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Reconsidering the Emergence of the Gay Novel in English and
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Wilper, James

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Chapter 4

The Highest Being Drawn Down into Decadence

The German poet Stefan George lamented the fact that in *Der Tod in Venedig* "the highest is drawn down into the realm of decadence" (Mann, *Letters* 96) ("sei das Höchste in die Sphäre des Verfalls hinabgezogen"; Mann, *Briefe* 179). Of course, the problem that George actually had with the novella was that it did nothing to bring "the highest"—George believed the love between an older and younger man to be the highest form of love—out of the realm of decadence, to which many commentators had already consigned it for some time. Mann's seemed yet another voice that either entirely or partially considered same-sex sexuality to be indicative of degeneration.

Although *Der Tod in Venedig* was written after Freud's *Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie* (*Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, 1905) began to effect a shift in thinking about same-sex sexuality, how influential Freud's writings on homosexuality were on the novella is a matter of debate (see Schmidt, "Childhood, Pedagogy, and Psychoanalysis" 301–02, note 8; see also Wysling, "Thomas Manns Rezeption der Psychoanalyse" 201–22; Symington, "The Eruption of the Other" 127–41; Widmaier-Haag, *Es war das Lächeln des Narziss*; Dierks, "Thomas Mann und die Tiefenpsychologie" 284–300). Mann, who knew Freud personally, admitted his debt to the psychoanalyst in an interview in 1925 with the Italian newspaper *La Stampa*, stating that *Der Tod in Venedig* "originated under the immediate influence of Freud. Without Freud, I would never have thought of treating this erotic motif, or would have certainly formed it differently" ("unter dem unmittelbaren Einfluss von Freud entstanden [ist]. Ich hätte ohne Freud niemals daran gedacht, dieses erotische Motiv zu behandeln, oder hätte es gewiß anders gestaltet"; qtd. in Dierks 284; Widmaier-Haag 156). Nevertheless, Hans Wysling suggests that this may have been a retrospective assessment on the author's part. "Regarding the treatment of the homoerotic motif, *Death in Venice* can have as much to do with Krafft-Ebing as with the *Three Essays*." ("*Der Tod in Venedig* kann, was das homoerotische Motiv angeht, ebensowohl mit Krafft-Ebing wie mit den *Drei Abhandlungen* zu tun haben"; Wysling 203). Freud, it is worth pointing out, writes against regarding homosexuality as the product of hereditary degeneration: "it may well be asked whether an attribution

of 'degeneracy' is of any value or adds anything to our knowledge" (Freud, *On Sexuality* 49) ("man [darf] fragen, welchen Nutzen und welchen neuen Inhalt das Urteil "Degeneration" überhaupt noch besitzt"; Freud, *Drei Abhandlungen* 17). In the *Drei Abhandlungen*, he points out several facts which to him indicate that homosexual men and women cannot be regarded as degenerate: the fact that homosexuality is found in people who in no other respects deviate from the "normal"; that it is found "in people whose efficiency is unimpaired, and who are indeed distinguished by specially high intellectual development and ethical culture" ("bei Personen, deren Leistungsfähigkeit nicht gestört ist, ja, die sich durch besonders hohe intellektuelle Entwicklung und ethische Kultur auszeichnen"); and that homosexuality is found "among the peoples of antiquity at the height of their civilization" (50) ("bei den alten Völkern auf der Höhe ihrer Kultur"; 18) as well as "among many savage and primitive races" (50) ("bei vielen wilden und primitiven Völkern"; 18). However, degeneration is an essential concept to the portrayal of same-sex desire in the novella. Hence it is evident that the text is still influenced by and comments upon degenerationist theories.

