability' that regulate what can/cannot be expressed about one's sex and/or sexuality. Obviously, as much as they depend on specific socio-cultural contexts of spatial and temporal settings, the conditions of what can be said, how and to what effects, change. Intelligibility, and the notion of intelligible gender, cannot therefore be conceived as a universal normative force. Therefore, intelligibility – and, by analogy, the intelligible genders – must be studied with a view to the historically located discourses and discursive practices that render a specific constellation of sexuality and gender as intelligible and as liveable. Focusing on what is brought to speech, and what is contrarily not, the specific cultural and historical contexts in which the texts are embedded need to be addressed. Furthermore, it is important to explore what words, expressions, and/or metaphors the subjects use, and from what context they draw these 'words' in order to speak/write about their sex and/or sexuality. What discourses are deployed in the gendered practice of self-writing? How does the 'unspeakable' shape (and become part of) the self-writing practice? Who can access the 'words' and means of expression that are made available for speaking about sexuality? Significantly, all the key texts discussed in the thesis differ in means and strategies of expression (as well as in formal and genre character), a fact that needs to be regarded with reference to the gender of the subject who composed the text.

Second, to regard the 'words' and tropes that the subjects deploy in their self-writing practices only as a means of expression of their subjectivity (i.e. as constative utterances) would be a limited perspective. It is vital to attend to the performative effects of the 'words,' i.e. to the power of the 'words' to create the meaning they convey. Here, a further level of meaning, embraced in the concept of (cultural and gender) intelligibility, transpires; it describes the 'kind of subject' that the discourses and epistemic categories of sex/uality produce. Following, the question what discourses are deployed and activated in the act of self-constitution, or self-constitutive speech acts respectively, therefore concerns the question of what kind of subject becomes created in the self-constitutive act.

Further, it is equally important to explore the contextual background against which the subject commences and/or modifies the practice of self-writing into a speech that equalizes one's self (identity) with one's gender and/or sex. What event, what encounter or what situation calls upon the subject and interpellates him/(her) into naming, defining, describing him/(herself) via sex/uality?[1] As the heteronormative matrix of intelligibility produces only specific versions of genders/selves, Foucault argues that it is necessary to ask, "[h]ow certain kinds of prohibitions and interdictions require the price of certain kinds of knowledge about oneself?"[2] Furthermore, Foucault argues that the specific knowledge produced through discursive regulation of sex/uality influences the ways in which the self relates to him/herself. Then, how does the regime of knowledge that encircles sexuality influence the ways in which the self transforms him/herself? How does it shape the subject's relations to others and what do these relations of power entail?

The epistemology of sex, as I will argue, weaves a power-imbued network of relationship between the self and others. For instance, the practices of (self-)disclosure, which will be discussed from different perspectives, elucidate how knowledge, sexuality, and power intersect. Disclosing the truth of sex is a powerful act that defines the subject position of those who disclose their own sex, those who disclose the sex of others, those who are disclosed, or alternatively those who refuse to disclose this truth. To this respect Sedgwick maintains, "to alienate […] from anyone […] the authority to describe and name their own sexual desire is a terribly consequential seizure." Moreover, "[i]n this century, in which sexuality has been made expressive of the essence of both identity and knowledge, it may represent the most violence possible."[3]

In the context with which this thesis is concerned, it was the medico-juridical discourses that represented one of the most powerful discursive formations attached to matters of gender and sexuality. Nonetheless, despite their importance in the process of constituting the modern figure of the 'homosexual'/ 'the lesbian,' the thesis does not take a primary interest in them. As Ed Cohen argues, the emphasis that the previous explorations have directed onto the

[1] I bracket the female pronoun in this sentence in order to indicate the gender differences of the disciplinary effects the technology of sex performs over the feminine self. It is not to suggest, however, that the disciplinary regime did not affect women. For a more detailed discussion of this issue see chapter V.
[2] Foucault, Michel. "Technologies of the Self." *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984*. vol.1, Rabinow Paul. ed. London: Allen Lane, 1997. 222-229. Quote on page 224.
[3] Sedgwick, *Epistemology,* 26.

medico-forensic knowledge and 'governmental discourses,' i.e. law, medicine, and sexology, has in consequence led to "a relatively comprehensive sense of the ways in which a privileged range of sexualised meanings and practices systematically coalesced within these discourses." In contrast, it remained short of developing a knowledge of the practices, in which the subjects of these discourses negotiated their existence. It remained short of developing knowledge of "how […] sexually 'ec-centric' subjects lived out their dispositions, let alone how they made sense of them."[4] It is this reworking of (medical, sexological) knowledge into the account of the self, its intersection with other discourses and significations, that provides interesting perspectives: what performative effects did the enactment of the privileged epistemic categories – for instance to declare oneself a 'homosexual' – have? What practices of the self does this enactment subsequently enable, and which, conversely, does it foreclose? What legitimisation do these discursive categories provide outside the medical context? To what extent could they be employed in self-explaining and self-legitimising practices in the auto/biographic context?

Furthermore, to deconstruct the binary opposition of 'homosexuality'/'heterosexuality,' it is necessary to explore how the classificatory categories such as 'homosexual,' 'lesbian,' 'invert,' 'intermediate sex' and others work, what enactments they perform, and what relationships they create.[5] Alternatively, it is as equally relevant to ask how the professed lack of knowledge and/or ignorance of sex can be employed as a semantic figure. Ignorance, as Sedgwick argues in *Tendencies,* "is not a single Manichean, aboriginal maw of darkness from which the heroics of human cognition can occasionally wrestle facts," but rather "a plethora of *ignorances."* Therefore, she proposes to start asking questions about "the labor, erotics, and economics of their human production and distribution." Most importantly, this plethora of ignorances relies – as much as the opposition of speech vs. silence does – upon its binary partner, knowledge. "[Ignorances] are produced by and correspond to particular knowledges and circulate as part of particular regimes of truth."[6] In what ways, then, do discursive and signifying practices of closeting/disclosing, confessing/silencing, naming/refusing-the-name, deferring the meaning, operate in the individual texts?

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[4] Cohen, Ed. "The Double Lives of Man: Narration and Identification in late Nineteenth-Century Representations of Ec-centric Masculinities". *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle.* eds. Sally Ledger, Scott McCracken. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995. Quote on pages 84-5.
The term 'ec-centric' is applied in the following sense, "to gesture towards the sexual positionings of those individuals who are circumscribed by and yet profoundly out of alignment with the historical 'centerings' of their cultures" (113n).
[5] Sedgwick, *Epistemology,* 27.
[6] Sedgwick, *Tendencies,* all quotes 25; emphasis in the original.

Concluding, the objective of this study overlaps to some extent with Cohen's incitement to study the individual means of fashioning and negotiating the 'queer' experience, as well as forging the ways of survival in a largely aversive culture. The second emphasis of the study is directed onto the heteronormative matrix, and specifically onto the intersections of gender, sex/uality and desire. In the context of this study, heteronormativity is not conceived solely in terms of 'assumption of heterosexuality,' or a regulatory system of sexuality that forecloses other than heterosexual options. Apart from these meanings, the term is used to refer to the constraint that both limits, as well as produces, the possibilities in which the subject conceives of his/her (gendered) subject position. I hold that heteronormativity, and the matrix of intelligibility that it engenders, interact even with those genders and sexualities that are constructed as non-heterosexual. Following, the ways in which the fashioning of the non-heterosexual and/or 'homosexual' subject relies upon the heteronormative matrix, and the ways in which "der Hetenterror"[7] affects the practices of the self (both heterosexual and non-heterosexual) will be explored. How does the heteronormative matrix affect the techniques that allow individuals to transform themselves by regulating their bodies, their thoughts, and their conduct, so as to achieve a certain amount of happiness, and self-containment?

In the process of composing the questions and subsequently carrying out the analysis of the individual texts, Sedgwick's observations about the epistemic power inscribed in the authority to demarcate one's own, or respectively somebody else's sexual identity, have gained crucial importance to my own work. As a counterpoint to approaches that lessen the authority of the individual subject to define the meaning of his/her sexual preferences, choices as well as identity, Sedgwick suggests a "safer proceeding." This, as I hope, stands also for my critical work:

> [T]o give as much credence as one finds conceivable to give to self-reports of sexual difference – weighting one's credence, when it is necessary to weight it at all, in favour of the less normative and therefore riskier, costlier self-reports. To follow this proceeding is to enclose protectively large areas of, not mere agnosticism, but more active potential pluralism on the heavy contested maps of sexual definition.[8]

[7] Brühl, Marcus. *Henningstadt.* Qtd in Glawion, Sven. "Schwul werden, queer sein, oder 'anders herum'? *Quer duch die Geisteswissenschaften. Perspektiven der Queer Theory.* eds. Yekani, Elahe Haschemi, Michaelis Beatrice. Berlin: Querverlag. 2005. 296-306. Quote on page 301.
[8] Sedgwick, *Epistemology,* 26.

IV. Technologies and Epistemologies of the ('Aberrant') Self. John Addington Symonds: "What He Really Was"?

IV.1. Technologies of the ('Aberrant') Self

IV.1.1. Memoirs of John Addington Symonds Written by Himself

> "That I have a definite object in the sacrifice of so much time and trouble upon a task so useless and so thankless, will not be doubted by those men who understand the nature of human indolence, and who are also able to estimate the demands made upon the industry of a fairly successful writer in his forty-ninth year."[1]

> "I have often thought that, if I lived to do nothing else, I should write Confessions which would be better for the world to read than Rousseau's and not less interesting. I sometimes think that I am being trained for this."[2]

John Addington Symonds (1840-93) was, as e.g. John Pemble states, "an eminent Victorian." "When he penned his memoirs […] he ranked among England's foremost men of letters."[3] Also Phyllis Grosskurth notes that "[Symonds] was regarded as one of the major English men of letters" (PG 13). Definitely Symonds was a prolific and an influential author. He 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*.[4] Nonetheless, it has not been his voluminous publications that have revived interest for his personality after he – together with other "eminent Victorians" – had been rejected by the modernists.[5] It was the publication of his *Memoirs* in 1984 that led to an increased interest in his figure. Thus it has been, as Grosskurth remarks, "by an ironical twist

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[1] Symonds, John Addington. *Memoirs of John Addington Symonds Written by Himself.* Unpublished Manuscript, lodged with the London Library. Quote on foil 1.
Grosskurth, Phyllis. *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds*. London: Hutchinson & Co, 1984. Quote on page 29.
All further citations – except in the titles – from the Manuscript (MS) as well as from Grosskurth's edition (PG) will be given parenthetically in the text.

[2] Grosskurth, *The Memoirs,* 15

[3] Pemble, John. "Art, Disease, and Mountains." *John Addington Symonds: Culture and the Demon Desire.* Pemble, John. ed. London: Palgrave. Macmillan, 2000. Quote on page 7.

[4] Symonds, John Addington. *Renaissance in Italy.* Vol. 1-7. [s.L.]: Smith, Elder, 1875-1886.
Symonds's poems collections *Many Moods* (Smith, Elder & Co.: London, 1878), *New and Old* (Smith, Elder & Co.: London, 1880), *Animi Figura; Sonnets* (Smith, Elder & Co.: London, 1882), and *Vagabunduli Libellus* (Smith, Elder & Co.: London, 1884) are remarkable for their treatment of the homoerotic theme. Symonds is also an author of *In the Key of Blue; and other Prose Essays* (Mathews & Lane: London, 1893) containing the well-known essays on the theme of intermasculine relations ("The Dantesque and Platonic Ideals of Love," "Edward Cracroft Lefroy," and "Clifton and a Lad's Love"), and of a biographic book on Walt Whitman, *Walt Whitman: A Study (*John C. Nimmo, 1893).

[5] Cf. Booth, Howard, J. "'A Certain Disarray of Faculties.' Surpassing the Modernist Reception of Symonds." *John Addington Symonds: Culture and the Demon Desire,* 154-170.

of fate" that he "had been resurrected from neglect by the revelations in a work which he knew would be impossible to publish during his lifetime" (PG 13). His "unprecedented *Memoirs*" has been since considered "the first self-conscious homosexual autobiography known to us now."[6]

For many years, John Addington Symonds wrote and collected material for his autobiography, yet it was never assembled into an ordered form, remaining instead a collection of loose papers kept in a box.[7] The first edition of Symonds's (auto)biography appeared shortly after Symonds's death, edited and published by his literary agent and intimate friend Horatio Forbes Brown.[8] The first publication of Symonds's life story has been, no need to stress, censored for possible explicit references to homosexuality by Symonds's family as well as by Brown, himself a homosexual. After Brown's death the 'green card box, tied with strings, measuring at most 6 inches by 12 inches by 18 inches and labelled "J.A. Symonds's Papers"'[9] was locked in the London Library until 1984 when Phyllis Grosskurth edited and published it for the second time, now disclosing the references to Symonds's 'homosexuality.'

This new inclusion of references to 'homosexuality' has provided a rich material for the study of a male same-sex erotics and sexuality, self-awareness of the sexual self. Furthermore, as the following quote suggests, Grosskurth's new editions opens a galore of different issues related to the cultural constructions of the 'homosexual' self.[10]

> As a genre, the *Memoirs are a hybrid, falling somewhere between literature and a psychological case history.* [….] [U]ndoubtedly the finest section is the account of his childhood, with its vivid – almost Proustian – recollection of early sensations. It is a present remembrance of times past which evokes a former self co-existing

[6] Cady, Joseph. "Symonds, John Addington." *glbtq: An Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Culture.* Sept. 2005. <www.glbtq.com/literature/symonds_ja.html> (Last visited 26 Dec 2006).
[7] In 1995, London Library bound the papers into a two-volume manuscript. According to the Library staff, the binding respected the way the manuscript had been assembled.
[8] Brown, Horatio Forbes. *John Addington Symonds. A Biography. Compiled from his Papers and Correspondence.* London: John C. Nimmo, 1895.
[9] Brown's instructions to the London Library to which he bequeathed the *Memoirs* (qtd. in PG 10). The *Memoirs* are still lodged with the London Library and now accessible to scholars.
[10] If Brown erases explicit and straightforward references to Symonds's sexuality, his editing politics is interesting in terms of implicit pointers. Brown's preface, for instance, accentuates that the biography is "a portrait of a singular personality" (vii). Likewise, he describes the text's character as a "biography of psychological order," and retains undisclosed its obsessive question after "the nature of [Symonds's] temperament" (xi). The conflicting search for one's identity is in Brown's edition transcribed as an interrogation of the Universe, as spiritual quest for God and truth.

> with his present self in that multiple awareness which Wordsworth describes in *The Prelude* as 'two consciousness.'
>
> (PG 17; emphasis added)

As the original manuscript remains somewhat out-of-hand in its London Library case, the editorial practice embodied in the published ('out') version of the manuscript raises important issues concerning the construction of the cultural memory of a 'homosexual,' and cultural memory of 'sexual difference' in general. Thence, any attempt to bring Symonds out of the late Victorian closet needs to be examined with respect to the discursive, as well as the epistemic, constraints that shape and predetermine the representation of the queer subject[11].

Symonds's motivation to write his autobiography seems to be incited by compulsive need to do so. In March 1889 he wrote to his friend Henry Graham Dakyns, "You see I have never 'spoken out.' And it is a great temptation to speak out."[12] Not surprisingly, the final publication of the manuscript was more than doubtful and Symonds himself was very much aware of this. In the mentioned letter to Dakyns, Symonds further states,

> I do not think [the manuscript] will ever be fit to publish [….] [I]t would be hardly fair to my posterity if I were to yield up my vile soul to the psychological investigators. [….] I do not know therefore what will come of this undertaking [….] I believe I shall go forward, & leave my executors to deal with what assuredly be the most considerable product of my pen.[13]

Consequently, Symonds communicates to Brown his wish that the manuscript be not destroyed along with his doubts about when and how it should/could be published.[14] From his

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[11] In the course of the essay three different terms are used to refer to men loving men: 'homosexual', 'queer' and 'gay'. They are differentiated as follows: the term 'homosexual' is used to refer to the specific concepts of sexual identity construed in the discursive context of sexology. Therefore, it is used predominantly in the passages that discuss Symonds's attempts at (and difficulties with) self-identification. 'Queer', on the other hand, is used to characterize a position of a subject whose (self-)perception does not agree with the culturally valid conceptions of gender and/or sexuality (see chapter I). 'Gay', finally refers to a contextually and historically specific self-consciousness of the community of men loving men as it developed in the post-Stonewall era in the second half of the 20th century in the Western World. The chapter consciously works with the tension that develops between the concepts of 'homosexuality', on the one hand, and the notion of queerness, on the other. Whereas the former operates a notion of a concrete identity, 'a type', the latter represents a concept that strives to trespass this way of conceptualizing sexual desire.

[12] Qtd. in Heidt, Sarah J. "'Let JAS Words Stand': Publishing John Addington Symonds's Desires. "*Victorian Studies.* 46.1. (2003): 7-31. Quote on page 10.

[13] Symonds qtd. in Heidt, "Let JAS Words Stand," 10.

[14] In a letter to Horatio Brown, Symonds states: "I am anxious […] that this document should not perish. It is doubtful when or whether anyone who has shown so much to the world on ordinary ways as I have done, will be

deathbed Symonds composes a note to his wife Catherine in order to remind her that he bequeathed his diaries, letters and other literary matter to Brown. He adds, "I have written things you would not like to read, but which I have always felt justified and useful for society. Brown will consult & publish nothing without your consent."[15]

The epitaph Symonds chooses for the *Memoirs* accentuates that it is of great importance that he alone composes his own autobiography, determined not to let the agency of his own words to compose his autobiography slip off into hands of others. At the close of the manuscript Symonds comes to reconsider the im/propriety of composing one's own autobiography, and although he acknowledges the limits of such representation, "[t]he [autobiography] has to be supplemented indeed, in order that a perfect portrait may be painted of the man," he still insists that, "it is impertinent to maintain that anyone has the same right to speak about a person as the person himself has" (MS 501).

The epitaph has been taken from Walt Whitman's 'Inscriptions' in *Leaves of Grass*, and it reads,

> When I read the book, the biography famous,
> And is this then (said I) what the author calls a man's life?
> And so will some one when I am dead and gone write my life?
> (As if any man really knew aught of my life,
> When even I myself I often think know little or nothing of my real life,
> Only a few hints, a few diffused faint clews and indirections
> I seek for my own use to trace out here.)
>
> (PG 30, MS 2)

Even if, as Clinton Machann notes, it is a customary gesture of the Victorian male autobiographer to assert the supreme authority to autobiographic representation of one's life,[16] Symonds's adamant effort to fashion and create the record of his own life has its own

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found to speak frankly about his inner self. I want to save it from destruction after my death, and yet to reserve its publication for a period when it will not be injurious to my family. I do not just know how to meet the difficulty […] I should like to excerpt it as a thing apart, together with other documents form my general literary bequest; so as to make no friend, or person, responsible for the matter, to which I attach a particular value apart from life's relation" (PG 289, MS 573).

[15] Symonds qtd. in Heidt, "Let JAS Words Stand," 11.

[16] Machann states, "[a]ssuming that the autobiography will take its ultimate place on the bookshelf at the end of one's collected works, it must serve as a key to interpreting and evaluating the others, if not itself offering a culminating, definitive statements of life philosophy." (XXX) Machonn also quotes John Stuart Mill: "I must be conscious that no one is so well qualified as myself to describe the series of my thoughts and actions."
Machann, Clinton. "Gender Politics and Study of Nineteenth-Century Autobiography". *Journal of Men's Studies.*

specificity; his gesture of an insistent desire to leave an imprint, to be found and represented in history has its own particular importance. Therefore, Symonds's autobiographical effort can be contextualised as an act of "auto-archiving"[17] and as a very important move of a queer subject towards self-representation and representation of a sexual otherness within the heteronormative context. As Sharon Marcus states, "[t]hrough auto-archiving, those hidden from history take history into their own hands" (201). Of course, as the discussion below shows, the self-representation of a queer subject is in no way freed from the disciplining effects of the dominant discourses and epistemologies of sex, nonetheless, it is vital to suggest that the performative nature of the autobiographic self-writing reveals several openings for (if limited) queer agency.

Considering the low possibility of *Memoirs of John Addington Symonds Written by Himself* ever being published, why did Symonds leave his other ample writing projects waiting? What forced him to speak out and to create a script with its minute precision of cataloguing his erotic and sexual impulses, dreams and imagination? Why did Symonds decide to undergo the desperate retrospective into years of misery, struggle with failing health and consuming homoerotic desire only at the moment when he apparently had managed to resolve the tension, a point in his life, where he had reached relative health and overall prosperity? The possible answers are multiple. Textualising one's traumatic experiences, "painful circumstances" and "painful incidents" of one's life, is one way to come to terms with those experiences. In that sense the manuscript embodies Symonds's work on processing his "sexual suffering."[18] Moreover, *Memoirs of John Addington Symonds Written by Himself* records his desire to reach out and communicate his suffering; he imagines that "some one, peradventure" will discover the manuscript and "shed perhaps a tear at the thought of what these lines have cost [him]" (PG 29-30, MS 1). Conversely, the manuscript also provides Symonds with the textual space to record and recount his erotic imaginations, dreams and amorous encounters. "Prick to prick, so sweet," is a textual rendering of a graffito Symonds once saw in Hyde Park. He also inserts a description of the accompanying design, "[it was an] emphatic diagram of phallic meeting, glued together, gushing" (PG 189, MS 370).

6.3. (1998): 307

[17] I borrow the term from Sharon Marcus. Marcus, Sharon. "Queer Theory for Everyone: A Review Essay." *Signs.* 31.1 (2005): 191-218.

Furthermore, fashioning the reasons and/or legitimation for composing the autobiographic text, Symonds oscillates between statements of singularity of his own character, which represents "an evolution of a somewhat strangely constituted character" (PG 61, MS 62), and attempts to situate himself within the non-visible community marked with the same fate. Gradually, the emphasis upon the representative character of his biography appears to predominate. In this way, Symonds claims a narrative much broader than that of just a single life. As he argues, *Memoirs* should function as an interpretative key to a sort of collective biography of those who share his "inclinations." In this sense, Symonds's *Memoirs* go beyond self-justification and raises the discrimination of the "thousand" as a social issue.[19]

> This was my primary object. It seemed to me, being a man of letters, possessing the pen of a ready writer and the practised impartiality of a critic accustomed to weight evidence, that it was my duty to put on record the facts and phases of this aberrant inclination in myself – so that fellow-sufferers from the like malady, men innocent as I have been, yet haunted as I have been by a sense of guilt and dread of punishment, men injured in their character and health by the debasing influences of a furtive and lawless love [...] should feel that they are not alone, and should discover at the same time how a career of some distinction, of considerable energy and perseverance, may be pursued by one who bends and sweats beneath a burden heavy enough to drag him down...
>
> (PG 182-3, MS 360-1)

IV.1.2. The Moment of Indeterminacy?

To regard the late nineteenth century, and particularly the 1890s, as a key moment or a turning point in the history of homosexuality, particularly male homosexuality, has become a commonplace assessment in the historical and literary-historical study of the intermasculine relations.[20] As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick documents in her groundbreaking study of the

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[18] Cf. Plummer, Ken. *Telling Sexual Stories. Power, Change and Social Worlds.* London/New York: Routledge, 1995.

[19] At the very close of the manuscript Symonds states, "[I] am now aware that my history is only one out of a thousand" (PG 281, MS 561). As this note of awareness of belonging to an imaginary group/community is missing from the original statements of the objective of the autobiography, I presume it mirrors the dynamics entailed in constructions of Symonds's identity that is eventually claimed to encompass some general features of a 'homosexual'.

[20] Cf. Bartlett, Neil. *Who Was That Man? A Present for Mr. Oscar Wilde*. London: Serpent's Tail, 1988; Bristow, Joseph. *Effeminate England: Homoerotic Writing after 1885*. London: Open University Press, 1995; Bristow, Joseph. ed. *Sexual Sameness: Textual Differences in Lesbian and Gay Writing*. London: Routledge, 1992; Bristow, Joseph. ed. *Wilde Writings: Contextual Conditions*. Toronto. Toronto University Press, 2003; Craft, Christopher. *Another Kind of Love: Male Homosexual Desire in English Discourse, 1850-1920*. Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 1994; Dellamora, Richard. ed. *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1999; Halperin, David M. *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality And Other Essays on Greek Love*. London: Routledge, 1990; Sinfield, Alan. *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Movement.*

homosocial relations entitled *Between Men,* the "minimal difference" [21] that had safeguarded the male homosocial (and homoerotic) relations from debasement, and 'homosexuality' became even more unstable and intricate at the turn of the nineteenth century. "Thus, it is at this historical point that a discussion of male homosexual desire as a whole really gives way to a discussion of male homosexuality and homophobia as we know them."[22] With the last decades of the nineteenth century we enter the time of the "homosexual scandal,"[23] "homosexual panic" and the "epistemology of the closet."[24] Simultaneously, alongside of the epistemology of "the closet," the sexological discourse and a new taxonomy of sex emerge to name and classify sexual 'otherness.' Nonetheless, Alan Sinfield argues that despite the new disciplinary and epistemic regimes attached to homosexuality, the turn of the century represents a specific historical moment of indeterminacy in which more regimes of un/speakability overlap and interact.[25]

Symonds's *Memoirs* are likewise located on the very interface of several of the epistemic regimes. This autobiographic text provides a rich and a complex array of codes and modes of expressions that Symonds finds accessible to relate to the otherness of his 'desire.' For instance, with the statement, "the Greek in me awoke" (PG 73, MS 91), Symonds draws upon the Greek code that in the second half of the nineteenth century proved as a potent carrier of

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London: Cassell, 1994; Weeks, Jeffrey. *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present.* London: Quartet Books, 1977; Weeks, Jeffrey. *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800.* London: Longman, 1981

[21] Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. *Between Men. English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985. Quote on page 200.

[22] Sedgwick, *Between Men,* 202.

[23] Dellamora, Richard. *Masculine Desire: the Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Caroline Press, 1990.

[24] Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. *Epistemology of the Closet.* London: Penguin, 1990.

Sedgwick's book has broken ground for an interpretation of the ways in which the virtually unrepresentable becomes a part of speech. In this book, Sedgwick convincingly shows that silence and closet represent performative utterances of its own right and as such construe and convey meaning (cf. chapters III and V.4.). Also, her use of binary opposition has revealed the extent to which any dominant and mainstream representations (especially those related to sexuality) reactivate those meanings/representations which they try to keep out of speech.

Recently, a new critical attention has been granted to the figure of the closet and speech acts of silences, evasion and deferral of meaning as an enabling form of expressing and living out one's 'different' desire and love. With relation to intermasculine relations in the British Victorian milieu see for instance: Cocks, H.G. "A Strange and Indescribable Feeling: Unspeakable Desires in Late-Victorian England." *Nameless Offences. Homosexual Desire in the Nineteenth Century*. London: Tauris Publishers, 2003. 157-199.

Chapter V of this thesis discusses the strategy of a deferral of meaning with reference to erotic/sexual relations between women.

[25] Sinfield, *The Wilde Century,* 8.

homoerotic desires.[26] Consequently, he represents the experience of reading Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Symposium* as "one of the most important nights in [his] life." "It was just as though the voice of my own soul spoke to me through Plato [...] I had lived the life of philosophical Greek lover" (PG 99, MS 150).[27] However, alongside of that, Symonds uses the ever-present trope of a secret, "I kept my love secret, and hugged the treasure jealously. It was the final flower of my long cherished inner self" (PG 106, MS 165), tropes of somnambulism, waking dreams, stupors, spiritual trances and the split of his inner and the outer self to draw the relation between his earliest self-awareness and his awakening desires. Furthermore, Symonds's decision to act upon his desires becomes associated with the specific Whitmanesque notion of comradeship, "singular sort of comradeship" (PG 118, MS 191), "natural friendships" (PG 126, MS 214). Nonetheless, phrases such as "somewhat rare aberration", "abnormal sexual feelings" (PG 64, MS 69) indicate his deployment of the newly emergent sexological discourse and the epistemology of sex. It is the objective of the subsequent discussion to show that gradually the epistemology of sex enforces itself as the most salient code for coming to *know* the sexual 'otherness' and the specific sexual desire.

The decision to focus on the epistemic and disciplinary regime is not (only) motivated by the wish to bring an evidence of how the disciplinary mechanisms of *the technology of sex* work and of how it shapes the modern (masculine) subject.[28] Apart from that, the complications this particular epistemology of sex represents for the (masculine) autobiographic representation need to be examined. In fact, *Memoirs* has two core objectives. On the one hand, the text conveys a life story of a man, while on the other it discloses and represents the virtually unrepresentable otherness of the man's sexual desire for men and his 'homosexual' identity. The *Memoirs* must be read not (only) as a speech act of 'homosexual' confession, and as a forerunner to modern coming-out narrative, but as a textual and narrative attempt to reconcile Symonds's 'normal' masculinity with the 'abnormal' sexuality, i.e. as a textual performance of his masculinity. This chapter thus discusses the intersection of Symonds's performance of masculinity and self-practices regulated by the technology of sex. Symonds's self-writing

[26] See for instance Dowling, Linda. *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford*. Ithaca, New York/ London: Cornell University Press, 1994.
[27] Elsewhere Symonds states, "The study of Plato proved decisive for my future. [....] It confirmed my congenital inclination towards persons of the male sex, and filled my head with an impossible dream, which controlled my thoughts for many years" (PG 100, MS 152).
[28] Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality. An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1990.

project entails both disclosing himself as a "type of character,"[29] as well as construing his gender identity of a *masculine* man.[30] In this sense, Symonds's self-writing practice is governed by two rivalling regimes of intelligibility. The sexological discourse (and the epistemology of sex) introduces the framework of 'homosexuality', while the gender specific autobiographic narrative operates discursive constructions of 'masculinity'. Simultaneously, the concurrence of these intertwined threads of narrative demonstrates that Symonds's self-presentation challenges the discursive limitations of both. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the two regimes of intelligibility engenders an epistemic tension that enables Symonds to articulate his awareness of the fact that self-presentation is as much limited as limiting. Symonds's narrative of masculinity thus challenges, as Ed Cohen argues, the dominant concept of the masculine self as unitary, self-possessed and innerly coherent. Symonds confronts this concept and "imagin[es] new narrative modes that encom[pass] non-unitary forms of male subjectivity."[31] Hence, as the *Memoirs* are marked with a sort of irresolvable crisis of representation (and intelligibility), alternative modes of interpretation to those focused on the politics of disclosure ('outing') need to be examined.

[29] Foucault, *History,* 42-5.
[30] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Masculine Domination*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001.
The terms "masculine man" and "womanly woman" have been coined by Bourdieu in order to accentuate the interdependence of "gender" and "sex" that previously tended to be regarded as two separate domains of culture and biology (Nature). Through his analysis, Bourdieu deconstructs this distinction by revealing the importance of the somatic dimensions of gender.

IV.2. Epistemologies of the 'Homosexual' Self

The self constitutes the central concern of Symonds's *Memoirs.* Repeatedly, it is referred to as a source of threat and uncertainty. "I fear[ed] anything so much as my own self. What that contained was a terror to me. [....] Nigh to [dreams and visions] lay madness and utter impotence of self-control" (PG 40, MS 14). There is "no escape from self" (PG 85, MS 122) and from the query of "what [the self] *really* was" (MS 501; emphasis added).[32] The urge with which the question presses itself upon Symonds corresponds with the 'simple' imperative "know yourself" that Foucault coins as the epitome of the modern disciplinatory regime.[33] The need to know the truth of the self most importantly initiates a constraint to know, name, and discipline one's desires, passions, and eventually one's *sex.* Not as a way to enjoyment and pleasure, the desire has to be known, as it becomes a telling sign of the epistemology of the self or – as Symonds phrases it – of "what I am" (PG 184, MS 363). Highlighting the power of the technology of sex, *Memoirs* produce taxonomy of Symonds's desire, disclosing even the minor movements of his sexual craving.

The answer to the epistemological query of "what [I] was" that Symonds forges over the period which he composes the autobiography, undoubtedly reflects the growing authority of certain discourses and epistemologies of sex. Nevertheless, the representation of Symonds's character as well as his interaction with the disciplinary regime has been considerably shaped by the editing praxis of Phyllis Grosskurth. Grosskurth's interventions into the manuscript reflect certain preconceptions about the 'homosexual' subject and 'homosexual' subjectivity.[34] Contrarily, the original manuscript of the autobiography opposes the dominant discourse and strives to articulate a dissenting position. As much as the enquiry into the self's

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[31] Cohen, Ed. "The Double Lives of Man: Narration and Identification in Late Nineteenth-Century Representations of Ec-centric Masculinities." *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle.* Sally Ledger, Scott McCracken. eds. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995. 85-114. Quote on page 88.

[32] For the contemporary anxieties attached to the self see for instance, Pfister, Manfred. *Die Modernisierung des Ich: Studien zur Subjektkonstitution in der Vor- und Frühmoderne*. Passau: Rother. Passauer Interdisziplinäre Kolloquien; 1, 1989.

[33] Cf. Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality. The Use of Pleasure.* Vol.2, Harmondsworth: Viking, 1985; Foucault, Michel. "Truth, Power, Self. An Interview with Michel Foucault." *Technologies of the Self.* Martin, Luther H., Gutman Huck and Patrick H. Hutton. eds. London: Tavistock, 1988. See also chapter II.3.2. of this thesis.

[34] I will comment upon this issue to a greater detail below. Grosskurth's own preconceptions about 'homosexuality' and 'homosexuals' transpire from her biography of Symonds published before the manuscript of the *Memoirs* was freed of the citation ban and could be published.
Cf. Grosskurth, Phyllis. *John Addington Symonds. A Biography*. London: Longmans, 1964.

identity forms the backbone of the autobiographic text, the text also probes the limits of *knowing* the self *for what he was*. In this way, *Memoirs* raise the question of adequate means of expressing such knowledge of the self and eventually challenge the epistemology of sex which has operated as its informing discursive framework. The epistemological quandaries Symonds experiences in the process of autobiographical writing open the space for the self to engage in a critical interaction with the technologies of domination. Nevertheless, the very passages that reflect upon the regime of truth that measures the text's (and the self's) "veracity" in terms of its sincere disclosure of sex, have been cut out of the edited version of the *Memoirs*.

The objective of the discussion here is twofold. First, we must examine how the technology of sex shapes Symonds's autobiographic account and how it directs the focus of Symonds's narrative. Second, we need to look at Symonds's awareness of the epistemic and representational limits of self-account that has been directed by the imperative to disclose "the secret which [he] carried" (PG 102, MS 156). Further, Symonds realises the limited scope of his self-representation and becomes aware of "the power of discourse to produce what it names."[35]

IV.2.1. Speak Out!

> 'In his life the man never spoke out', they will assert. 'He cherished an engrossing preoccupation, an absorbing and incurable proclivity, which found no outlet except in furtive self-indulgence, which had to be suppressed and hidden out of sight, although it flamed within him in the foreground of all vision, rendering him comparatively indifferent and therefore apparently equitable to everything which lay outside that fiery circle of his inmost self.'
>
> (PG 217-8, MS 425)

This caveat 'they' would raise against him, exemplifies the ambivalences that beset the *Memoirs*. On the one hand, Symonds finds himself subjected to the imperative to speak about himself, to 'speak out'; he perceives himself as subjected to the imperative to do "the work of

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For retrospective (re)formulation of her aims and objectives as an editor and publisher of Symonds's *Memoirs* see also "Bringing Symonds out of the Closet: Some Recollections and Reflections." *John Addington Symonds: Culture and the Demon Desire.* Pemble, John. ed. London: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2000. 170-178.

self-delineation" (PG 278, MS 559) that would "describe [him] as accurately and candidly as [he] was able" (PG 182, MS 360), and that would characterise his "inborn insanity" (PG 276, MS 547), his "incurable malady" (PG 281, MS 561), "uncontrollable bias of [his] nature" (PG 202, MS 387), the "somewhat rare aberration" (PG 64, MS 69), the "abnormal desire" (PG 276, MS 548), and the "congenial bias of [his] sexual instinct" (PG 136, MS 230). On the other hand, Symonds is well aware that the practice of self-inspection that the speaking-out entails only intensifies the "engrossing preoccupation" that renders him indifferent to the world outside of his self-inspective gaze. The self-engrossment of his self-presentation, represents a further challenge to his contest to negotiate between his man-oriented sexuality on the one hand, and his gender identity as a man on the other. Responding to the imperative to speak out is thereby complicated by Symonds's "fantasmatic quest for a non-effeminate intermasculine sexuality"[36] as well as by his fantasmatic attempt to fashion his sexual identity as both a 'homosexual' and masculine. With its emphasis upon gender 'inversion' and/or its implication of 'perversity,' the discourse of sexology poses a dilemma for Symonds. It provides him with a legitimation and an epistemic system to articulate and define his sexual otherness, however it simultaneously forecloses representation of anything else than this 'otherness'. The self-fashioning in terms of a "type of character" that the sexological discourse offers simultaneously puts to test the genre/gender limits of autobiography and Symonds's attempts to self-fashion himself as a masculine man.

> With regard to Ulrichs, [....] I should certainly be tabulated as a Mittel Urning, holding a mean between the Mannling and Weibling [....] But in this sufficiently accurate description of my attitude, *I do not recognize anything which justifies the theory of a female soul. Morally and intellectually, in character and taste and habits, I am more masculine than many men I know who adore women. I have no feminine feeling for the males who rouse my desire.* The anomaly of my position is that I admire the physical beauty of men more than women, derive more pleasure from their contact and society, and am stirred to sexual sensations exclusively by persons of the male sex.
>
> (PG 65, MS 71; emphasis added)

[35] Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomemology and Feminist Theory." *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*. Case, Sue-Ellen. ed. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990. 270-283. Quote on page 274.
[36] Craft, *Another Kind of Love*, 19.

IV.2.2. 'Case XVIII'?[37]

Parallel to his literary and critical work, John Addington Symonds wrote profusely on the subject of love between men. Apart from composing erotic poetry and construing historical and cultural lineages of intermasculine bonding, he also composed and privately distributed two treatises dealing with man to man erotic and/or sexual attachments. The first treatise – *A Problem in Greek Ethics*[38]– appeared in 1883. Significantly, Symonds's second attempt to approach the issue of same-sex desire – *A Problem in Modern Ethics* – changes both the mode of its address and its focus.[39] Its subtitle – *Being an Inquiry into the Phenomenon of Sexual Inversion Addressed Especially to Medical Psychologists and Jurists* – mirrors Symonds's wish to engage in a critical debate with the sexological discourses that were becoming dominant. Consequently, in a letter addressed to Edward Carpenter, Symonds recognises the need to link himself with the 'objective' knowledge of science in order to be able to approach a broader public in his planned publication. This resulted in cooperation with Havelock Ellis and in the co-authored work *Sexual Inversion*.[40]

Symonds's different attempts at critical and prosaic confrontations with the issue of male-to-male relationships reflect the increasing epistemological authority of sexology. The second of Symonds's treatises was finished alongside Symonds's final revisions of the *Memoirs*. Therefore, it must be examined how the sexological discourses and the epistemology of the sex operate within Symonds's autobiographic personal narrative. Further, how do they affect Symonds's self-presentation? And what kind of subject do these discourses and epistemic structures construe?

