



PROJECT MUSE®

---

Reconsidering the Emergence of the Gay Novel in English and  
German

Wilper, James

Published by Purdue University Press



Wilper, James.

Reconsidering the Emergence of the Gay Novel in English and German.

West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2016.

Project MUSE., <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.

➔ For additional information about this book  
<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/47991>

## Chapter 2

### Transcending Greek Love

Although it was not the nineteenth century's first Greek love apologia, or defense of love between men, Oscar Wilde's testimony during his second trial deployed classical philosophy in perhaps the most public invocation of this discursive strategy. He refuted that "the love that dare not speak its name" was base sensuality or unnatural vice; he elevated it rather to a higher, purer plane:

"The love that dare not speak its name" in this century is such a great affection of an elder for a younger man as there was between David and Jonathan, such as Plato made the very basis of his philosophy, and such as you find in the sonnets of Michelangelo and Shakespeare. It is that deep, spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect. It dictates and pervades great works of art like those of Shakespeare and Michelangelo, and those two letters of mine, such as they are. It is in this century misunderstood, so much misunderstood that it may be described as the "Love that dare not speak its name," and on account of it I am placed where I am now. It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection. There is nothing unnatural about it. It is intellectual, and it repeatedly exists between an elder and a younger man, when the elder has intellect, and the younger man has all the joy, hope, and glamour of life before him. That it should be so, the world does not understand. The world mocks at it and sometimes puts one in the pillory for it. (Hyde, *Trials* 201)

Noble and high minded, chaste, pure, and solely intellectual, this love is elevated and sanitized, thereby differentiating it from the Sin of Sodom. Wilde establishes the historicity of same-sex desire through the biblical love of David and Jonathan, through Plato's philosophy, and the verse of two cultural titans like Michelangelo and Shakespeare. It is this effort which is the central pillar of Greek love justification. In this defense is a statement of identity. Against the older language of sin and crime, writes Linda Dowling, Wilde deployed "a new and powerful vocabulary of personal identity, a language of mind, sensibility, and emotion, of inward and in-

tellectual relations" (*Hellenism and Homosexuality* 2) which saw same-sex desires as "belong[ing] to human experience in its fullest historicity and cultural density" (134). Wilde constructed an identity for himself, drawing upon history and philosophy, employing models from the past to structure his relations.

The courtroom defense speech gives an idea of the core beliefs about love between men inherent in nineteenth-century Hellenism. The ideals come directly from Plato's writings, from the *Phaedrus* and especially from the *Symposium*, in particular the speech of Pausanias. First, this love "is intellectual, and it repeatedly exists between an elder and a younger man, where the elder has intellect and the younger man has all the joy, hope, and glamor of life before him" (Hyde, *Trials* 201). In other words, it is intellectual or pedagogic. This is the "gratification" in exchange for being made "wise and good" described by Pausanias in the *Symposium* (Plato 19). Often these relationships were conducted between men of disparate ages, between adult men and teenage boys, but in some cases the age difference was negligible. Greek love could justify romances between upper- and lower-year students, as the relationship between Clive and Maurice in E. M. Forster's *Maurice* demonstrates. Second, "It is that deep, spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect. . . . It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection" (201). It was believed that love between males is a higher form of love, surpassing the love between a man and a woman: "heavenly" love opposed to "common" love (Plato, *Symposium* 13–14). And third, "There is nothing unnatural about it [love between men]" (201). Because the Socrates that Plato presents in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* believes that love is most likely to remain "heavenly" if sublimated and channeled toward philosophic ends, in the nineteenth century Greek love apologists often endorsed relations between males that valued the spiritual dimensions of love, while disavowing the sensual. At best, this conception of Greek love had to remain an unattainable ideal toward which its followers could strive; but at its worst it was merely a sham, a way of clothing sex with male prostitutes in the garb of intellectual mentorship.

This chapter examines the ways in which Thomas Mann's novella *Der Tod in Venedig* and John Henry Mackay's *Die Bücher der namenlosen Liebe* (in particular the novella *Fenny Skaller: Ein Leben der namenlosen Liebe* and the novel *Der Puppenjunge*) question and challenge the notions which form the justificatory and defensive backbone of much late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Greek love apologia. Writing on Mann's novella, Robert Tobin discusses the influence of contemporary discourses of Greek love in his essay "Queering Thomas Mann's *Tod in Venedig*" (2012). Tobin argues that a medico-psychiatric understanding of same-sex subjectivity comes into conflict with a "masculinist," Greek-inspired concept like that envisioned by Hans Blüher, Benedict Friedländer, Adolf Brand, and other writers and theorists associated with the homophile association the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* (Community of the Exceptional). This tension plays out between the protagonist and narrator: "Aschenbach sides with the masculinist approach, while the narrator is a liberal emancipationist" (69). Below, I argue that Aschenbach does not voice the masculinist understanding expounded in the writings of these contem-

porary German writers, but rather the older transnational discourses of Greek love, similar to that which Wilde invokes in his courtroom defense. The issue that shows that Aschenbach is meant to be part of this tradition, that which differentiates him from the German masculinist movement, is the anxiety about sex. This angst, which features in the ancient sources and which is compounded in the writings of many of the nineteenth-century inheritors of this philosophy, assumes pride of place in the novella.

Like *Der Tod in Venedig*, Mackay's books of the nameless love depict intergenerational same-sex desire and love. The former work of fiction portrays a man's struggle to reconcile his desire for a beautiful youth with his respectable, bourgeois identity. He calls upon Greek love to justify this desire to himself, but Platonic philosophy proves to be insufficient. Mackay's fiction appears to partake of a similar vision of love. J. Edgar Bauer writes that, in his nameless love writings, Mackay "basically pleaded for a renaissance of pederastic Eros under the auspices of past Greek ideals," finding there "the needed paradigms for reinventing the future" ("On the Nameless Love and Infinite Sexualities" 6). However, I argue here that Mackay's fiction unambiguously rejects invoking Greek love to defend or justify intergenerational same-sex desire and relationships, which also distinguishes his writings from "masculinist" approaches. Thus a factor which differentiates Mackay's writings from Mann's is Mackay's further-reaching rejection of Greek justificatory strategies. This chapter investigates the responses to Greek love incorporated into the two German works of fiction, in particular their depiction of intergenerational same-sex love. This chapter considers aspects of Plato's *Symposium*, especially the anxiety surrounding the issue of sexual relations between men and then discusses the revived form of Greek love which developed in Germany before it engages in a literary analyses of the responses to Greek love ideals in Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig* and Mackay's in *Der Puppenjunge*.