Of the two schools of sexological thought that influence the novella, the more evident is the degenerative theory which the Austrian psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing developed in the earlier editions of *Psychopathia Sexualis* (first edition, 1886). Aschenbach's passion for another male consumes him in a way parallel to the cholera epidemic which spreads through the canals of Venice. Moreover, Aschenbach is not the only "degenerate" homosexual in the novella. The old dandy on the ship to Venice is clearly a homosexual character, as is indicated by various markers such as dress, physical attributes, effeminacy, and the suggestive sign he gives Aschenbach as he disembarks from the ship. This character also displays physical signs of degeneration, namely, his bad teeth, weak voice, and pale skin. Tadzio too shows some of the physical characteristics associated with degeneration. Robert Tobin observes this link in his essay, "Queering Thomas Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig*": "They have yellowish, perhaps slightly sickly, skin, linking them to medical discourses of the time. Some of them are effeminate, going so far as to wear make-up, suggesting gender inversion. They seem to signal their membership in this group with a number of fashion markers—rakishly tilted and colorfully beribboned straw hats, red ties and sailor's outfits, for instance" (72). Mann does not, however, entirely denigrate same-sex sexuality by associating it with disease, argues Anna Katharina Schaffner, who charts the thematic influence of Krafft-Ebing's work in Mann's first novel *Buddenbrooks: Verfall einer Familie* (*Buddenbrooks: Decline of a Family*, 1901). She writes that in Mann's fictional framework, "sexual deviance and the signifiers of physical and psychological disintegration are associated with metaphysical, intellectual, and artistic progress; in fact they are the prerequisites for the advent of the artist" (*Modernism and Perversion* 175). Certainly this holds true for *Der Tod in Venedig*.

Psycho-degeneration was not the only school of sexological thought current at the time. Magnus Hirschfeld proposed from around the turn of the twentieth century

onwards the third- or intermediate-sex theory, which viewed homosexual men and women as belonging to a sex between the male and female sexes. Hirschfeld's theory may have worked some degree of influence on Mann's portrayal of Aschenbach. In the 2002 essay "Making Way for the Third Sex," Tobin discusses the influence of sexological theories of homosexuality, particularly Hirschfeld's third-sex theory, on Mann's early writings. Tobin asserts that the turn from the "liberal" medical understanding of same-sex desire that is manifest in the early short fiction to "antiliberal" historicizations of love between males as Greek love is nowhere "more apparent than in *Der Tod in Venedig*" (331). Although Aschenbach strives to clothe his desire for another male in the garb of classicism, argues Tobin, these efforts are "undercut by the novella" (331) and, "in the end, the late nineteenth-century view of homosexuality based on gender inversion . . . outlasts the anti-liberal" (333). Therefore, Tobin suggests that medical theories are still a powerful force in the novella. He develops his thesis further in the 2012 essay "Queering Thomas Mann's *Tod in Venedig*" where he argues that "the novella presents in Gustav von Aschenbach a powerful proponent of a Hellenizing, masculinist, anti-liberal and anti-medical understanding of sexuality" (79) which is in contrast to the voice of the "authorial narrator" whom Tobin identifies as a "liberal emancipationist" (72). "The narrator's narrative seems to undercut [Aschenbach's] approach with liberal presumptions of homosexual identity as a characteristic of a fixed, biological, pathological, and gender-inverted minority" (79). It is "the queer ironic structure of the novella," concludes Tobin that allows the novella to confront "the conflict between these two approaches dialectically" (79). Tobin presents two late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century cultural forces in conflict: sexology versus antisexology. What I wish to stress here is that "liberal sexology" was by no means a unified voice as Tobin would have it in his essays. It is understandable, though, that the strands of sexological thought represented by Krafft-Ebing and Hirschfeld are conflated since it seems that this is also the case in the novella. In the following, I tease out the differences and the ways they affect the portrayal of the characters. Aschenbach is an intermediary figure in terms of his gender and sexuality, but this intermediacy seems also to be in close alliance with decadence and degeneration, indeed perhaps is the root of this disintegration (or rather vice versa). Mackay, on the other hand, in his fiction recognized the distinct character of the two schools of sexological thought, but he condemned both, the one as physicians taking up the reins of societal power from priests and judges and the other as a misguided effort at liberating same-sex love by brokering a deal with the physicians.