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[37] Ellis, Havelock. *Sexual Inversion*. *Studies in Psychology of Sex.* Vol.I. London: University Press, 1897.
[38] Originally written in 1873 under the title *Studies of Greek Poets.*
[39] Written in 1889, published in 1891 in 100 copies that Symonds himself distributed privately, 2nd printing in 1896; reprinted for instance in Lauritsen, John. ed. *Male Love. A Problem in Greek Ethics and other writing.* New York: Pagan Press, 1983.
[40] Symonds writes, "My dear Carpenter, [….] I am glad that H. Ellis has told you about our project. I never saw him. But I like his way of corresponding on this subject. And I need somebody of medical importance to collaborate with. Alone, I could make but little effect – *the effect of an eccentric*." Interestingly, this piece of correspondence also illustrates the difference of concepts and focus both men had in the approach to the topic of 'sexual inversion.' Symonds claims, "the only difference is that [Ellis] is too much inclined to stick to the neuropathical theory of explanations. But I am whittling that away to a minimum. […] I mean to introduce a new feature into the discussion, by giving a complete account of homosexual love in ancient Greece…the phenomenon has to be studied from a different point of view from that of psycho-pathology." Symonds, John Addington. *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*. Herbert M. Schueller and Robert I. Peters. eds. 3 vols. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1967-69; Quote in Vol. 3, on pages 797-8; emphasis in the original.
For a discussion of this collaboration see: Koestenbaum, Wayne. *Double Talk: The Erotics of Male Literary Collaboration*. New York, London: Routledge, 1989.

The scientific discourses have had an identifiable and a noteworthy lure for the subjects that fall outside of the matrix of cultural intelligibility – be it 'homosexuals', 'transsexuals' or other 'queers.' This has been documented by the promptness and urgency with which they have responded to the emerging scientific explanations. As Jennifer Terry argues, the major enticement of the sexological epistemology for queers has consisted in its explanatory and justifying force. Terry coins the ambivalent relationship that this alliance evolves as "the paradox of seduction and repulsion."[41] The force of the sexological epistemology manifests itself in the response of the homosexual subjects who, at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, deliberately supplied their biographies to students of sex. In this way, their life stories were re-cast into the case studies and illustration of sexual 'abnormalities' and greatly substantiated the credibility of sexology.[42] In a kind of retroactive effect, these case histories provide a mirror of self-recognition to those who are yet to 'know' themselves as sexually different. As Klaus Müller argues, "die biographische Prothese," a typified biographical design becomes established through this circular mechanism.[43] Again, it is allegedly its enabling and strategic function which motivates the queer subjects to fall back on this biographic model design in their quests for identity as well as in their portrayals of the self.[44]

Symonds's interactions with the sexological discourse reflect the many occasions of his privileged access to the sexological knowledge as well as his educational training that allows him to engage in critical discussion. He does not simply reiterate the 'scientific' knowledge of

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[41] Terry, Jennifer. "The Seductive Power of Science in the Making of Deviant Subjectivity." *Posthuman Bodies.* Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston. eds. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. 135-161.

[42] Alongside of Symonds, also Edward Carpenter, another prolific author on the issue of sex and man-to-man sexuality, composed a biographic case study that was published in *Sexual Inversion*. It was through Symonds and his 'homosexual' contacts that Ellis could attain such an amount of original and previously unpublished case histories from English men. For his part, Edward Carpenter also received a large amount of self-accounts from queers who had recognised themselves in his books on the 'intermediate type'. These letters are collected in the Carpenter Archive in Sheffield.

[43] Müller, Klaus. "Die historische Konstruktion des Homosexuellen und die Codierung der Geschelchterdifferenz" *Das Geschlecht der Moderne. Genealogie und Ärcheologie der Geschlechterdifferenz.* " Hannelore, Bublitz. ed. Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1998; See also Müller, Klaus. *Aber in meinem Herzen sprach eine Stimme so laut. Homosexuelle Autobiographien und medizinische Pathographien im 19. Jahrhundert.* Berlin, 1991.

Conversely, the study of Bernice Hausman documents that the 'case histories' of transsexuals that accompany the medical and pathologising accounts of transsexuality serve as the biographic muster design that the transsexuals not so much try to live up to, as to deploy in their communication with the authorities and institutions that have the potency to credit or withhold from them the access to the plastic surgery they want and need.

Hausman, Bernice. *Changing Sex: Transsexualism, Technology, and the Idea of Gender*. Durham, N.C.; London: Duke University Press, 1995.

[44] Cf. Müller, *Die historische Konstruktion des Homosexuellen,* 154.

'homosexuality.' As the following quote demonstrates, some of Symonds's comments are saturated with irony.

> It does not appear to me that either Ulrichs or the school of neuropathical physicians have solved the problem offered by individuals of my type. The 'neuropathic grandmother' is too common an occurrence in modern families to account for what is after all a somewhat rare aberration of sexual proclivities; and the hypothesis of a female soul shut up within a male body savours of bygone scholastic speculation.
>
> (PG 64, MS 68)

Furthermore, Symonds emphatically validates the epistemic authority of his life experience over the scientific models and theories of 'sexual inversion' and 'homosexuality.'[45] The note which Symonds inserted in the page margin during his later revisions of the manuscript in December 1891 asserts,

> This was written by me at Venice at 1889. I had not studied the cases of sexual inversion recorded by Casper-Liman, Ulrichs and Krafft-Ebing. Had I done so, I should not perhaps have dealt with my personal experience so diffusely as I have done in this chapter. *What I wrote, I now leave as it stands. It forms a more direct contribution to the psychology of sexual abnormality than if I were to mix up with the discussions of theories unknown to me at the time of writing.*
>
> (PG 182, MS 360; emphasis added)

However, these examples of Symonds's agency in negotiating the meaning of his sexual experience do not disprove the important role the discourse of sexology and the specific epistemology of sex play in term's of his capability to articulate the 'unrepresentable' experience. The discursive framework John Addington Symonds chooses for his retrospective self-account is set by his ambition to portray "an evolution of a somewhat strangely constituted character" (PG 61, MS 62). The way Symonds formulates the legitimation for his self-focused presentation clearly deploys the discourse of sexology as its point of reference.

> I wanted to supply material for the ethical psychologist and the student of mental pathology, by portraying a man of no mean talents, of no abnormal depravity, whose life has been perplexed from first to last by passion – natural, instinctive, healthy in his own particular case – but morbid and abominable from the point of view of the society in which he lives – persistent passion for the male sex.
>
> (PG 64, MS 68)

[45] Ed Cohen argues that the textualisation of the evolutionary narrative which Symonds deploys in the *Memoirs* provides him with the "possibility for a deeper inquiry beyond and behind the limitations of biologically derived theories and presumptions." On the face of this, Cohen judges Symonds's usage of scientific discourses of sex as merely "rhetorical."
Cohen, "The Double Lives of Man," 95.

This, as well as the fact that the *Memoirs* construes its main focus to the portrayal of the development of "somewhat rare aberration of sexual proclivities" (PG 64, MS 68), contradicts Ed Cohen's assertion that Symonds's narrative uses scientific discourses only as a rhetorical device.[46] Crediting only a formal and/or "rhetorical" importance to the ways specific discourse of sex is deployed in the text, ignores the performative potential of the discourse and its ability to generate both the meaning and the subject. It brushes over the fact of how much Symonds's own understanding of his (sexual) experiences is informed by the epistemology of sex, and how this knowledge shapes both his account as well as his self-awareness. The explanatory force that Symonds finds in the epistemology of sex is reflected in the following statement,

> When I wrote th[e] recollections of my earliest sexual impressions, I was not aware how important they were for the proper understanding of *vita sexualis*, and how impossible it would have been to omit them from a truthful autobiography."
> (PG 64, MS 68)

The importance of the sexological discourse reflects in the way Symonds's autobiographic narrative draws upon the biographic model design, fashioning his personal life story into a story of an "evolution of a character," a biographic narrative of "a type of character." The preface written at the outset of the writing project, in 1889, mentions "a scientific student of humanity" as a possible addressee of the text, however it is only alongside of a "friend" and a "fellow creature" who constitute other members of the imagined audience (PG 30, MS 1). However, in the process of the text composition, it seems Symonds gradually imagines himself to be engaged in a more acute dialogue and/or argument with "a scientific student of humanity" than with the other members of the previously envisioned audience. Thus, it appears that Symonds gradually passes from the assertion that his is "a singular life history" (PG 281, MS 561) that cannot be related "in set phrases" (PG 30, MS 1-2), towards the claim of representative character of his own history.

> When I wrote [this] I have not yet read the autobiographies of *Urnings* printed in Casper-Liman's *Handbuch der Gerichtlichen Medicin,* in Ulrich's 'Numa Humantius' various tracts, notably in *Memmon,* and in Prof. Krafft-Ebing's

[46] Cohen, "The Double Lives of Man," 95.

> *Psychopathia Sexualis*. I have recently done so, and am now aware that my history is only one out of a thousand.
>
> (PG 281, MS 561)

The closing of the autobiography only accentuates this shift to a sort of general biographic representation of a 'type of person'. That what has been so far staged as a very particular life drama becomes transformed into a detached, impersonal synopsis of a life-history.

> A town-bred boy, burdened with physical ailments, shy and sensitive, above the average in mental faculty, but ill-adapted to the ordinary course of English education. Emotion wakes in him; and just when the first faint stirrings of sex before the age of puberty are felt, he discerns the masterful attraction of the male…
>
> (PG 281-2, MS 561-2)

The exclamation that concludes these passages enquiring about the relevance of this life story, "What is the meaning, the lesson, the conclusion to be drawn from this *biography*?" (PG 283, MS 563; emphasis added), represents a further indication of this transformation towards a generic biography.

IV.2.3. The Discursive Troubles with the "Truthful Autobiography"[47]

"I was […] scrupulous about telling the exact truth."[48]

Having tackled the aspects in which Symonds's autobiography draws upon the specific epistemology of sex, it is important to discuss the discursive troubles this very epistemology causes to Symonds's self-presentation. The discursive difficulty Symonds faces in his autobiographic self-account is ingrained in the dilemma installed by his own self-disclosure. On the one hand, Symonds subjects himself to the "the work of self-delineation" (PG 278, MS 559), on the other, he reflects that such a speech act (as well as the reiteration of the discourses of sexology) brings him perhaps too close to a 'case study' of sexual inversion/ 'perversion' and tests the limits of the autobiographic genre, as well as the limits of his self-fashioning.

Significantly, the question of "veracity," 'truth' represents the key problem issue in composing the autobiography. The *Memoirs* are impelled by the imperative to know and say the truth about one's sex. And as Symonds notes, the truth of sex is engrained and has to be

[47] Symonds, PG 64, MS 68.

read out of every minor detail of his life. "When the whole interest of a life centres, not in action, but in mental development and moral experience, *truth becomes imperatively necessary with regard to points of apparent insignificance*" (PG 61, MS 62; emphasis added). And yet, his autobiography illustrates the difficulties Symonds experiences when he composes the autobiography too closely around the *truth* of *sex.*

Even the second chapter of the manuscript, entitled *Containing material which none but students of psychology and ethics need peruse,* reflects this ambivalence. As much as it invokes the authority of the sexological discourse and its discursive power to provide the *Memoirs* with legitimation, Symonds's introductory sentence strives to dissociate this chapter from the rest of the autobiography. This indicates that Symonds is well aware that the information he encloses in the chapter virtually transgresses the genre framework of an autobiographic self-presentation of a (respectable) man. He says, "[t]he plan of these memoirs, which are intended to describe the evolution of a somewhat abnormally constituted individual, *obliges me to interpolate a section here which might otherwise have been omitted with satisfaction to myself*" (PG 61, MS 62; emphasis added). The following quote expresses similar concern, "I am glad to close this section, in which, after long reflection, I have set down what *I know to be absolutely certain facts* about the development of sex in me..." (PG 63, MS 67; emphasis added).

Reading Symonds's *Memoirs*, Christopher Craft exclaims, "[b]efore long you will find yourself entertaining a fantasy of metalepsis, a dream of historical reversal: *it is obvious, Symonds has been reading Foucault"* (1). If Symonds's autobiography "unfolds like the efflorescence of a Foucauldian paradigm" (1), and brings a detailed and obsessive description of the movements of Symonds's desire and his probing self-analysis of his sexual instinct, we can argue that Grosskurth' incisions make such a dream of historical reversal possible. In the following, some of the manuscript parts that do not appear in the published edition will be discussed.[49]

[48] Symonds, PG 60, MS 61.

[49] At this point I wish to emphasise that rather than in pointing out the potential inadequacies and/or lapses of Grosskurth's work, I am concerned with the discursive logic that lead her to consider some of Symonds's self-reflections insignificant, and to valorise other parts of the manuscript as central to the representation of the 'homosexual.'

To the close of his manuscript Symonds includes a short chapter entitled "Life at Clifton House 1870 – 1877" that focuses on "domestic events" (MS 507). Interestingly, the chapter approaches the question of "what he really was" (MS 501) from a new perspective. It interrogates and challenges the certainty and intentness with which the narrative so far positions the answer to the query on the interface of self, sex and truth. The danger that the *Memoirs* miss the appointed aim, i.e. to fashion the "truthful autobiography," resides, as Symonds reflects, in his failure to balance the focus on his inner life with the representation of his 'external' life.

> It is not veracity in which self-written memoirs fail. [One] is so engrossed in what have been the main preoccupation of his individual self, that he forgets how small a part those all-important things played *in his [contact] with the world*.
>
> (MS 501; emphasis added)

Thus the defect of an attempt of the autobiographer "to be true and self-presenting" is that he "forgets how much of his life was made up of *quite common stuff*." "The neglect of qualifying considerations" results in "the exclusion of *the general stuff of humanity*" (all quotes MS 502; emphasis added), and in the inaptitude to record the "circumambient atmosphere" of one's life, the "little daily doings or […] the myriad touches of fact and behaviour, which in their combination with deeper psychical preoccupation, *constitute a living man*" (MS 502; emphasis added).

The heart of the problem seems to be contained in the following paradox; the interest in the self and/or the engrossing wish to tell the truth about oneself (MS 502) might result in the "distortion of the truth" (MS 220v); the autobiography might be "too veracious" and thus ironically fail in presenting the truth of "what [the person] really was" (all quotes MS 501).

> I cannot proclaim that I was helpful to my neighbours, merry with my friends, thoughtful and kind and watchful in my family. It is impossible for me so fully to perceive myself as to make it obvious that those who lived nearest to me in everyday existence, had no conception of my sexual battles, and regarded me […] as a writer of books and as a practical authority and a source of stimulation and animation.
>
> (MS 502)[50]

In as much as they expose the performative effects which the discourse (and epistemology) of sex has on the retrospective (re)formulation of Symonds's sexual/gender identity, these

reflections represent a truly fascinating example of the agency of a 'queer' subject. Symonds's reflections over the limits of 'truthfulness' of his autobiography reveal that he has become very much aware of the restraints the discursive regime of the epistemology of sex, within which (only) he is capable of composing an account of his sexuality, represents for his self-account. It is only through the reiterative citations of sexological discourses that Symonds's 'sexual otherness' can become intelligible; nonetheless these discourses allow only very specific formulations (and fashionings) of his subjectivity. Symonds's doubts concerning the veracity of his "truthful autobiography" convey his realisation that the autobiographic account he has so far produced is selective, incomplete and arbitrary and that it does not (and cannot) take in all of the life he himself holds important. In this moment, Symonds appears to recognise that the practice of self-writing, governed by the imperative to 'speak out,' is predisposed. More than that, Symonds's claim that he has been turning himself into a "psychological monster" (MS 503), uncovers the immense force of a discourse to create what it apparently only names. Symonds's attempt to conceptualise the performative nature of his self-writing represents the measure of his own reflexivity of the process in which 'he' is being constituted as a specific subject.

Furthermore, Symonds's uneasiness with his self-account relates explicitly and expressly to the record of "his contact with the world," and to the fact that the discursive framing of his autobiography affects a complete "exclusion of the general stuff of humanity […] quite common stuff […] [and] the myriad touches of fact and behaviour [….] [that] constitute a living man." Here, Symonds touches upon the distinctions between public/private, general/particular, universal/specific, common/extraordinary (strange), i.e. upon the corner-stone binaries which are gender specific and which have been crucial for the construction of further binary, that of heterosexuality/homosexuality.[51] Symonds's concern with the veracity of the *Memoirs* involves precisely the performative effects of the reiterative practice. On the one hand, this allows him to express his 'sexual difference,' on the other, however, confers upon him a subject-position which eventually disables him from construing his identity otherwise than in terms of this very difference, challenging thus his identity of a masculine

[50] Note that Symonds can achieve and articulate such self-distancing only via reiteration of gendered definition of 'masculinity.'
[51] Cf. for instance Sedgwick, *Epistemology;* Watney, Simon. "Queer Epistemology: Activism, 'Outing', and the Politics of Sexual Identities." *Critical Quarterly.* 36.1. (1993): 13-27.

man. The only intelligible subject-position, allowed him by the regime of such a discourse, is that of a character defined and exhausted in the "deeply rooted perversion of sexual instinct" (PG 281, MS 561). The discursive limitation Symonds is forced to accept in order to disclose his love for men bereave the account of his life of its "circumambient atmosphere" (MS 501), and of the insignificant and the commonplace, as well as of the portrayal of the complex networks of his familiar and friendly contacts. The enforced "pure sincerity" (MS 501), self-fixation and the constriction of the focus of "the truthful autobiography" on the detailed disclosure of *sex* leads him – as he realises – to "pain[t] a portrait which his most intimate friends repudiate" (MS 501). Coming to realise the flaw of his memory work, Symonds attempts "as far as possible, to correct the inevitable short comings" (MS 503).

> I must now proceed to chronicle the small bee or my uneventful life. The transition from an epoch of work and of emotion to another epoch has to be effected by interpolating a record of facts which have nothing [important] or significant in themselves. *This is the only way in which I can supply the element of atmosphere, and evade the artistic error of depicting a* ***psychological monster****.* [….] This is what I mean by the want of atmosphere in autobiographies written with *a deprived purpose.*"
>
> (MS 503; emphases added)

IV.2.4. "Bringing Symonds Out of the Closet;" Or: Constructing the 'Homosexual'

"Part of his attraction lies for us in his struggle with his *demons*. That he managed to accommodate them as effectively as he did is a triumph *of a kind.*"[52]

Before turning to consider Symonds's negotiations of his gender identity, it is important to note – however briefly – some of the epistemological (and political) issues that the edition of Symonds's *Manuscript* manifestly reveals. Symonds's *Memoirs* has become a part of the canonical body of self-accounts of men loving men.[53] With the view to the symbolical weight of these texts for constructions of queer cultural memory, it is essential to address at least the most problematic assumptions Grosskurth presents in her work on the manuscript. To illustrate the import of this issue, we can quote Paul Monette's autobiography, another seminal text in

[52] Grosskurth, "Bringing Symonds Out," 178.
[53] Cf. Cady, "Symonds, John Addington"
Robinson, Paul. *Gay Lives: Homosexual Autobiography from John Addington Symonds to Paul Monette*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1999; Buckton, Oliver. *Secret Selves. Confession and Same-Sex Desire in Victorian Autobiography.* The University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

constructions of gay self-awareness, accentuating the interdependence of individual and collective sexual identity.

> I finally see how our lives align at the core, if not in the sorry details. I still shiver when a gay brother or sister tells of that narrow escape …yes, yes, yes goes a voice in my head, it was just like that for me…
>
> I do not trust my own answers any more. […] But I find myself combing the past these days, dreaming dreams without sleep, puzzling over my guys, the gay and the straight and the in-between. [54]

I want to assert that the editing of the *Memoirs* has operated the intrinsically phobic discourse that underlies the 'epistemology of homosexuality.' Firstly, I find Grosskurth's approach to the text and her work as an editor as caught up in a homophobic double-bind. On the one hand, it is directed by the imperative and obsessive ambition to disclose and reveal 'the truth' of Symonds's life; in other words, to bring him 'out.' She takes a severely critical stance on Brown's previous biographical portrayal of Symonds, ignoring completely the historical and cultural context of the publication. Grosskurth states, "Brown had been extremely hypocritical, in my view, to suggest that Symonds's *problem* (sic) had been religious doubt. Why bother to publish such a misleading account?"[55] In the same breath, however, she professes that Symonds's "obsessive" speech and focus on his sexual "problem" represents a severe detriment to the quality of the *Memoirs*. It would have been much better, Grosskurth seems to imply, had he not focused his self-account around the issue.

> A reader may experience a sense of frustration because *if Symonds had not been preoccupied with an obsessional theme, he might have produced a work of art of the first order*. [….] If one encounters Symonds only though his *Memoirs*, the overriding effect is that of a man tortured and tormented by his sexual obsession. [….] an autobiography consisting chiefly of cogitation and self-analysis presents as distorted an imprint as one which only describes things seen and done.
>
> (PG 17-18; emphasis added)

Here, Grosskurth voices the paradoxical (and phobic) demand to know and not to know; the paradoxical demand that queers speak and yet keep their queerness to themselves, keep it private, safely behind the closet doors.[56] The "invert" (PG 22) and the "pathology of homosexuality" (PG 11) that Symonds – in Grosskurth's vision – embodies requires him to both

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[54] Monette, Paul. *Becoming a Man. Half a Life Story*. London: Abacus, 1994. Quote on page 3.
[55] Grosskurth, "Bringing Symonds Out," 172.
[56] Cf. Watney, Simon. "Queer Epistemology;" Bunzel, Matti. "Outing as a Performance/Outing as Resistance: A Queer Reading of Austrian (Homo)Sexualities." *Cultural Antropology.* 12.1. (1997): 129-151.

come out and (re)assign himself to compulsory privacy. The editorial cuts undertaken on the body of Symonds's manuscript are larger than Grosskurth acknowledges, even if not as dramatic as Sarah Heidt asserts. The significance of the editing interventions lies elsewhere; most specifically in the way they draw upon and reiterate the epistemology that construes 'the homosexual subject.' The omissions from Symonds's manuscript affected some of his travel writing and most of the poetry pieces that Symonds originally included in the manuscript. Entries from his wife's diary, letters written to his sisters, notes written to friends, account of himself written by his governess and most importantly the chapter that has been discussed above were all omitted from the edited version of the *Memoirs*. Thus, the features of Symonds's text that Grosskurth perceives as the biggest flaws of the text, and which she identifies as the telling symptoms of the 'pathological' self-concern, and – by extension – pathology of 'homosexuality,' are to a great deal affected by her own incisions in the original text.[57] Perhaps, Grosskurth's interventions do not involve a dramatic change in tone or content, but they most significantly affect the narrative focus. Through her interventions into the text, Grosskurth has cut all passages where Symonds attempts to reach outside of the closet. She judges Symonds on account of his self-centeredness, "[h]e is not concerned with rendering his life as a *gestalt,* a rich composite of perceptions of the external world blended with personal reflection" (PG 29), and yet she eliminates his reflections from travels or wanderings that involve perceptions of the external world.[58] She also erases the "correct[ing] external information" (MS 501) Symonds attaches to the manuscript in the form of accounts of himself produced by people close to himself (his wife and his governess).[59] In this way, Grosskurth erases all moments which problematise and complicate the straightforward equation between *sex, truth,* and *self.*

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[57] Grosskurth accentuates the note of 'pathology' already in the introduction to the *Memoirs*, as she equates Symonds's desire for men with an effect of his childhood trauma and his "spoiled identity."
She remarks, "[c]onvinced as he was, however, of the congenital bias of his nature, it never crossed his mind that an infantile trauma might have been responsible for his condition [and] […] might have left him with deep psychological scars" (PG 17).

[58] Note as well that Grosskurth reiterates the overtly gendered binary of the private/public that demands the *masculine* self to engage with the public sphere and with the external world.
Furthermore, claiming that Symonds does not engage with the issues of the 'external' world, Grosskurth operates another gendered definition of what does and what does not count as the 'external world' (i.e. the world associated with political and economic matters).

[59] Significantly, Symonds introduces his wife's diary note that concerns their courtship as an opportunity to get away from the oppressive self-inspection. "For once […] I shall drop the hateful *I* and *me*, and let the reader see me, not as I saw or see myself. But as a far superior, happier and divine being – a pure and beautiful and a steadfast woman – saw me, when she deigned to love me" (MS 272).
The account written by the governess reflects how baffled she was by Symonds's request,
"Now, I hold, you will gather some notion of what you were then. I could go on for a long time in the same strain – don't you really remember what you were like in the least?" (MS 117-8).

IV.3. Symonds's Narrative of Masculinity

"I felt the necessity of growing into a natural man. [….] I wanted to do right. To be as one of those I loved and honoured, the nobler men I knew around me."[60]

It is the challenge to their gender identity, Judith Butler argues, that queer subjects most often have to face in encounters with homophobic denigrations.[61] The fact that homophobia often works through attributing a notion of a failed, damaged, abjected gender to homosexuals illustrates how much the dispositif of sex and the dispositif of gender rely upon each other in their regulatory power. 'Masculinity,' and the practices Symonds devises to construe his status as a 'masculine man,' constitute the subject of the following discussion. It explores the ways in which John Addington Symonds's self-narrative reflects the necessity to produce a gendered subject-position. First, the ways in which his love for men issues Symonds into confrontation with the dominant (and heterosexual) norms of 'masculinity' needs to be analysed. Second, the tropes and discursive means are discussed that Symonds deploys to subvert his position of 'sexual dissidence'[62] into a challenging criticism of the Victorian (homophobic) codes of masculinity. Against the background of the argument developed above, the following discussion will further concern the tension embedded in the *Memoirs* and point out how the narrative of "an evolution of a type" conflicts with the rivalrous narrative of 'becoming a man.'

Significantly, Symonds's exploration of his "inborn propensities" (PG 54; MS 45) coincides with, and in fact is juxtaposed, to the representation of his father, whom he considers the "rara avis" (PG 52; MS 42), "the fine specimen of English manhood" (PG 53; MS 44). Of course, the father "had no share" of Symonds's sexual ec-centricities[63] and/or his "sensibilities" (PG 54; MS 45). "How I, the son of such a father, came to what I am," Symonds asks himself (PG 54, MS 45).[64] The Oedipal structures that the text construes accentuate only further that in the act of naming and disclosing his sexual 'otherness,' Symonds confronts a challenge to his

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Further, Symonds's autobiographic reflections suggest that he was very much concerned with the question of who is capable of providing the more truthful version of one's auto/biography. Though he seems to favour the view that the self (himself) is the most authoritative source of truth on his own life, the autobiographer "presents fuller and more accurate conception of his moral and mental nature than the biography composed by a friend or stranger," he concedes that this self account has to be "corrected by external information regarding the author" (MS 501). His wife's and his governess's account as well as the fragments of his correspondence are perhaps inserted in order to provide this "external information."

[60] Symonds, PG 135, MS 229.

[61] Butler, Judith. *Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative*. New York and London: Routledge, 1997.

[62] Cf. Dollimore, Jonathan. *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1991.

gender identity, his 'being a man.'

IV.3.1. Becoming a Man

"I kept repeating: Wait! Wait! I will, I shall, I must!"[65]

The narrative of Symonds's life resounds with lamentations over his physical and intellectual incapacity and/or inadequacy, the futility of the life his ailing body forces him to lead, all of these expressions of Symonds's sentiment that he is failing in his performance as a man. As frequently, therefore, as complaining about being inadequate, Symonds's narrative strives to prove his self-determination and persistent effort to improve himself. Repeating tropes that are conventionally regarded as masculine, Symonds accentuates his strong-willed, strong-headed resolve to overcome his limitations, defying the suspicion of effeminacy that his conceded sexual 'aberration' and inadequacies of body and mind confer upon him.

> I tried to make the best of my defects. […] I strove […] to control the qualities I knew myself to have, to train and curb them, to improve them by attention [….] I have been gifted with obstinacy, in the face of physical and other disadvantages. This might also be described as courage or tenacity, or a determination to make the best of things, or a want of fastidiousness, impelling me to push my work forward in spite of obstacles, and without caring greatly how much it suffered owing to adverse circumstance.
>
> (PG 281-2, MS 425-7)

On the onset of his autobiographic portrayal of "an evolution of a somewhat strangely constituted character" (PG 61, MS 62), Symonds envisions to enclose the narrative within the framework of the three stages in a life of a man, where the "third exhibits the mature man in his development and in possession of his faculties" (PG 30, MS 1). Thus, the closing part of the narrative demonstrates the achieved maturity of 'manhood.'[66] These claims are

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[63] I borrow the tem "ec-centric" from Cohen's study.

[64] In *Bodies that Matter*, Butler argues that the enactment of the Oedipal structure might preclude one being positioned as a "feminised fag" (96). Hence, Symonds's emphasis upon his relationship with his father and this repetitive invocation of his father's authority might serve this end.

[65] Symonds, PG 86, MS 125.

[66] The efforts of Symonds to inscribe himself within definitions of masculinity document that becoming a man is not a deliberate act, but a response to the imperative to become a 'masculine man.'
Cf. Sussmann, Herbert. *Victorian Masculinities. Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995.
To accentuate the inessentiality of gender, Herbert Sussmann works with the concept of 'manhood.' This signifies (an illusionary) state of achieved manliness, a goal of the cultural process of "masculinisation" (13). Sussmann notes, "[Manhood] is not a condition achieved by all males and once reached [it is] exceedingly difficult to maintain. For nineteenth century men, manhood was conceived as an unstable equilibrium of barely controlled

underpinned by representations of restored physical health and competence, intellectual productivity, inner peace and balance that eventually surmounted Symonds's nervousness and states of "erethism." Also, Symonds emphasises that he has managed to fulfil the social roles of a man, i.e. those of a married man, father, publicly engaged figure, and of a person involved in charity to the lower classes. Nonetheless, the act of disclosure of the sexual 'otherness' produces such a strain upon the textual performance of masculinity, and upon his self-representation as a masculine subject, which this representation can only hardly surpass.

The Victorian society conceived the masculine self as a product of will and self-discipline and as an effect of a hard and difficult struggle against oneself.[67] In this respect, a new importance was assigned to a management of sexuality and sexual functions in the course of the nineteenth century.[68] In relation to masculinity, sexual functions were seen as to have a direct impact upon the preservation and development of a man's character and upon his gender identity. Sabine Mehlmann argues that the epistemological turn from 'man' as a universal gender- and sex-neutral signifier of a human being into gendered 'man' is connected with new power-knowledge regimes of sexuality.[69] With regard to the anxiety attached to gender identity of men-of-letters, both Herbert Sussmann and Eli Adams argue that due to its dubious 'effectiveness' and 'productivity' as well as the fact that it was mostly enclosed within the 'feminine'/'feminised' private sphere, the intellectual labour challenged the gender constructions of masculinity. Therefore, it was particularly the position of an intellectual, man-of-letters, which in Victorian society, amounted to intense negotiations in terms of self-

energy that may collapse back into the inchoate flood or fire that limns the innate energy of maleness, into the gender-specific mental pathology" (13).

[67] Cf. Sussmann, *Victorian Masculinities*; Adams, James Eli. *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Masculinity*. London: Cornell University Press, 1995; Dowling, Andrew. *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature.* Adlershot: Ashgate, 2001; Tosh, John. *A Man's Place. Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1999.

[68] Some of the sexological literature perceived male homosexuality as a result and/or prolongation of premature sexuality, onanism and masturbatory practices.
Cf. Acton, William. *The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs in Youth, in Adult Age, and in Advanced Life.* London: John Churchil, 1857; Kraft-Ebbing, Richard. *Psychopathia Sexualis*. Zuerich: A. Mueller, 1937; Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society.*

[69] Mehlmann states, "Aus dieser Perspektive ließe sich die Vergeschlechtlichung des Individuums als Prozess der Sexualisierung beschreiben." Mehlmann, Sabine. "Das vergeschlechtlichte Individuum – These zur historischen Genese des Konzeptes männlicher Geschlechtsidentität." *Das Geschlecht der Moderne. Genealogie und Archäologie der Geschlechterdifferenz.* Bublitz, Hannelore. ed. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1998. 95-119. Quote on page 99.

discipline and the self-regulation of sexual energy.[70] Apparently then, the representations of sexual discipline and self-regulations were of a heightened importance to Symonds as his masculinity had been challenged both as that of an intellectual and a representative of a sexual dissidence.

IV.3.2. 'Dipsychia' and the Critique of Bourgeois Masculinity

> The indulgence of any natural craving so as to injure the whole organism of the man, is sin. [....] The young man who has used his heart and lungs and all the sensations of vigorous virility that flow from their exercise for more than the proper strengthening and evolution of his physical force is on the wrong road. The young man who has used his sexual organs and all the exalted passions implicit in them for more than sober steady satisfaction of imperious desire, or for more than the consolidation of a durable love, is on the wrong road. *In each of these cases he runs the risk of disturbing that equilibrium of the man which is virtue and health, the violation of which is vice and disease.*
>
> (PG 250, MS 499a; emphasis added)[71]

It is no surprise that the suppression of the 'aberrant' sexual desire, and the strategies of self-disciplining, make up the dominant self-practice of Symonds's *Memoirs.* The ethical code of sexual self-management inherent in the bourgeois masculinity is deployed also as a point of reference when Symonds negotiates the terms of sexual im/propriety of his sexual relations with men. Referring to his first intermasculine sexual liaison, Symonds notes, "I now deliberately engaged in an *amour* with Norman […] the sensual element was held in check. Nothing occurred between us which the censorious could rightly consider unworthy of two gentlemen" (PG 194, MS 384).[72] While it was necessary to disprove the potential of

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[70] For the ways in which male sexuality and sexual purity conditioned male spirituality see Bradstock, Andrew, Gill, Sean, Morgan, Sue and Anne Hogan. eds. *Masculinity and Spirituality in Victorian Culture* London: Macmillan, 2000.

[71] Here, Symonds explicitly appeals to the Greek principle of temperance, and the notion of a "man as a whole, and playing his part in a larger whole" (PG 252, MS 499i). Nonetheless, it is its closeness to the Victorian discourses of balance and managerial economy, its inter-discursive links to the concepts of the regulation of the flow of productive energies and their profitability for effectiveness and quality of work, as well as to the achievement of masculinity and manhood that govern the use of sexual energies which makes it possible for Symonds to use this argument as a framework for his self-government.

[72] Note two more interesting matters: First, Symonds discusses the matters of his sexual attachment to men (and possibly also his physical attachment) with his wife quite openly. His "intimate friends" also became part of the familiar sphere for the time of the "friendship." Apparently, "the minimal difference" dividing the homosocial from the homoerotic relationships between men, and that, as Sedgwick argues, enabled the close and intimate relations between men, operates alongside of the new epistemology of sex. Cf. Sedgwick, *Between men*.
Second, Symonds's accounts make clear that it were his bonds with other middle-class men that rouse greatest amount of anxiety about their im/propriety and need of legitimation. His relations with men of lower social classes

intermasculine sexuality to threaten and endanger the position of heterosexual love,[73] the textual representation of self-management and sexual self-discipline is deployed as a strategic device to demonstrate the moral quality of "another kind of love."[74] Simultaneously, Symonds links the management of his own sexual desire, and its dissidence, with his gender performance and his masculine identity of a gentleman. The manuscript produces a serial assertion of Symonds's repulsion towards any sign of sexual indulgence, it also documents his attempt to discipline (i.e. eradicate) his own longings for men.[75] Nonetheless, as he argues, his own painful experience forces him eventually to articulate a dissenting position against the (sexual) norms attached to masculinity.[76] His experience reveals that, "Each has a point of strain which cannot be overpassed" (PG 250, MS 499c), and that the required repression of sexuality, and sexual desire, is essentially debilitating and thereby destructive.

Appealing to "the prevailing bourgeois ideology which readily and unambiguously equated social propriety – of both the class and gendered varieties – with somatic and economic well-being," [77] Symonds argues that healthy sexuality constitutes a condition for being a healthy man. Thus arguing for a sober use of the sexual energies, and "subordination of all bodily organs to the one purpose of a sustained life in health" (PG 250, MS 499d), "Symonds inverts this cultural logic on his own behalf."[78]

> [L]ooking backward from the vantage ground of middle life, I feel unable to explain the disastrous hold [passion] took upon my nature. […] Experience

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seem to have been relatively easily legitimized through class- and gender-specific structures of superiority and charity.

[73] Symonds here clearly relies upon the minimal distinction between the 'homosocial' and the 'homosexual' relations that Sedgwick defines in *Between Men*. He posits his relations with the men as harmful to or competing with their heterosexual bonds. With respect to his sexual congress with younger men, he emphasises that the act in no way changed their 'natural' preference for women. Note also the unspeakability of the sexual act manifested in the obtrusive repetition of the substitutive pronoun.

"When a young man whom I loved has become aware that I desired *this* pledge of comradeship, *this* satisfaction of my want, he never refused *it*, never showed that he disliked *it*. But I have not sought *it,* [...] unless I was aware that the man knew I was a friend and meant to hold by him. At that point he gave me *what* I desired, as a token of friendliness. *It* cost him nothing, and he saw that I took pleasure in *it*. Without altering his own instincts and appetites for the female, *it* enlarged his experience and was [...] no[t] without pleasure for himself. At all events *it* bloomed up like a spontaneous flower, from the conditions of our intercourse as comrades" (PG 278, MS 559; emphasis added).

[74] Craft, *Another Kind of Love*.

[75] See also my subsequent discussion of shame that I explicitly relate to sexuality and representation of sexual excess.

[76] "Experience of life, often extremely bitter, at times unexpectedly blissful, has taught me that there is nothing extraordinarily great in the greatest of achievements, nothing mean in the meanest of occupations: briefly that human life is not to be estimated by what men perform but by what they are. […] It is the duty of each to perform his own function as faithfully as he can; his privilege to obtain his pleasure where he finds it; his dignity to suffer pain as cheerfully as he is able" (PG 219, MS 427).

[77] Cohen, "The Double Lives of Man," 93.

[78] Cohen, "The Double Lives of Man," 93.

> teaches me that had I done so [acted on the desire], I should perhaps have sinned, perhaps involved myself in some scrape. But I should have emerged from the close unwholesome labyrinth of tyrannous desires and morbid thoughts in which I wandered [….] accumulating fuel for my own damnation.
>
> (PG 127; MS 213-214)

Parallel to the trope of a failing and incompetent body, Symonds deploys the trope of split subjectivity to document the actual destructive and corruptive effects of the over-wrought self-discipline and repression of sexual impulses. This trope of a divided self has made a powerful impact on the fin-de-siècle consciousness and the modern conceptions of the subject.[79] The cultural anxieties attached to this state of "dipsychia" – to use Symonds's own term – were to a considerable deal associated with the 'hidden,' 'secret' parts of one's (and particularly man's) life. Of course, this secret was predominantly coded as a sexual one.[80]

Giving this metaphoric representation a twist, it is not his secret desire and/or his sexuality (i.e. his transgression of 'masculinity'), but precisely his over-strained adherence to the norms of masculinity that Symonds represents as the source to the 'depraved' and 'diseased' state of his psyche. It is the over-discipline that leads Symonds into "the distinction in [his] character between an inner and real self and outer and artificial self" (PG 96; MS 141), and into a state of acute dipsychia.