## Plato's Anxieties

The contemporary sources for information on homosexual relations in the Greek world are diverse: literary references, historical narratives, philosophical writings, and visual arts all feature age-structured relations between males. One of the single most important figures for the inheritors of this legacy was Plato (428–348 BCE), and one of the most important texts was his *Symposium* (c. 385–380 BCE) (see Evangelista, "Lovers and Philosophers at Once" 231). In this philosophic text, each of seven speakers at a symposium, or drinking party, hosted by the poet Agathon, must give an encomium in praise of love. Pausanias, the second speaker, in his speech distinguishes between two loves: "we've been told simply to praise Love. If Love were a single thing, this would be fine, but in fact it isn't. . . . Since there are two kinds of Aphrodite, there must also be two Loves" (Plato 13). The older goddess, and by extension form of love, is the daughter of Uranus and has no mother, she is Uranian or Heavenly Aphrodite; whereas the younger is born of Zeus and Dione and is called

Pandemic or Common (13). Common love "is the kind of love that inferior people feel," and men led by this love "are attracted to women as much as boys, and to bodies rather than minds" (14). In contrast to this wanton and purely physical attraction, there is Heavenly love, which springs from Uranian Aphrodite, "who has nothing of the female in her but only maleness" (14). Men who are inspired by Heavenly love "are drawn toward the male, feeling affection for what is naturally more vigorous and intelligent" and are "attracted to boys only when they start to have developed intelligence, and this happens around the time that they begin to grow a beard" (14). For the ancient Greeks, who kept no record of age in years, the appearance of facial hair indicated when a boy transitioned from childhood to manhood and thus became a citizen (see Davidson, *The Greeks and Greek Love* 71–82). James Davidson writes that the customs structuring pederastic relations differed from city-state to city-state, and in Athens were particularly complex (*The Greeks and Greek Love* 68–98).

The lover precariously treads a fine line between the noble and disgraceful. Pausanias attempts to clear up the ambiguity between proper and vile love by laying out in his speech exactly under which circumstances a relationship could be consummated without bringing dishonor upon the lover or the beloved: "the lover is justified in any service he performs for the boyfriend who gratifies him, and . . . the boyfriend is justified in any favor he does for someone who is making him wise and good. Also the lover must be able to develop the boyfriend's understanding and virtue in general, and the boyfriend must want to acquire education and wisdom in general. When all these conditions are met, then and then alone it is right for a boyfriend to gratify his lover, but not otherwise" (19). The exchange of teaching for "gratification" is characterized as heavenly love, which "is a source of great value to the city and to individuals, because it forces the lover to pay attention to his own virtue and the boyfriend to do the same" (20). These relationships were, in the younger of the two men, intended to cultivate *aretē*, which Thorkil Vanggaard describes as an embodiment of all manly virtues (*Phallós* 34–35) and Beert C. Verstraete and Vernon Provencal translate as "human excellence" (Introduction 10–11). James Davidson notes that particularly the passage quoted above "is the main basis for the popular notion that Greek love was all about education, the lovers acting like adult volunteers in a youth club, helping teenagers to develop useful skills and knowledge of the world" (115–16). In his "reappraisal" of Greek love, Davidson is notably skeptical of this interpretation, suggesting that while this may have been an ideal or goal, it is doubtful that the Greeks lived up to it.

Further complicating the model of same-sex relations which the Victorian readers could derive from the *Symposium* is that, according to Plato's Socrates, relations between an older and a younger man are most likely to be uplifting, to be heavenly love, if they remain unconsummated. In his speech, the philosopher recounts his dialogue with a woman named Diotima who introduces the concept of spiritual begetting to the text. This is a refinement of Pausanias's distinction between "heavenly" and "common" love described above. Rather than education in exchange for sexual gratification, for her, heavenly love is based on the exchange of ideas.

Whereas common love between men and women can bring forth children, heavenly love between men produces offspring of a more undying nature: ideas. "People like that have a much closer partnership with each other and a stronger bond of friendship than parents have, because the children of their partnership are more beautiful and more immortal" (*Symposium* 58). Diotima removes the sexual element from these relations. This is why she argues that "he should regard the beauty of minds as more valuable than that of the body, so that, if someone has goodness of mind even if he has little of the bloom of beauty, he will be content with him, and will love and care for him, and give birth to the kinds of discourse that help young men to become better" (60). Regardless whether the Greeks or they themselves could achieve heavenly love, this ideal represented for the inheritors of this text an invaluable counter to church teaching in the Christian era. It is in this speech that the intellectual and pedagogic character of pederastic relations is founded, the notion that Greek love is a higher and purer form of love.

Plato's mistrust of the body would spell the end of the usefulness of his erotic philosophy toward the end of the nineteenth century. He goes to great lengths to differentiate heavenly love, which is good, noble, and benefits the practitioners as well as the polis, from common love, which seeks merely satiation of its appetite. This painstaking care with which "beneficial" desire is demarcated from "destructive" betrays the anxiety the Greeks felt about love and sex between males. Michel Foucault regards the large amount of Greek literature about loving boys as proof that this desire was a problem for the Greeks. "Because if there were no problem, they would speak of this kind of love in the same terms as love between men and women. The problem was that they couldn't accept that a young boy who was supposed to become a free citizen could be dominated and used as an object of someone's pleasure" ("On the Genealogy of Ethics" 344–45). For the Greeks, the woman or slave could be used as an object of pleasure. In Plato, physical pleasure and the reciprocity of friendship were seen as mutually exclusive. "The Greek ethics of pleasure is linked to a virile society, to dissymmetry, the exclusion of the other" (346). The views Plato puts forth in his dialogues regarding love between males not only is marked by angst but is often contradictory. Robert Allen argues that there are two Platos: "the homosexuality-friendly Plato of the *Symposium*, who values same-sex love as the bottom rung on the great ladder that leads up to God, and the homophobic Plato of the *Laws*, who forbade homosexuality for the first time in the history of Greek thought" (*The Classical Origins of Modern Homophobia* 33). Theodore Jennings, on the other hand, draws three categories into which Plato's texts fall. First are those dialogues that take love between men for granted, such as *Charmides*, *Lysis*, and many of the speeches in the *Symposium*. Second are those that understand that a man might fall in love with a beautiful youth but insist that this love be sublimated toward some philosophic end, the contemplation of beauty, education, or spiritual begetting, for instance. This group includes Socrates's speeches in the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*. And the third is the *Laws*, which rejects love between men (*Plato or Paul?* 15). Thomas Hubbard writes that in the *Laws*, his final work, Plato "drops all

pretence of defending pederasty as chaste love or as a metaphor for union with ideal Beauty: instead it is dismissed as an unnecessary and 'unnatural' pleasure" ("Pederasty and Democracy" 10).

The anxiety and contradictions present in the source texts are compounded in their later invocations, namely, whether or not these relations could be intellectual as well as physical was a site of struggle for the inheritors of this legacy. Men who drew on this discourse were presented with one of two options: either sublimation of physical desire, which often resulted in a consuming struggle, or hypocrisy. A literary example of the former, of the disavowal or repression of the physical aspects of love between men, can be found in Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's *Die Liebe des Plato* (The Love of Plato, 1870) which draws on Pausanias's distinction between heavenly and common love and Diotima's concept of spiritual begetting. Oscar Wilde's speech could be considered an example of the latter, of hypocrisy. His speech before the court in the Old Bailey "was a theatrical *tour de force*, but did not stand up to the testimony of boy prostitutes," writes Rictor Norton. "Wilde of course lied throughout much of his trials, and this particular line of defence was perhaps hypocritical and well rehearsed" (*The Myth of the Modern Homosexual* 222). This point of contention would be the impetus for movements that departed from Greek love.