John Henry Mackay's rejection of sexological models is well traversed terrain in the secondary literature on *Die Bücher der namenlosen Liebe* (see Fähnders, "Anarchism and Homosexuality in Wilhelmine Germany" 138–46; Kennedy, *Anarchist of Love*; Ivory, "The Urning and His Own" 334, 338, 345; J. Bauer, "On the Nameless Love and Infinite Sexualities" 1–26). James Jones writes that, in spite of the author's fervent opposition to sexological inquiry, the novella, *Fenny Skaller: Ein Leben der namenlosen Liebe*, unconsciously internalizes the thought structures of this field of knowledge. "While [Mackay's] stance against the 'Third Sex' theory would seem to

allow him to create a literary discourse ranging beyond the medical model, the very opposite proves to be the case. His works portray the homosexual character almost exclusively within a conception of him as Other and he is defined according to his love for other males" (*We of the Third Sex* 263). I concur with Jones's observation of the minoritizing understanding in *Fenny Skaller* and Mackay's other writings, but I disagree with the interpretation he draws from it. He argues that a conception of sexuality defining the individual is the influence of the medical model. Jones's conclusion might rest on an interpretation of the first volume of Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1976), one that views sexual subjectivity as the product of medical discourse. But, as David Halperin writes, such an interpretation—one that argues "that before the modern era sexual deviance could be predicated only of acts, not of persons or identities"—is as "inattentive to Foucault's text as it is heedless of European history" ("Forgetting Foucault" 97). Foucault, Halperin writes, is writing about legal/medical discourses, not about personal or private feelings. I suggest that the novella *Fenny Skaller* and the novel *Der Puppenjunge*, as well as other nameless love writings, prove that an essentialist, minoritizing view of same-sex sexuality need not be part and parcel of sexology. A significant debt to sexual science exists in *Fenny Skaller*, but it is in terms of reaction, not the unconscious adoption of the modes of thought of this system of knowledge. On the other hand, neither does Mackay fully embrace the vision touted by the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*. Members of the GdE imagined same-sex desire in universal terms, as a potential for all men, and conceived sexual desire as possessing fluidity. Mackay's nameless love is both minoritizing and essentialist, providing an alternative discourse to understanding and expressing same-sex love that neither surrenders itself to the hands of the scientists, nor indulges in an anachronistic Hellenic fantasy.

This chapter explores the influence of and reactions to sexology in the two German works of fiction. It first considers the development of two distinct schools of thought in German inquiry into same-sex sexuality, then examines Mann's incorporation of elements of degenerationist and third-sex conceptions, and finally Mackay's rejection of sexological thought, which is a central theme of the novella *Fenny Skaller* and is more subtly woven into the narrative of *Der Puppenjunge*.

The Inception of a Scientific Discipline

During the first decade of the twentieth century, the term "Sexualwissenschaft" ("sexual science" or "sexology") was coined to denote this diverse and rapidly expanding field of scientific inquiry which was most actively undertaken in Germany and Austria (see Hekma, "A Female Soul in a Male Body" 233, 544, note 37). The aim of this system of knowledge was to study the sexual life of the individual within a scientific context, and the forms which received, especially in the formative years of the discipline, the greatest attention were those that deviated from societal norms, such as same-sex sexuality (Irvine, *Disorders of Desire* 5; Roberts, "Medicine and the Making of a Sexual Body" 83; Bristow, *Sexuality* 13). The origins of medical

interest in same-sex sexuality can be traced to the mid-nineteenth century when some forensic physicians in France and Germany began to take note of cases of sodomy passing through the courts (Hekma 214–18). One of these physicians was Johann Ludwig Casper (1796–1864), who, in his essay titled "Über Nothzucht und Päderastie und deren Ermittlung seitens des Gerichtsarztes" (On Rape and Pederasty and Their Investigation on the Part of the Forensic Physician, 1852), was the first medical figure to consider the possibility that same-sex sexuality was an inborn phenomenon rather than an acquired vice (Beachy, "The German Invention of Homosexuality" 811). Other psychiatrists, including Wilhelm Griesinger (1817–1868) and Carl Westphal (1833–1890), made significant interventions in this area. The medical practitioner who would have the greatest influence in directing this school of thought, who would develop the idea of homosexuality as a marker of hereditary degeneration, was Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902). "In 1877," writes Chiara Beccalossi, "Richard von Krafft-Ebing published an important article in the *Archiv für Psychiatrie und Nervenkrankheiten* in which he explained *conträre Sexualempfindung* as a 'functional sign of degeneration.' This would go on to become the dominant psychiatric view of sexual inversion until the 1890s, paving the way for further sexological studies on various sexual deviations" (*Female Sexual Inversion* 6). His magnum opus was *Psychopathia Sexualis*, which ran through twelve editions in his lifetime. So pervasive was his influence that his was not merely a key voice in the medical discourse on sexual perversion, but also in the broader cultural discourse of decadence of the European fin de siècle.