> The result of my habitual reserve was that I now dissembled my deepest feelings, and only revealed those sentiments which I knew would pass the muster. Without meaning to do so, I came to act a part, and no one knew what was going inside me...
>
> (PG 81-82; MS 114)

Thus, as Cohen notes, Symonds represents himself to simultaneously confirm and to deviate from the preconceptions of bourgeois masculinity.[81] In his self-account, Symonds embodies the ethical dilemma the norms of masculinity represent for him. The enforced suppression of his sexual 'perversion' which he obediently follows results in nothing but a 'perversion' of a different (and possibly more unsettling) kind, as it plants a deep cleft into his personality,

[79] Cf. Pfister, Manfred. *Die Modernisierung des Ich;* Schabert, Ina. *Englische Literaturgeschichte: Eine Neue Darstellung aus der Sicht der Geschlechterforschung.* Stuttgart: Kröner, 1997.
[80] Showalter, Elaine. *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*. London: Virago, 1992.
[81] Cohen, "The Double Lives of Man," 95.

deviating from the notion of a unitary masculine self.[82] Textualising his 'perversity,' and 'dipsychia,' represents a "practice of transvaluation"[83] through which Symonds manages to transpose his own gender transgression onto the masculine norm.

> I have allowed myself to be an innovator, taking the principles of human sympathy and self-respect as my guides. At only one point I come into collision with conventional morality; and on this point I have felt it to be both my right and duty to act as I thought best." (PG 250, MS 499a)

> [T]he touch-stone [of direct appeal to life] had in my case to be an acted passion. [....] *When the moment came for inclination to assume her sway over my nature*, the criticism, intellectual work, moral relations immediately regained the meaning of reality. *They fell into their proper places. The man was restored to such health and energy as he could hope for after the exhausting errors of his earlier pilgrimage*.
>
> (PG 171; MS 328; emphasis added)

Furthermore, the deployment of the trope of dipsychia is significant in terms of the narrative possibilities that Symonds forges to articulate his self-consciousness. The cleft between the 'real identity' and the 'artificial appearance,' structures the narrative of Symonds's life and signalises Symonds's awareness that his autobiographic text transgresses the conventional boundaries of representability. As Cohen notes, "[h]e foregrounds the necessity for splitting open the dominant characterisation of (bourgeois male) subjectivity in order to engender a narrative affirmation of sexual and emotional intimacies," and "the effective solution […] to representational crisis" that Symonds sexuality and his masculine dilemma engenders "only as a double life."[84]

[82] As Cohen notes, within the prevailing discursive standards "the unitary male subject" constituted "the quintessential political, economic and sexual agent" (Cohen 91).
[83] Cohen, "The Double Lives of Man," 97.
Cohen claims: "The act of textualisation […] is […] a practice of transvaluation whereby the delineated self-representation recoups the author's transgressive ('monstrous') gender ideation on the side of the masculine norm."
[84] Cohen, "The Double Lives of Man," 94.

IV.4. Shame as a Practice of the Self

Apart from the (alternative) meanings that Symonds construes in his self-narrative, a further aspect of self-writing need to be discussed. The self-writing practice itself engenders an alternative space of agency and new possibilities of *being*/*becoming*. A considerable number of critical works which engage with Symonds's autobiography centre on the text's tropes of disclosure and revelation, or judge Symonds's text in terms of its frankness in sexual matters. This implies a certain bias in the interpretation and criticism of the text, as well as Symonds himself.[85] For instance, Paul Robinson prefaces his reading with statements about "agonizing compromises," "internalized repressions that were only gradually and imperfectly overcome" that, to his mind, mark Symonds's text. Further, he judges Symonds in terms of "sexual progress."[86] In contrast to such approaches, I wish to engage the very uncomfortable nature of the text and the tropes that are mostly seen as signs of 'internalised homophobia' or 'internalised repression.' With its emphasis upon the 'abnormality' and the "deeply rooted perversion of sexual instinct" (PG 281, MS 561), as well as the embarrassing nature of his existence, Symonds's *Memoirs* make a rather upsetting read. Therefore, I propose to consider these tropes not as expressions that reflect an inner state of Symonds's psyche, but conversely as a part of a specific performative practice.

The notions of performativity carry, as Sedgwick asserts, a lineage of two different concepts and discourses.[87] First, it is the concept of *performance* as a dramatic, theatrical event, and "Ereignis."[88] Second, it refers to speech act theories[89] and the potential of language to 'do' what it says. In this light, I perceive performances of shame as acts and/or practices that are both "dramatic" and "non-referential."[90] The tropes of illness, failure, inadequacy, physical as well as intellectual impotence that the text so abundantly deploys, will not be considered in their

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[85] For a thought-provoking discussion of the critical approach grounded in epistemologies of disclosure and/or exposure see: Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You're Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction Is about You." *Novel Gazing. Queer Readings in Fiction*. Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve, ed. Durham: Duke UP, 1997, 1-37.
Here, Sedgwick challenges what she perceives as the dominant mode in the Western tradition of thought of the last two centuries. This, Sedgwick argues, is informed by the "hermeneutics of suspicion" (18) and based upon "the paranoid trust in exposure" (19).
[86] Robinson, *Gay Lives,* all quotes page 4.
[87] Sedgwick, "Queer Performativity. Henry James's The Art of the Novel." *GLQ*, 1.1. (1993): 1-16. Cf. page 2.
[88] Cf. Fischer-Lichte, Erica. *Performativität und Ereignis.* Tübingen: Francke, 2003.
[89] Austin, John Langshaw. *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.
[90] Butler, "Performative Acts," 273.

referential function but conversely as utterances imbued with power to create certain effects and 'to do things.'

IV.4.1. The "Painful [Shameful] Circumstances;" Or: "Shame on You" – "Shame of Them" – "Shame on Me"

> Then again what hours and days and weeks and months of weariness I have endured by the alternate indulgence and repression of my craving imagination. What time and energy I have wasted on expressing it. How it has interfered with the pursuit of study. How marriage has been spoiled by it. What have I suffered in violent and brutal pleasures, snatched furtively with shame on my part, with frigid toleration on the part of my comrades, and repented with terror.
>
> (PG 190-1, MS 376-377)

Symonds's practice of self-writing is occasioned by confrontation with the heteronormative matrix, therefore the circuits of shame that embrace Symonds, establish a direct and privileged relationship with sexuality, gender and desire. If the heteronormative regime dares Symonds to define "what he really was" (MS 501), it simultaneously withholds from him the agency of self-definition. The subjectivity of those who self-identify as 'queers', Sedgwick argues, "is lodged in refusals or deflections of (or by) the logic of the heterosexual supplement."[91] It is hence not the speech act of "I do," but rather the illocution "shame on you," that Sedgwick considers as the possible opening for re-considerations of the agency of the queer subject. "The emergence of the first person, of the singular, of the present, of the active, and of the indicative are all questions, rather than presumptions, for queer performativity."[92]

The circuits of shame that encircle Symonds relate to his Love whose name is Shame.[93] The conferral of shame, as Symonds records it to be performed upon himself, is directly linked to his 'abnormal' desire. With its unexpected awakenings and its irrepressible nature, the desire for men frightens and humiliates him; it haunts him and it shames him. Any unawaited

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[91] Sedgwick, "Queer Performativity," 4.
[92] Sedgwick, "Queer Performativity," 4.
[93] 'What is thy name?' He said, 'My name is Love'/ Then straight the first did turn himself to me
and cried,/ 'He lieth, for his name is Shame,/ But I am Love, and I was wont to be/ Alone in this fair garden, till he came/ Unmasked by night; I am true Love, I fill/ The hearts of boy and girl with mutual flame,'/ Then sighing, said the other, 'Have thy will,/ I am the love that dare not speak its name!'
Douglas, Alfred. "Two Loves," Originally printed in *The Chameleon*, December 1894. *People with History. An Online Guide to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans* History*. <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/pwh/index.html>; See also Douglas's poem "In Praise of Shame." (Last visited 10 Nov 2006).

stimulus can "let out 'the wolf' again" and "pierc[e] the very marrow of [his] soul" (PG 187, MS 370). After these "awakening spasm[s] of desire," he feels "*humiliated*, frightened, gripped in the clutch of doom. [….] *Hallucinations of the senses crow[d] in [his] brain together with the pangs of shame*" (PG 188, MS 371; emphasis added). To document the shaming force of this juxtaposition between Love and the 'homosexual' Shame, note the following passage: "It cannot be doubted that the congenital aberration of the passions which I have described has been the poison of my life. […] I shall die without realising what constitutes the highest happiness of mortals, an ardent love reciprocated with ardour. This I could never enjoy, for […] I have never felt the sexual attraction of women" (PG 190, MS 374). In a diary note from 1889 which records his admiration for a peasant boy's beautiful hands, Symonds states, "then it flashed across my mind that no woman's hands – whether of duchess or milkmaid, maiden or married – had ever possessed for me such sexual attraction as these of the young peasant had" (PG 190, MS 375-6). After several years, when composing his autobiography, Symonds comments, "A man who feels like that has failed as certainly in finding life's chief boon as a repulsive hunchback has" (PG 190, MS 375-6).

The conferral of the 'homosexual' shame first forces Symonds into a hermetic and stultifying closet of silence and 'unspeakability'; at the same time incites him into practices of disclosure and self-writing which materialises in the *Memoirs*. With its emphasis upon self-justification and self-explication, the text is undoubtedly directly related to shame. The text is full of striking references to events that Symonds apparently experienced as painful and embarrassing, as well as references to his supposed inadequacy that likewise shames him. Nonetheless, the speech act of "shame on you" engenders an awkward situation of verblessness. "The absence of an explicit verb from 'shame on you' records the place in which the I, in conferring shame, has effaced itself and its own agency." The 'I' that is strangely withdrawn from the very act, projects shame upon another I, "an I deferred" that is to come into being. The 'I' that confers shame upon the 'you' is "never there as an active presence, only to be felt via the effects it exercises upon the 'you.'" It is the figurative defacement and/or elimination of agency of the instance that confers shame, inviting us to reconsider the agency of the queer subject onto whom shame has been conferred.[94] Becoming part of the bond that has been established via the speech act, the shamed subject finds

him/herself on its (re-)active end. Without belittling the oppressiveness of the heteronormative matrix that has been closeting queers, Symonds's autobiographical practice provides an opportunity to reassess the agency of the queer subject exposed to the conferral of shame. After all, as Sedgwick points out, shame is paired off with pride in a rather unstable binary. Even if it would be historically inappropriate to associate shame of the Victorian closet with the pride of post-Stonewall outing performances, it is viable to consider Shame in relation to its counterparts of Pride and Love, even (or perhaps precisely?) in the historical context of the homosexual panic.

The performance of shame relies on self-display and self-effacement, and activates a powerful element of theatricality. Performance (theatrical performance) as such engenders/represents a situation, a transformative moment, in which all the meaning becomes momentarily destabilised and reformulated. With respect to such transformative effect, re-readings of Symonds's assumed internalisation of the homophobic shame become plausible. In the light of queer performativity, textual expressions of shame appear as performative speech acts through which shame is (perhaps) being transformed into pride, love and/or self-love. It is its "near-inexhaustible source of transformational energy," its potential at resignification and re-appraising acts of appropriation that justifies the association of shame with queer politics.[95]

This chapter examines the effects of both the conferral of shame on the 'shamed' subject and the further speech acts this original performative act engenders. Hence, first focusing upon his (dynamic) positioning towards the inter-masculine sexuality and bonding, Symonds's interactions with the phobic conferral of shame will be examined. Second, the performance(s) of shame will be discussed as specific practices of the self. Particularly I will reflect their

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[94] All quotes Sedgwick, "Queer Performativity," 4.

[95] Sedgwick, "Queer Performativity," 4.
Sedgwick argues, "If queer is a politically potent term, which it is, that's because, far from being capable of being detached from the childhood scenes of shame, it cleaves to that scene as a near inexhaustible source of transformational energy" (*Queer Performativity* 4).
Talburt likewise accentuates the transformational potential of the queer politics of representation and self-definitions. She notes, "[Queer] does not copy past uses but draws on them for the creation of new meanings in contemporary contexts."
Talburt Susan, Steinberg R. Shirley. eds. *Thinking Queer: Sexuality, Culture, and Education.* New York and Berlin: Peter Lang, 2000. Quote on page 4.
See also Butler's definition of "queer" whose transformational and essential indefinable nature is, in her view, a sine qua non of its existence and critical potential. Butler, Judith. "Critically Queer." *GLQ*, 1 (1993): 17-32.

potential for creative reworking of the queer, "spoiled identity."[96] Thus, the performances of shame will be considered in terms of Symonds's relations to this own sexuality, and, most importantly, to himself.

Initially, we need to look at Symonds's narrative of "painful circumstances" and "painful incidents" of his life at colleges of Harrow and Oxford. The two chapters that recount Symonds's distress of his adolescence and young manhood, establish a stark contrast to the picture of a happy childhood with which the *Memoirs* open. Due to its emotionally charged nature, the account of Symonds's experiences at Harrow and Oxford occupies a central place in the manuscript. Likewise, it embodies one of the most explicit confrontations with the homophobic interpellation, and are hence a principal example of the performance of shame. When at Harrow, Symonds records to have been confronted with the materialisation of his inner and hidden desires and erotic dreams. "The earliest phase of my sexual consciousness was here objectified before my eyes; and I detested in practice what had once attracted me in fancy" (PG 96, MS 142). The visual explicitness of the acts between his schoolfellows shatters his elevated ideal of an aestheticised masculine body that had so far allowed him to articulate his desire.

> One thing at Harrow very soon arrested my attention. It was the moral state of the school. Every boy of good looks had a female name, and was recognised either as a public prostitute of some bigger fellow's 'bitch'. Bitch was the word in common usage to indicate a boy who yielded in his person to a lover. The talk in the dormitories [....] was incredibly obscene. Here and there one could not avoid seeing acts of onanism, mutual masturbation, the sports of naked boys on bed together. There was no refinement, no sentiment, no passion; nothing but animal lust in these occurrences. *They filled me with disgust and loathing.*
>
> (PG 94, MS 139; emphasis added)

In a hysteric act of self-recognition Symonds finds himself a target of the shaming illocution ("shame on you"); in reaction, he associates himself with the face-less (and homophobic) "I" that confers the shame and attempts to transpose the shame further away from himself. Symonds's description of Harrow and his schoolfellows resounds with expressions of "disgust" and "loathing," thus in a textual representation of the shameful acts "shame on you" is being transformed into "shame on them." Harrow is forcefully identified as the place of ultimate debasement. "I have seen *nothing more repulsive* in my life [….] I have seen *nothing*

[96] Goffmann, Erving. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, 1963.

more repulsive, I say…" (PG 95, MS 139v; emphasis added). The gesture of repulsion and disgust that Symonds performs here through the emphatic and reiterative professions of abhorrence is part of a gesture of abjection which is interwoven – as Julia Kristeva reveals – with self-identification.[97]

The narrative accounting for the "painful circumstances connected with [his] last year of [his] life at Harrow"[98] culminates with Symonds's involvement in a rather typical example of the "homosexual scandal"[99] of the 1890s. One of his school fellows intimates to him his "love affair" (PG 97, MS 145) with their college master. This leads Symonds to submit "this extraordinary revelation" to "casuistical analysis" (PG 97, MS 145), after which he comes to the conclusion that, "I was wrong in imagining that this species of vice formed only a phase of boyish immaturity. *I was disgusted* to find it in a man holding the highest position of responsibility [….] and whom I had been accustomed to regard as the pattern of my conduct" (PG 97, MS 145-46; emphasis added). [100] This – as he states – leads Symonds to act and eventually to disclose the whole matter to his father and other 'respectable' men. Of course, the scandal results in the master's resignation and departure from the school. It is the shame of the closet, the effect of the homophobic "shame on you" that affects so strong emotions and reactions in Symonds; the ambivalence of the familiarity and self-recognition he experiences in confrontation with the college master on the one hand, and the estrangement (or enforced dissociation) from him (and the desire) that stimulates Symonds's shame. This ambivalence and feelings of shame are intensified by the very fact that Symonds recognises himself and his own desire in the man he abhorred.

> Disgust, however, was mitigated by a dumb persistent sympathy. My own inclinations, the form which my erotic idealism had assumed, prevented me from utterly condemning --- .
>
> (PG 97, MS 145-46)

[97] Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror. An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia UP, 1982.
[98] The title of the chapter V of the *Memoirs*.
[99] Cf. Dellamora, *Masculine Desire,* 193.
[100] Again the manuscript documents how truly painful these events were for its writer and how equally problematic for its later editors. Both the names of the college master, and Symonds's Harrow friend involved in the case, were blackened out of the text. The name of the college master had been cut out, leaving an awkward incision in the page. I could not establish whether the names were blackened out by Symonds himself, or whether these censorial erasures were undertaken by Brown. Later, the black smudges were erased, as I presume, by Grosskurth who gives the full names in the edited versions of the *Memoirs*. However, she makes no note in this respect. For my part, I decided not to give the names of the persons involved.

> To complicate matters, I felt a deeply rooted sympathy with ---. If he had sinned, it had been by yielding to passions which had already mastered me.
>
> (PG 116-117, MS 185)

It is precisely "the haemorrhage of painful identification with the misbehaving man," the double movement that shame makes "towards painful individuation [and] toward uncontrollable relationality,"[101] which leads his course of action. "[T]his fact instead of making me indulgent, determined me to tell the bitter truth. At that period I was not cynical. I desired to overcome the malady of my own nature" (PG 116-117, MS 185).

In order to surpass the static notion of internalised homophobia, the speech acts of "shame on them" through which Symonds strives to dissociate himself from what he significantly represents as the 'threat' to and 'perversion' of English masculinity,[102] need to be viewed as part of more complex performance of shame. Precisely in the moments of "painful identification with the misbehaving man," Symonds's account of the Harrow scandal discloses its dubious ambivalence. In fact, Symonds identifies the strength of his rage towards ---'s conduct, "[m]y blood boiled and my nerves stiffened when I thought what mischief life at Harrow was doing daily to young lads under the autocracy of a hypocrite" (PG 116-117, MS 185), as the consequence of his tenacious attempt "to overcome the malady of [his] own nature" (PG 112, MS 178). The *Memoirs,* however, reveal this endeavour as an ill-set objective and emphatically illustrate the sheer impossibility of overcoming one's nature (or in fact the Nature herself). In this light, Symonds's reaction towards the Harrow master transpires as likewise misjudged. Thence, could Symonds's narrative question the illocution "shame on them" and transform it into a different performative, that of "shame on me"? After all, the need to recount these incidents in detail and to exonerate his deeds indicates Symonds's ambivalence and uneasiness towards his involvement in the affair. "It was inevitable that this [….] should cause me grave disquietitude [….] that thanks for what

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[101] Sedgwick, Kosofsky, Eve. *Touching Feeling. Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity.* London/Durham: Duke University Press, 2003. Quote on page 37.

[102] In this respect, Symonds's account of the homosexual scandal at Harrow activates the discourse of anxiety attached to colleges and schools perceived as the mainstay of 'British' manhood. As such, the schools were simultaneously encircled with anxiety attached to its potential perversity. Sexual excesses taking place behind the walls of the educational institutions for young boys and men, or between the students and their masters, were a source of great anxieties.
Cf. Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society;* Sedgwick, *Between Men.*

[others] considered my discharge of a public duty and a probate service were not sufficient to relieve me from painful heart-searching" (PG 113-4, MS 182).[103] Importantly, the transition from "shame on them" into "shame on me" is also marked by a transition in the individual 'Is' that perform the respective speech acts. Whereas the former illocution performs an 'I' which associates with (and replicates the heterosexual homophobia) the latter suggests a change in identification towards the abjected and the shamed.

The Harrow encounter with relations between men and their corporeality is represented as forming the experience of shame. It is construed as the originating source of Symonds's dejection and abhorrence of the self.

> I have drawn a somewhat disagreeable picture of [myself]. It is very probable that I am to some extent importing into this period qualities which were really developed by my intense hatred for life at Harrow. I was about to do so, because it presents itself under those aspects very vividly to my mind …
>
> (PG 82, MS 116; the last sentence of the quote does not appear in the edited version)

Therefore, the account of this experience, and the many-layered textual performance of shame related to it, represent a space with a high potential for (queer) resignification. Symonds's dynamic self-positioning and identification that operate the different shaming speech acts, indicates, a dynamic change in Symonds's positioning towards men-oriented desire, to the 'abnormal' sexuality, as well as to other queers. The change in his positioning might be indicative of his (if limited) dissociation from the heterosexual norm, and his joining the community of men, who finding themselves placed on the proscribed end of the homosocial spectrum, began to create a "difference beyond proscription."[104] Eventually, this change seems to indicate a possibility of a transformation in his self-relation, and his capability to transform shame into a more positive affect, perhaps even (self-)love. The circulations of shame, pride and love that affect Symonds's conceptualisation of (his) sexual desire, and his self-relation, compose the remaining part of this chapter.

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[103] Note the following statement through which Symonds attempts to dissociate himself from the decision to reveal the secret of Harrow's sexual scandal. On one summer day Symonds was walking with his friend, discussing the subject of "Arcadian love." Symonds: "Well: some turn in the argument – forced me to blurt out what I had so long concealed about ---'s story" (PG 110, MS 175).

[104] Sedgwick, *Between Men,* 202.

Juxtapose the following statements, the former an expression of sexual frustration and suffering, the other an account of a happy sexual intimacy:

> What I suffered in violent and brutal pleasures of the senses, snatched furtively with shame on my part, with frigid toleration on the part of my comrades…
>
> (PG 191, MS 376)

> Last night, I have touched the heights; he slept in my arms with many oft-repeated kisses.
>
> (PG 203, MS 399)[105]

These demonstrate the inconstancy of the circuit that connects love and shame. His love for men is finally – even if not unambiguously and limitlessly – embraced. More importantly, the transforming circuit between love and shame transforms Symonds's relation to himself. The accounts of his intimacy and love with his lovers eventually produce pride and self-content. For instance, on account of his relationship to one of his boy-lovers, Symonds states, "it is chiefly pride which makes me write about him" (PG 201, MS 396). Duly, with the experience of pride, as Symonds asserts, "health came to my heart and mind." "It was to me as clear as day that the fruition of my moderate desires brought peace and sanity and gladness" (PG 203, MS 399).

Moreover, the *Memoirs* of John Addington Symonds dramatize the multivalence of the pride/shame binary in the way the text enacts the relationship between the self that only emerges in the practice of writing and the younger self positioned in the past. This interaction between the 'older' and 'younger' self, materialises in the form of Symonds's notebooks and diaries which are inserted and integrated within the body of the *Memoirs*. "What undertaking could be more narcissistically exciting or more narcissistically dangerous than that of rereading, revising, and consolidating one's own "collected works"?[106]

[105] The original Latin version follows: "Summa cacuminal tetigi. In meis obdormivit brachiis, non sine bassis frequentissimis" (MS 399); the English translation by Phyllis Grosskurth (PG 203).
[106] Qtd. in Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling,* 39.

IV.4.2. The Repulsive Self and "a Plea for Love"

Feeling shame, being (a)shamed – the psychologist Silvan Tomkins argues – is an affect of breach in communication or contact. It might be provoked by situations when

> one is suddenly looked at by one who is strange, or [....] one wishes to look at or commune with another person but suddenly cannot because he is strange, or one expected him to be familiar but he suddenly appears unfamiliar, or one started to smile but found one was smiling at a stranger.[107]

Thus, shame and its affective power might be understood in terms of experiencing loss of contact, or a bond of familiarity. Symonds's autobiography, that is his "speaking out," performs an attempt to reseal the broken bond of communion with the outer world, as well as that of communion with himself. The subsequent citation stands for many occasions in the text which manifest his yearning for such a bond. "It has been my destiny to make continual renunciation of my truest self, *because I was born out of sympathy with the men around me*" (PG 218, MS 426; emphasis added). Likewise, there are enough passages to suggest Symonds's pain caused by isolation and seclusion. "I thirsted with intolerable thirst for […] for recognition as a personality" (PG 81, MS 111).

The act of speaking out, composing a text which so persistently focuses on one's self, with much meticulous analysis of the development of one's character, exposes Symonds to derisions of self-love and narcissism. But as I have tried to show, he is well aware of that. Symonds anticipates the objections potential readers of his *Memoirs* might raise: "He cherished the engrossing preoccupation, and absorbing and incurable proclivity, which found no outlet except in furtive self-indulgence" (PG 217, MS 424). However, as Sedgwick observes, the theatrical self-concentration and self-focus lures one into taking the risk precisely because it also initialises the hope of an exchange of sympathy and contact.

> [W]henever the actor, or the performance artist, or I could add, the activist in an identity politics, proffers the spectacle of her or his "infantile" narcissism to a spectating eye, the stage is set (so to speak) for either a newly dramatized flooding of the subject by the shame of refused return, or the successful pulsation of the mirroring regard through a narcissistic recruit rendered elliptical (which is to say: necessarily distorted) by the hyperbole of its original cast.[108]

[107] Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling,* 35.
[108] Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling,* 38.

Phyllis Grosskurth, the editor of the *Memoirs*, recognises that Symonds's "evocation of memory" serves "therapeutic" ends.

> Like all autobiographers, Symonds assumed that eventually his memoirs would fall into the hands of the ideal reader. Such a reader would find his life as fascinating as he regarded it; such a reader would find his temperament and his interests of absorbing interest. In its most basic sense*, such an autobiography is a plea for love.*
>
> (PG 28; emphasis added)

This acts, to her mind, to the detriment of the autobiography. The overt focus on the self and their "therapeutic ends" inhibit the *Memoirs* – as Grosskurth asserts – to become the work of real literary value. The posture Grosskurth adopts here is undoubtedly highly problematic and intrinsically homophobic, I have already argued so much. Further, her position assumes that Symonds's (sexual) shame, expressed in his plea for love and the obsessively self-focused narrative, is something contained within Symonds's psyche, and is thus a characteristic feature of his subjectivity and 'pathological' sexuality. Conversely, rethinking shame, Silvan Tomkins demonstrates that shame is not a structure inherent and internal to our psyche. Rather, he conceptualises it as a "kind of free radical that (in different people and also in different cultures) attaches to and permanently intensifies or alters a meaning of – of almost anything: a zone of the body, a sensory system, a prohibited or indeed a permitted behaviour, another affect such as anger or arousal…"[109] Against this background, shame appears as not only a social and cultural construct, but also as an outcome of specific and culturally located interactions. Most importantly, shame is a practice.

The practice of shame that is re-enacted in/through the practice of self-writing establishes a communication, solicits a play, through which a new sense of identity should/could be construed. Performances of discomfort, embarrassment and uneasiness that mark Symonds's retrospective work on the sense of self, operate as a "semaphore of trouble,"[110] reaching out in an attempt to initiate a communication; these performances express Symonds's "desire to reconstitute the interpersonal bridge"[111] between the past and the present selves, as well as between these selves and the (imaginary) reader(s) of the *Memoirs*. More importantly,

[109] Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling,* 62.
[110] Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling,* 36.

consider the possibility that Symonds constructs such a bridge of communication between his past and present selves, thus highlighting the transformative potential of the performance of shame to create a new subject and a new subjectivity that would transgress self-rejection and self-embarrassment associated with sexual 'otherness.'

The *Memoirs* abound in the reiterative statements of Symonds's incapability, failings of his physical and mental vigour, as well as physical debilitation. In order to illustrate the nature of these statements, as well as to highlight where Symonds locates his emotions of shame, I include several longer passages. Simultaneously, the quotes reveal the extent to which the performances of shame are bound to the illocution "shame on you," and to Symonds's confrontation with the heteronormative matrix of masculinity.

> The inborn repugnance to sordid things, which I have already described as one of my main characteristics, now expressed itself in a morbid sense of my physical ugliness, common patronymic, undistinguished status and mental ineffectiveness.
>
> (PG 81, MS 111-112)

> Repulsive weaknesses – boils, styes in the eyes, tedious colds which lasted the whole winter – lowered my stamina and painfully augmented my sense of personal squalor. I grew continually more and more shy, lost my power of utterance, and cast a miserable figure of form. I contracted the habit of stammering. [….] [O]n Speech Day [….] I chose Raleigh's 'Lie' for my piece. At the rehearsal I got through the first stanza, well or ill. Then my mind became a blank; and after a couple of minutes' deadly silence, I had to sit down discomfited. My external self, in these many ways, was being perpetually snubbed and crushed and mortified.
>
> (PG 86, MS 123-5)

> If there were but only one strong and perfect thing on me, I should been worthier, I might perhaps let youth ebb away [….] But when I regard my past life, I find so many broken [word illegible]: so much ignoble selfishness and the folly of sentimental ideality, at the same time such vulgarity of soul, cunning, want of faith in the highest things, that I am ready to sit down and cry for my futility. I am [….] stretching my hand and praying that this perpetual weakness of the body and this weary mental suffering may not quench my best chance of rising to nobler things through life. [….] At present I am plagued by the constant desire to use my brains for work, to store up knowledge for [the] future – baffled by the terrible incapacity of a naturally weak constitution and health broken by mismanagement.
>
> (MS 292)

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[111] Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling,* 36.

> I loathe myself, and turn in every direction to find strength […] there is no force in me to keep the resolves I form, and no content to make me acquiesce in present circumstances […] I cannot stifle the angry voice of conscience which accuses me of a void life, besotted in selfishness and slothful debility – they do not quench my internal thirst for peace and confidence and unity with the world. […] It is my particular source of misery that I cannot labour; I am forced to be inactive by my health; I get mildewed with the melancholy of the impotent.
>
> (PG 173-4, MS 344; emphasis added)

The angry voice of conscience which accuses Symonds of a "void life, besotted in selfishness and slothful debility," is clearly the voice that accuses him as not living up to the image of a masculine man. The close circuit of the mis-performance of masculinity and performance of queer shame transpires also from the following quotes that link Symonds's 'shameful' experiences with his failing body, specifically with his failing sexual organs and mismanaged sexual functions.

> "I suffered a period of painful and exhausting erethism, attended with profuse seminal losses.
>
> (PG 261, MS 524)
>
> "I dreamed very vividly, and suffered from seminal losses."
>
> (PG 122, MS 200)

> "[M]y nervous malady, felt mostly in the brain and eyes, but also expressed by a terrible disturbance of the reproductive organs, developed with painful rapidity."
>
> (PG 151, MS 269)

Symonds's concern with his repulsiveness and ugliness overlaps metaphorically with the re-enactment of the loss of speech. The stammer that broke the string of his words on the Speech Day is symbolic of his projections of a loss of contact with the outer world. Expressions such as "[I could] not quench my internal thirst for peace […] and unity with the world," "I am [….] stretching my hand," "[I] turn in every direction to find strength," enact Symonds's effort to overcome the stultifying experience of the closet, to reach out.

According to Elspeth Prosbyn, the transformative potential of shame consists in its aptitude to evoke a state of self-scrutiny that forces us into examining "what we are and we would like to be." Hence, even if painful, shame contains the possibility to "throw into relief the values we

have."[112] Symonds's contemporary self, construed in the practice of self-writing and re-enacting of the shame accumulated during his life in the closet, does not merge with the shaming figurations of his younger self. On the contrary, reactivating his shame challenges the values that shamed him. With regard to the verblessness of the "shame on you," it is with Symonds that the agency rests. In opposition to the curiously agency-less instance that confers the shame, Symonds has the agency to initiate a new, transformed relation to himself. Nevertheless, the expressive accounts of the prior experience, the assumed loss of contact to the outer world as well as the experience of self-loathing and self-abhorrence, suggest not a breach but rather an attempt to establish a contact. This signalises a self-transforming practice of the self; a practice that initiates communication between the older and the younger man. The older man turns to the younger, and through the retrospective enactment of those utterances, affects a new relationship of interest, engagement and sympathy.

Furthermore, Symonds construes a narrative of a progress with the ultimate point in a cathartic crisis. Importantly, it is not a crisis leading to revelation, or conversion, but a crisis culminating in self-acceptance and in Symonds's achievement to "accep[t] [his] place in the world," as well as his "ruling passion" (PG 173, MS 343). At this point, the voice of the older man introduces the word "love." The loving retrospect overrides – if momentarily – the older tones of self-shame.

> I found the affirmation of religion and contentment in love – not the human kindly, *friendly love* which I had given liberally to my beloved wife and children, my father and my sister and my companions, but in the *passionate sexual love* of comrades. Through the whole of my malady and my discourses on it, I had omitted the word 'love'. That was because I judged my own sort of love to be sin. But when, in the stage of indifference, I became careless about sinning, then, and not until then, **I discovered love, the keystone of all the rest of my less tortured life.**
>
> (PG 176, MS 348; emphasis added by Brown; bold emphasis KK)[113]

[112] Qtd. in Monaghan, Peter. "Exploring the Good that Comes from Shame." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 1 July 2005: 1.

[113] In fact, this note presents an intensive drama of shame/love. The original terms Symonds uses – "love," "sexual love" – which represent an important point in his self-relation, apparently confronted Brown, the executor and the first "editor" of the manuscript, with a new homophobic illocution "Shame on you." Brown replaces Symonds's words with "affection" and "lust." The note inscribed into the margin "Let JAS words stand" was added, as Sarah Heidt assumes, by Symonds's daughter Katherine Furse who came to London Library to read the manuscript. Cf. Heidt, "Let the JAS Words Stand," 26-7.

On other occasions, however, it is the lengthy diary-quotes dating from Symonds's youth that serve as a juxtaposition to a more depressing and despairing voice of the older man. Composing his autobiography, Symonds seems to find pleasure and relief in going through his notes and poems written under the acute and immediate impression of his love liaisons. Thus, the younger and the older man engage in a dialogue of sympathy and love; the *Memoirs* generate a circuit of love/shame, humiliation/self-respect, which operate between the different selves of the man. "The love of comrades" is transformed from a source of shame into a source of love and pleasure. Also the literary expressions of this love which repeatedly shamed Symonds as expressions of "futility" and "furtive self-indulgence" (PG 218, MS 426), become transformed from "kind of mental masturbation" (PG 189, MS 373) into a source of pleasure and self-concern. "I wrote for distraction, for enjoyment, for myself" (PG 232, MS 462). "Writing for myself alone, I produced the larger portion of my poetic cycle – on the love of comrades" (PG 231, MS 459).

Concluding, it must be noted that the account of Symonds's crisis that arguably initiated him into the state of self-acceptance and led him to accept his "love," is subsequently juxtaposed with cyclical accounts of Symonds's religious, emotional and intellectual development; each of these chapters incites new performances of shame and new dramas of self-rejection only to attempt the reunion of the different 'I's in the self-accepting (loving) conference. It is most distressing to read the closing passages of the *Memoirs* that pose the disquieting exclamation, "Why was he not born a savage or a normal citizen? [….] The perpetual discord between spontaneous appetite and acquired respect for social law […] drives him into blowing his brains out, or into idiocy" (PG 283, MS 564). Thus, it is essential to realise that the circuits of shame, humiliation, love and respect defy any concept of a progressive linear passage towards a definite resolution of shame. "The forms taken by shame are not distinct 'toxic' parts of a group or individual identity that can be excised."[114] Instead, Sedgwick argues, shame constitutes the integral part of the processes through which our identity is construed and shaped. Therefore, the concept of queer performatives of shame does not – and virtually cannot – provide any chronological, 'progressive' teleology of resolution, or liberation. The performances of shame are available "for the work of metamorphosis, reframing, refiguration,

[114] Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling,* 63.

transfiguration, affective and symbolic loading and deformation," but unavailable for "effecting the work of purgation and deontological closure."[115]

To Jill Swiencicki, shame operates through a specific rhetoric of awareness in which the self's identification is interrupted by effects of estrangement. She says, "[h]ere we start to think of shame, not as good or bad, but in terms of how it acts in a specific social context, as a structuring device, a wedge into dominant culture-consciousness."[116] The notion of shame, as Swiencicki uses it, operates as a structural device interrupting the unquestioned association of the self with the dominant culture. In the case of the *Memoirs*, shame initiates the painful recognition of being expulsed from heterosexual masculinity and masculine selfhood. Simultaneously, however, the experience of shame forces Symonds into questioning his (so far unquestioned) presumptions about masculinity, as well as about 'normal' (i.e. 'healthy') sexuality. In this way, the experience of shame operates as an experience in and through which his "self-consciousness" is transformed. It has been the objective of this chapter to argue that it is plausible to regard the performances of shame, humiliation and disgrace as a diachronic echo of the Foucauldian principle of 'care of the self.' Thereby the performances of shame, as they figure in Symonds's autobiographical self-presentation, create an antinomian practice of the self to that of self-knowing and self-disciplining. Even if the self-writing project has been incited through confrontation with the heteronormative matrix (the technology of dominance), the performative utterances of his own embarrassment, humiliation, failures, shame, transform this affect into a potential basis for a caring relation to himself.

[115] Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling,* 63.
[116] Swiencicki, Jill. "The Rhetoric of Awareness Narratives." *College English*. 68. 4 (2006): 337-356. Quote on page 347.

IV.5. Conclusion

Symonds's *Memoirs* reflect the dramatic condensation of discourses 'sex' provoked at a certain historical moment. They document as well the pervasive concern with knowledge of this 'sex.' Particularly, *Memoirs* make evident how self-perception, the ways the self relates to himself, ('practices of the self'), become shaped through this fixation on 'knowing' the self/sex. Nonetheless, the text also discloses a great variety of modes and practices of self-relating.