## The Love of the "Eigenen"

A new strand of Greek love took shape in Germany around the turn of the twentieth century, which is often termed the "masculinist" movement and which, for the purposes of this study, I refer to as "Eigene" love. This term was a neologism which Adolf Brand (1874–1945) coined for the title of his homosexual journal, *Der Eigene: Ein Blatt für männliche Kultur*, whose first edition appeared in 1896 and which was published intermittently until 1932. The publication spawned an organization, founded in 1902 by Brand and Benedict Friedländer (1866–1908), the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* (GdE) (Keilson-Lauritz, *Die Geschichte der eigenen Geschichte* 61–142). The term "Eigene" loses something when translated into English as "exceptional," or sometimes "self-owner." Marita Keilson-Lauritz explains that these options are one-sided; the advantage of the nomenclature lies in the equivocal nature of this unconventional German term (74). The German movement justified and defended same-sex desire by historicizing and deploying Greek love to map out relations between males. They did not disavow the physical manifestations of this love, but cautioned against excesses. Friedländer writes in *Renaissance des Eros Uranios* that the goal of their movement was "the revival of Hellenic *Lieblingminne* and its social recognition; however with the greatest possible avoidance of all sexual excesses" ("die Wiederbelebung der hellenischen Lieblingminne und deren sociale Anerkennung; jedoch mit möglichster Vermeidung aller sexueller Ausschreitungen"; *Renaissance des Eros Uranios* 259). Unlike English-speaking writers and theorists, who were reinventing Greek love at nearly the same time (which is explored further in the following chapter), Brand, Friedländer, and Kupffer remained true to the Greeks

particularly in one aspect: they wrote of not intragenerational male same-sex love, but intergenerational love, or pederasty. The German *Eigenen* conceived of relations between males as between an older and a younger one. To describe these relations, however, they did not employ the term "pederasty" (*Päderastie*)—or its synonym in German "Knabenliebe." Friedländer instead uses the term "Lieblingminne" to describe the "courtly love" (*Minne*) of a man for a male favorite. This term was coined by Elisar von Kupffer (1872–1942) in his essay "Die Ethisch-politische Bedeutung der Lieblingminne" ("The Ethical-Political Significance of *Lieblingminne*," 1899), which became the introduction to his literary anthology dedicated to the love of friends and love of a man for a youth that appeared the following year. Friedländer writes: "Under *Lieblingminne* is understood in particular close friendships between youths and still more the relations between men of unequal ages" ("Unter Lieblingminne sind insbesondere die engen Jugendfreundschaften und noch mehr die Bündnisse zwischen Männern ungleichen Alters zu verstehen"; *Renaissance des Eros Uranios* 259). Although there are two types of love described here, the one on which special emphasis is placed is that "between men of unequal ages."

The *Eigenen* viewed the ability to love homosexually as not confined to a particular species of human, but rather as a universal drive. Friedländer insists that this natural instinct forms the cement of sociability. "So-called homosexuality is only an extreme special case of a fully normal and necessary, psychological and biological characteristic of the human" ("Die sogenannte Homosexualität [ist] nur ein extremer Specialfall einer an sich völlig normalen und nothwendigen, physiologischen und biologischen Eigenschaft des Menschen"; *Renaissance des Eros Uranios* xiii). This understanding of male-male desire is also the foundation of the writings of Hans Blüher (1888–1955), in particular the third of his three-volume of his history of the *Wandervogelbewegung* (youth movement), *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen* (The German Youth Movement as an Erotic Phenomenon, 1912), and his most famous work, the two-volume *Die Erotik der männlichen Gesellschaft* (The Erotic in Manly Society), published in 1917 and 1919 (see Bruns, *Politik des Eros* 107–66). Friedländer contends that denying these normal and necessary drives is at the root of much modern social degeneration. This renaissance of Uranian Eros was imagined to be a panacea for social problems plaguing Wilhelmine German society. James Steakley, in his seminal history of the German homosexual liberation movements, posits that many social and community initiatives in Germany that formed during the late nineteenth century were responses to the rapid and turbulent industrialization and urbanization which followed the foundation of the German Empire in 1871. This rebirth of pederasty was part of this larger societal phenomenon, the *Lebensreformbewegungen* (life-reform movements), which promised to reverse a perceived decline of modern German culture. Steakley cites examples of other social movements, like the *Wandervogelbewegung*, *Freikörperkultur* (nudist movement), and various nutritional movements, such as vegetarianism (*The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany* 26–27, 44). Using ancient practices and conceptions of love as a model, Germany could return



to what Friedländer and other leading figures of the *Eigenen* argue would be more authentic love relations and thereby could undo the damage done to society by shoring up the social order.

## Mentorship, Spiritual Begetting, and Mania

Greek love serves a dual purpose in *Der Tod in Venedig*. On the one hand, as Ignace Feuerlicht argues, it makes same-sex desire distant, impersonal, and inoffensive. On the other hand, it is an important tool which enables Aschenbach to conceptualize and to give voice to his desire and to imagine a path that a relationship between him and his beloved boy might follow. Ultimately, though, Greek love disintegrates. Its models are shown to constrain and thwart same-sex desire rather than liberate it. Reconciling pedagogy and Eros becomes a Sisyphean effort. Its intellectual conceits prove to be baseless. Thus, what results is that while Greek love operates on the one level, serving to distance the reader from material deemed morally objectionable, on the other level, these discourses and values fail. With regard to the latter, the novella challenges Greek love, positing the insufficiency of this philosophy in the modern world.

On the first of these levels, "For the reader, who otherwise might have been shocked by the 'perversion,'" writes Feuerlicht, the utilization of Greek love discourse meant that the novella's action was "unfolding in a time and place where 'such things' were 'beautiful'" ("Thomas Mann and Homoeroticism" 93). The "Greek backdrop" was "a help and refuge for Mann" as he transformed his experience of being captivated by the beauty of a Polish youth into fiction "and as the author who had to think of the public's reaction to that experience" (94). Feuerlicht suggests that Mann's use of Hellenism is indirectly explained in his essay on the poet August von Platen (1796–1835). In the essay, which was published in 1930, eighteen years after *Der Tod in Venedig*, Mann writes that Platen's homosexuality was evident in his verse even to his contemporaries: "His only disguise lay in his choice of the traditional forms in which he poured himself out; they gave a frame of tradition to his kind of passion. The Persian ghazal, the Renaissance sonnet, the Pindaric ode, all of them knew the youth-cult and gave it literary legitimacy" (*Essays of Three Decades* 264–65) ("Seine einzige Maskerade lag in der Wahl der überlieferten lyrischen Formen, in denen er sich ausströmte und die auch seiner Gefühlsart eine Überlieferung boten: Das persische Ghasel, das Renaissancesonnet, die Pindar'sche Ode kannten den Knabekult und verliehen ihm literarische Legitimität"; *Gesammelte Werke* 9: 275). The poet channeled depictions of love between males into established poetic motifs, thereby granting it "literary legitimacy," allowing the subject matter to evade censure. "Thus the erotic feelings in Platen's works could be viewed by his readers as traditional, impersonal, and inoffensive" (Feuerlicht 94). But Greek love in Mann's novella is not limited to this role. Additionally, Greek love facilitates the protagonist's conceptualization of his desire, how he gives voice to his attraction, and the models through which he can imagine love relations between two males.