Eventually disclosing the "secret which he carried," Symonds subjects himself to the regulative and disciplinary technology of sex. Furthermore, ascribing Symonds a concrete type of personality, the act of self-disclosure, 'coming-out',[117] documents the power of 'heterosexual morphology' to mould non-heterosexual/queer sexual identities. Woltersdorff claims that the performative act of 'outing' is not a single act. On the contrary, it obliges the self-outing individual to incessant reiterative confirmations of the outing act. Woltersdorff notes, "Wer sein Coming-out hatte, ist nicht damit frei."[118] By analogy, Symonds is compelled to characterise every moment of his life and every single facet of his personality in relation to his sex/uality. Symonds's autobiographic retrospect is composed of a series of disclosures and utterances aimed at conveying the 'truth of himself.' Hence, Symonds's self-writing needs to be considered as a *performative* rather than a *referential* practice. The self engaged in the practice of writing does not precede the act itself. His identity and/or subject position is realised in and through the practice of writing. Woltersdorff describes this in a following way, "So wird einerseits die performative Herstellung von schwuller Identität als *plot* erzählt und anderseits diese Identität performativ über das Schreiben und die Lektüre

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[117] Of course, Symonds's *Memoirs* do not fall into the same genre category as coming-out narratives that belong to the post-Stonewall period. Nevertheless, his autobiography does share some of the characteristic features of the genre. Therefore, some of the criticism refer to similar self-narratives of this period as 'proto-coming out' stories. Also, Woltersdorff distinguishes between the 'inner' coming-out, involving the act of coming out to oneself, and the speech act that outs the individual to others (132). In this sense, Symonds's narrative performs the act of 'outing' oneself to oneself, leaving the further stage of the disclosure to the decision of his literary agent and his descendants.
Cf.Volker, Woltersdorff. *Coming Out. Die Inszenierung schwuller Identitäten zwischen Auflehnung und Anpassung*. Campus: Frankfurt am Main, 2005.
[118] Woltersdorff, *Coming Out,* 132.

selbst produziert."[119] In this sense, self-writing based upon the self-disclosure is, as Martin Biddy remarks, a tautological practice "insofar as [it] describe[s] a process of coming to know something that has always been true, a truth to which the author has returned."[120] However, Symonds's autobiography makes transparent that this truth to which the author returns to is nothing inherent to the subject, but itself a product of specific epistemic regime attached to sex, and the always already effect of the heterosexual morphology. Briefly, Symonds's ambition to compose "the truthful autobiography," and his query "who he really was," belongs to the discursive imbrications of truth/sex/self where discourse and power become one.[121]

However, the reading of Symonds's *Memoirs* problematises the notion of a subject's complete subjection to the effects of power. It draws out the ambivalent relation between moments of reinforcement vs. subversion of the (heteronormative) epistemology of sex. If the incessant compulsion to undergo further acts of disclosure, and self-positioning as sexually 'abnormal' represents an effect of the interpellative force of the heteronormative matrix, then the very repetitive nature of the outing utterances conversely needs to be examined for its subversive resignifications and deferrals of meaning. In this sense, the acts of self-disclosure are at once normalizing and subverting. On the one hand, Symonds achieves the position of an intelligible subject (only) via reiterating the epistemology of sex, his assertion of being 'sexually other' challenges, on the other hand, the heterosexual matrix itself.[122] For instance, speaking out first, Symonds can subsequently problematize the veracity of his self-account which, as he becomes aware, is modelled too closely along the model biography of a 'homosexual.' Realising that the 'words' he finds only enable him to present some 'significant' features of his personality, Symonds challenges the very binary opposition of what is true/ what is false, (revealed/disclosed) inherent to the constructions of 'homosexuality.'[123] Also, the practices of

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[119] Lehmann, Annette Jael, Mattenklott Gert and Volker Woltersdorff. "Cross-overs – Performativität im Kontext genderspezifischer und medientheoretischer Fragestellungen." *Paragrana: Theorien des Performativen*, 10.1. (2001): 137-154. Quote on page 149.

[120] Biddy, Martin. "Lesbian Identity and Autobiographical Difference(s)." *Women, Autobiography, Theory. A Reader.* Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson. eds. Madison, London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998. 380-392; Quote on page 387.
See also Woltersdorff, *Coming-out,* 173.

[121] Cf. Butler, "Performative Acts," 274; Foucault, *Technologies.*

[122] Apart from the potential to destabilize the 'naturalness' of the heteronormative matrix and its position of an "original" (Butler *Imitation*, Butler *Bodies*), performative acts of coming-outs also produce effects upon the 'social reality' and make the possibly work to representability of the non-heterosexual subject.

[123] Sedgwick*, Epistemology of the Closet.*

shame epitomize this paradox of 'empowering subjection', or "Ermächtigende Selbstentmächtigung"[124] that marks Symonds's practices of the self. The re-evaluation of performances of shame allows a subject to "become someone else than one was in the beginning."[125]

[124] Woltersdorff, *Coming-out,* 134.
[125] Foucault, *Technologies,* 9.

V. 'Michael Field'

'Michael Field' = 'Michael' + 'Field' = Katherine Bradley + Edith Cooper

V.1. The Triangular Structures of 'Michael Field'

Katherine Bradley (1849-1914) and Edith Cooper (1862-1913) collaborated over thirty years as the poet 'Michael Field', "a name which stands not as a pseudonym so much as a joint poetic, public identity, the sum being greater than the parts of the individual women."[1] 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 whole of Bradley and Cooper's journal covers a long period between 1888 to 1914.[2] Katherine Bradley starts the first volume of the journal, and, as she survives Cooper by several months, it is she who makes the last entry. My reading focuses on volumes spanning the years 1889 – 1896. This period includes the first volumes of the joint journal, and covers the time when Bradley and Cooper managed to disengage themselves from Cooper's family house, to travel abroad, and eventually settle in their new home of Durdaus. Further, this period encompasses the happenings of the 1895 sexual scandals in England.

Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper or, rather, their joint persona has come to embody the ideal type of the 'lesbian couple.' 'Michael Field' figures in most of today's canonical works on the

[1] White, Chris. "Flesh and Roses: Michael Field´s Metaphors of Pleasure and Desire." *Women´s Writing.* 3.1. (1996): 47-63. Quote on page 47.
[2] The manuscripts of these journals are held by the British Library in London. Cf. MS 46776-46804 B
Excerpts from these journals were edited and published; see: Moore, Thomas. ed. *Works and Days, from the Journal of Michael Field.* London: John Murray, 1933.

history of women loving women.[3] For their erotic dialogue, and the apparent perfect coalescence of their lives, the literary collaboration of 'Michael Field' is celebrated as an augury of Luce Irigaray's vision of the erotic moment "when our lips speak together."[4] Nevertheless, we need to bear in mind that interpretation that grants us – the readers of Bradley and Cooper's intimate journals – a knowing position is highly problematic as it secures us the epistemic privilege over the women. We need to devise a different reading strategy that would not require Cooper and Bradley to signify as *lesbians* or as some definite (sexual) identity for that matter. Only an interpretative approach that respects the complexity and contradictions of the journal's narrative can provide us with understanding of the specific cultural and historical moment in which the text is generated.

Bradley and Cooper's journal is a fragmentary text marked by a duality or rather multitude of voices, narrative disjunctures, incoherencies and, unlike the other texts analysed in this thesis, does not impart a narrative closure. Furthermore, its production, in which both women participated over a long period, necessarily constitutes a different and specific practice of self-writing. With respect to the key concern of the present thesis, Cooper and Bradley's journal varies further in terms of its relation to discourses of 'homosexuality.' The journals engage in different interactions with "the will to knowledge" than we observe in the auto/biographic self-writing of John Addington Symonds and Havelock Ellis, in that their self-writing practice(s) engender different tensions between knowledge and ignorance, or between speech and silence.

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[3] Cf. Faderman, Lillian. *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present*. New York: William Morrow, 1981; Vicinus, Martha. *Independent Women. Work and Community for Single Women 1850 – 1920*. London: Virago, 1985; Vicinus, Martha. *Intimate Friends. Women who Loved Women. 1778-1928*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
Likewise, 'Michael Field' embodies the lesbian within the context of the virtual space.
See for instance:
Isle of Lesbos, "Michael Field." <http://www.sappho.com/poetry/m_field.html>, "Field, Michael [Katherine Bradley (1846-1914) and Edith Cooper (1862-1913)]" <http://www.glbtq.com/literature/field_m.html>; "Michael Field (Katherine Bradley, 1862-1913 & Edith Cooper, 1862-1913)"
<http://www.queertheory.com/histories/f/field_michael.htm>
(All sites last accessed 28 Dec. 2006)

[4] Irigaray, Luce. "When Our Lips Speak Together." *This Sex Which Is Not One*. New York: Cornell UP, 1985.
For interpretation of the writings of Michael Field that focus upon its homo-erotic meanings, see: White, Chris. "Poets and Lovers Evermore: Interpreting Female Love in the Poetry and Journals of Michael Field." *Textual Practice*, 4. 2. (1990): 197-212; White, Chris. "Flesh and Roses: Michael Field´s Metaphors of Pleasure and Desire." *Women´s Writing.* 3.1. (1996): 47-63; Prins, Yopie. "A Metaphorical Field: Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper." *Victorian Poetry.* 33. 1. (1995): 129-148; Prins, Yopie. "Sappho Doubled: Michael Field." *Dwelling in Possibility: Women Poets and Critics on Poetry.* Prins, Yopie, Maeera Schreiber, eds. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1997. 229-251; Prins, Yopie. "Greek Maenads, Victorian Spinsters." *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*. Dellamora, Richard. ed. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1999. 43-81; Hotz-Davies, Ingrid "'Nobly lighted while she sleeps': Images of Desire in the Poetry of 'Michael Field.'" *Bi-Textualität. Inszenierungen des Paares.* Heitman, Annagret et al. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2001. 50-72.

Focusing on the triangle of 'Michael Field'/Cooper/Bradley, the chapter follows several objectives. First, it examines the various literary tropes and figures Bradley and Cooper devise to relate to and communicate with each other. It focuses on strategies Cooper and/or Bradley employ(s) to construe and express the experience of love and desire, and explores the ways in which Bradley and Cooper share the textual space of their journal to create the intimate world they cohabited and where they collaborated. Second, the discussion zooms in on the changes and alterations of these tropes and figures in order to explore the ways in which the multilayered bond that Bradley and Cooper create incites question(s) concerning their gender and/or sexual identity. Furthermore, this chapter explores the ways in which the practice of self-writing construes the individual *I*s in their relations to the multilayered construction of the *We,* encompassing the positionalities of 'Michael Field'/ and/or *Edith and I* and/or *Katherine and I.* Likewise, it looks at the ways in which the writing *I* relates to *Myself.* In particular, it concerns whether (and in what ways) the (textual) constructions of these selves (both as individual selves, as well as selves bound together) intersect with Cooper's and/or Bradley's awareness of their sexuality. To what extent do the utterances and/or silences about sexuality correspond to the normative definitions of 'femininity' and 'womanhood'? Lastly, how do these utterances/silences about the (sexual) desire inscribed (and yet hidden) in the *We* interact with the heteronormative prescriptions of a *man-woman* relationship?

V.1.2. The Journal as a (Self-)Writing Practice and Fictions of the We

The critical literature devoted to 'Michael Field' focuses primarily on their literary works, and their (early) collections of poetry. The interest of this chapter, in contrast, lies with the self-reflective writing practice of both women. I consider the textual space of the journals as a polysemous field upon which their intimate dialogue with each other takes place, where their relationship is both being articulated and represented, and where a dialogue with the outside world is being performed. As Robert Fletcher notes, "the ambiguity of the triangle imagined [Cooper/Bradley/*Field*] allows the two women to balance […] a desire to tell and not to tell, a wish to control their own story and the realisation that they can do so only through the cooperation/co-option of others."[5] Furthermore, the genre of the journal represents a close link to the self-writing practice through which the self is being dynamically (re-)constituted. In the context of the diary, the speaking *I* takes on the role of the subject as well as that of the

[5] Fletcher, P. Robert. "I leave a Page Half-Writ. Narrative Discoherence in Michael Field's *Underneath the Bough*." *Women's Poetry. Late Romantic to Late Victorian: Gender and Genre. 1830-1900.* Armstrong, Isobel, Blain, Virginia and Cora Kaplan. eds. New York: Macmillan; St. Martin's, 1999. 164-182. Quote on page 167.

object of its own speech. According to Rachel Langford and Russell West, "the diary advertises its links with subjectivity by virtue of the prominence it accords to the speaking *I*," the link to the first person singular pronoun being, they claim, often "so massively self-evident and redundant as to be able to be elided altogether."[6] Moreover, Philippe Lejeune makes the connection between the diary-writing and practice of the self even stronger as he points out that the diary represents an intimate utterance marked by anxiety and an acute need to capture and (re)construct the meaning of one's life experience.[7] He says, "[b]efore becoming a text, the private diary is a practice. The text itself is a mere by-product, a residue."[8] 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 embodies a composite text/practice as more subjects become articulated within its textual space. The two different *I*s move and slip fluently between I/Katherine/'Michael' and I/Edith/'Field'. Moreover, both of these *I*s 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 "perfect orgy of togetherness," and the "self-propagated myth of unity" of the 'Michael Field' persona is, as Virginia Blain argues, "[to] deflect attention from the dynamic nature of their lesbian relationship."[9] We need to deconstruct the fiction of "the collaboration […] so loyal, the union so complete, that one may search diligently, and search in vain [for signs of

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[6] Langford, Rachel, Russell West. eds. *Marginal Voices, Marginal Forms. Diaries in European Literature and History.* Internationale Forschungen zur allgemeinen und vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft. Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999. Quote on page 2.

[7] Lejeune, Philippe. "The Practice of the Private Journal: Chronicle of an Investigation (1986- 1998)." *Marginal Voices, Marginal Forms,* 185-211.

[8] Lejeune, "The Practice of the Private Journal," 187.

[9] Blain, Virginia. "Michael Field, the Two-headed Nightingale: Lesbian Text as Palimpsest." *Women's History Review*. 5.2. (1996): 239-257. Quotes on pages 242, 244 and 242.
When presenting their work to the outer world and especially to (male) literary critics, Cooper and Bradley emphasise that they create in perfect unison and that it is impossible to detect their individual voices. Rather than two poets engaged in a creative cooperation, they attempt to present themselves as one creative persona. To Havelock Ellis, who among others inquired about the technique of their literary collaboration, they answered, "As to our work, let no man think he can put asunder what God has joined. […] [T]he work is perfectly mosaic: we cross and interlace like a company of summer dancing flies; if one begins a character, *his* companion seizes it; if one conceives a scene or situation, the other corrects, completes, or murderously cuts away" (Moore 3; the emphasis added). As to this strategic distribution of the myth of unity, Blain remarks: "[Michael Field] has been regarded as a univocal product by its admirers and detractors alike. Yet such a reading of their work, although encouraged by the authors themselves, tends to homogenise it and disguise the much more dynamic dialogue structure that sustains it" (242).

the double-authorship],"[10] so we can focus on the ways Bradley and Cooper position themselves within their relationship. The cautious deconstruction of the *We* is necessary in order to observe and explore how they 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 is where their voices intersect, interweave, and communicate with each other. The journal-writing is a declaration of love. As Roland Barthes maintains, 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."[11] However, it is the (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, and to its essential unintelligibility. 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 – or as Bradley writes in one of her journal poems, "to thee I must be ever mute" (MS 46777, f. 87r) – does not constitute an empty space of utterance. There is not a simple binary between the said and the silenced.[12] 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[13] 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, as I argued above, the journal serves as a space for self-reflexive

[10] Sturgeon, Mary C. Michael Field. London: G.G. Harrap, 1922. Quote on page 62.
[11] Barthes, Roland. *The Pleasure of the Text.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1975. Qtd. in Meese, Elizabeth A. *(Sem)Erotics. Theorizing Lesbian*. New York. New York UP, 1992. Quote on page 84.
[12] For instance Karin Cope argues, the "relationship between homosexuality and textuality is more variable and nuanced than the opposition between the open or 'out' speech, and covert, or silenced speech (in the closet) allow." Cope, Karin M. "'Publicity is Our Pride': The Passionate Grammar of Gertrude Stein." *Pre/Text. A Journal of Rhetorical Theory.* 13. 3-4. (1992): 123-137. Quote on page 124.
[13] Moore, *Works and Days,* 35.

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.

V.2. Appropriations

V.2.1. Passing Time in a Greek Dream-Land

"I am self-consciously the subject of/in writing, placing my lesbian : writing alongside of my subjects […] Our texts, like sexual bodies, are intercalated, interpolated, one engaged with and added to another."[14]

In May 1889, Bradley enters into the journal, "Mr. Browning came in greeting us as his two dear Greek women […] ardently then and afterwards he spoke of the Sapphies…" (MS 46777, f. 4r). The address "Greek women" tempts to be read as a pun that plays up the ambivalence of the Greek signification. Does it refer to the tone and motifs of 'Michael Field's poetry, which often enough the women discussed with Browning? Or does it possibly insinuate other meanings of the term? Similar ambiguity surrounds the term "Sapphies." For her part, Bradley certainly is well aware of the pun-like nature of these appellations. On the morning of the same day, Bradley enters another note:

> On Monday I had seen at the Academy "The Roses of Heliograba" (sic)[15], wasteful of a fervour to crown the rose with praise. Still in bed in early morning I wrote: Sappho loves the Rose and always crowns it with some/praise, likening beautiful maidens to it; she likens it/also to the arms of the Graces, when she describes their elbows/bare…
>
> (MS 46777, f. 4r)[16]

Reading *Long Ago*, one of the early poetry collections of 'Michael Field', provokes Yopie Prins to ask, "[H]ow should we read these two women writing as a man writing as Sappho?"[17] She argues that Bradley and Cooper's (erotic) poetry relies on the figure of transposition that, in the poetic work, helps them produce a safe detachment from Sappho. For the context of our discussion, Prins's original question might be modified to inquire how we should read these two women writing as a man writing as Sappho once the safe figure of transposition is complicated by their individual voices being exposed. How should we read these two women writing in their joint journal as Katherine/*Michael* as Sappho as Edith/ *Field* as 'Michael Field'? What im/possibilities do these slippages open? Once inserted into the joint journal, the references to Sappho tend to slip – as they do in the above quotation – into a direct relation to the women's experience as Katherine/Edith/Sappho collide into each other.

[14] Meese, *(Sem)Erotics,* vxiii
[15] Here, Bradley refers to a painting "The Roses of Heliogabalus" (1888) by Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema, (1836-1912).
[16] A version of this poem was included in the collection *Long Ago*. Field, Michael. *Long Ago*. London: Bell and Sons, 1889.
[17] Prins, "Sappho Doubled," 229.

In the first years of their journal, Bradley's entries dominate. In 1889, the year *Long Ago* was published, Bradley's notes (more often than those of Cooper) flourish in references to the book. The journal is full of its verses. In this way, the journal transforms into an intertextual and inter-referential space where the voice of the woman writing mingles with that of 'Michael Field'/Sappho.[18] Alternatively, citing the poems that appear in *Long Ago*, and even signing as 'Michael Field', the voice of 'Michael Field' mingles with the voice of the woman who re-cites the text onto the journal pages. Thus, the balance of the triangular structure of 'two women writing as a man as Sappho' is destabilized, in effect of which the relation of the speaking woman and Sappho becomes much more intimate. Prins argues that 'Michael Field' operates as a mechanism of transposition (here as the figure of the third) that detaches both women from Sappho. It is "a poetic practice that does not assume identity with the original Sappho, nor assumes her voice, [but] instead emphasizes a belated or secondary relationship to Sappho."[19] If 'Michael Field's lyrics of *Long Ago* are "self-consciously non-original," and represent "the [doubling] of Sappho's signature rather than the reclamation of her song,"[20] then transposing these poems into the textual space of the journal changes the belated relationship to Sappho. Hence, these intertextual quotes operate as a doubled figure of transposition, which performs the very act of reclaiming Sappho's/their song. Simultaneously, the intertextual references between *Long Ago* and Bradley and Cooper's journal, enact a circular motion between *I/ You/ We*. When Bradley cites Sappho's/'Michael Field's/her own

[18] The intertextual references occurring in the journal make the belated or secondary relation to Sappho collapse. Note how the poem cited above, and which later appeared in *Long Ago*, communicates with other entries, notably with the appellation of 'Sapphies.'
Further, the following quotes illustrate the communication of Cooper's and Bradley's journal writing. Bradley enters her notes and recollections from a walk to "Edith's valley." Subsequently, entering into a creative exchange with Bradley, Cooper inscribes her own impressions. Transforming the impressions of the hyacinths, the poem that follows on the journal pages (and which appeared later in *Long Ago* – no. LX) reveals how the intimate cohabitation/collaboration and visions of the idyll feeds the poems of 'Michael Field'. More importantly, it also documents how the intertextual references to works of a man writing as Sappho, referencing the intimate communication of the two women.
Bradley writes: "Nature becomes dumb to me from the moment she grows green, we shall have no more communion till she summons me to her death-bed.[…] They have hurt and trumped the hyacinths; but one day last week is a field of vetches I saw them grow safe. […]
May 25h, In Edith's valley at the evening, we found a bank of hyacinths. Above them overlooking ... oaks, was a full, pale moon, not shining, not yet an influence -- a steady, dominating presence…"
Cooper adds: "the slope with level horizon-line at the further end of my valley is a rare lawny purple, but the brown withered bracken is illuminated by […] the hue of mingled hyacinths, and their brilliant colour is mitigated and diffused by the wintery times…" (MS. 46777, ff. 5v-6r).
And the poem, signed by mf [Michael Field]: "She loved the perfumed in let (sic), in the spring the swans were want/ to sail [flew] and sing/ Leda, there was a bird of lustrous wing!/And there one day, she [illegible] this said/an egg, hid in the hyacinth bed//…"(MS. 46777, f. 8r).
For further intertextual references between the poems of *Long Ago* and poems in *Works and Days,* see particularly ff. 51-59.
[19] Prins, "Sappho Doubled," 242.
[20] Prins, "Sappho Doubled," 242.

poems, she transgresses the unity of *We*/'Michael Field'. She sings again (to herself and to Cooper) the song they sang together, thus prolonging the perfect circularity of their love and desire. All this reveals that Bradley and Cooper savoured in the indeterminacy surrounding Sappho's figure. [21]

Before Sappho became increasingly associated with 'lesbianism,'[22] Victorian England witnessed a multiplication of her figure. She was invoked within classical studies, within male homoerotic discourse, as well as by "decadent" authors. It was this proliferation of Sappho's imitations that, as Prins notes, "create[d] the possibility of lesbian imitation as well."[23] The indeterminacy of the multiple invocations of Sappho's might possibly effect the teasing suspense between Bradley and Cooper's *knowing* and *not-knowing* of others, and thus engender one of the pleasure's loci in the journal.

V.2.2. "Queer Tutelage" and/or Queer Gate Keepers

> "January 12th [1891]. It is my Love's birthday. She is fresh and sweet and soft. […] What a possession we have in the Greek anthology! God bless us for it, as he blessed us for Sappho!"[24]

References to Greek times and/or culture, many have argued, circulated profusely in the male homoerotic context of Victorian England, and operated as a covert code of homoeroticism. Despite the fact that this code related mostly to relations between men, Bradley and Cooper

[21] Likewise, one of Cooper's rare 'Greek' entries refers to this trope of an idealised intercourse and communication. Describing a decoration on a ceramic vase, she notes, "two young women sit in gossiping ease on a wayside sarcophagus – their knees are crossed under the chitons – one of the talkers has her hand on her hips, the breath of conversation hurries through their mouths – Every gesture tells of intercourse and emotion…" The closeness of the two women represent to her, "the grace of intimate Greek life" (MS 46777, f. 84r).

[22] Two short examples representing the contemporary discourse should suffice to illustrate how the univocal 'lesbian' representation of Sappho collided with sexualized and morbidified representations of her figure. For instance, McMurtrie dubs Sappho as "the prototype of the woman invert". Cf. McMurtrie, Douglas Crawford. *Some Observations on the Psychology of Sexual Inversion in Women from the Lancet-Clinic,* 1912

In the same year, Donald Campbell makes a short cut between the 'morbid lesbian' (whom he symptomatically portrays as a kin to a thief and/or prostitute) and the 'Sapphist'. Cambell says, "This woman is only a minor edition of a more fortunate sister […] who wants fleshy plays alternated with American rag-time and Parisian chansonettes, who occasionally likes a clear sky and a bountiful sun, but who usually prefers the white lights of night-time and the music of Tziganes to that of the birds. It is among these that you find the intelligent, charming woman who has lost her interest in men, although naturally sensual. Here is the Trybade, the Lesbian. Perhaps the best poetic explanation of this passion is to be found in *Les Chansons de Bilitis*, by Pierre Louys. Stern scientists have said: 'Le Saphisme comporte bien moins de reverie ideale que l'homosexualité masculin.' This is Dr. Moreau's opinion, but it is representative."

Cambell, Donald. "The Woman Offender." *The Freewoman*. 11 April 1912: 405-8. Quote on page 408.

[23]Prins. "A Metaphorical Field," 131.

Prins quotes current work focusing more specifically on the figure of Sappho in Victorian poetry: Leighton, Angela. *Victorian Women Poets: Writing against the Heart.* Harvester: Wheatsheaf, 1992; Brown, Susan "A Victorian Sappho: Agency, Identity, and the Politics of Poetics." *English Studies in Canada*, 20.2. (1994): 205-225.

[24] MS 46779, f. 3r.

managed to deploy it as an epistemic key to their otherwise un-nameable experience. 'Michael Field' not only appropriates the code, *he* simultaneously opens it for female homoerotic signification.[25] Shortly after *Long Ago* appeared, 'Michael Field' received a letter written by a female reader addressing *the poet* with her own vision of 'long ago.'[26] Bradley's decision to transcribe the poem reveals her joy that 'Michael Field's readers comprehend the book to offer more than retrospective brooding over times long past, and more than "a delightfully audacious thought – the extension of Sappho's fragments into lyrics…"[27] Bradley and Cooper themselves state their ambition as an endeavour towards "reconci[liation] of the old and the new," and towards engendering a "continuation of the beautiful life of Greece."[28] Furthermore, note the remark that Bradley adds: "Every day we are expecting the first copy of *Long Ago*. Tiny marsh violets have been sent to Edith – they are like Violets that have put aside their loving and made sly little scholars of themselves…" (MS 46777, f. 66r). All these comments accumulate to suggest that it is Bradley and Cooper's ambition to enter the male-defined homoerotic discourse and to open it up for alternative Sapphic/lesbian writing.[29]

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[25] Prins notes, "Their version of Victorian Hellenism, while mediated by a set of homosexual conventions, nevertheless implies the entry of Michael Field into lesbian writing, as another 'field' yet to be defined" ("Sappho Doubled" 235).

[26] Bradley records: "This morning two glorious letters from Mr. Gray and a poem to Michael from Pakenharm." And she gives the full transcription of the poem:
Long Ago (to Michael Field*)*
I. The lesbian sea gives up her dead,/ and on her gleaming wave/ Each borne from her green bed/ the gold-haired Nereids throng/ to hear their risen Sappho's song/ round her Leucadian grave//
II. Sappho, what strange and subtle speech/ did the cold and secret sea/ that bore thy goddess teach/ thy lips, what wild sweet thing/ have the waves taught thy heart to sing/ unknown on earth to thee?//
III. What has the silence told thy sleep/ more passionate and dear./ What songs more sweet and deep/ Than in thy Lesbian sky/ the sunset's heart heard, loath to die,/ and slain with joy to hear//
IV. Ah, who may hear thy song aright/ that none may dare to [praise?]/ forlorn of bloom and light/ our lives may never know/ the skies and songs of Long Ago/ in these doom-darkened days." Pakenharm Beatty, May 24th, 1889; MS 46777, f. 72r.

[27] Opinion of a "literary friend," Cf. the Preface to *Long Ago.*
'Michael Field' states about *his* 'revisions' of Sappho's fragments: "devoutly, as the fiery-bosomed Greek turned in her anguish to Aphrodite, praying her to accomplish her heart's desires, *I have turned to the one woman who has dared to speak unfalteringly of the fearful mastery of love*, and again and again the dumb prayer has risen from my heart …" (ii; emphasis added).

[28] See Michael Field's letter to Robert Browning: "Dear Sir, ever since the issue of my little volume *Long Ago*, I have had the intention of pleasing myself by offering a copy to you: circumstance alone has intervened. I feel I have hope that you will understand the spirit of my lyrics – you who have sympathy with attempts to reconcile the old and the new, to live as in continuation of the beautiful life of Greece. […] Renaissance is the condition of man's thought, which seems to have for you the most exciting charm. What I have aspired to do from Sappho's fragments may therefore somewhat appeal to your sense of survival in human things – to your interest in the shoots and offspring of older literature." Lawrence, Evans. *Letters of Walter Pater*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970. Quote on page 96.

[29] Anne Lister (1791-1840) of Shibden undertook a similar attempt to construe a shared code that could express love and desire between women. For 34 years, Anne Lister kept a diary written in 'crypt' (Lister's own term). There she recorded not only her introspective reflections, but also chronicled her love affairs with women as well as the emotional and sexual experiences she gathered in these liaisons. Importantly, Lister distributed the crypt she used in her own diary among the women whom she knew shared her erotic preferences and encouraged them to keep similar textual representations of their lives/loves.
See e.g. Liddington, Jill. *Presenting the Past: Anne Lister of Halifax 1791-1840* Hebden Bridge: Pennine Pens,

If Bradley and Cooper appropriate the Greek code and feel related to "uncles of a queer tutelage,"[30] they are also very much aware of the fact that their access to the domain of classical scholarship is limited. For instance, Bradley notes: "One sentence of Mr Pater's which I would not say I could forgive, because I recognised its justice, but which I suffered, and which was hard to bear – that in which he speaks of the scholarly conscience as male."[31] Elsewhere she writes, "I demonstrate that women cannot have the scholarly conscience."[32] In addition, when Bradley and Cooper published their first co-authored book of poetry, *Bellerophôn,*[33] they tried to arrange for a review written by John Addington Symonds. Though he was "interested in the book," it was – as he states – "chiefly for the sake of what [he was told] about the authoresses." Symonds declined to review the book. Nonetheless, in his letter to a friend, Symonds included a rather eloquent commentary on the verse. This, interestingly, reveals an epistemological fight over the proper meaning of the Greek code. Furthermore, Symonds's observations illustrate the extent to which the meaning of the Greek code was canonised within the male homoerotic discourse. Symonds's private review of *Bellerophôn* reveals his own deployment of the code with respect to his politics of gendered (masculine) self-fashioning. Significantly, it is the expressions of love and desire in *Bellerophôn* lyrics that Symonds does not find appropriate for the Greek style: "[T]he kind of love described is over-warm for the Greek taste and very crude for the modern." The imagery of *Bellerophôn* he finds "moved by excess and want of taste, [moved] chiefly I should say [by] straining after more effect than is required. […] I think these (sic) dwell too much on *the erotic elements* of Gk mythology, and treat them in sentimental emotional spirit wh is really alien to the sensuous simplicity of the Greeks." Symonds concludes in a deprecatory tone, "These ladies have much to learn from their Greek models, *of self-restraint, sobriety, and purity in style*. […] It is as though a new Keats had gone a-riot in the floweriest places of a classical dictionary."[34] Apparently, Symonds strives to set a normative reading of the Greek models. This, as I have argued, might stem from his own politics of appropriation. However,

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1994; Orr, Dannielle. "'I Tell Myself to Myself': Homosexual Agency in the Journals of Anne Lister (1791-1840)." *Women's Writing.*11.2. (2004): 201-222; Rowanchild, Anira. "'Everything done for effect': Georgic, Gothic and Picturesque in Anne Lister's self-production." *Women's Writing*. 7.1. (2000): 89-104.

[30] The term "queer tutelage" was coined by Sedgwick. Sedgwick, Kosofsky. *Tendencies.* Durham: Duke UP, 1993; see also Prins, "Greek Maenads," 46.

[31] Moore, *Works and Days,* 137.

[32] Moore, *Works and Days,* 192.

[33] Published under the pseudonym Arran and Isla Leigh, in 1881.

[34] Schueller, Herbert M., and Robert L. Peters. eds. *The Letters of John Addington Symonds.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967-69. (3 vols.). Quotes in vol. II on page 676; emphasis added.

apart from that, it is interesting to note how Symonds's criticism is affected by his knowledge of the gender of the book's author/esses. Subsequent to his realisation who 'Michael Field' was, he feminises their work. In correspondence with a contemporary anxiety about "feminisation of literature/culture,"[35] Symonds terms 'Michael Field's lyrics as too sentimental and defying proper measure and restrain.

[35] Cf. e.g. Felski, Rita. *The Gender of Modernity*. London: Harvard University Press, 1995.

V.3. Crossings and Locations of Desire

V.3.1. Locations of Desire

"And I sing of other times when I was happy, though I know that these are figments of my mind and nowhere I have ever been. But does it matter if the place cannot be mapped as long as I can still describe it?"[36]

The following part discusses Cooper's and Bradley's renderings of the journey they undertook to Dresden in the summer of 1891. The narrative of the Dresden journey creates a peculiar section of *Works and Days*. Already the opening passages emanate the impression that Cooper and Bradley enter an unknown land. For instance, Cooper notes, "we are as dumb as sheep carried on through places no map had ever shown to us…"[37] It is a feverish narrative where images and pictures spin in a wild rhythm. It is a narrative whose flux obfuscates and crosses the borders between the imagined and the seen, between the paintings, theatre performance and reality.[38]

Furthermore, the journey to Dresden overlaps with a new stage in their relationship, as the death of Cooper's mother and Bradley's older sister made it possible for them to "keep house together." Set against the earlier volumes of the journal, the travelogue thus also appears to document a new and ever more acute need to reflect upon, and construe the meaning, of their relationship. Interestingly, it seems that this need is encountered differently by each woman, and that Cooper experiences it more intensely than Bradley. This seems to reflect in the predominance of Edith Cooper's voice in the travelogue. Nonetheless, we need to keep in mind that even when Cooper's voice dominates, it still occupies the shared textual space. Cooper writes with an awareness of Bradley's presence in the journal, and of her readership. It is to be assumed that Cooper's reflections are directed not less to Bradley as to herself. Therefore, especially in those passages where Bradley seems to be silenced altogether, we need to consider how her presence in the journal becomes transformed, and with what new functions it is endowed. Furthermore, the performative nature of their writing becomes dramatically transparent in the travelogue's negotiations of time levels. Even though entered

[36] Winterson, Jeanette. *Sexing the Cherry*, London: Vintage, 1990. Quote on pages 14-15.
[37] Unless stated otherwise, further quotations refer to the manuscript journal from 1891, i.e. MS 46779. Further on, the references will be given parenthetically in the text.
[38] The term "feverish" should be taken literally; in Dresden, Cooper was taken down with scarlet fever and had to be hospitalized. The figure of Schwester that will be discussed later in the chapter refers to a nurse who was tending to the ill Cooper during her hospital stay.

into the journal retrospectively[39], when Cooper recuperates from the illness, all the notes are kept in the present tense which grants the communication between women with present acuteness.

Moore, the editor of the journal excerpts, perceives the travelogue passages particularly in need of explanatory comments. First, Moore finds it necessary to give reasons for including these passages, as they arguably do not bring any insights into the contemporary literary and art world. He notes, "[t]he […] extracts do not deal with [Bradley and Cooper's] contacts with famous people, but reveal that amazing zest with which these ladies encountered experience."[40] Simultaneously, his editorial interventions endeavour to eliminate the troublesome implications the text harbours. Moore states: "Extraordinary is the manner in which Cooper's study of pictures mingled into her delirium, and not less so the tact and humanity with which she put aside, without wounding it, the violent passion she aroused in the poor heart starved Sister who nursed her."[41] Significantly, in Moore's explanation, Cooper's (and Bradley's) gallery impressions, which – as I argue below – constitute an important element of the strategy they contrive to render their (erotic) experience, become mere products of Cooper's intoxicated brain. Likewise, Moore frames the accounts of Cooper's encounters with Schwester so as to effectively de-sexualise Cooper and subsequently her relationship to Bradley. Along these lines, Moore strives to normalise the bond between Bradley and Cooper.

In 1892, 'Michael Field' published a collection of ekphrastic verse, *Sight and Song*.[42] The travelogue's closely detailed descriptions of the gallery visits and the exhibited paintings indicate that many of these poems were spawned by the tour. It is these notes, inscribed into the textual space of the journal that shall be discussed as a means of crossing into a utopian location of desire. The commentaries on the paintings should not be viewed simply as annotations taken to compose the verse. In fact, within the context of the journal, these images engender imaginary locations and new meanings in their own right. [43]

[39] I draw this conclusion on the basis of the journal's physical appearance (empty pages, Cooper's handwriting persist even there, where the text says "Sim/Katherine writes" etc.)
[40] Moore, *Works and Days,* 44.
[41] Moore, *Works and Days,* 44.
Appellations 'Sister' and 'Schwester' refer to the same person. In the manuscript, Cooper and Bradley use the latter with greater frequency.
[42] For a discussion of Michael Field's use of the ekphrastic verse see, Hotz-Davies, Ingrid. "'Nobly lighted while she sleeps.'"
[43] I argue that it is the web of intertextual references to their own/'Michael Field's poems that helped Bradley to

Interestingly, the gallery tour is fashioned in the modus of an excited dialogue[44], as if sharing the pleasure of re-reading and re-imagining the paintings they have seen. This shared joyous experience enjoyed in their solitude is then juxtaposed with the invasion of other gallery visitors who finally shatter the illusion of a newly found landscape. Cooper notes, "Sim[45] becomes too ill to stay longer in the Gallery. It is painful with the noise and figures and straining faces" (f. 88r). Upon leaving the gallery Cooper bitterly remarks, "I have hot sense of regret in leaving the Zwinger, a kind of malaise and disappointment. My throat is fearful swollen and gives me continuous pangs" (f. 88r).

Several paintings arrest particular attention of both Bradley and Cooper and seem to give them special joy. They are struck by Giorgione's image of Venus sleeping naked (Fig.1). Even before coming down to Dresden, Cooper notes, "I have never seen anything more consummately lovely than the Venus of Dresden. The limbs repeat the feminine amplitude of the Earth ...." (f. 22r) In Cooper's and Bradley's renderings, the blissful goddess of love that dominates numerous paintings and that is seen as the guardian of always already heterosexual love undergoes transfiguration. In the Zwinger, both women are taken by the beauty of the picture and each of them records the impressions it makes on her:

[Bradley writes],

> "[T[here is about her [Venus] *nothing bitter or barren - everything is of harvest - silent ripening, full fulfilment."*
>
> (f. 69r; emphasis added)

For her part, Cooper notes,

> [T]here she is! – Giorgione's Venus. *This is perfect womanhood;* the earth is holy ground about her, it has itself the round, unconscious cures of her sex. There is in

express her attachment to Cooper (and vice versa). It is through the intertextual network with the writing of 'Michael Field' that the journal engenders a field of metaphorical continuance with the imaginary locations and landscapes Bradley, Cooper (and 'Michael Field') recreate, revisit, and revive in their poetic writings. For instance, in *Long Ago* Bradley/Cooper/'Michael Field' create(s) a space, where their desire can be articulated, where Bradley speaks directly to Cooper and vice versa, or as Prins phrases it, where they engender "utopian lesbian topos, a place where 'I' can address 'you'" (*A Metaphorical Field* 134). In the travelogue Cooper and Bradley deploy a similar strategy of creating imaginary (and utopian) locations even if they abandon the scenery of the imaginary Lesbos. It is the imaginary locations created through their revisions of reality that enables Bradley and Cooper to "sing of other times when [they were] happy." In 1896, in a particularly strained period, Bradley notes, "[d]eliberately I said to Henry the other day – 'Henry let us go together into dreamland, and there be shut" (MS 46784, f. 22r).