After he is first confronted with his object of desire, Aschenbach deploys his storehouse of art-historical knowledge to give voice to his appreciation of the boy's beauty. Tadzio is a living work of art: "With astonishment Aschenbach noticed that the boy was entirely beautiful. His countenance, pale and gracefully reserved, was surrounded by ringlets of honey-colored hair, and with its straight nose, its enchanting mouth, its expression of sweet and divine gravity, it recalled Greek sculpture of the noblest period" (219) ("Mit Erstaunen bemerkte Aschenbach, daß der Knabe vollkommen schön war. Sein Antlitz, bleich und anmutig verschlossen, von honigfarbenem Haar umringelt, mit der gerade abfallenden Nase, dem lieblichen Munde, dem Ausdruck von holdem und göttlichem Ernst, erinnerte an griechische Bildwerke aus edelster Zeit"; 91). Greek art is Aschenbach's first port of call: he sees Tadzio's beauty in artistic terms, feigning an impersonal interest, cloaking his "ecstasy" ("Entzücken") and "rapture" ("Hingerissenheit") in the "cool professional approval" ("fachmännisch kühlen Billigung") of an artist confronted with a masterpiece (223; 96). Ritchie Robertson describes how in general *Der Tod in Venedig* "continues and comments on the long-standing German fascination with Greece and Greek sculpture" and in particular explores the unstable relation between art and desire ("Classicism and Its Pitfalls" 96–97). Regarding Aschenbach's unconscious decision to conceptualize physical desire in terms of appreciation for artistic beauty, Robertson asks, "Does art sublimate desire, or release it?" (97). This strategy of channeling his attraction through these concepts depersonalizes the desire, thereby rendering homoeroticism unthreatening to his persona as the revered, dignified *Dichter*. As the narrative progresses, his culture not only gives him the vocabulary with which he can voice his attraction, but it provides him with models through which he can imagine a relationship with the boy.

In the mind of the protagonist, a mentorship develops between him and Tadzio. The first instance of these imagined dialogues occurs after he watches another boy named Jaschu kiss Tadzio. Quoting Xenophon's *Memorabilia of Socrates* (c. 371 BCE), Aschenbach jestingly contemplates giving Jaschu the same advice that Socrates gives to Critobulus after he had kissed Alcibiades's son (Deuse, "Griechisches in *Der Tod in Venedig*" 44). "Aschenbach was tempted to shake his finger at him. 'But I counsel you, Critobulus,' he thought with a smile, 'to go travelling for a year! You will need that much time at least before you are cured'" (226) ("Aschenbach war versucht, ihm mit dem Finger zu drohen. 'Dir aber rat ich, Kritobulos,' dachte er lächelnd, 'geh ein Jahr auf Reisen! Denn soviel brauchst du mindestens Zeit zur Genesung'"; 100–01). Over the ensuing days he follows and watches the boy, and the more he watches, the more his Socratic fantasy grows. "And a delightful vision came to him, spun from the sea's murmur and the glittering sunlight. It was the old plane tree not far from the walls of Athens. . . . But on the grass . . . there reclined two men . . . one elderly and one young, one ugly and one beautiful, the wise beside the desirable. And Socrates, wooing him with witty compliments and jests, was instructing Phaedrus on desire and virtue" (238) ("Und aus Meerrausch und Sonnenglast spann sich ihm ein reizendes Bild. Es war die alte

Platane unfern den Mauern Athens. . . . Auf dem Rasen aber . . . lagerten zwei . . . ein Ältlicher und ein Junger, ein Häßlicher und ein Schöner, der Weise beim Liebenswürdigen. Und unter Artigkeiten und geistreich werbenden Scherzen belehrte Sokrates den Phaidros über Sehnsucht und Tugend"; 117). Within the Platonic paradigm, Tadzio promises to be a source of rejuvenation for Aschenbach's art. "The boy's beauty is the writer's inspiration," writes T. J. Reed (*Making and Unmaking a Master* 56). "The *Phaedrus* talks of 'spiritual begetting' as something analogous to, but higher than, the production of physical offspring. Homosexual love might lead men to write poetry, to pursue philosophy, or to act bravely in a common cause" (55). The rejuvenating effect attributed to the boy's beauty is particularly appealing to Aschenbach who, as the reader learns in the first chapter, takes no pleasure in his writing and fears that the emotion he enslaved to reach the heights of honor and respectability is now avenging itself. "Could it be that the enslaved emotion was now avenging itself by deserting him, by refusing from now on to bear up his art on its wings, by taking with it all his joy in words, all his appetite for the beauty of form?" (201) ("Rächte sich nun also die geknechtete Empfindung, indem sie ihn verließ, indem sie seine Kunst fürder zu tragen und zu beflügeln sich weigerte und alle Lust, alles Entzücken an der Form und am Ausdruck mit sich hinwegnahm?"; 67). He longs to work in the presence of his beloved boy whose beauty he sees as an embodiment of the divine and a medium to divine inspiration, and Aschenbach does have this opportunity. "Never had he felt the joy of the word more sweetly, never had he known so clearly that Eros dwells in language, as during those perilously precious hours in which, seated at his rough table under the awning, in full view of his idol and with the music of his voice in his ears, he shaped upon Tadzio's beauty his brief essay—that page and a half of exquisite prose which with its limpid nobility and vibrant controlled passion was soon to win the admiration of many" (239) ("Nie hatte er die Lust des Wortes süßer empfunden, nie so gewußt, daß Eros im Worte sei, wie während der gefährlich köstlichen Stunden, in denen er, an seinem rohen Tische unter dem Schattentuch, im Angesicht des Idols und die Musik seiner Stimme im Ohr, nach Tadzios Schönheit seine kleine Abhandlung,—jene anderthalb Seiten erlesener Prosa formte, deren Lauterkeit, Adel und schwingende Gefühlsspannung binnen kurzem die Bewunderung vieler erregen sollte"; 118–19). This page-and-a-half essay is an "act of intercourse and begetting between a mind and a body" (240) ("zeugender Verkehr des Geistes mit einem Körper"; 119), but it is the only artistic fruit Aschenbach's love bears, and the writing thereof seems nearly indecent to the author after the intoxication wears off. "It is as well that the world knows only a fine piece of work and not also its origins" (239) ("Es ist sicher gut, daß die Welt nur das schöne Werk, nicht auch seine Ursprünge"; 119). Once his reserve reasserts itself, Aschenbach is ashamed of his dalliance, as if he had been involved in "some kind of debauch" (240) ("einer Ausschweifung"; 119). His passion for the beloved boy does not ultimately lead to "spiritual begetting"; instead it leads him to stalk the lad and his family maniacally through Venice (see R. Robertson, "Classicism and Its Pitfalls" 102).

As his obsession grows ever more intense, Aschenbach pauses and asks: "Where is this leading me! he would reflect in consternation" (249) ("Auf welchen Wegen! dachte er dann mit Bestürzung"; 131). He justifies his love and his actions to himself through Greek love discourse. "Had it not been highly honoured by the most valiant of peoples, indeed had he not read that in their cities it had flourished by inspiring valorous deeds? Numerous warrior-heroes of olden times had willingly borne its yoke, for there was no kind of abasement that could be reckoned as such if the god had imposed it; and actions that would have been castigated as signs of cowardice had their motives been different, such as falling to the ground in supplication, desperate pleas and slavish demeanour—these were accounted no disgrace to a lover, but rather won him still greater praise" (249–50) ("Hatte er nicht bei den tapfersten Völkern vorzüglich in Ansehen gestanden, ja, hieß es nicht, daß er durch Tapferkeit in ihren Städten geblüht habe? Zahlreiche Kriegshelden der Vorzeit hatten willig sein Joch getragen, denn gar keine Erniedrigung galt, die der Gott verhängte, und Taten, die als Merkmale der Feigheit wären gescholten worden, wenn sie um anderer Zwecke willen geschehen wären: Fußfälle, Schwüre, inständige Bitten und sklavisches Wesen, solche gereichten dem Liebenden nicht zur Schande, sondern er erntete vielmehr noch Lob dafür"; 132). There we have a case of Mannian irony directed at Greek love justification. Potentially any undignified action, any exotic extravagance of feeling, can be justified as manly in this paradigm that the protagonist has set up for himself. "Signs of cowardice" ("Merkmale der Feigheit")—such as refusing to inform Tadzio's mother that a quarantine of the city is imminent—as well as "falling to the ground in supplication, desperate pleas and slavish demeanour" ("Fußfälle, Schwüre, inständige Bitten und sklavisches Wesen") are accorded honor, indeed they are praiseworthy, because they are performed out of love. Any otherwise unsavory act or behavior can be vindicated via the Greeks. Aschenbach's love reveals itself to be common love, base sensuality which one feels for boys or women, according to Pausanias, and not sexless, intellectual heavenly love. The portrayal is ironic in that it brings into question the overwrought nature of this distinction. As the narrative progresses, the philosophic justification for his attraction assumes an ever diminishing importance until the final monologue, where the protagonist repudiates the assumed mentor role.