[44] If in the retrospect all these reflections are entered in Cooper's hand, they are always assigned to the woman who – professedly – wrote them in the first place. Their comments on the pictures are fragmented as if to record the flow of dialogue between them. For instance, Cooper notes "here I am called away [by Katherine] to see the Heilige Sebastian of Antonello da Messina" (f. 68r.), upon entering her own description of the picture, Cooper continues: "Sim writes of him" (f. 68v).

[45] 'Sim' is one of the nicknames with which Cooper addresses Bradley.

> the picture that *ideal sympathy between woman and the land*, *which the nations have divided when they made their countries feminine. She lies asleep*: her chestnut, braided hair only a little brighter than the bank above, which is shaggy as a wolf-skin; […] her pillow is a heap of pomegranate-red – that fertile red that is the right kind of colour, between the solemn flesh and the grave slopes…
>
> (f. 68r; emphasis added)

Having been called away by Bradley, Cooper continues her notes on Venus later:

> Her face is oval, […] with the scarce rose that stays on olive cheeks; the brows zestfully crescent-shaped; the lids in their profound slumberness wrinkled a little where they begin to [boost?] over the eyes. The nose […]; the lips have a steady red, the upper one so short that the shadow of the nose meets its lovely curves. *The mouth expresses unconscious, dreamless rest. All is asleep in this face – the brain, the sweet blood as well as the features.* […] The breasts are almost invisibly veined, firm, unselective in the holy loveliness; the left arm follows the lower […] of the body and the hand lies over the thigh, *the fingers bent inward with unashamed simpleness — that profound universal pleasure of sex that sleep itself will not, dare not invalidate.* […] [P]ure as the things man needs for his life that use cannot violate. *No one watches her*; there is not figure to be seen: she is closed from the sense of the perfection…
>
> (f. 87v; emphasis added)

I introduce this somewhat lengthy quotation to elucidate the re-creative/erotic energy with which the journal flourishes. Redrawing/caressing Venus's body, lingering over her facial features, Cooper (and Bradley in her own interpretation of the picture) emulates the impression of a body wrapped in the sleepy slumber that – as suggested – follows the consummation of desire.[46] Venus signifies perfect womanhood, she is the personification of the fertile unity with nature; being safe from observation, she inhabits a woman-centered space. Here, Venus becomes transformed from the goddess of (heterosexual) love into a self-, nature-, woman-identified woman, whose womanhood resonates with self-contentedness, sensuality, and inviolable autonomy. Likewise, the language that Cooper uses is evocative of erotic meanings and implications; Venus's body figures here as a clearly eroticized female body, as a location of (Cooper's) erotic desire. Her nakedness does not associate exposure, and the happy slumber of satisfaction that Venus embodies transgresses the image of a

[46] Cooper's note, "the fingers bent inward with unashamed simpleness — that profound universal pleasure of sex that sleep itself will not, dare not invalidate" is a suggestive one.
The poem "The Sleeping Venus" in *Sigh and Song* renders it as follows,
"Her hand the thigh's tense surface leaves,/ Falling inward. Not even sleep/ Dare invalidate the deep,/ Universal pleasure sex/ Must unto itself annex – / Even the stillest sleep; at peace,/ More profound with rest's increase,/ She enjoys the good/ Of delicious womanhood.
Field, Michael. *Sight and Song.* London: Elkin Mathew and John Lane, 1892. Quote on pages 101-102.
Hotz-Davies also reads the gesture of Venus's hand as rendered in the poem as a gesture celebrating "unashamed simpleness" of Venus's autonomous auto-erotics (72).

woman bound by her sexuality to any external instance. The description of Giorgione's Venus recalls another description of Venus that Cooper noted shortly before she and Bradley set off on the journey. In the London National Gallery she admired Botticelli's "Venus and Mars." In *Works and Days* she notes:

> It is ideal, it is ironic, it is true! Venus lies alert, her body lifted like short after thunder-rain, triumphant – *for she has but received the storm: in him it is spent – a fury and power that he has lost.* He sleeps as if dead […] This fulfilment of love is so like fulfilment of life! *How tragic are the two great figures – male and female – he sleeping in illusion, she already above it, and watchful lest he cheat her […] she is modern, cold, she is sad, she is awake.*
> Ah, nature, nature! It laughs in its satyrs […] it enjoys its own laughter, but above the rust-red locks of the sleeping lover it has set wasps to swarm, with a dim fierceness of movement, round the bole of a tree.
>
> (f. 56v; emphasis added)

Yet, how different these two Venuses seem, both conceived as having spent themselves in a sexual act, the latter a tragic heroine, entangled in the tragic truth of life, spent in the storm of a fury, derided by nature which laughs over her with its satyrs; the former enclosed by calmness and cherished by nature. The latter watchful lest her lover cheat her; the former self-contained, depending only on herself for her own sexual satisfaction. The juxtaposition of these differing images of Venus dissociates her from heterosexual significations and become part of Cooper's address to Bradley. Cooper's readings of Giorgione's version of the goddess locate her into the space of a feminised natural landscape, which becomes "not only her natural habitat but in fact her mate."[47] If the close attachment of Venus to the land "places her in a quasi-lesbian relationship,"[48] then once transposed into the textual space of *Works and Days,* the transfiguration of Venus and her quasi-lesbian attachment take on further meanings. In the textual space in which voices of Cooper and Bradley intermingle, the relationship of Venus and her mate becomes a location of the desire that cannot be expressed directly. It is in the belated/postponed dialogues over the pictures that Cooper and Bradley translate into the intimate space (of desire) where the slippages between expressing admiration (and desire) for Venus/Katherine/(Edith) occur. The erotic force of the images that Bradley and Cooper create on the pages of their journal recall the assertive potential Audre Lorde attached to the erotic.[49]

[47] Hotz-Davies, "'Nobly lighted while she sleeps," 72.
[48] Hotz-Davies, "'Nobly lighted while she sleeps," 69.
[49] Another figure that arrests attention of the women is Saint Sebastian, particularly the painting "Heilige Sebastian" by Antonello da Messina. Perhaps, the focus upon the male nude youth might highlight even more lucidly the re-creative/erotic force Bradley and Cooper exert in their re-readings and re-visions. For symbolism of a male nude and the use of this topos within the female homoerotic context see: Vicinus, Martha. "The Adolescent Boy: Fin-de-Siécle Femme Fatale?" *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*. Dellamora, Richard. ed.

Lorde understood the erotic as "an assertion of the life force of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work, our lives."[50] It is the empowerment of their creative force to express what was previously unexpressed, the creative and erotic power of their re-readings and re-visions that this discussion of Cooper's and Bradley's gallery impressions attempts to highlight.

V.3.2. Across Sexualities[51]

Raising the knotty question of "what makes a lesbian narrative a lesbian narrative," Marylin Farewell commences the discussion with the following statement, "as a not-so-closeted lover of opera, I sometimes imagine what a lesbian opera might look like. The prospects are dim. Nineteenth-century romantic opera celebrates excessively and ecstatically heterosexual romance in a way that tests one's feminist let alone one's lesbian politics."[52] This critical assessment notwithstanding, Farewell suggests possible lines for reading against the grain that could give a lesbian the chance to – figuratively speaking – "steal the narrative."[53] Her rather pessimistic statement interplays with the discussion of (textual) strategies Bradley and Cooper develop to express their erotic/sexual desire. By a nice coincidence, the wanderings through the Zwinger in *Works and Days* is followed by notes referring to a visit to the Dresden opera.

Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1999. 83-106.
However, the figure of Saint Sebastian appears important for other reasons than as the embodiment of erotic associations. Both women comment on Saint Sebastian's apparent suffering. This, in association with Sebastian's homo-erotic symbolism proves important in later remarks of Cooper that I discuss below.
Cooper describes the picture as follows: "…eyes filled with suffering and unredeemed submission; the mouth is open as if for dying breath, and has that reproach against fate in it which is scarcely even wanting to St. Sebastian face…", and "Sim writes of him: He thoroughly suffers and thoroughly submits…" (f.68v)

[50] Lorde, Audre. "The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power." *Sister Outsider. Essays and Speeches by…* The Crossing Press feminist Series, 1984. Quote on page 55**.**

[51] Sedgwick Kosofsky, Eve. "Across Gender, Across Sexuality: Willa Cather and Others." *The South Atlantic Quarterly*. 88.1. (1989): 53-73.
As Sedgwick notes, the refractions across gender and/or across sexualities "are the shadows of the brutal suppressions by which a lesbian love could not in [that] time and culture freely become visible as itself." Still, Sedgwick asserts, "we can look for affordances offered by that love to these particular refractions" (69).

[52] Farewell. Marilyn R. *Heterosexual Plots and Lesbian Narratives*. New York; London: New York University Press, 1996. Quote on page 1.

[53] Farewell, *Heterosexual Plots,* 16.
In *Alice Doesn't,* de Lauretis weighs the possibilities of a character to subvert the narrative structure. Drawing upon her arguments, Farewell argues against an easy affirmative. She notes, "[i]f we accept that the narrative [as an ideological structure] determines the character and not vice versa, it is easy to argue that the existence of a strong heroine does nothing to change narrative as a system. […] She simply occupies the male position and the same story is told. At best we have "another normative narrative wrapped around the thematics of liberation" (30). However, she also considers the narrative portrayal of a lesbian as a forceful and destructive element with a potential to disrupt – if not subvert – the narrative frameworks always already founded on the heterosexual matrix. She states, "[u]nlike the heterosexual woman as narrative subject, the lesbian subject becomes an aggressive agent which […] steals the narrative. But this theft is never without a challenge, for while the

The journal brings an extensive commentary upon Wagner's love drama of Tannhäuser and Elizabeth.[54] As if overwhelmed, Cooper documents her involvement with the tragic story of the lovers, "[W]hat a situation it is – how it makes one's blood its own, to [be] swept along as it will, to be pricked with inner delight" (f. 89v). Further, with reference to the tragic climax of the drama between the lovers onstage, Cooper notes, "I feel vaguely that it may be the last-sight I see before I lie thus – Sim thinks it is possible that the picture is prophetic…"(f. 89v). Could the tragic love story invoke a tragic note there is to *their own* liaison? When on the stage, Elizabeth decides for death as an atoning sacrifice for her lover and when upon finding her dead body, Tannhäuser too kills himself, the story becomes too tragic: "we almost fled from that ghastly and …" (f. 89v). Overcome by the play, Cooper does not finish her sentence. Here, the journal text fabricates a correspondence between the tragic story of Tannhäuser and Elizabeth and that of Bradley and Cooper. This suggestion seems to be supported also by the emphasis attached to the repetitive statement that Bradley and Cooper could not bear to witness the drama till its end, "[W]e almost fled before it ended, driven by panic, scared by phantasy …" (f. 90r).

Cooper writes:

> Tannhauser (sic) is in me – It moves flood in me – its hero gives me finer pain than the disease at my throat – that classic purification through tragedy moves me as a joy – I hug the cleansing sorrow with all my nervous strength. I make it mine in the hours faint-lighted by the night-light and still.
>
> (f. 90r)

In her feverish musings, Cooper is both Tannhäuser and his bride, the phrase "Tannhauser is in me – it moves flood in me – its hero gives me fin[e] pain," expressing erotic sensuality and pleasure, manoeuvres ambivalently between the erotic and autoerotic. Entering the body of Tannhäuser/ letting him to enter her body/ becoming Tannhäuser, Cooper merges the position of the groom/bride of Bradley/Tannhäuser. "I get up, as if I were dressing for a great event with the exaltation of a bride – only I think I am dressing for the last time" (f. 91r). Cooper stages this state of rupture as a liminal experience, which takes her to the threshold of death, a long day of the quiet […] only my Love, ever with me, is real and undivided from the mind beyond my senses. I feel almost the patient agony of dying" (f. 90v), "the fever burns steadily

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narrative system is not impregnable, it must be considered a system of power relationship that does not easily abide change" (16).

[54] Cooper's depictions of the opera's love scenes recall her impressions from the Zwinger. Thus, a continuum with their imaginary (non-existent) world is created. Cf. MS 46779, ff. 88-89.

and makes me feel less and less mortal. I am delighted to the depths and alive within the circle of the disease (f. 93r). Note again the specific location divorced from 'reality' and from the reach of the paternal authority – Cooper writes, "I am conscious of a new, an ideal union with my Love" (f. 92v).

The narrative provides interesting material for considering the im/possibility of appropriating the plot of heterosexual love so that it conveys desire that is not in accord with the heterosexual normative. Accentuating the importance of narrative structures, distribution of the narrative voice and other devices of what de Lauretis terms "technologies of gender" for the workings of the narrative, she expresses her doubts about the possibilities to subvert the narrative so that it would cease to refer to its ideological framing. Fully acknowledging these reservations, I argue that by evaporating the boundaries between herself and the central character (Tannhäuser), Cooper opens up the scale of erotic possibilities to the associative play that enables also the possibility of Edith desiring Katherine to emerge and to circulate. In their feverish ambiguity, the journal entries thus affect readings and visions spreading 'across sexualities.' Nonetheless, the erotised pleasure attached to illness, disease, agony of pain and suffering and to the liminality of the approaching death, however, is marked by ambivalence. The urgency with which Cooper emphasises that her narrative takes its inspiration from her feverish state and "agony of dying," that it borders upon "madness," marks the limits of the erotic play of associations. Cooper's musing about her coalescence with Tannhäuser is heavily charged with sensuality and erotic pleasure (Cooper seems to draw upon images and symbolism of (hetero)sexual intercourse: "flow," "moving inside me," "giving me pain.") Whereas his influence transforms her into the mad Maenad, "Vast Bacchanals rush by Rubenesque, violent – [here Tannhauser (sic) feeds the phantasy][55] I fall into an attitude of sleep […] on the ground…" (f. 94v). The images that explicitly refer to Cooper's "new unity with Love" remain sober and do not convey any such state of rupture or erotic bliss. With reference to Bradley, Cooper notes, "only My Love, ever with me, is real and undivided from the mind beyond my senses" (f. 90v), and the relation to her represents "[a] new ideal union" (f. 92v).

[55] Here, rewriting her feverish experience into the journal, Cooper comments upon them.

V.3.3. Is This Our Schwester?

"[W]hile my Love is by chance fort, Sister assaults me with a great love in bed – kissing me on the lips and breast, gathering my limbs in her arms as if veritably I was a child under its nurse's mother's handling. She would embrace "die ganze Edith."[56]

The subsequent journal entries are set in a Dresden hospital, where Cooper was treated for scarlet fever. The present tense, the form of the narrative's composition, as well as the empty pages framing the hospital recollections, draw attention to the performative nature of the narrative and create the impression of a theatrical stage. While Schwester and Cooper – or *Heinrich*, as Schwester nicknames her[57] – become its central characters, Bradley, on the other hand, withdraws from the drama's immediate focus. The main drama is played out between Schwester and Cooper. Nonetheless, Bradley remains the third presence that serves as the ultimate point of reference. In this reading, even if illusorily absent, the third instance (Bradley) serves as the original point of the whole drama and simultaneously as the instance that generates other significations than those generated by Schwester. In this way, Bradley and Schwester appear to be positioned as two contrasting/conflicting points of reference. Thus, the encounter with Schwester, as well as the mode of the narrative/the mode of its staging, brings back the key question of the thesis. What specific role does the hospital narrative play in Cooper's (Bradley's) practice of self-writing and construing the notion of (her)self? Finally, yet importantly, how does it relate to the intricate position of the *I* to *She*, and of the *I* to *Myself*?

In the journal context, the figure of Schwester appears to be framed by a tension attached to the representation of desire. She epitomises sensuality and sexual desire. Simultaneously, she embodies its threateningly insatiable, "frustrated nature" (f. 111v). "She is like one who has been in a desert" (f. 108r) – its menace, unsavourness and "persistency of madness" (f. 112r). Cooper's encounters with Schwester are staged as a rite of struggles with Schwester's "clinging hands" and "great, spreading kisses" (f. 108v), as she incessantly "com[es] to grasp and kiss" (f. 108r), "kiss[ing] [Cooper] with a kiss that plunges down among the wraps […] [Y]es, as the wolf did when he sought the child – O Eros!" (f. 105v). [58]

[56] f. 113v.
[57] It is generally assumed that Cooper's nickname 'Henry' originated from this 'Heinrich.'
[58] To illustrate the ways in which the struggle between the Schwester's passion and Cooper's 'reasonableness' is staged, the following entry should suffice. Cooper records, "Afternoon. Ausgang (sic) for Sim to get rooms for us at the Belle Vue. I must fight Nurse's unreasonableness. She comes while I am resting, throws herself about me and kisses with the persistency of madness: I manage to make her understand she grieves and fatigues me – instantly with repentance. She retires to the arm-chair, and I pretend deep sleep with anxious ears" (f.112r).

As suggested above, Bradley's role in the narrative is now specifically carried by the moments of her absence that overlap with Cooper's fight/play against Schwester's passion.

> Schwester, *while my Love is in the garden, embraces me bodily* and from the outer precincts of language I catch the sound 'eine mächtige Liebe!' – *her hand curls round my heart to feel the life beat and strays. '[D]ie schöne Brust – O das schönes [sic] Bauch!'*___ I don't know the German of the last exclamation! She makes me shiver, but I play with her passion like a child and she is utterly deceived in it herself…
>
> (f. 111v; emphasis added)[59]

Afterwards, she adds, *"My Love returns bring[ing] home sweet yellow lupins…"* (f. 112 r; emphasis added). In this way a symbolic juxtaposition between Schwester and the attachment of Cooper and Bradley is enacted. Against its backdrop, the bond between Cooper and Bradley is again re-construed as belonging to a romantic, safe, and happy pastoral refuge: "I hasten to meet my Love in the woody paths and we visit hand in hand the quince and apple" (f. 111r). The space that Bradley and Cooper stage to inhabit together (again!) is the pastoral land of floral symbolism and tranquillity. There, they "watch the sunlight on the fountain" (f. 111v). Therefore, we might assume that it is the uncontrolled passion exhibited by Schwester that Cooper feels threatened by, and feels a need to dissociate from it. The note of detachment permeates Cooper's reflection over the parting scene.

> [T]hen I kiss the moist, powerful lips and look into the brown eyes that bless me and weep for me – I fly and on Sim's arm….I look back at the little villa in the wood – to see a big round, grey shape wave a handkerchief, bend and wave, wave, wave till the dot of white becomes an invisible …among the trees.
>
> (f. 114r)

In an attempt to close off the (retrospect and yet so present) staging of her (and Bradley's) encounter with the figure of Schwester, Cooper becomes conscious that she has gradually formed a new awareness of the events – and of herself.

> This seems a little circular bit of my life, shut out by a special *exclusive line from my other days*; it is curious how perfectly my imagination has been curving round to the point where this circle began. As soon as my convalescence touched me warmly, my thoughts began to revert to the first sensations, the fear, the sadness, the vacancy of illness – the splendour of delirium, the still growth of the "machtige (sic) Liebe" in Schwester. *I see all those things in their completeness as the time comes for me to pass the hospital doors, I am nearer to them than when I was passing through them.*
>
> (f. 113 r; emphasis added)

[59] Note the way Cooper inserts a quotation in German as a way of detaching herself from their erotic and sexual meanings and implications.

Attesting to the performative nature of the assumed retrospect, the remark concluding this train of recollection suggests that it engenders a new awareness of yearning and desire. Cooper notes, *"A new yearning has been planted in Memory"* (f. 113 r; emphasis added). Reviving Cooper's earlier comments on the eroticised image of the suffering saint, Saint Sebastian,[60] these notes make a statement about desire, passion and their insatiable nature. Or is it the denial of passion and desire and their fulfilment that Cooper speaks about?

> I never know what a passion of passions disappointment can be. I only got relief when I thought of A. da Messina's St Sebastian in the Gallery – his virile, reproachful face reared against the blue heavens - his eyes asking, *"why am I denied what I was made for."* That picture was constantly with me…and Sim's dear voice was as constantly occupied in reading […] to me…"
>
> (f. 99v; emphasis added)

It is the ambivalence contained in Cooper's/Saint Sebastian's lament, "why am I denied what I was made for," that affixes a new meaning to da Messina's painting. Juxtaposed against the erotic visions expressed in her (their) re-readings of the paintings in Zwinger, and of Wagner's opera, Cooper's mental picture of the lone Saint standing – as if – excluded from the town thriving behind his back, provokes many questions. (Fig. 2) Does it imply a new understanding and conception of her own (and possibly also Bradley's) desire and/or sexuality? Further, does it say that this desire is conceived as intricately interwoven with her notion of the self? Would it thence not imply new ways in which Cooper relates to herself, and to Bradley and their relationship? How are these new meanings attached to desire and Cooper's concepts of her/their sexuality? These questions constitute the major focus of the subsequent part of the chapter.

[60] Cf. Note no.39 of this chapter.

V.4. Epistemologies of Silence(s) and Sexual Interdictions

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/*he*/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."[61] 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, following questions arise: 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,[62] 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.

Discourses of sexuality operate as always already gendered ones. As de Lauretis notes, the discursive regimes have construed sexuality as essentially 'male,' as opposite of, or preemptive to, female sexuality.[63] Nevertheless, the concepts that place female (and particularly female same-sex) sexuality outside of the regulative discourses of sexuality miss their point. Regulations of female same-sex sexuality are then thought to emerge only with the upstart of sexology that eventually complicated and "morbidified" these relations.[64] Inbreathing as these studies have been for exploring the ways in which women created a space to bond, to live, to love, and to survive, these studies necessarily remain insufficient for

[61] Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge, 1999. Quote on page 25.
[62] Cf. Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. *Epistemology of the Closet.* London: Penguin, 1990
[63] De Lauretis, Teresa. *Technologies of Gender. Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction*. London: The Macmillan Press, 1987. Quote on page 14.
[64] Symptomatic in this respect is the following text, Faderman, Lillian. "The Morbidification of Love between

theorisations of the specific ways in which women loving women (and perhaps also women loving both men and women, and possibly even women not entering any erotic/sexual relationship) became subjects to sexual interdictions. Likewise unaddressed, remain the ways in which these women managed to deploy the technologies of domination – perhaps precisely through their already gendered nature – to constitute a practice of the self through which they could attain a "certain state of happiness."[65] No matter if the relations between women were, or were not, 'really' sexual, they hardly fall out of the imaginary jurisdiction that regulates one's sexuality. Re-reading Foucault's discussion of the memoirs of Herculine Barbine,[66] Butler opposes Foucault's romanticising – as she argues – of the sexual options *Alexine/Herculine* enjoyed before Alexine was caught and laced in the straightjacket of the masculine identity of Herculine. On the contrary, Butler maintains, even then there was no innocent, diffused, and unregulated pleasure of sex. In order to keep away from the romanticising vision of sexuality, she cautions to ask, "[w]hat social practices and conventions produce sexuality in this form?"[67]

Edith Cooper and Katherine Bradley/ 'Michael Field's references to Greek times and to Sappho, appropriations of images of the once lost woman-centred commune, the way Bradley and Cooper perceive their writing – and particularly the journal writing – as engendering the (alternative) space where they could live/love, their crossings into utopian landscapes where they locate their desire, these all reflect workings of a specific discourse of sexuality. Against the backdrop of these (poetic/erotic) strategies, we need to attend more closely to the ways in which the normative definitions of gender imbricate with constructions of sexuality and sexual interdictions. The self-writing practice as it materialises on the pages of *Works and Days* enables us to observe how the technology of sex (even if cast as non-sexuality or emotionality) produces its own (sexual and gendered) subject. More importantly, the self-writing practice also calls attention to the constitutive constraints attached to sexuality and desire. It dramatises the radically unthinkable, the forms of desire that remain unattainable, and unendurable.[68]

Women by 19th-century Sexologists." *Journal of Homosexuality*. 4.1. (1978): 73-90.

[65] Foucault, Michel. "Truth, Power, Self." *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault.* Martin, Luther H., Gutman Huck and Patrick H. Hutton. eds. London: Tavistock, 1988. Quote on page 18.
See also Chapter II of this thesis.

[66] Foucault, Michel. ed. *Herculine Barbine: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-century French Hermaphrodite.* New York: Patheon Books, 1980.

[67] Butler, *Gender Trouble,* 125.

[68] Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* London: Routledge, 1993. Quote on page 94.

V.4.1. Eloquent Silences of the We

Examining silences produced in *Works and Days* and their performativity, we need to deconstruct the unity of the *We* and to focus on the tension and dynamics covered behind its seeming stability. As we argued on the outset of the chapter, it is the *We* rather than the *I* that in case of *Works and Days* represents the "self-evident," "redundant."[69] Obviously, the construction of the unitary *We* is intricately related with the self-fashioning strategy the two women deploy for construing their mutual bond. It stands for a figural/figurative device that Bradley and Cooper deploy in order to assuage the impropriety of their relationship and of 'Michael Field'. However, constructing this unitary persona also bears upon the self-writing practice through which they construe their (gender and sexed) subject position. As such, the *We* persona arguably corresponds to performance of cultural patterns of 'femininity'/ 'femaleness'/ 'womanhood,' and those of apposite sexuality. For instance, the so much emphasised literary *collaboration*, upon which the public persona of 'Michael Field' is based, represents one of the self-fashioning strategies that are to legitimise their *cohabitation*. As Bette London argues, the very image of the inextricable literary partnership, which Cooper and Bradley so painstakingly distribute, reinforces, even perfects, the appropriate codes of femininity.[70] The act of writing double emphasizes, London argues, the work's "conversational composition, dialogic interchange, felicitous sympathy, harmonious union, and above all, seamless production." Importantly, these features operate as invocation of qualities culturally coded as feminine such as "selflessness, sympathy, nurturance, domesticity."[71]

On the face of this, we need to probe the fiction of stability and permanence of the equation *I + She = We*, and consider the *We* construction(s) under the aspect of the practices of the self. We need to readdress the intricate networks of coexistent, interlacing/ conflicting relations *I – She*, *I – We*, and enrich it for a newly present axis of *I – He.* The complexity of these axes of intersecting, overlapping **and** conflicting relations embodies a locus of epistemological conflict, a locus upon which the re/negotiation of Cooper's (Bradley's) subject positions is to be observed. The interface of these axes represents the very location upon which the writing *I* construes herself.

[69] Langford and West, "Introduction," *Marginal Voices, Marginal Forms,* 3.
[70] London, Bette. *Writing Double: Women's Literary Partnerships*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1999.
[71] London, *Writing Double,* 71 and 74.

Studying the archive of the (auto-)biographic narratives formed around Trans* subjects, Judith Halberstam makes clear that none of these subjects can possibly be subsumed under the univocal category of sexual identity. She maintains, "all must be remembered according to the narratives they meticulously circulated about themselves when they were alive."[72] Halberstam's objective is to show that the strategies we use to remember Trans*/queer lives are highly contingent of the normative prescriptions of gender and sexuality. She argues that the biographic fictions we attach to these subjects are "violent, often imprecise project that brutally seeks, retroactively and with the benefit of hindsight, to erase the carefully managed details of the life of a passing person."[73] The inspiration I draw from Halberstam's observations is to be attentive to the polysemy, even the potential ambiguities, in Cooper's (and Bradley's) narrative(s) of the self. Therefore, the following part focuses on, and emphasises precisely those aspects of *Works and Days* that appear to challenge, the notion of uncomplicated (and unequivocally 'lesbian') bond between Cooper and Bradley.[74] Only the study that embraces the overlappings, as well as conflicts of the various axes onto which Cooper positions herself, can potentially address the complexity of the performative constitution of a gendered subject, and to highlight the limits of cultural intelligibility of various forms of sexuality. Likewise, juxtaposing the distribution of silences (ignorances) that encircles the *We* (as well as the *I – She*), and the specific speech acts Cooper enacts in her self-positioning towards Berenson, might prove informative as to regulative politics of sexual inhibitions.

Before proceeding further, it needs to be noted that the following analysis centres on journals spanning the period of 1894-1896 in which Cooper's voice predominates even more markedly than in the previous years. It is highly probable that this distribution of women's voices within their joint journal corresponds to the (power) dynamic established in the relationship itself. The predominance of Cooper's notes, the acuteness of their tone and their subject matter, likewise support the thesis that Cooper experiences a higher degree of self-consciousness and

[72] Halberstam, Judith. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives.* New York, London: New York University Press, 2005. Quote on page 48.
Halberstam bases her argument upon reading Jackie Kay's novel *Trumpet*.
Kay, Jackie. *Trumpet.* London: Picador, 1998.
[73] Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place,* 48.
[74] Nonetheless, it has to be noted that examining the role the relationship on the axis *I – He* played in the self-fashioning practices of Cooper, it is not to accentuate the importance of Cooper's relation to a man over her bond to Bradley. Anything near heterosexualising Cooper is far away from my objective. It will be no surprise on the other hand that the workings of the heteronormative matrix can be traced to earlier renderings of 'Michael Field'. Cf. Sturgeon, *Michael Field;* Moore, *Works and Days.*

anxiety. Furthermore, against the evidence of unequal distribution of their self-reflections in the journal volumes, it appears quite plausible to conclude that both women hold differing conceptions of how their mutual bond and their experience relates to their self-perceptions and to their subjectivities.

To follow Halberstam's caution as to the complexity and contradictions that self-reflexive narratives (queer) subjects generate, we must expand the field of our study to one more axis of relation. In the period between 1891 and 1896, Bernard Berenson occupies one of the most prominent positions in the journal.[75] The complex constellation of *Berenson – Cooper – Bradley* proves to be a location of permanent and unceasing resignification. It is to be assumed hence that his figure plays an important role in Cooper's (and Bradley's) self-perception, as well as in the ways Cooper and Bradley position themselves within the *We* constructions. With respect to the questions formulated above, it is of importance to observe what mutual positionings the respective relations *Berenson – Cooper – Bradley*, *Cooper – Bradley,* as well as *Cooper – Berenson,* produce.[76]

Initially, Berenson enters the world Cooper and Bradley fabricate for themselves in the guise of 'Michael Field' as their mutual friend. He is fashioned as the third vertex of their playful imaginary triangular constellations. For instance, they assign him the role of Faun and/or Satyr that participates in their wild feasts of Maenads and celebrations of the god Bacchus. Increasingly, however, Cooper seems to construe her relation to Berenson through the category of *difference*. As they switch from the *We and Berenson* to the *I and He* and, in some instances, even to the *I and You,* Cooper's journal notes related to Berenson take on an air of romantic infatuation. This distinguishing moment of difference then operates as a double category of meaning. First, the difference is called upon in Cooper's strategies of self-positionings towards Berenson, in terms of which – as I hope to demonstrate shortly – it operates to define the respective positions of a 'woman' towards a 'man.' Secondly, the

[75] Bernard Berenson (1865-1959), American art historian. *Works and Days* dubs him also as 'BB', 'Bernie', or 'Doctrine'.

[76] Martha Vicinus argues that Cooper and Bradley tend to employ a symbolic triangular structure, where one vertex needs to be occupied by a male figure. Be it (successively) Cooper's father, Berenson, their much-adored friend Browning, Bacchus, their beloved dog, or, after their conversion, Catholic priests.
Vicinus, *Intimate Friends,* 100-101.
If we read this with Butler's considerations of the classic Oedipal structures, we might assume that these triangular positionings with the supreme vertex occupied by a male authority, to which both women relate, are to preclude the improper positiong that Butler terms as "phallicised dyke" (*Bodies* 96). Compare also with the strategic deployment of the Oedipal structures in Symonds's autobiography.

difference seems to inform the juxtaposition of Cooper's bond to Bradley and her relationship with Berenson. *"I and my Love,"* i.e. the *We*, appears differentiated from the axis *I – He*. Interestingly, the increased dynamic of the symbolic re-signification that I have just described to affect the axes of *Cooper – Bradley* and *Cooper – Berenson* happens to be located in the historical moment spanning the years 1895 and 1896.

V.4.1.1. Being a Woman?

"Woman I cannot call her"[77]

Previously, the deployment of the love drama of Tannhäuser has been discussed with respect to Cooper and Bradley's strategies of appropriative crossings across sexualities and across gender that enable them to express a woman's desire for a woman. The subsequent section examines *Works and Days'*s representational strategies of the (heterosexual) love between a man and a woman from a different perspective. With a view to the practices of the self that Cooper devices for herself, it explores how Cooper relates to Berenson, and what role this positioning plays for constitution of Cooper's subjectivity. Further, I will also examine if – and in what ways – the representation of the relationship between Cooper and Berenson intersects with the representation of the women's relationship as Katherine/*Michael* – Edith/*Field*. It needs to be asked whether the mutual (and shifting) symbolical relation of *I – She* vs. *I – He* reflects any sort of confrontation of Cooper's *I* constructions with the normative prescriptions of gender and sexuality. Rather than to reproduce the thoroughly static binary oppositions, the question so formulated should illustrate the dynamic and unstable relation between what only in retrospect appears as the univocally 'hetero-' or 'homosexual' relation. Following questions need to be addressed: (How) does the juxtaposition of *I – She* and *I – He* relations operate (the) figure(s) of difference? (How) does the formulation of the *I – He* relationship intersect with categories of femininity or other (normative gender) categories? Could the way (as well as the context) in which Cooper fashions herself within the *I – He* relationship uncover some of the implications the *I – She* relationship might have onto the way Cooper relates to herself?

The context against which Cooper's relation to Berenson attracts new signification happens to be framed with references to an event that many have seen as the turning- point in the history of homosexuality, i.e. the Wilde trials. In her concluding reflections over the year 1895,

[77] MS 46783, f. 68r.

Cooper notes: "The moral shock of this year – the trial and condemnation of Oscar has been the horror – a spectre thing through all the seasons" (MS 46784, f. 51r). In addition, the following quote from the journal mirrors the anxiety with which Cooper and Bradley responded to this affair:

> On Sunday night after talk about Carducci's Satana and about Oscar I dream that we stop at a restaurant half way up a mountain and a woman from down the table begs to speak with us when the table d'otel is over, for she has heard things against us. "Oh," says a woman on Michael's left "[W]hat an interesting talk that will be – I suspect it will be about your works." Michael replies. I have no fear at all about my works – I know quite well that all come from Satan" at her right hand I whisper, "[F]or goodness' sake don't say these things – remember the Oscar scandal!" – How characteristic both remarks!
>
> (MS 46783, f. 57v)

These quotes document clearly that Cooper considers these happenings to have a potential effect on her (and Bradley's) position. Confronted with these occurrences, she recognises that her and Bradley's relationship might possibly be recognised as similarly improper.[78] Further, references to literary works of 'Michael Field' and their affinity to the works of Oscar Wilde, whose supposedly immoral literary works served as one major proof of his immorality (i.e. sexual impropriety),[79] imply that Cooper referrers to the 'immoral' (i.e. sexual) dimension of her relation with Bradley. Thus, Cooper's anxiety about Oscar reflects her anxiety about the sexual impropriety of 'Michael Field'.

The reflections upon the 'sex trouble' coincide in *Works and Days* with a newly urgent confrontation with the normative prescriptions of 'femininity' and 'womanhood.' Apparently, the instance when Cooper recognises that her and Bradley's attachment might be considered to defy the rules of decency and sexual propriety overlaps conspicuously with her becoming acutely aware of her (and Bradley's) thorny position as unmarried, independent, and childless

[78] Regulation of male homosexuality was undoubtedly the prime object of the new disciplinary regime. Likewise, the scandals accompanying trials with Wilde had the severest effect upon male same-sex subculture(s). However, it would be incorrect to presume that women who loved women either did not recognise the nature of these events, or went unaffected by these changes. Before examining what possible effects these changes could have had upon the ways in which Cooper and Bradley construed their mutual relationship, there is another example documenting that some women might perceive these social events as having implications for their personal situation. In an essay entitled "Eugenics and Spiritual Parenthood," discussing Oscar Wilde as the example of an 'invert' personality, Edith Ellis records her talk with a doctor whom she had approached to ask about the possible solutions to the inverts' situation. Obviously, the received answer depressed her reasonably. It did not list any other possibility "except [for the male invert's] death, imprisonment"
Cf. Ellis, Edith. *The New Horizon in Love and Life*. With a preface by Edward Carpenter and an introduction by Marguerite Tracy. London: A. & C. Black, 1921. Quote on page 61.