The intellectual and pedagogic aims of the intergenerational liaison were seen as crucial to the apologia of Greek love, and for Aschenbach his attraction to Tadzio, and the relationship that he fantasizes exists between the two, are rooted in this tradition. And yet, in the final Platonic monologue, Aschenbach gives up pretensions to reconciling Eros with philosophic mentorship. After stalking Tadzio through the dark and dirty alleyways of Venice, he collapses in a rubbish-strewn square and eats overripe strawberries to quench his "no longer endurable thirst" (264) ("nicht mehr erträgliche[n] Durst"; 152). This thirst is for sexual gratification rather than for water because he chooses strawberries, which, as Ellis Shookman points out, was an established literary trope for succumbing to the temptation of sexual pleasure (*A Reference Guide* 114). Symbolically Aschenbach consummates his love for Tadzio, and as

these forbidden fruit are overripe and most likely tainted, this act may also indicate an intentional self-infection with cholera (see Binion, *Sounding the Classics* 139; see also Kitcher, *Deaths in Venice* 125–29 for an alternate interpretation). As he sits in the square, his intellect warped by the "strange dream-logic" ("seltsam[e] Traumlogik") of his degraded mental and physical condition, he imagines for the last time that he converses with his beloved Phaedrus/Tadzio. At this point in the narrative, Aschenbach rejects the pedagogic aims and ideals of Greek love *paiederastia* first in his specific case and then in general. He admits defeat in mentoring his beloved: "For Beauty, Phaedrus, mark well! only Beauty is at one and the same time divine and visible, and so it is indeed the sensuous lover's path, little Phaedrus, it is the artist's path to the spirit. . . . For I must tell you that we artists cannot tread the path of Beauty without Eros keeping company with us and appointing himself as our guide . . . . Do you see now perhaps why we writers can be neither wise nor dignified? That we necessarily go astray, necessarily remain dissolute emotional adventurers?" (265) ("Denn die Schönheit, Phaidros, merke das wohl, nur die Schönheit ist göttlich und sichtbar zugleich, und so ist sie denn also des Sinnlichen Weg, ist, kleiner Phaidros, der Weg des Künstlers zum Geiste. . . . Denn du mußt wissen, daß wir Dichter den Weg der Schönheit nicht gehen können, ohne daß Eros sich zugesellt und sich zum Führer aufwirft. . . . Siehst du nun wohl, daß wir Dichter nicht weise noch würdig sein können? Daß wir notwendig in die Irre gehen, notwendig liederlich und Abenteuerer des Gefühles bleiben?"; 153). And then he continues, calling into question whether any artist could assume the role of educator: he spurns "the use of art to educate the nation and its youth" ("Volks- und Jugenderziehung durch die Kunst"), characterizing it as "a reprehensible undertaking which should be forbidden by law" ("ein gewagtes, zu verbietendes Unternehmen"). "For how can one be fit to be an educator when one has been born with an incorrigible and natural tendency toward the abyss?" (265) ("Denn wie sollte wohl der zum Erzieher taugen, dem eine unverbesserliche und natürliche Richtung zum Abgrunde eingeboren ist?"; 153). The artist, in particular love-drunk Aschenbach, is unworthy of acting as a mentor because his artistic temperament and the nature of artistic production prevent him from being a wise and suitable educator. Caroline Picart explains that "The artist is the slave of desire and passion—such is his calling, his craving, and his shame, which renders him unfit to become a worthy citizen" (*Thomas Mann and Friedrich Nietzsche* 28). Reed writes that the final dialogue "draws the conclusion that there simply was no right path for [Aschenbach]. Whatever he did—and, more generally, whatever any artist does—must be tragically wrong in one direction or another" (*Making and Unmaking a Master* 66). The only lesson Aschenbach can teach is the impossibility of mentoring even an imagined pupil (70). Tobin points out that "While Socrates becomes more idealistic about love in the *Phaedrus*, Aschenbach becomes less so in *Der Tod in Venedig*. The narration presents Aschenbach's arguments in a way that rejects the Grecophilic understanding of male-male desire" ("Queering Thomas Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig*" 76–77). What Tobin considers, but neither Picart nor Reed do, is that by condemning mentorship and by extension the pedagogic defense of intergen-

erational same-sex love, the novella is toppling the central buttress to the Greek love apologia, thereby indicating a major rupture with contemporary discourses of Greek love. The novella works simultaneously within and against the legacy of Hellenism applied to love between men. Aschenbach reasons that he, and the artist in general, is an unfit educator, owing to his incorrigible, inborn "sympathy with the abyss" (207) ("Sympathie mit dem Abgrund"; 74); on the other hand, the text intimates that the artist should follow the path of Eros to love and create art, to be an adventurer of emotions, free from the moral imperatives to educate, to be a guardian of values and morals, and to be a wise and worthy citizen. That the text is willing to call this discourse into question signals a significant shift in thinking toward Greek love; as a conduit for the expression of same-sex love in the modern era it is insufficient, constraining, and ends in tragic disappointment.

Dramatizing the shortcomings of Greek love ideals and models is the chief means through which the novella breaks with literary Hellenism. Absent from the text's incorporation of Greek love discourses is the justification that same-sex love is a higher and purer form of love because of its educative and intellectual components. Later in his career, Mann would address this issue again in his essay "August von Platen," in which he states unequivocally that same-sex passion is a love like any other. Platen was a key figure whom Mann referenced in the creation of Aschenbach (Feuerlicht, "Thomas Mann and Homoeroticism" 93–94; R. Robertson, "Classicism and Its Pitfalls" 96; Tobin, "Queering" 77–78; see also Henry, "August Graf von Platen und *Der Tod in Venedig*" 27–50; and Kitcher, *Deaths in Venice* 75–82). Mann was fascinated by the relationship between Platen's poetry and his sexuality, and the poet's death inspired events in the novella. When a cholera epidemic hit Italy, Platen fled Naples, but he had already contracted the disease and he died a few days later in Sicily (Aldrich, *Seduction of the Mediterranean* 62). In the essay, Mann considers the role the poet's homosexuality played in his artistic production: "Platen realized that his homosexual constitution was his profoundest impulse, and then again did not realize it. He suggests it, in the sense of a sacred subjection to the beautiful, as the purity and consecration of the poet to the highest he knows, in love as well" (*Essays of Three Decades* 264) ("Platen selbst hat diesen seinen tiefsten Impuls [seine exklusiv homoerotische Anlage] gekannt und auch wieder nicht gekannt: er deutet ihn als heilige Unterjochung durch das Schöne, als Dichterreinheit, Dichterweihe zum Höheren auch in der Liebe"; *Gesammelte Werke* 9: 274). Mann asserts that Platen was correct in recognizing his homosexuality as his deepest impulse in the creation of his art. But his belief that same-sex love is a higher form of love is only a "half-understanding" ("halbe[s] Verständnis"). Mann writes that Platen believed that "his love was in some sense higher, instead of a love like anybody else's, only—at least in his time—with smaller prospects of happiness" (264) ("seine Liebe durchaus keine höhere, sondern eine Liebe war wie jede andere, nur—wenigstens zu seiner Zeit—mit selteneren Glücksmöglichkeiten"; 274).

It is problematic to read the novella in light of a later essay, nonetheless there is a certain affinity here deserves to be mentioned. Aschenbach's love for Tadzio,

although not a higher form of love, as many nineteenth-century and contemporary Greek love enthusiasts were wont to claim, possesses the power to bear his art upon its wings. In this way, Mann juxtaposes Platen and Aschenbach significantly. Platen's recognition of his Eros, despite it being a half-understanding, enriches his poetry and imbues it with beauty and vitality. Platen merges classicism with "softness, soaringness, lyric enchantment, music, that magic breath and bloom, those accents of inspiration" ("Weichheit, Beschwingtheit, Liedzauber, Musik, jener Hauch und Farbestaub, jener Tonfall magischer Innigkeit"; 260) to craft poetry which is "truly lyric" ("eigentlich lyrisch"; 269). Aschenbach's art has brought him national acclaim and a title of nobility, but it brings him neither joy nor pleasure. His art is an exhausting struggle, a battle which in the course of the narrative he loses. Thus, a half-understanding is better than none at all. By the time Aschenbach begins to delight in sensuality, he lacks the ability to regulate his pleasure and it consumes him. The novella does not condemn this desire, as Hannelore Mundt argues, only the extremes to which it leads (*Understanding Thomas Mann* 93). The novella partakes of the understanding of same-sex love that, because it is a love like any other, is a wellspring of artistic inspiration. This claim is lent credence by the fact that same-sex desire was a source of inspiration in the production of the novella. Like his protagonist, Mann encountered and was captivated by the beauty of a Polish youth while on holiday in Venice in 1911. Although the fictional author is unable to utilize his desire toward significant creative production, the novella proves that Mann was able to do so (see Heilbut, *Thomas Mann: Eros and Literature* 247; Kurzke, *Thomas Mann: Das Leben als Kunstwerk* 194). While utilizing the literary legacy of Greek love to grant the novella's portrayal of intergenerational same-sex love legitimacy, *Der Tod in Venedig* undermines the foundations upon which this legacy is set. The novella achieves this by thematizing the shortcomings of *paiderastia*, especially the intellectual and pedagogic basis of these relations.

### Intergenerational, but Not Greek, Love

The first book of the nameless love, "Die namenlose Liebe: Ein Bekenntniss," begins with an evocation of ancient Greece: "Once, more than two thousand years ago, it was one of the roots from which the in so many ways unrivalled culture of a people, the most thirsty for beauty and drunk on beauty that the world has ever known, drew its best nourishment. Health, strength and greatness blossomed for the Greeks from the love of a man for a youth, of a youth for a man, a love prized by its thinkers and sung by its poets" (53) ("Einst, vor mehr als zweimal Tausend Jahren, war sie eine der Wurzeln, aus denen die in so Vielem unerreichte Kultur des schönheitsdurstigsten und schönheitstrunkensten Volkes, das die Erde bisher getragen, ihre beste Nahrung sog. Gesundheit, Kraft und Größe erblühte den Griechen aus ihrer, von ihren Denkern gepriesenen, von ihren Dichtern besungenen Liebe des Mannes zum Jüngling, des Jüngling zum Manne"; 73). Despite the contemporary moral and legal persecution of this love, writes Mackay, "a Greek inheritance ineradicably lives

on" (56) ("ein hellenisches Erbteil . . . unausrottbar weiterlebt"; 78). Yet, ironically, it does not live on in *Die Bücher der namenlosen Liebe*. Mackay's fiction confronts some aspects of the Greek love legacy, but then moves beyond these concerns to depict the joys and sufferings involved in actual love relationships between men and teenage boys in the modern world. There are three key aspects of Mackay's fiction which challenge nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Greek love discourses—the texts reject (1) the ideal that sexual desire should be repressed or sublimated, (2) that these relations are pedagogic, and (3) that, because they are conducted between men and are intellectual, they are higher and purer than love between men and women.

The one aspect of the nameless love which does bears a great deal of similarity to ancient erotic practices, as well as some nineteenth-century interpretations of them, is that the nameless love is between men and youths. Mackay's fiction fits into an ephhebophilic tradition, operating within the established Greek love literary conventions by depicting intergenerational love with its associated celebration of adolescent beauty. In the books of the nameless love, all the same-sex love relations portrayed are intergenerational: "always an older man and a younger" (*Hustler* 49) ("immer ein Älterer und ein Jüngerer"; *Puppenjunge* 53). In *Fenny Skaller*, none of the boys are "under fourteen, none over seventeen" (*Books* 180) ("unter vierzehn, keines über siebzehn"; *Bücher* 316); they belong to "the sweet and mysterious, the inexplicable ripening age" (180) ("dem süßen und geheimnißvollen, dem unerklärlichen Alter des Reifens"; 316). This applies to Günther as well, and his beauty is indeed celebrated. The two central characters share a bedroom in a hotel and, while the lad slumbers, Graff has his first opportunity to take his beauty in fully. "How beautiful he was! How divinely beautiful! Never had he believed that a human being, that he could be so beautiful" (122) ("Wie schön er war!—Wie göttlich schön!—Nie hatte [Graff] geglaubt, daß ein Mensch, daß er so schön sein könne!"; 142). The narration of the youth's physical beauty, channeled, as it is, through Graff's perception, rhapsodically catalogs his attributes. "How beautiful were his legs! How tender his knees and hips! How well-proportioned his still-so-childlike breast! How undeveloped still his slim shoulders, those still-so-thin arms! And how beautiful were those hands, those slender hands, the only part of this body he had come to know, those hands that he had held in his own and which he loved almost more than that face!" (122) ("Wie schön waren diese Beine!—Wie zart ihre Gelenke und Hüften!—Wie ebenmäßig die noch so kindliche Brust!—Wie unentwickelt noch die schmalen Schultern, diese noch so dünnen Arme!—Und wie schön waren diese Hände, diese schlanken Hände, die allein von diesem Körper er erst kannte, diese Hände, die er in den seinen gehalten und die er liebte, wie kaum das Gesicht!"; 142). The adjective "tender" ("zart") appears here and recurs in other descriptions of Günther. As an object of desire, he is described by Graff in terms of his immature characteristics: his tender knees and hips, his childlike chest, undeveloped shoulders, and thin arms. The most striking fact about Günther's physical characterization is that there is nothing particularly masculine about him. Such characterizations are also found in the writings of contemporaries, such as André Gide, Stefan George, and Constantine Cavafy, as well as