[79] See e.g. Hyde, H. Montgomery. *The Trials of Oscar Wilde.* New York: Dover, 1962.

women. Women devoted unconditionally to literary and intellectual work (and to one another), and defying both the social constraints imposed upon women by the patriarchal society, as well as regulations of the reproductive bio-politics. Both Cooper and Bradley marvel in their critiques of the Victorian notions of femininity and womanhood. Their representations of Sappho surrounded by her female circle, 'Michael Field's ekphrastic verses celebrating Venus, and the tribute they repeatedly pay to ecstatic Maenads,[80] are meant as a celebration of essential 'womanhood.' This, they understood, embodies a stark contrast to the Victorian constructions of a 'woman' and 'femininity.'[81] Nonetheless, about this moment, the journal entries suggest that Cooper and Bradley become troubled by their position outside of normative femininity. The reoccurring nightmares illustrate this. Few months after the Wilde nightmare, Cooper records another one. She writes,

> Then I dreamt a nightmare of a new, endless Review that began 'and *who are these wild Kernes* […] who defy the marriage-tie and decency.' I had to read on and on trying to swallow with my brain before my eye had received as one does when a review comes – only gathering insult and misconception. This was a very original and successful nightmare. I congratulate Morpheus….but even now I hardly know through which door he sent it.
>
> (MS 46784, f. 23v)

I introduce the quote to highlight the appellative force of the normative categories of gender, which, however, is always already a particular type of *hetero-gender*. Here, femininity is framed within the heteronormative constructs of decency and marriage and thus defined by particular forms of normative sexuality. Symptomatically, the added emphasis accentuates

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[80] The figure of the Greek Maenad provides Bradley and Cooper/'Michael Field' with an alternative to the infamous figure of the Victorian Spinster. Bradley, in particular, likes to emphasise her (their) kinship with figures of Maenads, who in ancient Greece formed a band of women worshipping Dionysus. Professedly, they, intoxicated by wine and the sound of drums, became the "mad ones," and rendered apart sacrificial animals and ate their raw flesh. Thus they (temporarily) subverted social roles assigned to women and enacted a ritual of feminine rebellion. Cf. Prins, "Greek Maenads."
The rebellion and subversion, as well as the worship to Dionysus (or Bacchus as Bradley and Cooper prefer to term their favourite god), appear to constitute the basis of their interest in Maenads. For instance, in 1895 Bradley mocks a mother praising her daughter on her intellect and education. Bradley says: "[S]he knows nothing of Plato except that he is not quite…well you know! and imagines that Maenads were only drunken women…" MS 46783, f. 163v

[81] Especially their dramas re-work and criticise the contemporary notions of femininity.
Cf. Moriarty, David J. "'Michael Field' and Their Male Critics." *Nineteenth-Century Women Writers of the English-Speaking World.* Rhoda B. Nathan, ed. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1986.
Also, the following quote illustrates that they juxtapose their own relationship to that of a man and a woman. They weigh their bond in terms of the possibility to escape the restraints imposed upon femininity. In 1893, Cooper notes, "I am proud of my flowers – women do not have such gifts – except from men – because they have not learnt through the centuries to give their love objectively in signs and lavish tokens – they give their hands, their lips, themselves, but nothing impersonal which they endow with ardour" (MS 46781, f. 18r).

that the appellative force always slips to encompass the whole of the 'Michael Field's *We* and highlights the impropriety/queerness, or even unintelligibility of the women's relationship.[82]

Visiting Berenson in Florence in 1895, Cooper devotes a relatively large space of the journal to characterisations of women she and Bradley meet who appear to trouble and occupy her mind. Interestingly, Vernon Lee happens to be one of the described women. Her description in particular is characterised by suggestive ambivalence; if admired for her independence, she is also seen as an embodiment of the new (and strange) 'womanhood,' which Cooper perceives as shaped by masculinity, "intellectual vampirism," and bareness (MS 46783, ff. 45-57). Strangely, in terms of a lifestyle and social position, Vernon Lee, as well as the other women described in *Works and Days,* happen to resemble closely that of 'Michael Field'. Despite this, or perhaps because of this, Cooper identifies these women as somehow awkward, strange, and perhaps comic. Briefly, Cooper's characterisation invokes allusions to queerness.[83] However, this gesture of transposition that Cooper performs here deflects her (their) own anxiety with being recognised as queer, attests the measure to which Cooper (and Bradley) is (are) aware of her (their) own uneasy position. Confronted with visions of queerness, Cooper draws on contemporary discourses surrounding the figure of the New Woman and the presumed battle of the sexes. In terms of these discourses, Cooper encodes the described women as simultaneously 'unfeminine', 'hyper-feminine' and 'non-female,' but

[82] With their later works, Cooper and Bradley become increasingly anxious about the bad reviews 'Michael Field.' received. Considering the fragility, the distinction between the literary and the personal (so central to Cooper and Bradley's self-fashioning strategies), the bad reviews of 'Michael Field's works operate simultaneously as reviews of Cooper and Bradley's lives (and love). They are concerned that their artistic vision is no longer attractive to the outside world/audience. Cooper notes, "noone wants our work and we can't make our song against the world as we did" (MS 46783, f. 60v). Elsewhere, she records the frantic search for a positive review of their play *Attila, My Attila*. Finally, she finds one and exclaims, "[t]his has saved me. It has established my sanity…we each confer that *all day we have been in a horror of dread that we really were going insane, dwelling on dangerous subjects and writing?*" (MS 46784, f. 21r; emphasis added).
As Cooper and Bradley construe their cohabitation upon their collaboration, I propose to read the anxiety they record about the in/acceptance of their work as an expression of a deeper-seated anxiety about the in/acceptance of their lives/love. By analogy, the positive acclaim of their works would then translate into the imprimatur upon their shared life.
Cf. Fletcher, "I leave a Page Half-Writ."
Analogously, the later volumes of *Works and Days* suggest a similar need to draw an approval for their works (collaboration). An interesting situation arises, for instance, when in 1913, shortly before Cooper's death of cancer both women stage a reading of their love poetry to another before their confessor, Mr. Francis. Reciting her lyrics, Bradley uses the instance of the confessor to demand acceptance of their love: "There was need of Francis to listen to *Wild Honey*: there will be need of God to assure that immortal oneness of Love." Simultaneously these recitations take a form of performance she stages for Cooper. Bradley states, "I also let my Beloved realise what her poet's gift has been to me – her poet-lover's gift…" (Moore 323-324).

[83] Even though Cooper does not use the term herself, I resort to it for its apt ambiguity. In its original sense (strange, odd, obscure, and essentially unintelligible), it pertinently corresponds to the troubles Cooper had when making sense of the women.

also simultaneously as 'masculine' and overall 'unnatural.'[84] It is further significant that these discourses conflate gender with sexual impropriety.[85] Commenting on one of the 'queer' women,[86] Cooper says, "[She is] an earnest, self-ruling, fine creature, woman I cannot call her" (MS 46783, f. 68r). This rather expressive commentary happens to be juxtaposed to discussions of sex, and of the union woman and man arguably achieve in the sexual act that Cooper and Bradley enjoyed in the society of their Florence acquaintances. Significantly, the two opposing disputants, whose opinions Cooper traces and notes, are Berenson and the creature Cooper has just termed as 'not-woman'.[87]

Moreover, Cooper's reflections of this particular woman reveal a further aspect that seems to trouble Cooper.

> She spoke of herself as abnormal, as *probably physically different from other women*! It seemed to me she stripped naked and *the nakedness* was not at all beautiful, and therefore *abominable*.
>
> (MS 46783, f. 68r; emphasis added)

Reading these lines through Kristeva's notion of abjection (that, what we find repulsive is that which both threatens us and still functions as something we identify with and feel attracted to),[88] we might say that the aspect Cooper finds so particularly revolting about this woman uncovers much more about Cooper's self-reflections. I want to suggest that her description of this queer woman corresponds with what she finds troubling in her self-perceptions, and/or with that she attempts to abject from these reflections. Similarly, as in the case of *Field*'s encounter with Schwester, it is the strategic refusal to name, as well as the strategy of transposition, that mark Cooper's representation of this woman. On the one hand, Cooper's distancing from the queer *not-woman* is necessarily motivated by an act of (self-)recognition. It is the identification of her own trespasses against the sexual (and gender) norms that provokes Cooper to the act of transposing (externalising) it onto a different figure. Simultaneously though, these trespasses cannot be named and recognised (thus have to become a part of the economics of ignorance) lest the transposition could collapse. Does the

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[84] Cf. Pykett, Lynn. *The Improper Feminine: The Woman´s Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing.* London: Routledge, 1992. Cf. MS 46783, ff. 43v-44, 45-53, 60-68.

[85] In this respect, consider the proverbial figure of 'the Mannish Lesbian' that grows out of the imbrications of new sexological theories of sexual inversion with the discursive constructions of new women. Cf. Newton, Ester. "The Mythic Mannish Lesbian: Radclyffe Hall and the New Woman." *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past.* Vicinus, Martha, Duberman, Martin and Chauncey, George. eds. London: Penguin Books, 1991. 281-293.

[86] In the journal, the woman figures as 'Miss Cruttwell' and is said to be a friend to Vernon Lee.

[87] Apparently, the final verdict of "woman I cannot call her" is due to the woman's rejection of these notions of (heterosexualised) union of a man and a woman. Cf. MS 46783, ff. 65-68.

[88] Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror. An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia UP, 1982.

danger of (self-)recognition reflect further in Cooper's self-writing practice? Does it affect the way the women construe their relationship? Alternatively, what self-fashioning strategies are available to them in the given historical moment and in the given context? How does Cooper confront (her own) queerness defined in terms of gender (and sex) trouble?

In 1895, Cooper enters the following note into the *Works and Days*:

> At last we are together, I and you. Alone with out great power – that you are a man, that I am a woman: every second knew why we were left like this. Our life began – a movement from the loveliness of sense, a need to go along with it, intense as terror…and the going! We were caught, swept each in each, and out great power at will used us, although we never stirred to meet. But the lamp light and the air grown still our eyes clung: and our natures by the heat of that slow gaze to an ecstasy were wrought.
>
> (MS 46783, f. 81r)

The surprising turn into *I and You* that Cooper performs here does not, as indicated above, address Bradley, but Berenson. Cooper and Berenson are posited to embody a fate-like encounter of a man and a woman, in which the irresistible powers of magnetic attraction force the two parts to merge, in which they are swept into each other, into unity. It is in this symbolic unification of a man and a woman that Cooper becomes recognisable as a woman. In and through her relation to Berenson, the 'womanhood' of Cooper is confirmed. The erotic (and sexual) implications overt in the way Cooper addresses Berenson here are present also in more of Cooper's notes. For instance, she remarks, "I know I am created to respond to B's fascination as a sensitive plate to light…" (MS 46784, f. 20r) Apparently, (the figure of) Berenson as *Works and Days* characterise him in his relation to Cooper, operates on two interlinked levels. First, Cooper defines her relationship to Berenson as that of a woman to a man. In this sense, the figure of Berenson serves to underwrite Cooper's gender identity that she experiences as challenged. Second, the fashioning of the man-woman relationship enacted in Cooper's journal notes makes a constant reference to its erotic nature and thus arguably involves Cooper's sexuality. Whereas the relationship between Cooper and Bradley is played out through the scrupulous performance of the *We*, the elliptic expression of the erotic/sexual dimension of their liaison, Cooper's self-positioning within the *I – He* relationship, on the contrary, slips into the eroticised bond of *I and You*. Against this background, I would argue that *doing gender,* as we observe it in Cooper's journal, comprises an interdependence between gender and sexuality. On the face of this, alongside its appraisal of women bonding, *Works and Days,* and particularly Cooper's practice of self-reflection, records a conflict with

the limits of gender intelligibility provoked precisely by the women's bonding. Being a woman, is in the given context of the journal the most powerful mode of self-identification; hence its challenge signifies a challenge to Cooper's entire intelligibility as a describable human being (note again Cooper's inability to find fitting words for the 'fine creature' once she recognises that 'woman' does not apply here). Significantly, Cooper's response to the call upon her identity as a woman operates through concurrent distribution of silences and utterances of erotic (and sexual) attachments. Recognition of queerness, as well as strategies of its rejection, involves specific imbrications of gender and sexual impropriety that indicates a specific type of gender. In this sense, Cooper's doing gender, being/becoming a woman (necessarily) corresponds to the heteronormative matrix.

V.4.1.2. Powers of Silence and Ignorance

> "[A]ll of a sudden she becomes to me a world of spring and her little language falls on me like rays giving me health. We listen to the larks darting song through the air. We walk hand in hand."[89]

Examining the measure to which the axis of the *I – He* relation determines Cooper's gender performance, we have attended to both prescriptive nature of gender performativity that incites (enforces) certain articulations of sexual positions (and desire) and simultaneously forecloses others. In this way, our attention has been placed upon the constraining nature of the silences that encircle Cooper and Bradley's positionality as the *We*. However, the overlapping of the positionalities inscribed within the triangular relations of *Cooper – Bradley – Berenson* allow for a different reading of these silences. Considering alternative significations that the axis *Cooper – Berenson* (i.e. *I – He*) acquires in this period of the journal, I ponder the extent of the women's agency in negotiating (appropriating) the normative gender prescriptions of 'femininity.' Once more the attention should be focused upon the suspiciously stable nature of the *Cooper – Bradley* relationship. This axis is based upon the feminine qualities of loyalty and complete communion, and the ellipsis (silence) of a direct discourse of *I – You.* However, the stability of the *We* position that silences the dynamics of the relationship needs to be examined with regard to the question of the women's agency to utilize (if on a limited scale) strategies of power for their own self-fashionings. Or, as John Law and Vicki Singleton note, "staying the same may also depend upon changes,"[90] we also need to examine in what ways the distribution of silence(s), and of the elliptic *We,* might prove as an enabling practice of the self.

[89] Bradley, MS 46785, f. 37

The journal volumes spanning the two eventful years between 1895 and 1896 are dense with references to Berenson; hence they record the concentration of meaning attached to his figure, and the new constellation of the respective relations that his inclusion into the narrative generates. Reading the journal entries of these years, it becomes increasingly clear how difficult a process, how overburdened with significance and meaning(s), it was for Cooper to position herself on the interface of these relations. It is the irresolution of their mutual position that makes this constellation so tricky to unravel. Having argued that the way Cooper relates to Berenson and fashions herself onto the *I – He* axis employs an idealised signification of sexuality between a man and a woman. I now want to discuss Cooper's reflections of her relationship with Berenson under a different angle that allows us to examine Cooper's strategic employment of her own positionality.

The references to the relationship between Cooper and Berenson encompass an element of anxiety. The relationship becomes transformed into a troubling and upsetting instance that eventually appears to threaten the very relationship between Cooper and Bradley, which is the relationship of prime importance for Cooper's (and Bradley's) self-fashioning. First, Berenson is recorded to exercise a stultifying force over Cooper. She portrays herself as being turned into a passive and impressionable object of Berenson's interest that "[is] treated as wonderful when act[s] as a fool…"(MS 46783, f. 79r). Moreover, Cooper notices that the presence of Berenson makes her grow completely mute. With increasing unease, she perceives to be losing her voice, "I remained silent mostly and raised my Love's ire, who said I seemed as if lying in my coffin – or hard in trance. […] Really, I am getting hateful in this speechlessness. What causes it?" (MS 46783, f. 79r) The same inexplicable and debilitating effect of Berenson's presence pervades even her talk of matters she is familiar with and knowledgeable about, namely poetics and art. Thus, Cooper's self- reflections permeate with the repetitive statements of wonder and anxiety.

> *I can't stop thinking what comes to me that I grow simply idiotic in this company*, […] or like a public fool – […] stiff, pathetic deadly […] I who am by nature a shy swift-lizard am transformed into an elephant! It nearly drives me mad to become aware of myself as this bogie-idiot-deity-ghost. Dio Mio! I sometimes wonder if I am quite sane. I cannot converse, scarcely speak…*and to express an opinion is beyond my fortitude.*

[90] Law, John, Vicki Singleton. "Object Lessons." *Organisation.* 12.3. (2005): 331-355. Quote on page 339.

(MS 46783, f. 75v; emphasis added)

Most importantly, Cooper also notes that the debilitating influence of Berenson affects her artistic aptitudes. This threat to Cooper's creative power has a twofold footing. First, Berenson embodies a symbolic authority granted the right to approve or disapprove of Cooper's artistic production. Coinciding with the entries that portray Cooper's increasing infatuation with Berenson, Berenson is installed into the role of a proving authority over Edith's ability to create, and she fails.

> At afternoon tea B[ernard] […] pray[s] me to read some of *This Moment Only* and in a luckless moment I consent. When I fetch the [Manuscript] I feel the sort of anguish I once had in childhood when I was sent to fetch some biscuits I knew I had eaten …[Y]es, *I experienced the same deathly sickness of humiliation.* I read – […] my voice goes from bad to worse and till it is a bleating sobs and hides the very meaning of the words it wrings out… B[ernard] is almost silent…doom urges me to madness; I try to read […] have to stop and shivering from head to foot get away and let the outrage against my nature revenge itself in a spasm of hysteria – an earthquake and geyser combined!
>
> (MS 46783, f. 76v; emphasis added)

Second, if the relation between Cooper and Berenson has been characterized in eroticized/sexualized terms, it is precisely this dimension of their relationship that is ascribed a new, rather threatening, and negative meaning. With anxiety, Cooper records that her feelings for Berenson mar her independent creativity.

> I'm in a desperate state […] I am torn by a *renewed passion that is like madness when aroused* and I almost hate the beloved Love of my life, because she must sever me from *the hateful tyrant of my blood – [...] whose fire is my fire, whom I adore to the point of self-destruction.*
>
> (MS 46785, f. 36v; emphasis added)

> *When I am severed from him, I again create and see that my creations are good* – when I am with him I am […] *too captured physically***,** to gain mental joy from exchanged thought.
>
> (MS 46785, ff. 36v – 37r; emphasis added)

Here, physical attraction to Berenson is turned into a terrorizing presence. Though bringing her the "delicious experience of sensuality" (MS 46785, f 37r.), the over-present physicality of their attachment blocks her own power of creation. The experience of passion is recorded as nothing but maddening, tyrannous, and verging upon self-destruction. And it is Bradley, "the beloved Love of my life" – as Cooper dubs her – that rescues Cooper from the overpowering madness of sexual passion. In this way, the *I – He* relationship becomes

contrasted against the *I – She*.[91] The juxtaposition of *Cooper – Berenson* vs. *Cooper – Bradley* is fabricated upon the respective reference to binary oppositions, such as emotional unity/ sexual attraction, mutual care and support/ threatening sexuality, stability/ instability, security/fear and anxiety, security/ threat, reassurance/challenge, incentive. Apparently, the chain of significations attached to both relationships, *I – He* vs. the *I – She* (or rather "I and my Love"), draws upon the predictable Victorian middle-class gender clichés of contrasting characterisations of femininity/masculinity, as well as upon the (related) clichés ascribed to woman – woman, or man – woman relationships respectively. The recurrence to such cliché-like notions clearly marks the limits of cultural concepts available within the given context. In another sense, however, the employment of these binary oppositions (in the context of their work on producing the meaning of their bond) documents again the strategic possibilities gender norms of femininity could hold for them. Both Cooper's positioning towards Berenson, as well as towards Bradley, are shored upon her iterations of femininity. However, whereas in case of the former relationship, Cooper records the somatisation of the passive and subordinate 'feminine' position that humiliates her and stultifies her creative abilities. In case of the latter, it is recorded as essentially enabling and gratifying experience.

Lastly, the seemingly unmovable facade of the *We,* or *I – She* respectively, needs to be examined with a view to the changing significations attached to the relationship of Cooper and Berenson. Significantly, the effects Cooper records as troubling symptoms of her fascination with Berenson, translate into the effects he has over the whole of 'Michael Field'. "What was actual in [Bernard's influence] while it operated was death and destruction" (MS 46783, f. 46r).[92] Further, the potentially destructive effect over 'Michael Field' translates into the destructive effect over the relationship of the two women. Threatening the completeness, the unity of 'Michael Field's persona, Berenson (or Cooper's relation to him) threatens the unity of the relationship binding Cooper and Bradley. Cooper: "We feel in spite of ourselves that we are jarred in our completeness, […] we who speak together to the world!" (MS 46785, f. 37r). One soberly brief and laconic note expresses with exceptionable clearness that Cooper

[91] The trope Cooper uses to describe the conflict in her loyalties is that of a violent dilemma. "[T]o stand between Hell and Heaven loving both, has been a crisis" (MS 46785, f. 38v). Resolving the conflict and the re-establishing of their impregnated unity occurs again in the idyllic and harmonious pastoral. "Love and I stroll together round the chalky crests, a plunge among the yews, flecked here and there with hazel-catkins" (MS 46785, f. 38r).

[92] In 1896, Cooper weighs up the last 5 years in 'Michael Field's career, which cover the time of their friendship with Berenson. "[W]hat was the work of these 5 years?" […] Add up the result of the five years – it is appallingly negative…in 'Michael Field's life a 0 [read "zero"]. […] The modern, American side of Bernhard has braced us almost to extinction but having endured, we are there [b]old alive" (MS 46785, f. 46r).

construes and recognises both relationships as mutually exclusive when formulated as *Cooper – Berenson* and as *Cooper – Bradley*. "[A]s time went on his affection became more and more hateful and continues so – it divides worse than death" (MS 46783, f. 86v). Again, the logic of mutual exclusivity of both relationships reflects the heteronormative matrix.

V.5. (Precluding) Conclusion: Relational Self

In the way of conclusion, I want to recapitulate the most important features of Cooper's practices of the self. However, the very emphasis upon the *self* transpires here as problematic. Reading Rousseau's *Confessions* as the emblematic example of the modern subject (and of its self-writing technologies), Gutman characterises the emerging modern self as "atomistic," "autonomous," and as its own "ultimate hermeneutic authority."[93] Juxtaposed to *Work and Days*, this concept transpires with pristine clarity as marred by gender myopia. The notion of (*Her-)Self* that Cooper and Bradley construe is defined through its own relationality towards other subjects rather than through its autonomous nature and its individuality. Emphasising relationality and positionality as the determining factor of their construction of the self, Cooper's and Bradley's self-writing practices expose the fictional nature of the unitary, autonomous, and self-contained subject as the gender specific strategy of self-construction. Paraphrasing Maihofer, these different constructions reflect gender specific "ways of existence."[94]

The practice of journal writing – in the examined period – constitutes the subject on the interface of complex relations organised around the triangularity of *Cooper – Bradley – Berenson,* and through the dynamic flow between *I and She* / *I and He* / *We and He*. I have attempted to show that Cooper deploys complex strategies of deferral of meaning and silences. This specific epistemology of silence (and ignorance) transpires as an ambivalent one; the silence that defers any explicit utterance of erotic and/or sexual relations between the two women enables Cooper and Bradley to express their desire, enhances it, and even serves as a means of its proliferation. Silence and/or constant deferrals of direct naming and articulating operate as a source of desire and pleasure of 'Michael Field', the distribution of silence, and the effect of ignorance it creates, serves certain economics and erotics. However, the epistemic pair of ignorance/ silence also reveals its binary twin of knowledge/ utterance that would – in the given context – arguably equal self-disclosure. In this sense, the distribution of silence/ignorance also refers to normative and – as the hints to Oscar Wilde's trials suggest – even punitive epistemology. As the second part of the chapter demonstrates,

[93] Gutman**,** Huck. "Rousseaus's *Confessions*: A Technology of the Self." *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*: Martin, Luther H., Gutman Huck and Patrick H. Hutton. eds. London: Tavistock, 1988. 99-120. All quotes on page 102.
[94] Maihofer, Andrea. *Geschlecht als Existensweise. Macht, Moral, Recht und Geschlechterdifferenz.* Frankfurt am Main: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 1995.

the silence that encloses the changing and dynamic relations between Cooper and Bradley needs to be perceived as an effect of specific sexual interdictions and/or technology of domination.

As the following quotes suggest, the dynamics of signification that circulates within the triangular structure of *Cooper – Bradley – Berenson* cannot be exhausted by a simple binary division of 'homosexuality'/ 'heterosexuality.' Resuming the events of the year 1896, Cooper enters her two love declarations alongside of each other.

> I love Bernhard ever as I did – ever to the Ever shall. I see the glances of his eyes all to night – arrows of silver shot through the springs of Helicon, – when passionate, arrows of sunlight in cool wine. Well, for a whole year I have not crossed weapons with these glances!
>
> My Love and I are further on in our love, getting nearer to the flame-warm core where the divine ripeness is, the fragrance and future – every year we are deeper in love, more tenderly attuned. [….] I look on […] for a fated union of all we each are as poets – we cannot quarrel with fate […]
>
> (f. 196v; emphasis in the original)

Simultaneously though, the juxtaposition of the relations (and sexualities) between a man and a woman, or between two women respectively, deployed in *Works and Days*, is indicative of the normative power of the heteronormative matrix. Furthermore, Cooper's reactions to other women she qualifies as 'queer,' suggest her confrontations with the possibility of being/becoming 'undone' by gender, or more precisely by her non-compliance to the triadic structure of gender as *female – feminine – desiring a man.* Importantly, her intelligibility as a woman, which she in this moment perceives as the defining category of her identity, relies very much on her simultaneous fulfilment of sexual norms. To conclude, I quote Cooper's hopeful and expectant remark with which she invites the new year of 1897, swinging the attention to her and Bradley's creative (and desiring) double persona of 'Michael Field'.

> We shall have the sorrows of publicity – I feel the pain is conceiving its brood to pray on what is sensitive in us. We shall have joy – the joy of quivers, the joy of those who are living close against Life.
> May we be ever closer, we the entwined [...] I feel we shall get on in our religions of Life – solve, explore, [word illegible], dance round the sources that feed us.
>
> (MS 46785, f. 197r)

VI. My (Her) Life

VI.1. Havelock Ellis, the Ventriloquist and the Lesbian Ghost

The present chapter discusses the practice of self-writing from the perspective of Havelock Ellis's autobiography *My Life.*[1] Although Havelock Ellis's project is autobiographical and to a considerable extent draws upon traditions of the Victorian *Bildungsroman,* I hold that it is shaped by its biographic ambition. Essentially, it is Ellis's wife *Edith*[2] who embodies the semantic centre of the text. As she gradually becomes the focal point of the narrative she plays a part of a troubling ghost figure.

As Trev Lynn Broughton notes, the feminine influence was a familiar trope of the Victorian auto/biographical accounts, nonetheless in most cases it was safely confined to the chapter focusing on the man's childhood and to descriptions of the mother's tender care and/or her improving influence upon his character.[3] Alternatively, it was consigned to admiring dedication to his mother or sisters, or to his interest on domestic ties. "The life of a wife, mother or sister, addressed candidly and in earnest, would surely test the biographer's narrative resources to the limit."[4] It is the narrative resources of a ventriloquist[5] which enables Ellis to shift *Edith* into the text's focus and simultaneously to appropriate the story of his wife's life for his own self-fashioning narrative. The metaphoric figure of the ventriloquist will be used here in a twofold meaning. On one level, it is understood to describe the way Ellis incorporates *Edith's* words and quotes from her letters into the text and thus creates an impression that she is allowed to speak for herself. On another level, the metaphor refers to the biographic practice of *My Life* as such that collapses the boundary between the autobiography and biography and subsumes the latter to the objectives of the former (self-)writing practice.

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[1] Ellis, Havelock. *My Life*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1939.
Unless otherwise stated all further quotations refer to this work. Subsequent references are given parenthetically in the text.

[2] In order to accentuate the fictitious (and necessarily biased) character of Edith Lees's biography as presented by Ellis's *My Life,* I decided to take over his own way of referring to his wife. Setting the name in italics I hope to draw attention to *Edith's* awkward and ghost-like presence in the text.

[3] Broughton, Trev Lynn. *Men of Letters, Writing Lives. Masculinity and Literary Auto/Biography in the Late Victorian Period*. London: Routledge, 1999.

[4] Broughton, *Men of Letters,* 12.

[5] Here I borrow the concept of ventriloquism as developed by Ina Schabert. She used it to describe narrative and poetic strategies of male authors appropriating woman's voice.
Cf. Schabert, Ina. *Englische Literaturgeschichte: Eine Neue Darstellung aus der Sicht der Geschlechterforschung.* Stuttgart: Kröner, 1997. 140-144.

"[T]here seemed no need for haste, life was still spread spaciously ahead," acknowledges Ellis in the preface. "[T]he narrative moved […] slowly" till his wife's death inspired him to "ma[ke] fresh start from the time of my marriage" (xxxv). However, *Edith's* death seems to have a more profound effect than merely to remind Ellis of the finality of human life. According to his words, it infused his autobiographic project with *"a new sacredness"* (xxxv). It is this compelling need to account for his wife's life and their relationship that concerns me in this chapter. With reference to Avery Gordon's suggestion that "[the] ghost [is] a social figure, investiga[tion] [of which] can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life,"[6] I propose to read the aspects in which Edith represents a ghost figure as well as the practice of ventriloquism that incorporates her into master narrative(s) of kinds as such telling intersections.

Firstly, I want to argue that Ellis's autobiographical account, that is the master narrative focused on the portrayal of the (masculine) subject, depends upon his ventriloquising his wife's story.

> I believe, nevertheless, that – sensitively independent as she was – *I may now venture to speak for her as well as for myself. Her wisdom of life,* as she remarked to an acquaintance during her last week in the world, has *been the outcome especially of her experience with me.* (xxxix; emphasis added)

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 phallocentric discourse rests. This sort of 'metaphysical cannibalism' […] positions the woman as the silent groundwork of male subjectivity – the condition of possibility of his story."[7]

Furthermore, the story of Edith Ellis becomes swallowed up by yet another master narrative of the Western culture. Having mentioned Edith Ellis as the subject of my interest, I have been more often than not confronted with remarks and/or questions about her 'lesbianism'. Apparently, Edith Ellis was allowed to enter cultural memory only in the unequivocal role of

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[6] Gordon, Avery. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. Qtd. in Halberstam, Judith. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives.* New York, London: New York University Press, 2005. Quote on page 48.

[7] Braidotti, Rosi. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. Quote on page 139.

the sexually 'other', as 'the homosexual', or 'the lesbian' respectively.[8] As sources ascertain, Edith Ellis had several intimate relationships with women.[9] Her letters to her husband suggest that she acknowledged her sexual preference for the same sex and that she even considered it as an incontestable part of her personality. However, our knowledge about her life has an inerasable flaw. Most of the information that we gather about Edith Lees is provided and regulated by her husband. Rather than to erase Edith Ellis's desire and love oriented towards women, the line of reasoning I present here wants to problematise our knowledge of *Edith's* sexuality, or more precisely to problematise the way we come to know. Further, I examine the effects the forceful disclosure/ 'outing' of *Edith* and the subsequent deployment of this knowledge produces on the subject involved in letting us know.

Ellis's autobiography is a text in which both a 'woman' as well as an 'invert' ('lesbian') operate and are manoeuvred "as categor[ies] of meaning"[10] in producing the binaries 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 allusion to the process of other/ing as applied within the post-colonial critique might be helpful 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/the Father/the symbolic order occur at the same time, "the colonial subject being both a 'child' of empire

[8] In the course of the chapter, I use the following terms denoting the alleged sexual 'otherness': "sexual inversion," "invert," "homosexuality," "homosexual" and "lesbian." These terms are not used interchangeably, but are distributed according to the following logic: the terms "sexual inversion" and "invert" stand for particular time and discursive context of which Havelock Ellis's sexological, as well as biographical, writing bear evidence. "Lesbian" as a definition of sexual identity, in comparison, would refer to a later historical context and to a different (self-)consciousness of the lesbian community starting to emerge with the first decades of the twentieth century. The term "lesbian" is hence used to denote a category of meaning, an upsetting and "apparitional" figure that taxes the heteronormative order. Cf. Castle, Terry. *The Apparitional Lesbian. Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.
"Homosexual" and "homosexuality," finally, are used as more general terms that circulate within our culture to denote sexual difference, and represent thus a binary opposition to concepts of "heterosexuality."

[9] Cf. Wallace, Jo-Ann. "The Case of Edith Ellis." *Modernist Sexualities*. Stevens, Hugh and Caroline Howlett. eds. Manchster: Manchester UP, 2000. 13-40.

[10] Martin, Biddy. "Feminism, Criticism, and Foucault." *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance.* Diamond, Irene and Lee Quinby. eds. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988, 3-20. Quote on page 14.

and a primitive and degraded subject of imperial discourse."[11] 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.

The previous chapters have focused on the set of critical concerns linked to the performative act of construing the 'homosexual'/queer subject. However, we need to be acutely aware that focusing (merely) on the construction of the 'homosexual' self entails certain dangers. Firstly, the dichotomy between those who have the epistemic power to name and those who are named may be but perpetuated. By analogy, such an approach might establish a normative notion of (the visible, unequivocal, definable, intelligible) 'homosexual' subject and ultimately stabilise and reinforce the binary separation between the heterosexual (i.e. 'normal') and the 'homosexual' (i.e. 'abnormal'). Therefore, this chapter demonstrates that the questions raised by chapter IV has raised have broader relevance and that they might (and should) be also explored with relevance to the (assumed) heterosexual self. From the vantage point of the present chapter, I am not so much concerned with the 'homosexual' as with the knowledge of 'homosexuality' and more particularly with the knowledge of a 'sexually inverted' woman and its specific employment in Ellis's autobiographic narrative. Juxtaposing the two objectives of the narrative, that is the autobiographic against the biographic one, I bend the attention away from the 'abnormal'/ 'homosexuality' and interrogate instead that which seemingly stands for the taken-for-granted, unproblematic, gender neutral and 'natural', the norm, i.e. the 'heterosexual' masculine self. From this point of view, Ellis's autobiographic account uncovers the inherent epistemological instability of categories such as 'homosexuality', 'sexual abnormalcy' and most importantly those of 'heterosexuality' and 'sexual normalcy.'[12]

The trajectory of the chapter is following: Firstly, it explores the discursive strategies that Ellis's autobiographic account embraces in order to construe *Edith* as recognisable/intelligible example of 'sexually inverted'/ 'homosexual' woman. With respect to Ellis's masculine self-fashioning, it explores the ways in which the representation of *Edith's* overlaps with or

[11] Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth and Helen Tiffin. *Post-Colonial Studies. Key Concepts*. London: Routledge, 2000. Quotes on pages 132-134.
[12] Cf. chapters II and III of the thesis.

contradicts to the sexological case studies of 'sexually inverted' women. As well, it probes how Ellis's professional status of a man-of-science and his epistemological privilege operate in construing gender and sexual identities for both himself and his wife. Secondly, due to its evident (over-)emphasis on the issue, I study the means in which Ellis's narrative manages to pose him as a partner and a husband to a woman who is concurrently identified as of "opposite sexual temperament" (263). Thirdly and lastly, the unexpected or 'queer' elements in Ellis's self-fashioning will be discussed with a view to their subversive potential. I also review the ways in which Ellis's autobiographic self-fashioning relates to the 'dispositif of sex,'[13] and what practices of the self Ellis deploys to construct himself as the masculine (and heterosexual) subject.

[13] Cf. Foucault, *History*; Bublitz, Hannelore. *Das Geschlecht der Moderne. Genealogie und Archäologie der Geschlechtedifferenz*. Frankfurt am Main; New York, 1998.

VI.2. *Edith*: a Case of "Deep-Lying Anomaly of Temperament," Or, How to *Out* One's Own Wife[14]

"'I study you,' he said, 'as I study the Bible.'"[15]
"I am regarded as an authority on sex."[16]

The double auto/biographic project of *My Life* operates the well-known, well-established and highly gendered hierarchical binaries such as knowing/known, naming/named, observing/observed, involved/detached, active/passive.[17] As will be discussed, these binary oppositions intertwine further with those signifying the binary separations of the 'normal'/ 'abnormal' and by extension the 'healthy'/'unhealthy.'[18] The epistemic hierarchy that so strikingly shapes Ellis's autobiography is further asserted by the metaphor of an open book that insinuates that *Edith* subjects herself to the studying gaze of her husband with a due deliberation. Ellis notes, "[p]erhaps the very fact that she told me, and was ready to tell me, so much made me feel that here was an open book ever before me which I could turn to when I wished …" (219). Also, Ellis's claims of "I know" are repetitively qualified by the phrase "[because] she told me everything" (263). Time and again, Ellis designates himself as "the only person in the world who really understood her" (264), or as "the only person with whom she could be most completely herself" (225). Emphasizing his point, Ellis remarks, "[t]hat *refrain* concerning 'the one person in the world who really understood her' occurs again and again in her letters" (264; emphasis added). Ellis's affirmation of knowing/understanding his wife denotes the most prominent strategy of representation the text employs and as such shores up Ellis's deployment of the epistemic privilege. With respect to Ellis's professional status, it is important to note that at the moment of the publication of *My Life*, Ellis could rely upon his status of an acclaimed sexologist and a man-of-science. Despite lamentations that he had no medical authority to lean against at the time of the obscenity trial that followed the publication of *Sexual Inversion* (1897), the situation changed dramatically in the subsequent decades.

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[14] Ellis, *My Life*, xxxix
[15] Ellis, *My Life,* 230
[16] Ellis, *My Life*, 179
[17] Here, it is important to draw attention to the fact that Ellis found it an imperative to renounce the possibility that his own self-analysis is included in his scientific studies of sexuality. Explicitly, he disclaims this as follows, "[I] would never have attempted to put into my books any "case" or "history" of myself" (Ellis, *My Life,* 179).
Of course, the fact that *Edith* is subjected to the medical gaze while Ellis claims an aloof and detached position for himself is significant in terms of power distribution that again bears on the gendered signification of both *Edith* and Ellis.
See also Ellis's correspondence with John Addington Symonds. Cf. Schueller, Herbert M. and Robert L. Peters. eds. *The Letters of John Addington Symonds.* (3 vols.) Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967-69.
[18] See below; for instance in the section discussing the mother-child role-play.

Both Ellis's authority of a sexologist and the epistemologic privilege that he drew from his professional status are performed (and hence reinforced) in the way *My Life* reiterates the scientific 'truths' about 'sexual inversion' and 'homosexuality'. To name one example only, Ellis's own *Sexual Inversion* presumes female 'inverts' as liable to psychical and emotional stress and tension. He notes, "inverted women […] retain their feminine emotionality combined with some degree of infantile impulsiveness and masculine energy."[19] In reference to Renée Vivien, whom he introduces as an example of an 'inverted' woman, Ellis writes, "[s]he suffered […] from nervous over-tension and incurable melancholy" (200). Compare these statements with his description of *Edith,* "[s]he remained in some degree undeveloped, in temperament as well as physically something of a child, and with the undue nervous sensitiveness and susceptibility of one whose textures had never had the chance of acquiring completely normal powers of resistance to noxious influences…" (220). Against this background, Ellis's narrative denotes the nervous breakdowns, states of melancholy, dejection and depression of her later years, and *Edith's* suicidal attempt as the accumulative proofs of her "deep-lying anomaly of temperament" (xxxix). Further, *Edith's* "remarkable ancestry" is given in detail only to arrive at the conclusion that "[t]he ancestral traits which the child of these stocks inherited were her destiny" (219). Of course, Victorian mania with the ancestral stock did not concern only the issue of sexual 'anomalies', nonetheless, a closer look at the individual case studies of the 'inverts' in medical books reveals that ancestral stock was assigned prime importance among possible causes of 'sexual inversion.'

Similarly, *Edith's* character traits that Ellis deems positive, such as artistic tendencies, the gift for friendship, sympathy for the lower social classes, love of animals, spiritual and mystic powers, evoke the portrayal of an 'invert' or those of the 'intermediate sex' that one finds in the discursive proliferation surrounding the 'homosexual' subject.[20] *Studies in Feminine Inversion*[21] assembled and published in 1923 by Stella Browne distribute the following characteristics across the five cases examined, "bent towards mysticism", "keen instinctive

[19] Ellis, Havelock. *Sexual Inversion. Studies in Psychology of Sex.* Vol.2. Philadelphia: F. A. Davies, 1917. Quote on page 201.
[20] Cf. for instance Carpenter, Edward. *The Intermediate Sex. A Study of some Transitional Types of Men and Women*. London: Swan Sonnenschein and co. Ltd. Bloomsbury, 1908; Carpenter, Edward. *Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk. A Study in Social Evolution.* London: George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1914.
[21] Browne, Stella. "Studies in Feminine Inversion." *The Sexuality Debates.* ed. Jeffreys, Sheila. London: Routledge, 1987. 606-610.
Stella Browne (1882-1955) became an active worker for socialist feminism on the eve of World War I., a campaigner for women's rights to contraception and abortion. From 1914 Browne was involved in the Malthusian League informing workers on contraceptive methods. In 1936 she belonged to founding members of the Abortion Law reform Association. Later on, Browne joined the Communist and subsequently the Labour party.

delicacy and emotional depth, devotion to friends", "fancy for literary criticism", "fond[ness] of animals, devot[ion] to children", "distaste, even positive disgust for the physical side of sex"; one of the women is described as "extremely energetic and capable, any amount of initiative and enthusiasm, never afraid to assume responsibility, very dominating and managing, something of a tyrant in practice," with "interest in politics and public affairs," and "logical and rationalist bend of mind," while her "attitude towards men [is] […] perfectly unembarrassed and [of] equal comradeship."[22] The extent to which these characteristics and the portrayal of *Edith* echo each other produces nearly a comical effect. These intertextual correspondences demonstrate that by the second decade of the twentieth century the female 'invert' had become – if only within certain and specific discursive field – an established figure with specific and stereotyped features, and with characteristic – if contradictory – emotional, physical and spiritual composition.

Against this evidence I claim that the policy of representation that informs the portrayal of *Edith* affects her *outing*. The explicit statement that *Edith's* emotional preferences were directed primarily towards women becomes consequently underpinned by the strategy of representation that recurrently hints at certain character, emotional and even physical features that disclose her as a person whose sexual preference is only one – if the most evident – sign of her utter difference of sex. To paraphrase Michel Foucault,[23] *Edith* is transformed into a type of person with the family history and ancestral stock that supposedly preconditions her fate. Likewise, Edith is assigned a personal history that marks her development through phases of ignorance to recognition and acceptance of her love for women – i.e. her 'inversion' – as something she can give up only "at the expense of all her personality" (292).

A short excursus into Ellis's rendering of *Edith's* literary and lecturing work provides not only further apt illustration of the text's disclosing strategy, it further reveals that the personality defined through "anomaly of temperament" was already subjected to normative notions. I discuss two short stories by Edith Ellis that Havelock Ellis explicitly sets in a direct correspondence with her 'inversion'. These are *Heaven's Jester* and *The Idealist* both of which written at the close of her life.[24] Most significantly, Havelock Ellis's interpretation of Edith Ellis's literary texts is informed by the assumption that there is an autobiographic relation between the texts and their author. Thence, he reads these texts as "transmut[ations

[22] Browne, "Studies in Feminine Inversion," 606-610.
[23] Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality. An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1990.
[24] Ellis, Edith. *The Mine of Dreams. Selected Short Stories by Mrs. Havelock Ellis.* London, 1925.

of] her emotion […] into art" (371). As to *Heaven's Jester*, a short allegorical text with Wildean undertones, it is read through the presupposed knowledge of *Edith's* erotic and sexual preference and through the assumption that this *has to* find its expression in her literary work. Ellis states, "[i]n this poignant legend she expresses, once and for all, her love and reverent worship for women, body and spirit, and the melancholy underlying the gaiety with which she could shake her cap and bells" (371-2).

Even more forceful is Ellis's reading of *The Idealist,* which he renders a somewhat gloomy story of social ostracism directed against a "fisherman with a kind of necrophilic attraction to corpses" (373). His wife presents him in the following way,

> 'I've tried to find out in books something as would clear it up. But I've never come on the likes of he,' she said solemnly. 'I'd sooner 'ave married a tortoise or a cod fish, in a manner of speakin'. They'r clammy and queer, and do be he at times. He told me once he'd married me 'cause I was the only woman he had ever met with an eye like a corpse. He […] makes out that there's a perfume round me as minds him of funerals and death chambers.[25]

The social banishment of the fisherman leads eventually to an unjust accusation and conviction for his wife's murder and to his death. On the face of it, it is not surprising that Ellis interprets this story as an allegory that "transform[s] the situation [into a] general problem of the abnormal." However, for Ellis, the treatment of the *general* problem of "the abnormal" denotes nothing else than a treatment of a very *specific* issue. He affirms that supplanting the real subject (i.e. 'sexual inversion') by "morbidity of another sort," the story makes a statement about "the tragedy of the invert's position in the world" (373).

If in the case of *Heaven's Jester* Ellis conceded that the interpretation is his own – "It is unlike anything else she wrote [and therefore] its interpretation was *not quite clear to me*, and as ever, *I never asked her* to explain it […] *I gather* – for I do not remember that she told me so," "It was, *I believe*, …" (371; emphasis added) – in case of *The Idealist* he does not hesitate to see the story as an important sign of Edith's progress to self-recognition as an 'invert'.

> [S]he was slow at approaching a subject, but when she had fully come up to it and grappled with it and mastered it she never lacked courage to declare what she had found. *During twenty years in which this problem had been more or less clearly present to her she had never written about it or discussed it with strangers, but now at length her mind was made up.*
>
> (373; emphasis added)

[25] Ellis, Edith. *The Mine of Dreams,* 39.

Both of the short stories I mention may of course be read as allegoric statements about the same sex love and otherness of sexual desire. However, within the context of Ellis's dual auto/biographic project his interpretation of the stories underpins the enforced outing of *Edith* as a specific personality/ 'an invert'. The assertion that *Edith* has written herself into literature, as well as Ellis's proclamation that she would – had she only lived longer – produce a self-probing autobiographic text proffering her own understanding of her sexual nature, imposes upon her a notion of the self fully determined by her sex and (the otherness of her) sexuality. The first unspoken premise of Ellis's interpretation of *Edith's* work is thus informed by the "hermeneutics of suspicion"[26] that transforms all elusive, allegorical and covert themes into overt signifiers of *Edith's* sex/uality. Translating both short stories as texts of self-revelation, Ellis demonstrates his second unarticulated and essentially heteronormative premise. He presupposes that being an 'invert', entails an endorsement of the imperative to make one's sex known. In this way, Ellis expects *Edith* to reveal her hidden yet 'true' nature. Having once characterised *Edith* as of a different sex, this difference seeps through all of her personality and through all its expressions.

Lastly, I want to comment upon Ellis's reading *The Idealist* as an allegory of "the tragedy of the invert's position in the world" (373). As Ellis claims, Edith Lees scarcely wrote on the subject. Her two essays – *Eugenics and the Mystical Outlook, Eugenics and Spiritual Parenthood*[27] that deal with the issue of 'inversion' and the position of the 'invert' in the world and society explicitly do not transgress the tragic vein that Ellis finds in her stories. In the light of this, the ending of *The Idealist* which unsettles both the notion of the 'normal' and its desirability appears even more remarkable. The young woman, who is the narrator of the fisherman's story contemplates his death,

> The sudden comprehension of the abnormal had thrust me onto the realisation of the normal, and I was readjusting my ideas. This perverted fisherman had unconsciously undermined all my traditions and my respectable niceties of distinction between what is counted good and what is reckoned bad […] *my past challenged me. I remembered […] I forgot back memories of spiritual strangulations of my own, which I had confused with stupid technical names. At last I was decent enough to face the fact that I had banged the half-open door, from whence love had once beckoned me,* because maxims held me and joy scared

[26] Cf. Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You're Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction Is about You." *Novel Gazing. Queer readings in Fiction*. ed. Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. Durham: Duke UP, 1997. 1-37.

[27] Ellis, Edith. *The New Horizon in Love and Life*. With a preface by Edward Carpenter and an introduction by Marguerite Tracy. London: A. & C. Black, 1921.

> me. This unashamed lover of his own vision had dwarfed my immoral moralities to a comprehension of spiritual realities, before which all else seemed trite and vague.
>
> (55; emphasis added)

This quote has a tragic note. Nevertheless it is disputable that the source of "the tragedy of the invert's position in the world" the story suggests is identical with the one Ellis assumes. In my reading, in the light of this quote the idealist fisherman does not appear a tragic figure any longer, rather the narrator herself realises to have missed chances of her own and at once recognises herself as "strangulated" on "stupid technical names"; the latter phrase echoing the opening passage of the story where the fisherman's wife recounts studying books so that she would find a clue to her husband's peculiarity/queerness. *The Idealist* thus tells a fundamentally different narrative that the one provided by Ellis and *his* epistemology.

VI.2.1. The Strategy of Disclosure and Epistemic Power

Having discussed the representational tropes through which Ellis effects the disclosure of the sex (true nature) of his wife, the performative aspects of the outing procedure will be examined. Outing is a performative act par excellence[28]; it represents an unequivocal example of the utterance that 'does what it names.' In the following I consider more closely what Ellis's naming *Edith* 'an invert' does to *his* self, *his* own gender performance, and the effects it has over the representation of *Edith* as well. Particularly, I am interested in the outing strategy as a power-invested and power-generating practice. I have previously argued that the practice of disclosure overlaps with the employment (that is simultaneously its assumption) of epistemic power over *Edith*. Moreover, the strategy of disclosure itself relies upon the blatantly gender-specific cultural tropes of unveiling employed by the medical gaze directed on the woman and her body.[29] In this sense the act of outing activates a chain of significations attached to the secret/open binary where the secret alludes to the unknown and hence threatening that needs to be brought into the open so that it is divested of its frightening

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[28] Woltersdorff in Lehmann, Annette Jael, Mattenklott Gert and Volker Woltersdorff. "Cross-overs –- Performativität im Kontext genderspezifischer und medientheoretischer Fragestellungen." *Paragrana: Theorien des Performativen*, 10.1. (2001): 137-154. Quote on page 145.
See also Woltersdorff, Volker. *Coming Out. Die Inszenierung schwuler Identitäten zwischen Auflehnung und Anpassung*. Campus: Franfurt a. Main. 2005

[29] For feminist critiques engaged in *unmasking* the symbolical as well as epistemological power of the medical gaze that is involved in and produced through erotically/sexually charged colonisation of its object. see for instance: Showalter, Elaine. *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*. London: Virago, 1992;
Schiebinger, Londa. "Skeletons in the Closet: The First Illustrations of the Female Skeleton in Eighteen-Century Anatomy." *Representations.* 14.1. (1986): 42-82; Laqueur**,** Thomas and Catherine Gallagher. eds. *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1987.
As to the eroticism of the outing strategy consider, for instance, the symbolicism of the open book that is to characterise Edith or the binary oppositions such as passive/active etc.

aggressiveness. However as D.A. Miller notes, the act of disclosure does not completely dismantle the symbolic force of the original binary. Miller claims, "the phenomenon of the 'open secret' does not, as one might think, bring about the collapse of those binarisms and their ideological effects, but rather attests to their fantasmatic recovery."[30] Consequently, even if the strategy of disclosure could arrive at a moment of a total and complete exhaustion of the secret – which, as will I argue shortly in the subsequent section, is never the case – and even if *Edith's* secret was thoroughly known, Ellis's position would not in the least be divested of the epistemic power he originally derived from his ability to bring her secret into the open.

With reference to Ellis's epistemic power, the strategy of disclosure establishes a clear reference between the auto/biographic text of *My Life* and the scientific enquiries of *Sexual Inversion* and further medical sources engaged in the disclosure of the sexually 'abnormal' and/or 'deviant'. The moments of convergence between the portrayal of *Edith* and the representation of female sexual 'inverts' having been discussed, it remains to explore how 'the invert' operates in the text as a category of meaning, and particularly what enactments the specific knowledge of 'homosexuality' brings forth. Lastly but importantly, the ways in which the enactments of this knowledge relate to power will be considered.

Significantly, it is already the Preface of *My Life* that breaks the news about *Edith's* 'homosexuality' as it claims that her personality was to a great extent shaped by the "deep-lying anomaly of temperament" (xxxix).[31] Thence, the question as to the enactment of knowledge and its effects proves as vital. The code having been cracked at the very outset, the meaning spills everywhere. It encourages the reader of the auto/biography to engage in the suspicious search for the signs of *Edith's* 'inversion.' These cannot but be found in plenitude. Yet as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick notes, being blinded by the pre-given knowledge (or by the suspicion of it) "may ma[ke] it less rather than more possible to unpack the local, contingent relations between any given piece of knowledge and its narrative/epistemological entailments for the seeker, knower, or teller."[32] Consider then what performative effects it has to pursue the *knowledge* of *Edith's* 'homosexuality' in the text, what performative effects it has to receive again the knowledge that we already know.[33]

[30] Qtd. in Sedwick, Kosofsky Eve, *Epistemology of the Closet*. London: Penguin, 1990. Quote on page 67.
[31] In addition, the editorial note terms *Edith* "a Lesbian." Ellis, *My Life*, xxx.
[32] Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading," 4.
[33] Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading," 4.

Juxtaposing the subsequent quotes, I hope to elucidate at least some of the effects that I regard to follow from the performative nature of the specific knowledge Ellis deploys. On the one hand, Ellis repeatedly states, "[b]ut *at that time* I had *no* real practice of *knowledge*…" (263; emphasis added), *"[then] I failed* to realise *why*…" (233; emphasis added) On the other hand, he professes, *"[t]hat perpetually recurrent [...] discordance* made always a threat of tragedy…" (216; emphasis added). Firstly, the emphasis laid upon the notion that the *why* has been already disclosed, the narrative effectively closes-off the multitude of possible meanings of phrases such as "that perpetually recurrent discordance," "divergence in temperament" (216), "the nervous irritability of temperament" (346). Secondly, the repetitive claims of "I know [her]", "I understand [her]" may be perceived as manifestations of Ellis's epistemic power over *Edith*. It is equally significant, however, that these reiterative utterances in fact generate the very epistemic power based in the ability and/or authority to name/to know.

In sum, the symbolic oppositions grounded in the logic of the gendered binary as well as Ellis's acting-out of the epistemic power uphold his signification as masculine. Furthermore, the enactment of the specific knowledge of 'homosexuality' Ellis performs in the narrative (re)activates the binary structures upon which the construction of 'homosexuality' has always already rested.[34] Therefore the disclosing strategy and the (performative) reiteration of the knowledge of 'homosexuality' constitute Ellis's separation from what he knows and reinforce his association with the other pole of the binary, i.e. 'heterosexuality'.

VI.2.2. The 'Lesbian' as an Epistemic Impossibility

Having highlighted the discursive strategies *My Life* employs to fashion *Edith* into a recognizable embodiment of an 'inverted' woman and/or a 'lesbian,'[35] the representational limits of these strategies will be discussed. Studying narrative structures of fictional texts and the representational modes that portray the 'lesbian', Marilyn R. Farewell has noted that by necessity the 'lesbian' remains an embodiment of impossibility. The 'lesbian' is both the most silenced and the most threatening for the narrative structure as "'she' […] exceeds the constructed boundaries for woman's otherness."[36] Similarly, Ellis's auto/biography manifests tensed inability to contain *Edith's* figure within the *difference of a woman* or within the

[34] Cf. Sedgwick, *Epistemology.*
[35] Ellis himself does not use the term "lesbian," which is also why I have not used it in the preceding section. Nonetheless, as the editorial note to *My Life* suggests, the representation of *Edith* promotes such reading. Cf. Ellis, *My Life*, xxx
[36] Farewell. Marilyn R. *Heterosexual Plots and Lesbian Narratives*. New York; London: New York University Press, 1996. Quote on page 16.

otherness of a 'lesbian'; *Edith* remains "representationally vacant, epistemologically arousing placemarker."[37]

As her being "largely homosexual" stood in the way to the harmonious encounter of a man and a woman, *Edith* could not satisfy – as Havelock Ellis explicates – all his needs as a man and as a husband. These are his exact words, *"[T]he very qualities* in her nature which made her *largely homosexual*[38] were qualities which, fortifying as they might be to our comradeship, were *inimical* to *the purely feminine qualities* of sweetness and repose which *a man* seeks *in a woman…"* (265; emphasis added). In a like manner, *My Life* emphasises that the "divergences in [their] temperaments*"* sowed the seed of a "necessary" discord into their cohabitation (216). However, this is as far as Ellis gets in specifying the very qualities that made *Edith* an unsuitable and 'un-feminine' companion. Ellis never specifies in what ways and/or in what sense *Edith is* different from the woman he would wish for himself.

The bulk of the sexological material correlates 'sexual inversion' with gender transgression.[39] Accordingly, the studies state, "the commonest characteristic of the 'sexually inverted' woman is a certain degree of masculinity or boyishness."[40] In Ellis's view, *Edith's* character reveals also elements of gender transgression even if these are not marked and detectable at the first sight, "[t]he masculine traits were indeed not obvious in Edith […]; most people I

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[37] Sedgwick, *Epistemology,* 95.

[38] I come to discuss the phrase "largely homosexual" shortly.

[39] Cf. Faderman, Lillian. "The Morbidification of Love between Women by 19th-century Sexologists." *Journal of Homosexuality*. 4.1. (1978): 73-90; Newton, Ester. "The Mythic Mannish Lesbian: Radclyffe Hall and the New Woman." *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past.* Vicinus, Martha, Duberman, Martin and Chauncey, George. eds. London: Penguin Books, 1991. 281-293; Rupp, Leila J. *A Desired Past: Short History of Same-Sex Love in America.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999; Weeks, Jeffrey. *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800.* London: Longman, 1981.
For discussion of the association made between female homosexuality and prostitution see for instance: Miller, Heather Lee. "Sexologists Examine Lesbians and Prostitutes in the United States, 1840-1940." *NWSA Journal*.12.3. (2000): 67-87; Terry, Jennifer. "Lesbians under the Medical Gaze: Scientists Search for Remarkable Differences." *The Journal of Sex Research*. 27.3. (1990): 317-339.
The heightened attention to female 'inversion' further increased the anxiety about how to recognize and localise this phenomenon given the greater elasticity of social bonds between women and the consequent invisibility of female 'homosexuality'. As an outcome of the cultural anxiety attached to the figure of the 'lesbian', the lesbian body was turned into the material proof of her essential difference. Analogous to the notion that gender difference was encoded into every single particle of the body, also the 'heterosexual'/ 'homosexual' divide was perceived as inscribed onto every even the smallest bodily part. Cf. Ellis, Edith (neè Lees). *The New Horizon in Love and Life*. With a preface by Edward Carpenter and an introduction by Marguerite Tracy. London: A. & C. Black, 1921. Particularly pages, 246-259; see also works of McMurtie, Krafft-Ebing and others. However, as Terry's study *Lesbians under the Medical Gaze* documents, the meticulous and nearly obsessional precision of the drawings, testing and measurements the scientists took of the body and genital parts of the lesbians remained inconclusive. Similarly to this (necessary) failure of attempts to detect, classify and describe – and hence set once and for all – the essential otherness of the 'lesbian', the 'invert'/ 'lesbian' as portrayed in *My Life* remains a figure of epistemic impossibility.

[40] Ellis, *Sexual Inversion,* 244.

believe failed to see them."[41] However again, it remains vague and unspecified what these masculine traits are. Consider the following quotation in which Ellis explains his need for an intimate companionship with another woman (Amy).

> Edith herself possessed fully all the power of mind and character which I needed in an intimate soul comrade. They are precious qualities but are not necessarily accompanied by other *precious qualities of sweetness and gentleness* which I also craved and found in Amy. I felt and still feel now that all is over, *that I could do no other*, that under all the circumstances my attitude was not unreasonable, and that even if by a great effort I could have thrust away from me for ever that beautiful influence which soothed my life, *I should merely have succeeded in crushing my own spirit,* with whatever possibilities for use in the world it possessed.
>
> (288; emphasis added)

Now, the characterisation Ellis presents here of *Edith's* assumed 'inversion' does not become more specific than a reference to *Edith's* comradely faculties and her failing or insufficient femininity. Ellis's statements – "I could do no other", "I should […] crus[h] my own spirit" – represent a salient reference to the gender binary and the dictum of complementarity. Ellis needs to find himself a 'feminine' counterpart, lest his own ('masculine') spirit should suffer. Whereas woman's 'difference' is contained within the boundaries of the mutually interdependent and mutually reinforcing binaries (femininity/masculinity, active/passive etc.), *Edith* (the 'invert') disrupts this structure of interdependence and mutuality. Her 'otherness' is perceived here as not mutually dependent but – contrarily – mutually exclusive.

So far, it has been argued that *Edith* embodies a recognisable representation of 'sexual inversion'. However, it needs to be emphasised that simultaneously Ellis qualifies the limits of *Edith's* 'inversion'. Repeatedly he stresses Edith is merely "largely homosexual." And yet, the text is riven with contradictions. The incongruity is – I contend – inherent to Ellis's text. The 'lesbian' is an impossible figure; the means of her characterisation and description necessarily remain scant and inconclusive, as simply there is no 'Lesbian'. To my mind, the *impossibility* of her figure is manifest 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

[41] Ellis, *My Life*, 263.

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.

VI.2.3. The Threat of the 'Lesbian' and the (Homophobic) Interpellation of the Man

"The man who is passionately attracted to an inverted woman is usually of rather a feminine type."[42]

Above I contend that the performative effects of the disclosing strategy did not only involve *Edith,* the one who is being disclosed as different, but also Ellis who enforces the category of difference upon her. Activating the category of 'inversion'/ 'homosexuality', Ellis reinforces his position as the 'normal'/ 'heterosexual' masculine subject. Another premise follows: the emphasis Ellis lays on *Edith's* difference, his knowing, understanding, containing and managing it ensues from the fact that *Edith's* sexual 'inversion' and gender impropriety puts his own gender identity, i.e. masculinity into question.

Partly, it might be due to his scientific concern with ('homo-')sexuality that provoked the assumption that Ellis himself was a 'homosexual.'[43] However, it is *Edith* who represents the major troubling point to Ellis's (heterosexual) masculinity. The quote opening this subchapter shows that the hegemonic discourses construe sexual attraction through the logic of a clear-cut binary. As Douglas McMurtrie claims on behalf of "the unusual instances where the attraction [of 'inverted' women] has been not only for others of the same sex but also for inverted men", "these cases […] seem to justify more thoroughly than anything else the use of the term "sexual inversion;" for "[i]t is true inversion indeed, when from a psychological standpoint the woman can assume the masculine attitude while the man assumes the feminine."[44] The logic voiced here reveals the precarious nature of Ellis's position as a husband and a partner to an 'inverted' woman as McMurtrie maintains those attracted to an 'inverted' person could be so only on the basis of their own 'inverted' nature.

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[42] Ellis, *Sexual Inversion*, 201.

[43] As the editor to Ellis's autobiography states: "During more recent years I have been astonished to hear, especially from younger people (who, oddly enough, had rarely read any of Ellis's books), that he was homosexual! This again is totally untrue." Walton, *My Life*, xxx
McCracken also notes that most of Ellis's biographies are concerned with the possibility that Ellis might have been a repressed or closeted homosexual. McCracken, Scott. "Writing the Body: Edward Carpenter, George Gissing and the Late-Nineteenth Century Realism." *Edward Carpenter and Late Victorian Radicalism*. Brown, Tom. ed. London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1990. 178-200. Quotes on pages 181-182.
Cf. Brome, Vincent. *Havelock Ellis: Philosopher of Sex: A Biography.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979; Brecher, Edward Moritz. *The Sex Researchers*. London: Deutsch, 1970.

[44] McMurtrie**,** Douglas Crawford. *Some Observations on the Psychology of Sexual Inversion in Women from the Lancet-Clinic*. New York, 1912. Quote on pages 2-3; emphasis added.

Hence, *Edith's* 'inversion' ('homosexuality'), and his association with her, subjects Ellis to homophobic paranoia[45] that expresses itself in the threat of his emasculation. As he himself puts it, "the man who is passionately attracted to an 'inverted' woman is usually of rather a feminine type."[46] This sort of emasculation however does not challenge only his gender identity but questions also his sexual identity; not-masculine is associated here with effeminacy and ultimately with 'homosexuality'.[47] To use Volker Woltersdorff's term, *Edith* figures as the permanent occasion of the "schwule Anrufung,"[48] the homophobic denigration. This, as Woltersdorff alleges, is inherent to the process of construction of masculine gender identity; all boys and men are exposed to it and even if they manage to stave it off, the obloquy serves its purpose as it reinforces the normative masculinity that is always already construed as heterosexual.[49] However as much as *Edith* challenges Ellis's masculine identity, her figure actually serves him also as the means of averting the very infamy of 'homosexuality' and as a symbolic means of reenactment of his heterosexual masculinity. As I argue throughout the chapter, it is via ventriloquising *Edith's* story and via establishing himself as the authority over the life of his *ghost* that Ellis is capable of fashioning himself as masculine.

To evaluate the performative nature of Ellis's text and to envision the importance his auto/biography has in his endeavour to produce an intelligible image of himself as essentially a man – be it as a man-of-science or a married private man – it is important to realize that Ellis's text reflects his interaction and various responses to the normative definition of masculinity. Further, his text reveals the degree in which gender and sexuality intersect in this attempt of writing the self and in fashioning one's intelligible gender identity.

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[45] Cf. Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* London; New York: Routledge, 1993; Butler, Judith. *Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative*. New York; London: Routledge, 1997; Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You're Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction Is about You" Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve, ed. *Novel Gazing. Queer readings in Fiction*. Durham: Duke UP, 1997. 1-37.

[46] Ellis, *Sexual Inversion,* 201.

[47] On association between 'homosexuality' and 'effeminacy' see e.g. Bristow**,** Joseph. *Effeminate England: Homoerotic Writing after 1885*. London: Open University Press, 1995; Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. *Between Men. English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

[48] Woltersdorff, *Coming Out,* 124.

[49] According to Wolterdorff, "[d]er homophobe Verunglimpfung ist Bestandteil männlicher Sozialisation" (124). "[Die schwule Anrufung] fällt insofern überall auf fruchtbaren Boden, als sie die meisten Jungen und Männer dazu veranlasst, sich zu fragen, ob sie Männlichkeitsnormen zufrieden stellend erfüllen. Auch wenn sie diese Zweifel abwehren können, erfüllt die Beschimpfung damit ihre Männlichtkeits- und Heterosexualitätsregulierende Funktion." Woltersdorff, *Coming Out,* 126.

VI.3. "Heterosexual Comedy"[50] and the Heteronormative Grid

"[H]e inadvertently married a Lesbian, and thus entangled himself into an intricate position, as always happens in such marriages.[51]

"We'll […] go […] and live our lives as friends and lovers and dreamers."[52]

"It would be a blasphemy against life to speak of a relationship which like ours aided great ends as a mistake."[53]

Considering the context that I have been discussing so far, the emphasis Ellis places on his self-presentation as an "absurdly loving Husband" (268), partner and a comrade to *Edith* might appear as the most striking and possibly the most surprising motif of his auto/biography. As already observed, the intimate association with an 'invert'/ a 'lesbian' represents a point of significant trouble to Ellis's (heterosexual) masculinity. It is worthy of note that the apprehension translates into Ellis's anxiety that his marriage should be perceived a fateful misstep or a fiasco. Repeatedly, *My Life* gainsays this implication. "Much as each of us suffered through marriage I have never been convinced that our marriage was a mistake…" (234). To accentuate his words, Ellis quotes from *Edith's* letters. The following passage in which she cites Emily Dickinson's poem should prove her love and loyalty to him, "'[T]his dos thou doubt, / sweet? / Then have I / Nothing to show / But Calvary,'" upon which Ellis adds, "[t]he oath of love may well have sometimes seemed to each of us the path of Calvary. But, as all Christendom has testified, the path of Calvary is not the path of failure" (292).

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. Following Butler's notion of heterosexual comedy, Ellis's portrayal of the

[50] Here, I borrow the term Segal and Osborne used in their 1993 interview with Butler. Butler's notion of a comedy to which the interviewers refer conceives of *heterosexuality* as both a compulsory system and a repetitive performance that is however always already certain to fail. *The heterosexual comedy* is according to Butler destined to failure as it attempts to reproduce an original/ an ideal that does not exist outside of these (ever failing) performative enactments.
Cf. Osborne, Peter and Lynn Segal. "Gender as Performance. An Interview with Judith Butler." *Radical Philosophy.* 67.1. (1994): 32-39. Quote on page 34.
[51] Ellis, *My Life*, xxx.
[52] *Edith* qtd. in Ellis, *My Life*, 306.
[53] Ellis, *My Life*, 234.

marriage can be seen as a strategic and yet "an impossible imitation of itself,"[54] that is (the ideal of) heterosexual marriage. 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.

Undoubtedly, as a social institution, marriage is inextricably linked to the normative claim of "compulsory heterosexuality."[55] Martha Vicinus – to quote one of the many critics of heteronormativity – has reflected that "[m]arriage represents heterosexuality more forcibly than any other public institution; support for it, as well as attacks on it, *reveal larger social concerns about masculinity and femininity*."[56] Keeping in mind the interdependences between the normativity of gender identity and the performative enactments of heteronormative patterns of companionship,[57] alongside of the performative enunciations of "I know" Ellis's gender identity is underpinned by his proclamations about the moral worth and success of his marriage to *Edith,* as well as his affirmations about the spouses' mutual love. These assertions build up a chain of utterances that reiterate the wedding oath.[58] The persistent assertions of love, "I love you", "I need you", "come to me" (473-5) inscribe the motif of the Ellis's marital relationship at the narrative centre of *My Life*.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that Ellis's self-fashioning in the husband-position overlaps to a significant degree with his assertion of epistemological privilege. Apparently, it is the life-long experience of a husband and an intimate partner to his wife that substantiates his epistemic authority and knowledge of *Edith*. Hence, the years of cohabitation that in this sense appear to equal years of *study* allow him to remark, "*But at that time* I had no real practice of knowledge…" (263; emphasis added), "[*Then*] I failed to realise why…" (233; emphasis added).

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[54] Butler, Judith. "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader.* Abelove, Henry, Barale, Michèle Aina and David Halperin. eds. New York, London: Routledge, 1993. 306-320. Quote on page 313.

[55] Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" *Blood, Bread, and Poetry.* Norton Paperback: New York, 1994.

[56] Vicinus, Martha. "Lesbian Perversity and Victorian Marriage: The 1864 Codrington Divorce Trial." *The Journal of British Studies*, 36.1. (1997): 70-98. Quote on page 72; emphasis added.

[57] For instance Butler discloses the straightforward link conjoining performative inscriptions of gender to performative pronouncements sealing the act of marriage.; Cf. Butler, *Bodies*, 232. For a more detailed discussion of this issue see chapter II.

[58] Cf. Austin, John Langshaw. *How to Do Things with Words*. Clarendon Press, 1962.
For a critique of the implied heteronormative logic inherent to Austin's preferred examples of the performatives, see: Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. "Queer performativity. Henry James's The Art of the Novel." *GLQ*, 1 (1993): 1-16; as well as her and Parker's introductory essay in *Performativity and Performance*. Kosofsky Sedgwick points out that Austin's elevating the scene of marital ceremony to the position of a supreme example of the performative speech act constitutes a performative act in its own right and with its own tangible effects.
Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve and Parker Andrew. *Performativity and performance*. New York; London: Routledge, 1995. Quote on page 10.

In the analysis of the narrative framework through which Ellis recounts his attachment to the 'inverted' woman I draw upon theses Anthony Giddens as well as Niklas Luhmann formulated in relation to the modern transformation of the discourses (and relations generated by these discourses) of *love, sexuality* and *intimacy*.[59] According to both theorists, it was the discourse of romantic love[60] that from the 18th until late in the 20th century shaped the intimate relations between partners and marital spouses. Within the complex of notions and ideas associated with romantic love, Giddens recognises several defining and novel features.[61] The most significant is that for the first time romantic love becomes correlated with freedom and with self-realisation. Thereto "both [love and freedom are] seen as normatively desirable states."[62] It is this discursive formation and the symbolic value attached to love and the related notion of a complementary self – self that needs its other half to achieve the state of wholeness and integrity – that provide Ellis with the background against which to construct his narrative about himself and his wife.

VI.3.1. Sexual Matters

As to sexual relations, Ellis confides that he and *Edith* were not suited to one another and since not mutually sexually attracted, their "marital relationship in the narrow sense was permanently brought to an end" (292). Yet, consider the following quotations that Ellis uses to describe *Edith's* influence upon himself.

> [T]he presence of her naked and vital spirit moved my more dreaming and aloof spirit to a realisation of the fundamental facts of living … (234-5)

> [She was] the woman who was to arouse in me whatever possibilities I held of becoming in that mystical and transcendent sense a Lover (244).

The metaphorical quality of such quotes is striking. Considering that Ellis has just intimated the cessation of their sexual relations, expressions such as – *"naked and vital spirit", "fundamental facts of living", "arouse", "Lover"* – puzzle with overt eroticism. It appears that the text is to bear out the erotic and/or sexual quality of the bond. However, it simultaneously transposes this erotic/sexual dimension onto the level of transcendence and

[59] Giddens, Anthony. *The Transformation of Intimacy. Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992; Luhman, Niklas. *Láska jako vášeň; Paradigm Lost*. Praha: Prostor, 2002.
[60] Luhmann works with the term "semantics of romantic love."
[61] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy,* 37-48.
[62] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, 40.

spiritual communication, note the words *"spirit"* and *"mystical", "transcendent."* Similarly, Ellis's *Little Essays in Love and Virtue* argue that the notion of *sexual energy* needs to be extended beyond physical manifestations of sex.[63] The "object of marriage," the *Essays* argue, has grown in the civilized world beyond its "primary object [that] we may term the animal end of marriage."[64] Leaning upon the notion of social evolution,[65] Ellis formulates the second, so called "spiritual object of marriage."[66] This concept he understands as encompassing "all those *higher mental and emotional processes* which in human evolution are ever gaining greater power."[67] Ellis's "I [became] in that mystical and transcendent sense a Lover" strikes an echo with the *Essays's* proclamation that sex "becomes […] *the inspiring stimulus to all those psychic energies* which in civilization we count most precious*."*[68] On the face of this, the representation of the Ellis's "marital relations" corresponds with this notion of spiritual vocation of marriage. The "triumphant conclusion"[69] of the Ellis's life with one another seems to allude to a(n orgasmic) climax of a spiritual/transcendent encounter. Furthermore, as the *Little Essay* assert that only "rare and gifted natures"[70] are capable of sexual/spiritual communion untinged by carnal facticity, Ellis's liaison with his wife becomes associated with the notion of superiority and evolutionary progress. The apparently contradictory claim to erotic/sexual facet of their marital love that Ellis lodges here makes in my reading an important constituent of Ellis's gender performance; separating the erotic impetus of his relation to *Edith* from the *body* and the physical reality of their failed intercourse enables Ellis to recast their relationship as an encounter of a *man* and a *woman.* In this sense, *Edith's* 'homosexuality' that we have seen revealed is – simultaneously – integrated into and overshadowed by the narrative of (heterosexual) marital bliss as their "[l]ove breaks with sexuality while embracing it."[71] This corresponds with Giddens's argument that the discourse of romantic love tends to prioritise "sublime love" over "sexual

[63] Ellis, "The Objects of Marriage", *Little Essays of Love and Virtue*, no pagination.
Project Gutenberg <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/15687>
[64] Ellis, "The Objects of Marriage."
[65] Clearly, the discourse Ellis uses to argue against the 'platitude […] concerning the question of sexual purity", is that of development of civilisation and of its evolution. Within this argumentative framework he labels positions he argues against as "flowing from the far past", and "spr[inging] from a […] source far back in the primitive human world." Similarly, sexuality freed from the constraints of reproduction is a mark of the civilisation's evolution. "It has taken God – or Nature, if we will – unknown millions of years of painful struggle to evolve Man, and to raise the human species above that helpless bondage to reproduction that marks the lower animals."
Ellis, "The Objects of Marriage", no pagination.
[66] Ellis, "The Objects of Marriage."
[67] Ellis, "The Objects of Marriage", emphasis added.
[68] Ellis , "The Objects of Marriage", emphasis added.
[69] Ellis, *My Life,* 234.
[70] Ellis, "The Objects of Marriage."
[71] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, 45.

ardour,"[72] in consequence of which the notion of intimacy and the relationship between love and sexual relations undergo significant reformulations. Romantic love is "incompatible with lust […] not so much because the loved one is idealised […] but because it presumes a psychic communication, a meeting of souls which is reparative in character."[73] In the like manner, *My Life* accentuates the unity, intimacy and (physical) closeness the Ellis's manage to achieve in the relationship. This is – Ellis contends – even more important than the sexual contacts would have been. Again stressing their accomplishment he asserts, "the loss was in our case a gain," while, allegedly, the loss of sex was transformed into the gaining of understanding and personal proximity:

> We had secured all that that 'golden key to the deepest secrets of intimacy' has to give and we could now develop our relationship better without it. In all other respects our physical intimacy remained the same, and nearly to the end we would find consolation in lying or sleeping together, nearness she sometimes deeply craved.[74]

VI.3.2. He and She, Two Parts of one Whole, or Surpassing the Love of Women

> "I do not come forward to say: 'This was the real Me – that was the real She'. [….] It is an impersonal revelation which I uncover. [….] The narrative holds a true picture of life [that] should be helpful to many."[75]

Discussing the "semantic of romantic love," Luhmann draws attention to the inner tension that it entails. This grows out of the very expectations the ideal of romantic love arouses in lovers. The expectations operate as a norm that cannot but remain unfulfilled. Hence, the lovers' great expectations can easily turn into the source of bitter disillusionment of the spouses.[76] The tension ingrained in the ideal notion of romantic love surfaces most powerfully in 'The Marriage Question' of the turn of the century, as well as was manifest in production of the advice literature focusing on happy marital cohabitation.[77] Necessarily, *My Life* engages with the social debate around the institution of marriage.

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[72] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, 42.
[73] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, 45.
[74] Ellis, *My Life*, 292.
[75] Ellis, *My Life*, xxxix.
[76] "Je-li kód specializován na to, aby se jeho pomocí jevilo nenormální chování jako normální, nezhroutí se, jakmile se bude chování renormalizovat pod tlakem reálných psychických podmínek? Stará neslučitelnost se nakonec znovu objevuje jako problém v manželství: jako zklamání těch očekávání, na nichž bylo manželství založeno" (Luhmann, *Láska I*56).
[77] For the most comprehensive anthology of the contemporary sources to the so-called Marriage Question see: Heilmann, Ann. *The Late-Victorian Marriage Question: A Collection of Key New Woman Texts*. London: Routledge/Thoemmes, 1998.
Both Edith Ellis and Havelock Ellis published profusely on the issue of marriage; See also Carpenter, Edward. *Love's Coming-of-Age*. A Series of Papers on the Relations of the Sexes. Labour Press: Manchester, 1896.

If the relationship between Ellis and Edith Ellis does not correspond to the discursive framework of romantic love at the beginning, it is important to note that the narrative deploys its semantic to bring out the bourgeoning of love in the process of the Ellis's married life. The story of love between Ellis and *Edith* is transformed into a narrative of a slow but decisive "conquest of a great difficulty" (292), into a difficult passage of struggle "towards ideals which would be truer to the nature of each of [them]" and in the course of which "[their] deeper union, far from being destroyed, was being consolidated" (272). As the auto/biography draws to its end, Ellis proclaims, "[t]o me a deep love which had grown even stronger through a quarter of a century of trials and proofs was something far too solid ever to be shaken" (431).