Mann. Günther and Tazio contrast interestingly. The adjective "zart" is often used to describe both, although Günther's tenderness differs from that of Tazio's. The latter is tender in terms of fragility, weakness, decline, and death (central themes to Mann's novella), whereas the former's tenderness represents amelioration; Günther is like a blossoming rose. Both lads are possessors of divine beauty, but Tazio's beauty communicates an eternal quality as opposed to the transience of Günther's "short springtime of his life" (295) ("kurze Frühling seines Lebens"; 340). Like his youthful beauty, desire of an "ephebe" is transitory by nature. "For this love was appointed only a modest span, and eternal it was not. It swore no oath and they did not bind themselves in a bond for life. They came and they went, and if friendship developed and the friendship remained, that was good" (*Books* 199) ("Denn dieser seiner Liebe war nur eine Spanne beschieden, und ewig war sie nicht. Sie schwor keine Treue und sie band sich nicht zu einem Bunde für das Leben. Sie kam und sie ging, und wenn Freundschaft blieb, so war es gut"; *Bücher* 347). It is the age, not the individual young man, which Skaller and Graff love. "It is the age which you love, Hermann. . . . Would you love him if he had a mustache?" (290) ("Es ist das Alter, welches Du liebst, Hermann. . . . Würdest Du ihn lieben, wenn er einen Schnurrbart hätte?"; 334–45). Graff's spiritual "mother," the only other character in the book to understand him fully, makes it clear to him that although he might have remained friends with Günther, he could love him or find him sexually attractive only as an adolescent. For the Greeks, explains James Davidson, facial hair marks entry into manhood, it is nature's signal that passivity in a homosexual relationship is no longer acceptable (*The Greeks and Greek Love* 80–81). The mustache fulfills a comparable function in the novel. Hence, in terms of the desire the nameless love fiction depicts, there are marked similarities with Greek love and contemporary interpretations of it.

However, the nameless love books reject the philosophical framework of the Hellenism. The first and foremost of the ideals which Mackay's fiction rejects is the one that insists that so-called "heavenly love" between men and youths must remain chaste. In *Der Puppenjunge* especially, male-male sexuality is freed from many of the complications entailed in the sublimation of physical desire. Unlike Aschenbach or Clive, Graff consummates his relationship with his beloved. Mackay's fiction takes the physical manifestations of love for granted in a way that other works of fiction of the era do not. Under the relatively liberal Weimar Republic, greater openness in depictions of homosexual love in fiction was possible, and thus *Der Puppenjunge* was not subject to the strict censorship that even the earlier nameless love writings faced. Graff, unaware that the boy he has fallen in love with is a *Strichjunge* (hustler or renter), initially resists making an amorous advance. Fighting his urge causes him no mean amount of internal conflict. This behavior, inexplicable to Günther, drives the boy away. Eventually Graff comes to the conclusion that his efforts at chastity are nothing but "self-torture" ("Selbstquälereien") and he spurns the notion that love can or ought to remain unconsummated, the "love of souls": "Why did people talk and twaddle about the love of souls! It did not exist. It was the sentiment of weak, eccentric, sick people! The healthy person wanted and had to possess what he

loved, not in unstable dreams of longing, but in the warm reality of life. Everything . . . that he felt for him had been nothing other than this one burning wish: to possess him!" (171–72) ("Was redeten und faselten die Menschen von einer Liebe der Seelen? Es gab sie nicht. Es war das Empfinden schwacher, überspannter, kranker Menschen!—Der gesunde wollte und mußte besitzen, was er liebte: nicht in haltlosen Träumen der Sehnsucht, sondern in der warmen Wirklichkeit des Lebens. Alles . . . was er für ihn gefühlt, war Nichts Anderes gewesen, als dieser eine glühende Wunsch: ihn zu besitzen!"); 200). Graff voices a concept that is intimated in *Der Tod in Venedig* with Aschenbach and is communicated in *Maurice* through the decline of Clive's appearance and his estate, Penge: the association between suppression of physical desire and illness, and consequently between sexual fulfillment and health. This challenges the moralistic position that thwarting sexual desire is an admirable undertaking. Even before Freud challenged conventions by asserting that sex was a healthy and necessary basic drive, the Austrian psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing in his magnum opus, *Psychopathia Sexualis* (first edition, 1886), writes that pederasts "who sometimes satisfy themselves with platonic love" do so at "the risk however, of becoming nervous (neurasthenic) and insane as a result of this enforced abstinence" (231) ("Es gibt feinfühlig und willensstarke Individuen, die ihre Triebe zu beherrschen im Stande sind, freilich mit der Gefahr, durch diese erzwungene Abstinenz nervensiech (neurasthenisch) und gemüthskrank zu werden"; 249). Mackay's characters are reunited and they have intercourse; afterward Günther tells him: "You could have had that long ago, if—you had not been so dumb!" (179) ("Das hättest Du längst haben können, wenn—Du nicht so dumm gewesen wärest!"); 208).

The pedagogic aims and justification of the intergenerational liaison are negated in *Puppenjunge* in the same forthright manner. Earlier in the narrative, after Graff has seen Günther in the street, but not yet met him, he imagines a friend whom he could love and who would love him in return: "A young friend, a quite young friend, still impressionable, before whom the world lay as a closed book full of suspense and mystery, whose title only was known, whose first pages he wanted to turn and read with him, explaining to him what he still did not yet understand and was not yet able to understand" (58) ("Ein junger Freund, ein ganz junger, empfänglicher noch, vor dem die Welt noch lag wie ein verschlossenes, geheimnisvoll-spannendes Buch; wie ein Buch, von dem er erst das Titelblatt kannte; dessen erste Blätter er mit ihm zusammen wenden und lesen wollte, ihm deutend, was er noch nicht verstand und noch nicht verstehen konnte"; 64). Thus at the outset at least, he intends to mentor the boy he loves, to assist him in gaining *Bildung* (education and socialization) and transition from boyhood to manhood. Graff at this point in the narrative imagines that he would reject the idea of a relationship based upon goods for services rendered (58; 64). As the relationship between Graff and Günther develops in the narrative, this proves not to be the case. Theirs is less about the education and socialization of the young man than it is about the emotional and sexual needs of the older partner. Günther may appreciate his friendship, this can be assumed but is never made explicit, but it is clear that the sexual encounters are not mutually satisfying. "Disgust?

No, he felt no disgust really, but also no pleasure—he simply went along. In the end, the main thing in all this was only the money" (51) ("Ekel?—Nein, er empfand eigentlich keinen Ekel. Aber auch kein Vergnügen. Er machte eben mit. Schließlich war bei dem Allen doch nur das Geld die Hauptsache"; 55). In this regard Günther is typical of interwar male prostitutes in Berlin. Frank Rector explains that "Many of the boys and young men of post-World War I Germany were not *homosexual*, they were simply *sexual*" (*The Nazi Extermination of Homosexuals* 22). And Graff's efforts to better the lad's lot appear half-hearted at best, while class differences and their disparate educational levels act as an insurmountable barrier to any pretence at mentorship. This is not only true for this particular case, but the text demonstrates this in regard to any attempt at educating the *Strichjungen*. "If a decent man came among them, one with good intentions toward one of them . . . that opportunity too was wasted until the gentleman, discouraged by his lethargy, dropped him again. They all returned back here again . . . semiconscious by day, living it up at night" (252) ("War einmal ein anständiger Mensch darunter, der es gut mit einem von ihnen [den Strichjungen] meinte . . . so ließ man sich auch Das gefallen, bis 'der Herr' ihn, entmutigt durch diese Lethargie, wieder fallen ließ. Alle kehrten sie . . . zurück, verdämmern die Tage, durchjubelnd die Nächte"; 291). Thus, according to the novel's portrayal, blame lies with the boys, their dissolute behavior, their lack of ambition. *Fenny Skaller* goes so far as to characterize love for adolescent boys as a curse because of the lack of empathy of adolescent boys: "It was a horrible age, and a curse to love it" (*Books* 184) ("Es war ein schreckliches Alter, und ein Fluch, es zu lieben"; *Bücher* 322). For this reason pedagogy is not merely unnecessary, but impossible. "This age was confused and uncertain, impulsive and lacking in insight. They say it must be taught. But there was nothing of the teacher in him. He could only be its friend, no more, no less. He could only understand it" (*Books* 183) ("Verworren und schwankend war es, dies Alter, triebhaft und einsichtslos. Sie sagten, man müsse es erziehen. Aber in ihm war Nichts von einem Erzieher. Er konnte nur sein Freund sein, nicht mehr, nicht weniger. Er konnte es nur verstehen"; 321). Skaller can offer his young friends understanding and love, but not mentorship, not education. The reader can infer that the same is true in Graff's case. The rejection of pedagogy in *Der Puppenjunge* and *Fenny Skaller* is twofold: overtly mentorship is impossible because adolescence simply will not have it, and implicitly this justification and defense of this love is superfluous. The implication is that love does not need pedagogy to justify it, playing no more of a role in these relations than it would play in heterosexual love or any other form of love.

From the beginning of the narrative, Graff understands that his love needs no explanation: "It was a love just like any other love" (158) ("Es war eine Liebe wie jede andere Liebe"; 184). And toward the novel's climax, after Graff has been released from prison for violating Paragraph 175, this is reiterated to him by his "mother" who assures him: "It is a love, like every other" (289) ("Es ist eine Liebe, wie jede andere"; 333). This is the novel's only defense of same-sex love, which recurs throughout the Sagitta writings. Same-sex love needs no justification, explanation, or excuse any

more than cross-sex love does. Owing to this bold stance, Mackay's fiction differs from that of many of his contemporaries, including writers associated with Adolf Brand's journal, *Der Eigene*, and the homophile association *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*. Mackay was in some respects sympathetic to this movement, but not a part of it. His writings regularly appeared in *Der Eigene*, and he materially contributed to the philosophy of individual anarchism which was central to the *Eigenen* movement by rediscovering and circulating Max Stirner's *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (*The Ego and His Own*, 1844) (Keilson-Lauritz, *Die Geschichte der eigenen Geschichte* 66–67; Ivory, "The Urning and His Own" 338). At the same time, Mackay charts his own course toward the liberation of male-male love in his writings. He never formally joined the GdE and rejected the association's right-wing nationalistic leanings and anti-Semitism (J. Bauer, "On the Nameless Love and Infinite Sexualities" 8), and, crucially, he avoids turning to the past for answers for love between males in the modern era. Although the love he depicts in his fiction is intergenerational, it is distinct from the understanding of love between a man and a youth, "hellenische Lieblingminne," theorized by Friedländer in *Renaissance des Eros Uranios* and by Kupffer in the introduction to his anthology. Indeed, Mackay is critical of key aspects of their path toward liberation. In the introduction to *Die Bücher der namenlosen Liebe*, Mackay criticizes Greek love apologia, and thereby subtly distinguishes his vision of same-sex love from that of the GdE. He identifies the positioning of love between males as a higher, purer form of love as one of the failings of homosexual liberation efforts up to that point: "In reaction to a persecution that had increased until it was unbearable, it has been sought to represent this love as special, as 'nobler and better.' It is not. This love is a love like any other love, not better, but also not worse" (44–45) ("Man hat, im Umschlag gegen eine bis zur Unerträglichkeit gesteigerte Verfolgung, versucht, diese Liebe als eine besondere hinzustellen, als eine 'edlere und bessere.' Das ist sie nicht. Diese Liebe ist eine Liebe, wie jede andere Liebe, nicht besser, aber auch nicht schlechter"; 62). In elevating love between men, one must necessarily denigrate love between man and woman; Mackay rejects this strategy. "The fight *for* [same-sex love] should never degenerate into a fight *against* another" (45) ("Der Kampf für [gleichgeschlechtliche Liebe] sollte nie ausarten in einen Kampf gegen eine andere"; 62). He opposes an effort that "sought to promote the freedom of the love of a man at women's expense" ("versucht, die Freiheit der Liebe des Mannes zu fordern auf Kosten der Frau"). Mackay cautions against emancipation efforts that alienate the heterosexual mainstream and could make the enemies of today into the irreconcilable enemies of tomorrow (45; 62). The introduction does not openly name the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*, but by censuring the misogynist and retrogressive movement toward liberation, it leaves little doubt from which stances Mackay distances himself. Mackay's fiction implicitly opposes the masculinist movement by rejecting their retrogressive vision of universal same-sex desire structured as Hellenic *Lieblingminne*. Instead, love between an older and a younger man is a love like any other, it is not nobler or better than the love shared between a man and a woman, it is not educative, and certainly is not the key to the renewal of German culture.

Mackay's *Sagitta* texts develop and advocate an alternate vision of love between men: one that neither surrenders itself to the hands of the scientists, immersing itself in their taxonomy and thought structures, nor indulges in an anachronistic fantasy of a rebirth of pre- and early modern conceptions of love, the renaissance of Hellenic *Lieblingminne*. Greek love is briefly invoked in *Fenny Skaller*: the nameless love is identified as "that between the masculine man, whose masculine inclination was for the masculine youth—the ancient love of the Greeks" (*Books* 148) ("den zwischen dem männlichen Manne, dessen männliche Neigung der männlichen Jugend galt—die alte Liebe der Hellenen"; *Bücher* 263); but this serves another purpose. The key word in that passage is "manly," which indicates the importance of tropes of masculinity in the nameless love vision and identity (which is discussed in greater depth in chapter 7). Greek love does not provide in *Der Puppenjunge*, or the other books of the nameless love, the historical validation or the philosophical justification of love between men that it had effected in earlier texts; instead Mackay's fiction validates same-sex desire and love through its insistence that it is a love like any other, and thus requires no defense or justification outside itself.

## Conclusion

Greek love had been in the nineteenth century an indispensable counter to church teachings and state persecution. But the repudiation of the body which is found in the source texts, such as in particular speeches of Plato's *Symposium* and in the *Phaedrus* (and which is communicated directly in the *Laws*), spelled the end of the primacy of this discourse in homosexual identity formation, in homosexual politics, and in homosexual literature. Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig* dramatizes the Western European legacy of Hellenism and specifically calls into question many of the conceits of this philosophy. The novella discounts many of the cornerstones of the Greek love defense: that this desire is educative and intellectual, that physical desire should be sublimated, and that this love consequently is higher and purer than so-called "common" love. Mackay's *Der Puppenjunge* too responds to legacies of Hellenism as well as "Eigene love," the revived Greek love particular to the German cultural context, but progresses further than the former literary texts in throwing off Greek loves. And one way that it does this is by fully affirming the sexual component to intergenerational love. The anxiety about sexual consummation of same-sex love embedded in Plato, which is problematized in *Der Tod in Venedig* as a longing for sexual relations that unhinges the protagonist, Gustav von Aschenbach, is cast off in *Der Puppenjunge* when Hermann Graff sleeps with Günther.