Notwithstanding, the acclaimed independence of the spouses of one another as well as the considerable freedom they credited each other in their individual quests for gratification of emotional (as well as sexual) needs, I want to argue that it is the professed degree of intimacy and mutual interdependence that in the auto/biographic narrative is turned into the measure of success of their marital union. Reflecting on the moment of *Edith's* death, Ellis remarks, "I felt as I watched her dying […] that life for me was over" (383). To prove that his wife's feelings were equivalent to his own, Ellis cites her letter, *"I know that neither of us could live long without one another,"* and adds, "[t]hat she had found me was from the outset, I knew, […] a miracle […] *No one could take, in the smallest part, my place; she could not admit more than one person to the inmost springs of her being"* (382; emphasis added). Clearly, it is the vision of the unique and exclusive quality of their relationship that Ellis propounds here. Complementing each other, he and *Edith* are as two halves of one whole. According to Giddens the motif of complementarity represents another normative feature of the ideal of romantic love. In this sense the discourse has had altered the notion of an individual; without the experience of love, not loving and not being loved, the individual is marked with a lack. It is only through love that s/he becomes a whole and the flaw of lack is healed.[78] "I shall always fly to your breast […] – *you are me, and I am you*…" and "in your arms and on your breasts is my *one complete home*…" (*Edith*, 272; emphasis added). The notion of complementarity, "I am his champagne and he is my opium" (216), intimate spiritual communion and mutual interdependence of their individualities that Ellis's auto/biography so intricately weaves into assertions of the ever increasing intimacy and flourishing love,

[78] Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy*, 45.

reiterates the key outlines of the heteronormative matrix. Before I proceed to a summarizing discussion of the ways in which Ellis's narrative deploys the "semantic of romantic love" and its effects on Ellis's gender performance, I propose to consider the ramifications it had for Ellis's portrayal of *Edith's* "friendships" with women.[79]

A considerable number of critics have argued that the anxiety attached to the figure of a *lesbian* is to a large extent anxiety roused by independence of women's sexuality. The possibility that women's sexuality and desire could break free of the heterosexual constraints and of the reproductive imperative is regarded as one of the most powerful triggers of unease. I will now attempt at least a brief outline of the ways in which *My Life's* representation of the same-sex bonds among women corroborates the heterosexual norms and the heteronormative matrix.

> But there was always a place in Edith's heart, a sacred and beautiful place, only to be filled by a woman who must be more than a friend in the conventional sense, a woman on whom she could expand a love which was like passion, even if an etherealised passion, and lavish those tender refinements and protective cares of which she so well knew the secrets.
>
> (324)

First, it should be noted that Ellis discusses *Edith's* relations with women openly. As transpires from the quote above, he as well acknowledges openly that these relations have always played a significant role in his wife's life. Nonetheless, it does not require an arduous interpretative effort to uncover a gender-specific hierarchy which organises the relation between the emotional and erotic relationships described in *My Life.* The moment Ellis intimates for the first time that his wife has fallen for another woman makes a representative example of this hierarchy. Edith's feelings for a woman are presented as a sequel to her "revelling in her new-found felicity" resulting – as Ellis asserts – from *Edith's* experience of being freshly married to him. It was due to the "fermentation now working in Edith to a new experience of freedom and joy" and "in the climax of her felicity" (262-3) that these feelings of love for a woman could generate. Apparently, it was her marriage to Ellis and the exhilarating effect of this experience that opened *Edith* to love in the first place. As absurd as it may seem, in this way the marital love prefigures as well as pre-conditions *Edith's* realization of her love for women.[80] Thus, the love bond that is always already coded as heterosexual is posited as a point of origin and hence superordinate to other non-heterosexual/same-sex relations that *Edith* develops with women.

[79] Note the term that introduces a concept of hierarchy between the marital love on the one hand and Edith's friendships on the other. Cf. for instance Ellis, *My Life*, 430.

[80] It is interesting to note that one of the reasons emotional relations between women were to a degree tolerated by society was a different heteronormative assumption. According to it, love between women was seen as a way of preparation for marriage; a school of emotional intensity that was expected from women by the norms of femininity.

Ellis proclaims, "[w]hatever I might think in hours of depression, [Edith's relations with women] never interfered with her larger and deeper love for me…" (265). As well, the claim to primacy of *Edith's* bond to Ellis seems to be coupled with the underpinning statement that in fact *Edith's* concept of the self and self-integrity was as much as dependent upon her relationship to her husband. Ellis cites from *Edith's* letter, "I should go stark raving mad if you left me …" (269) or, "[i]f I lost Havelock, the earth would rock" (431).

Further, simultaneously to disclosing that *Edith* has always sought love outside the ambit of the marital relationship, Ellis introduces a gender coding that serves to differentiate *Edith's* relationships with her women *friends* and her relationship to her husband. Having recognised three distinct (gendered) elements in his wife, i.e. those of *a woman*, *a child* and *a boy*,[81] Ellis asserts that the former two gendered facets of *Edith's* character shape the interaction between the spouses. To prove his words, he inserts quotes from *Edith's* letters: "I do love you, Havelock, and need you with *my whole woman heart*" (258; emphasis added). Or, "my heart is aching and aching for you, and my eyes (*not boy's but woman's eyes*) keep filling at the though of you" (291; emphasis added).[82] With contrast, it is "boyish ardour" (326) that Ellis points out as characteristic for *Edith's* communication with her women 'friends'. When with one of them, Edith "had all the air and spirit of an eager boy, even the deliberate poses and gestures of a boy, [N.B.] never of a man…" (325-6).[83]

To conclude, it should be noted that in her own words *Edith* loved her husband.[84] However, the focus of this chapter has been placed on different issue that is on the positive and generative power of the heteronormative matrix that enabled Ellis to produce an intelligible gender identity. As Scott McCracken observes, the objective medical discourse that informs the scientific studies of 'homosexuality,' might have enabled Ellis to "write himself outside the subject matter."[85] Nonetheless, such a discursive strategy has only a limited resource to offer for composing an autobiographic narrative. Within the framework of a personal narrative, the

[81] "[Edith was] always woman, boy, and child, and these three, it seemed, in almost equal measure" (*My Life*, 263).
[82] This remark seems to suggest that also Edith Lees herself drew a conscious distinction in her relations, that she developed distinct gender self-fashionings for the interaction with women on the one hand and the marital bond on the other.
[83] For the lesbian erotic symbolism of the boy figure see: Vicinus, Martha. "The Adolescent Boy: Fin-de-Siécle Femme Fatale?" Dellamora, Richard. ed. *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1999. 83-106.
[84] However, the possibility that Edith Ellis would see herself as a 'bisexual,' or that she would prefer to stand mute and not to pin herself down to any of accessible sexual identities should not be foreclosed.
[85] McCracken, Scott. "Writing the Body: Edward Carpenter, George Gissing and the Late-Nineteenth Century Realism." *Edward Carpenter and Late Victorian Radicalism*. Brown, Tom. ed. London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1990. 178-200. Quote on pages 181-182.

strategy of disclosure that provided Ellis with the powerful gaze and the superior position of the scientist and hence rendered him masculine, does not function as the discourse that would make his bond to an 'invert' intelligible. Rather, it might affect him obversely. Therefore, Ellis's auto/biography resorts to the discourse of romantic love and the narrative framework of the love between He and She that promises to assuage the threat of the 'lesbian'.

Moreover, it is crucial to reveal yet another level of the heteronormative logic in which Ellis's text is perforce embedded. One of the most intriguing aspects of the double auto/biographic project of *My Life* is that it illustrates the resources of the heteronormative matrix to subsume (ventriloquize) even the non-heterosexual subject matter. As *My Life* buttresses the heteronormative code by the gendered semantic of romantic love, its radius of action is paramount to the heterosexual/homosexual binary. *My Life* establishes a distinct hierarchy that de-centres *Edith's* non-heterosexual relationships as friendships that *Edith* cannot give up or else "at the expense of all [her] personality" (292), but that – nonetheless – cannot achieve the centrality her relationship to her husband did. Ventriloquizing stories of *Edith's* same-sex attachments Ellis manages to integrate them into the overarching narrative of marital love which consequently maintains its exclusivity. Whereas *Edith's* love for women is a given part of her temperament, her attachment to Ellis is framed by the discourse of personal development and the realisation of the self.[86] In the networks of interdependence, and mutuality that they have managed to weave as *My Life* tries to convince the reader, they have become parts of each other's personality. "You can no more get free of me than you can of your own guts."[87]

The discourse of romantic love is employed to negotiate the major pitfall of the relationship, its *sexual* otherness. The depiction of the pair's comradeship of equality, personal freedom and understanding downplays the importance of the failed sexual communion, *Edith's* lacking femininity, as well as the discordance of their temperaments that Ellis bemoans elsewhere. Against this backdrop the gendered binary of man/woman seems (momentarily) to be divorced from and to override the hetero/homosexual separation. Their marital love as if surpasses the *other* love as well as Edith's (sexual) otherness. Nonetheless, the limit of Ellis's attempt to seal his and his wife's life into a coherent frame of their (heterosexual) portrait always remains marked by the *but* of this otherness.

[86] "Her wisdom of life, as she remarked to an acquaintance during her last week in the world, has been the outcome especially of her experience with me" (Ellis, *My Life* viii).
[87] Edith qtd. in Ellis, *My Life*, 306.

VI.4. Queering? Like a Mother to His Child

"I miss you terribly, my own Love, *who are woman and man*. Your own child Wifie."[88]

"[S]he no longer called me 'sweetheart' or said that I was both woman and man to her. I remained her 'boy', her 'child' always her 'comrade' and 'the one person in the world who understands me.'"[89]

The quotes indicate that the interaction between Ellis and *Edith* embraced an element of gender-play or *gender-bending*. Apparently, within their intimate interaction, Ellis is assigned both genders, or is addressed (possibly even desired?) as both a *man* and a *woman*. In some instances the quoted fragments of their intimate correspondence, Ellis's love letters sound a somewhat feminine tone. For instance he writes, *"*All these weeks my whole body has been *like a bundle of sensitive nerves throbbing with love of you*, every tiniest act of the day has seemed mixed up with love of you" (269; emphasis added). Especially the phrase "a bundle of sensitive nerves" – to point out just the most outstanding one – recalls the images of frail and nervous femininity that proliferated in the Victorian imagery. Against this background, I address those features that seem to defy/challenge the conventional – or if you like hegemonic – i.e. middle-class white masculinity with the view to their possible strategic role in Ellis's self-fashioning narrative.[90] Particularly, I ask whether (and if so in what ways) the tropes of gender-bending relate to the gendered fashioning of *Edith*.

> My own sweet Baby, eh! man! Thee ought not to go far from your mammy's apron-strings for thee wants thy bottle sadly!
>
> (*Edith,* 291)

> [C]ome home, dear child, and you shall be fed and hushed and comforted by your wifie.
>
> (*Edith,* 291)

With regard to the gender-bending aspects of the text, the metaphors of mothering and images of mother and child occur with the most frequency. In their intimate communication, both Ellis and *Edith* occupy positions of a mother as well as that of a child. In the following quotes Ellis assigns himself the feminine role of a mother, "[t]his sort of maternal feeling which I felt [towards her] continued to grow in intensity throughout the whole period of our lives together." And, "even in these early days [*Edith*] fell into that attitude towards me, *as of a*

[88] Ellis, *My Life*, 291. Emphasis added.
[89] Ellis, *My Life*, 326. Emphasis added.
[90] Connell, Raewyn. *Masculinities.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995.

child to its mother" (254; emphasis added). Does this self-descriptive gesture imply that Ellis embraces androgyny as an element of his gender performance? Or on the contrary, does his commandeering of the mother role – precisely because it is so inextricably associated with womanhood and femininity – indicate that the trope of failing/deficient femininity he in the act attributes to *Edith,* becomes strategically deployed in his auto/biographic narrative?

First, Ellis's self-ascription of the mother(ly) figure coincides with the note referring to *Edith's* nervous instability and her ever more frequent illnesses. Furthermore, according to his record it is *Edith* who craves the mother-child play. "I wish you were here with your *loving arms to help me and to comfort me.* I'm like a *weak tired child* and *want my mammy"* (255; emphasis added). Allegedly, this mother-child role-play is of a positive influence to *Edith.* As Ellis affirms, the role of a *child* and his motherly approach provides his wife with the so much needed relaxation of her inner tensions and strains. He cites her letter, "You rest every fibre in me and suit me, *sir,* […] and I crow like a *wee child* at the breast, and I'm happy …" (255; emphasis added). However, the emphasis Ellis sets upon his ability to bring his wife's nervous stress into balance and equilibrium as well as to counter her emotional confusion with his rational vision evokes a rather different notion than that of a loving and tenderly caring *mother*. Using this trope Ellis refers much more to a (gendered) conception of fatherhood current in the Victorian era. As Lesley Barclay and Deborah Lupton document in their discussion of the contemporary material, the ability to reintroduce order, balance and rationality into the lives of the children was historically associated with the assumed rationality of fathers.[91] The contrast between the *sir* and the *wee child* that the quote employs subscribes to such an interpretation.

Furthermore, the citations I address below suggest that Ellis uses the same metaphoric trope of *mothering* to dissociate himself from the assigned role of a mother. Consider the following pair of Ellis's statements, the motherly approach to *Edith* fostered, "by [his] realisation *that her temperament was that of the eternal child,* [and that she] need[ed] at [his] hands all sorts of little cares and attentions. [T]hereby [he] develop[ed] […] to an acute degree of aching tenderness […] *all the femininely maternal impulses that may chance to be latent within me"* (255; emphasis added). Here, the metaphor of *mothering* establishes several interlinked binary oppositions. Whereas *Edith* represents the unambiguous embodiment of "the eternal child*,"* of immaturity and imperfect development, the maternal abilities that Ellis observes to awake in

[91] Lupton**,** Deborah, Barclay Lesley. *Constructing Fatherhood. Discourses and Experiences.* London: Sage, 1997. Quote on page 37.

himself are perceived as a response to the urgent need of the situation. The dense discursive formation that encircled the notion of evolution taken into account, it is plausible to interpret the sprouting "feminine[e] maternal impulses" as a reference to the (gendered) discourse of evolution that ascribes men with greater variability of development. Note as well that Ellis himself was a great promulgator of the theory of greater developmental variation in men.[92] In the like manner, Ellis's supposed evolutionary enhancement is juxtaposed against the notion of an imperfect development of his wife.

> [S]he remained in some degree undeveloped, in temperament as well as physically something of a child, and with the undue nervous sensitiveness and susceptibility of one whose textures had never had the chance of acquiring completely normal powers of resistance to noxious influences.
>
> (220)

With reference to my earlier discussion I contend that in this way the mothering metaphor is turned into a symbolic trope that binds together the reference to *Edith*'s 'inversion' with the image of dependence and inferiority. In contrast, it ascertains Ellis with a position of symbolic superiority. In this respect there is yet another issue that the employment of the mothering metaphor activates. The marriage of *Edith* and Ellis did not produce any offspring. Having in mind the fact that motherhood is always already conflated with the discourse of womanhood, (and vice versa the normative womanhood is always already bound to discourses of motherhood), it transpires that representing *Edith* as failing in her mother-to-be role necessarily implies that she as well fails in her woman role. Thus not being allowed to become a mother,[93] only further emphasises the inequality that as I argue underlies and upholds the metaphor of mothering. Principally, Ellis asserts that the decision not to beget a child was taken on the ground of *Edith's* ancestral inheritance of "nervous instability."[94] Against this background I maintain that in the line of reasoning that Ellis performs both the

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[92] Cf. Russet, Cynthia Eagle. *Sexual Science. The Victorian Construction of Womanhood*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991. For the overview of contemporary discussions and disputes over the issue of sex-specific variations in development see particularly the chapter *Hairy Men and Beautiful Women.* For Ellis's discussion of the issue see his influential *Man and Woman.* Ellis, Havelock. *Man and Woman. A Study of Secondary and Tertiary Sexual Characters*. London: Heinemann, 1934.

[93] Apparently, the decision not to have children was consulted with further medical authority who termed *Edith* as un-fit both for marriage as well as motherhood. Ellis recounts, "In resolving this difficulty [whether or not to have children] we were both much influenced by the opinion of [Edith's] physician […] No one had ever studied her so thoroughly and minutely, or understood her so well, as this clever old doctor…", "[He] had told her […] that she ought not to marry, but that if she should marry she certainly ought not to have children" (*My Life* 230-1).

[94] Wallace remarks that the decision was taken "owing to Edith's 'inherited nervous instability' and Havelock's own 'nervous excess" (37).

Note that Wallace takes Ellis's explanation at face value without critically considering its gendered politics of representation.

Consider also the biased way Ellis accounts for *Edith's* and his own ancestry.

"At that time the problems of eugenics had hardly come to the front […] But […] I regarded heredity as a matter of serious concern. […] We were able to discuss the matter with fair impartiality, as a question of her health and ancestry, since my heredity was as nearly as possible perfect, and my health – with due allowance for an intellectual worker's nervous hyperaesthenia – would pass all ordinary tests" (230).

nervous instability and the ancestral inheritance conflate with the way 'sexual inversion' is encoded in the text. Furthermore, deeming *Edith* as incapable of reproductive 'function', and/or inapt for motherhood, activates the discourse of eugenics active also in the construction of sex, gender, race, class, and nation. *Edith's* 'inversion', as it were, embodies thus a possible danger to the social body as a whole.[95] "[It is] one of the chief point in the woman's progress," writes Edith Lees in one of her essays about eugenics, "to realise that in them lies the responsibility for the health and the sanity of the nation through their refusal to add to the misery of the world by bringing into it human beings who are badly handicapped even before birth."[96]

In sum, even those features of Ellis's self-fashioning that seem to be at odds with the middle-class white British masculinity of the late Victorian period need to be considered against their possible effects upon the fashioning of *Edith* and with regard to symbolic signification attached to her. In view of that I want to argue that *My Life* integrates the metaphoric trope of mothering into such a symbolic framework that in effect bolsters Ellis's self-fashioning as masculine.

[95] For a discussion of the intersections of gendered discourses of sexuality and race see e.g. Sommerville, Siobhan B. "Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body." *Sexology in Culture. Labelling Bodies and Desires.* Bland, Lucy and Laura Doan. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998. 60-76.
[96] Ellis, Edith, *The New Horizon,* 56.

VI.5. Technology of the Masculine (Heterosexual) Self

Before embarking upon the concluding recapitulation of the practices Ellis employs with himself, and importantly also upon others, in the process of self-formation, the interface between subject/ivity – knowledge – power – sex – truth needs to be discussed. Even though the concern with this relational axis has defined my discussion throughout the chapter, it has focused so far on the ways it affected *Edith.* So far, it has not been explicitly explored what relationship the narrative of *My Life* establishes between *sex* (the truth of sex) and the truth of Ellis's subject/ivity. Below, I want to explore how sex determines the self-formation of the masculine heterosexual subject of *My Life*. However implicit and tacit, Ellis's auto/biographic text reflects upon, as well as establishes, correspondence between (the truth of) *sex* and the truth of what/who Ellis is. *Edith'*s *sex* might have been named through an explicit act of exposure; however the act of telling on Ellis's sex is not the less pressing or tangible in the text. On the one hand, it is the very act of disclosing *Edith'*s 'inversion'/ 'homosexuality' that bears witness to Ellis's self-imposed imperative to speak about his own sexuality. Recognizing himself as subjected to the symbolic threat that the sexually defined otherness of his wife represents to him and to his own gender/sexual identity, Ellis makes a statement of its own right about his own sexuality.

On the other hand, Ellis's sexuality is also made an explicit object of the autobiographic narrative. Ellis provides a comprehensive survey of the development of his sexual desires and sexual behaviour from the early childhood with its ineffectual attempts to masturbate through sexually timid adolescence to his sexual life in adulthood. Manifestations of his own sexuality become the subject of study to himself. For instance, on account of the "physical efflorescence" he states, "[I] methodically not[ed] their occurrences in my pocket diary" (125). Similarly, he describes rather in detail how his propensity to watch women pass water standing up came to the surface and considers whether or not this form of "urolagnia*"* (68) constitutes a form of "perversion" (68) of his sexual instinct.[97] With an emphasis upon his scientific matter-of-factedness, Ellis likewise mentions that he took care to elucidate sexual matters to his unknowing wife-to-be.

Discussing Ellis's portrayal of *Edith,* I have argued that the symbolic that buttresses Ellis's position of (masculine) dominance, relies upon presenting himself as the instance that unites

[97] Ellis claims, "[it] never developed into a real perversion nor […] formed distinguishable part of the chief love interests of my life" (68-9).

in itself the caring with the knowing aptitude. It is his knowledge and understanding of *Edith* that underlies his motherly/fatherly care he allegedly takes of *Edith*. In this sense, Ellis subjects *Edith* to the specific power that Foucault names 'pastoral'.[98] However, the examples of the way Ellis presents his own sexuality support the argument that Ellis *himself* is a subject/subjects himself to pastoral power. Also for him to become a *subject* entails subjecting his *sex* to all-disclosing acts of speech. Neither has he been exempt from the force of the leaden ring which forces his *sex* to speak it own truth.[99]

Consider now the following quote,

> I have never repressed anything. What others have driven out of consciousness or pushed into the background as being improper or obscene, I have maintained and even held in honour. […] This fact now seems of immense significance for the whole of my life; it is […] the key to all my work and my whole attitude towards the world. It has become wrought into the texture of my whole work. […] [T]he same impulse is expressed in my whole attitude towards the world.
>
> (67-8; emphasis added)

Sex is the subject of this utterance; sex is posited as the key to the whole of Ellis's life, to his work. As well, it weights his ethical and moral principles. It is not so much of importance that Ellis emphasizes his open, direct and enlightened approach to sex. In fact, it would not make a cardinal difference if he argued in the contrary, and founded his self-presentation upon the denial of sex. It is the fact that sex is credited the central place in Ellis's self-account that is significant. Apparently, the complex relation between sex, knowledge (truth) and power interact in the way Ellis's subjectivity is formed.

Bringing the traditional notion of the self under critical and gender-sensitive attention, Andrea Maihofer maintains that the structures of power, dominance and subjection have to be critically reconsidered along with the notion of the self. She asserts, "Herrschafts-, Patriarchats-, und Subjektkritik [fallen] unmittelbar in eins."[100] In the modern context to become a 'man', a masculine subject, means, Maihofer claims, to fabricate a specific and subjective relation to power. "Herr seiner selbst zu sein [heißt] ein Verhältnis der Herrschaft in sich über sich selbst zu errichten."[101] Ellis's autobiography and his gender performance of masculinity rely upon his ability to affect the rules of self-discipline and self-mastery over his

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[98] For the definition of "pastoral power" see chapter II.1., note 32.
Cf. Foucault, Michel. "The Subject and the Power." (Afterword) *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Dreyfus, Hubert and Paul Rabinow. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1983. 208-229.
[99] Foucault, *History,* 79.
[100] Maihofer, Andrea. *Geschlecht als Existensweise. Macht, Moral, Recht und Geschlechterdifferenz.* Frankfurt am Main: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 1995. Quote on page 109.
[101] Maihofer, *Geschlecht als Existensweise,* 113.

sexual self.[102] However, self-mastery and self-discipline – and in this aspect Ellis's narrative differs considerably from the Victorian discourse of masculine sexual self-restraint[103] – do not equal repression of his sexual desire. Ellis's assertion, "I have never repressed anything. What others have driven out of consciousness or pushed into the background as being improper or obscene, I have maintained and even held in honour," set a different ethical framework for the mastery of sexuality. *Sex* and its management appear to be central to the ethical code that Ellis devices for himself; it epitomizes his attitude both to himself as to the whole world and as such represents the hub of Ellis's practices of the self. Firstly, sex and Ellis's mode of sexual behaviour is chosen as the prime material of his ethical conduct and is established as the ethical substance of his personality. Furthermore, determining sex as the prime site of ethical conduct and ethical concern, Ellis simultaneously presents his personal mastery of sex as the pledge of his moral integrity whereby converts sex into the telos of his ethical self.[104] As noted above, these practices that Ellis performs upon his self are deeply engrained in gendered structures and constitute thus an integral part of the performative acts through which Ellis becomes (endeavours to become) a masculine subject.

Moreover, the interface between the *biographic* and the *autobiographic* concern of *My Life* highlights further gender-specific aspect of Ellis's practices of the self. It illustrates how much the ethics of Ellis's masculine *self*-discipline overlaps with the claim to management and/or dominance exerted on others. Ellis's management of his wife and most importantly of her sexuality is deployed as a proof to his appropriate and masculine management of himself. The telos of Ellis's ethical conduct based on the capability to master his sexuality according to a specific (and self-devised) ethical framework embraces most significantly also mastery of *Edith's* sexual 'otherness' and her (sexual) relations with women.[105]

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[102] Cf. Mainhofer: "Das ("männliche") Selbst muss Herr seiner (sexuellen) Lust als einer der grundlegendsten Bedrohungen "patriarchaler Ordnung" werden" (109).

[103] Cf. for instance Adams, James Eli. *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Masculinity*. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1995; Dowling, Andrew. *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature.* Adlershot: Ashgate, 2001; Sussmann, Herbert. *Victorian Masculinities. Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art.* Cambridge: CUP, 1995.

[104] Cf. Foucault, Michel. *History of Sexuality. The Use of Pleasure* Harmondsworth: Viking, 1985; see also McNay, Lois. *Foucault and Feminism. Power, Gender and the Self*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992. If Foucault argues that sex establishes the *intelligibility* of the subject and ascribes him/her with a recognisable identity, it is also important to keep in mind that Foucault simultaneously points out that this intelligibility is organised around the (heterosexual) norm. Accordingly, the practices through which Ellis construes himself, position him in relation to this norm.
cf. Foucault*, History*, 144.

[105] Note again here the specific hierarchy through which Ellis installs the heteronormative marital bond as the naturally sustaining and healthy one, as opposed to the potentially threatening liaisons with women. This corresponds with Lisa Duggan's argumentation. Duggan notes that the cultural narrative that circulated about the women's love bonds "made the exceptional cases of violent conflict between women seem characteristic of female sexual passion. The stories were thus structured to emphasise, ultimately, that no real love story was possible."

> I never grudged the devotion, though it was sometimes great, which she expended on [her intimate women friends], for I knew that it satisfied a deep and non-eradicable need of her nature. *The only test I applied to them was how far they were good for her.* If they suited her – and *her first intuitions were not always quite sound – I was not only content but glad.*
>
> (269; emphasis added)

Here, Ellis inaugurates himself as the ethical authority over *Edith's* erotic and emotional choices; he appropriates himself both the right and the ability to judge the beneficialness of her relations to women as well as to ensure their moral inoffensiveness. He says, "it must not be supposed that these women intimate friends were more than few in number," and though allowing that there were several of them, he hastens to add that this is due to the complexity of the given situation; each of the relations would "have been permanent had circumstances allowed." Note as well how much the ethical standard Ellis reiterates here subscribes to the normative of the one-to-one pair arrangement that in fact mirrors the ethical normative applied to heterosexual bonding. "[Edith] was always relentlessly true to her ideals; she loathed promiscuity" (269).

Duggan, Lisa. "The Trials of Alice Mitchell. Sensationalism, Sexology, and the Lesbian Subject in Turn-of-the-Century America." *Queer Studies. An Interdisciplinary Reader*. S. Valocchi; Corber R.J. ed. London: Blackwell, 2003. 73-87. Quote on page 83.
Cf. also Faderman, "The Morbidification of Love between Women", and Ellis, *Sexual Inversion*.

VI. 6. Conclusion

It was the objective of this chapter to illustrate the ways in which the technology of the sex, gender and the matrix of heteronormativity intersect. I attempted to show that sexuality shapes both the intelligibility of the homosexual as well as the heterosexual self. Both *Edith* as well as Ellis emerge as intelligible subjects in relation to their *sex* and/or *sexuality* and the ways of its management. However, the working of the power of sexuality has been revealed as a gender-specific mechanism. As I attempted to document, Ellis's practices of the self rely on "symbolical violence" that he exerts on *Edith.*[106] Further, this chapter has engaged in examining the cultural dynamic that surrounds the binary separation of 'hetero-'/ 'homosexuality', and the heteronormative underpinnings of masculinity. Most importantly, if Ellis's autobiographic narrative produces several variant self-positionings, it also illustrates how every single of these positions and self-fashioning tropes rely for its intelligibility on the act of (re-)interpretation of *Edith's* otherness which takes the binary structure of man/woman and/or 'hetero-'/ 'homosexuality' as its reference point.

The premise of my interpretation of Ellis's autobiographic narrative has presupposed that *My Life* discloses the interface of historically specific cultural anxiety surrounding the figure of 'the lesbian' and the construction of masculine subjectivity. Thus, I read the discursive strategies the text employs as an attempt to pacify the troubling effects the 'lesbian' ghost might have had for the masculine self. In this concluding remark I would however like to emphasise that the narrative can never completely contain these upsetting effects. The narrative self-consciously refers to the impossibility to assuage the uneasiness provoked by Ellis's association with *Edith.* Despite the practices of representation that are to fashion Ellis as masculine, Ellis reveals himself disconcerted by being pushed into passivity by Edith's sexual and emotional independence, or into feminine role of nursing and caring etc. The repetitive proclamations of "I know" only further emphasise the difficulty of conjoining the contradictory elements of *Edith's* representation within the text. The utterances of "I know" perform an "interpretative foreclosure" eliminating possible interpretations and readings of the narrative and establish it as a virtually – if illusionary – "closed text."[107] On face of this tension inscribed in the text, I consider Ellis's auto/biography a valuable example of both the imperative to produce a fiction of a coherent gender identity and simultaneously the virtual impossibility to effectively do so.

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[106]Bourdieu, Pierre. *Masculine Domination*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001. Bourdieu perceives the symbolic violence as the founding element to masculine domination that upholds gender inequality.

[107] Hausman, Bernice. *Changing Sex: Transsexualism, Technology, and the Idea of Gender*. Durham, N.C., London: Duke University Press, 1995. Quotes on pages 154-157.

VII. Concluding Remarks

In a way of introduction, the thesis has suggested that the compulsion to confront oneself with the question of "Who I am?", and in particular to search for the answer in one's sex/uality, represents a new type of power relation to which the modern self is subjected. Regarding the autobiographic texts as effects of the conjoined imperatives to 'know' and to 'write' oneself, the thesis has endeavoured 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 originatory force, [or] an originator of speech acts and ideas, but rather constituted effect of knowledge regimes and discourses."[1] 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. The subject-positions that take shape in the autobiographic reflections embody the effects of specific "games of truth."[2]

However, if the thesis asserts that the subjects represent the product of "relation[s] of power exercised over [their] bodies, multiplicities, movements, desires"[3] it is does not claim that they remain utterly passive and power-less manikins. Butler puts it in a following way, "my agency does not consist in denying [the] condition of my constitution, [….] If I have any agency, it is opened up by the fact that I am constituted by a social world I never chose. That my agency is riven with paradox does not mean it is impossible. It means only that paradox is the condition of its possibility."[4] 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.[5]

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,

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[1] Erevelles, Nirmala. "Signs of Reason. Riviere, Facilitated Communication, and the Crisis of the Subject." *Foucault and the Government of Disability.* Tremain, Shelley. ed. University of Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2005. 45-64. Quote on page 48.

[2] Foucault, Michel. "The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom." *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984. Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. Vol. 1, Rabinow Paul. ed. London: Allen Lane, 1997; Quote on page 282.

[3] Erevelles, "Signs of Reason," 48.

[4] Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. New York, London: Routledge, 2004. Quote on page 3.

[5] Cf. Nelson, Lise. "Bodies (and Spaces) do Matter: The Limits of Performativity." *Gender, Place and Culture*. 6.4. (1999): 331-353. See page 341.

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"[6] potential entailed in the subversive rearticulations of the suppressive structures. 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

[6] Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You're Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction Is about You." *Novel Gazing. Queer Readings in Fiction*." ed. Sedgwick, Kosofsky Eve. Durham: Duke UP, 1997, 1-37.

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.

Likewise, as 'Michael Field's journal communication elucidates, the text is not a simple articulation and/or reflection of desire, but also its potent location (V.2.1. and V.3.). Thus the complex and shifting positionalities between *'I'* and *'S/he'* and *'We'* as performed on the pages of the journal, arguably demonstrate that articulating one's desire for another person shapes one's self-perception and subjectivity (V.5.). The self-writing practice also takes a tangible and material effect upon the subjects' gendered and sexual body. Symonds's *Memoirs* most articulately reveal that in some cases the price paid for producing certain kinds of 'truth' about oneself involves the loss of those forms of desire and pleasure engendered by gender/sexual ambiguities (e.g. esp. VI.3. and VI.4).

The variety of textual material explored in the thesis accentuates how essentially important it is to investigate the differences in the ways and forms of interaction between the subjects and the technologies of power. This constitutes an important methodological and conceptual accompaniment to the concept of 'the matrix of intelligibility'. Where the latter is used to draw attention to the normative conditions and to the "constitutive constraints" inscribed into the process of becoming a subject, the discussion of the concrete textual material and of the varied consequences of telling/revealing one's (queer) desires, and/or "truthful identity," should have emphasised the diversity of its constitutive, as well as constraining effects. Discussing the variations and nuances in the ways the subject-positions are being articulated, prevents the normative prescriptions of gender/sexuality to be understood as essentialised, universal forces. It is precisely the concern with gender as an analytical category that enforces sensitivity to differentiated effects of technologies of sex and gender. The thesis accentuates the divergences in the practices of the self in order to demonstrate the differing modalities of

the individual self-fashioning strategies, as well as to highlight the concrete power mechanisms that produce the individual subjects.

Furthermore, the thesis attempts to highlight 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[7], 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. Here, the thesis makes a claim about the insufficiency of adding the 'queer' subjects to historical and literary projects. It is essential to scrutinize the epistemology of sex and the forms of subjectivity it produces. However, 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. If, from differing perspectives, 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.

The knowledge that makes 'Michael Field' and *Edith* Ellis recognisable as 'lesbians', Symonds as a 'homosexual', and Ellis as a 'heterosexual' or – for that matter – as a 'suppressed homosexual,' is in fact performative in as much as it produces what it names (cf. VI.2.1. and VI.2.2). Indeed, it seems to merely reduplicate what we have already known before critically engaging the texts. In this sense, this knowledge is – to use Sedgwick's words – "paranoid," and produces its own interpretative frameworks based upon anticipation and faith in exposure, in 'finding out.'[8] For instance, attaching a 'lesbian' identity to Edith Cooper and Katherine Bradley, would in a sense equal a claim of seeing through the protective mask of the 'Michael Field' pseudonym. This act of disclosure, hence, would correspond to the

[7] Cf. Scott, Joan Wallach. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. 28-53.
[8] Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading." She criticises this interpretative approach as based upon the "hermeneutics of suspicion."

logic that requires the fast link between the self and sex. Further and quite paradoxically, it would silence certain locations of their 'lesbian desire' activated precisely by the moments of ambivalence and overlappings in the *We* (cf. V.1.2, V.3.).

The greatest challenge to queer methodology relies therefore in creating a platform for "reparative readings" open to surprises,[9] and divorced from the 'competence' of heteronormativity.[10] To subvert the logic of exclusionary relation on the one hand, and to resist the clearly cut and unambiguous categories of (sexual and/or gender) identity on the other, is a matter of necessity to the queer project as "only the decentered subject is available to desire."[11] Of course, it might be difficult to conceive of such a decentered subject-position on the face of the concrete technologies of power that subject the individuals to a system of governance based upon the defined sex/uality and gender. However, the critical investigation of the individual texts aspires to draw a map open to surprisingly complicated networks of relations of sexual and emotional identifications. These might suggest some possibilities of "reparative readings."

[9] Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading," 22.
[10] Butler dubs the logic of mutually exclusive binary oppositions (both 'heterosexuality'/'homosexuality' and 'man'/'woman'), the "logic of repudiation," and argues that it represents one of the greatest impasses to any critical engagement with sexuality. Queer studies focus on systematically disputing this logic.
Cf. Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* London, New York: Routledge, 1993; and Butler, Judith. Critically Queer." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*. 1.1. (1993): 17-32.
[11] Butler, *Bodies,* 113.

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IX. Resumé

IX.1. Czech Resumé

Poznej sám sebe: napiš o sobě!

Konstruování sexuální a genderové identity na přelomu devatenáctého a dvacátého století

Disertace se zabývá procesem utváření sexuální a genderové identity na přelomu 19. a 20. století, přičemž její hlavní těžiště leží ve studiu sítě „technologií moci," které nutí subjekt k definování vlastní identity skrze jeden partikulární aspekt vlastní osobnosti – zde skrze touhu, sexualitu. Konstruování identity je tedy pojímáno ve vztahu k tzv. technologii sexu. Zároveň ovšem práce vychází z předpokladu, že účinky moci, které přiřazují subjekty k sexu, jsou genderově určené a rozlišené, a že navíc obdobné technologie moci přiřazují subjekty k normativním genderovým kategoriím. Formování sexuální identity nelze tedy sledovat bez vztahu k genderu a naopak.

Autobiografické texty jsou analyzovány jako text performativní povahy, v jejichž rámci se identita utváří a formuje. To znamená, že texty je možno nazírat jako produkt interakce subjektu s mocí. Na druhé straně ovšem „performativní" hledisko umožňuje sledovat neurčenost a flexibilitu formulování vlastní identity. V tomto smyslu se i normativní působení „technologie moci" jeví jako nikdy neuzavřené a nedefinitivní a poskytující prostor pro „subverzivní reartikulace".

Předkládaná disertační práce je z velké části založena na studiu a analýze rukopisných nepublikovaných materiálů, případně materiálů, které byly publikovány pouze částečně a v notně upravené podobě. Jedná se o autobiografii Johna Addingtona Symondse (1840-1893) *Memoirs*, deníky 'Michaela Fielda' [literární pseudonym Katherine Bradley (1849-1914) a Edith Cooper (1862-1913)] *Works and Days* a autobiografii Havelocka Ellise (1859-1939).

IX. Resumé

IX.2. English Resumé

Know Yourself: Write Yourself!
Queer Subjects and the Constructions of Gender and Sexual Identity at the Turn of the 19th Century

The thesis examines the normative structures that shape and pre-determine the construction of the gender and sexual identities at the turn of the nineteenth century in the British context. The focus of the study is the critical investigation of the binary – heteronormative – logic that governs the formation of these identities. The concern with gender intelligibility (and the "matrix of 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.

Bringing together three diverse case studies – based upon the autobiographic texts of John Addington Symonds (1840-93), 'Michael Field' [Katherine Bradley (1849-1914) and Edith Cooper (1862-1913)], and Havelock Ellis (1859-1939) – the thesis explores the strategies of (gendered) self-fashioning from various perspectives. Importantly, the choice of the respective sources reflects the concern with some central issues that need to be taken into account when considering the modern constructions of sexual and gender identities. Firstly, the individual chapters reveal that the construction of the modern non-heterosexual identities has to be considered with close attention to differing discursive positions, social and other locations of the subjects. Secondly, these different subject positions will be discussed in relation to issues of epistemic privilege, as well as symbolic violence performed upon the so-called 'queers.' Thirdly, the sources present insights into different discursive constructs of gender/sexual identity, thus presenting a differentiated perspective into operations of power. Further, the thesis endeavours to provide an optics that would not minimize or even eliminate the ambivalences and contradictions manifested in the self-writing practice, or in the work of one' s identity. On the contrary, it has been my ambition to accentuate these moments and to discuss them in relation to the cultural construction of (gender and/or sexual) identity. Lastly, the study of the original manuscripts enhances the horizon of the thesis as it includes critical confrontation with the editorial practice and/or with the common line of interpretation of the respective source. In this way, the thesis hopes to provide space for considering issues of epistemology of sex and the relations perceived between sex/uality and subjectivity on a broader level of the cultural constructions of intelligibility.