Psychopathia Sexualis set the standard for all following studies of sexuality to imitate or react against. It is a compendious study, treating more than just homosexuality—although this is the nonnormative mode of sexuality which, particularly in later editions, received the most attention—but also sadism, masochism, fetishism, bestiality, necrophilia, and others. For Krafft-Ebing, aberrations come in two forms: they are either a form of "perversion" ("Perversion") or of "perversity" ("Perversität"); the former is a congenital form of sexual pathology, whereas the latter is a form of acquired vice (*Psychopathia Sexualis: A Medico-Legal Study* 53; *Psychopathia Sexualis: Eine medicinisch-gerichtliche Studie* 65). As Beccalossi describes, Krafft-Ebing regarded homosexuality as "a functional sign of degeneration" (223) ("ein funktionelles Degenerationszeichen"; 242) which is closely associated with other forms of degenerative mental conditions. "As a rule," writes Krafft-Ebing, these perversions are "constitutional, having its root in congenital conditions" (223) ("Diese ist in der Regel eine constitutionelle, in angeborenen Bedingungen wurzelnde"; 242). He argues that "In almost all cases where an examination of the physical and mental peculiarities of the ancestors and blood-relations has been possible, neuroses, psychoses, degenerative signs, etc., have been found in the families" (223–34) ("Fast in allen Fällen, die einer Erhebung der körperlich geistigen Zustände der Ascendenz und Blutsverwandschaft zugänglich waren, fanden sich Neurosen, Psychosen, Degenerationszeichen u.s.w. in den betreffenden Familien vor"; 243). Homosexuality, however, was not considered a hereditary condition, but the underlying

degeneration was, and it was likely to be compounded in succeeding generations. Yet there was a silver lining to these dark clouds of degeneration. Unlike his contemporary Max Nordau (1849–1923), in his work *Entartung* (*Degeneration*, 1892), Krafft-Ebing associates degeneration with artistic creativity. As Schaffner explains, homosexuality was in his view "cast as both socially destructive and culturally redemptive" (*Modernism and Perversion* 48). "Insanity of a degenerative character" (223) ("Irresein mit dem Charakter des degenerativen"; 243) is to be found side by side with "brilliant endowment in art, especially music, poetry, etc." (223) ("glänzende Begabung für schöne Künste, besonders Musik, Dichtkunst, u.s.w."; 243). Out of the sphere of decadence, disease, and disintegration springs art and beauty.

This psycho-degenerative theory may have been the dominant school of thought in fin-de-siècle sexology, but it was not uncontested. In the 1860s, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825–1895) developed in his writings, *Forschungen über das Räthsel der mann männlichen Liebe* (*Research into the Riddle of Man-Manly Love*), which were published between 1864 and 1880, the theory of the third sex, arguing that homosexual men and women were not mentally ill, but belonged to a third sex between the male and female sexes. This concept formed the foundation of Magnus Hirschfeld's theory of sexuality. Hirschfeld (1868–1935) referred to the third sex as naturally occurring sexual intermediaries ("sexuelle Zwischenstufen"). In contrast to Krafft-Ebing's more clinically neutral approach to the study of sexual variance, which sought to systematize and classify diverse forms of nonnormative sexual behavior, the writings of Ulrichs and the studies of Hirschfeld are driven by their efforts at penal reform. There was, however, much interaction between these two schools of thought on homosexuality. Ulrichs consulted Krafft-Ebing in 1869, and Krafft-Ebing admitted his debt to Ulrichs in a letter he wrote him in 1879 (Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren of Nature* 139), which Ulrichs published in his final treatise "Critische Pheile: Denkschrift über die Bestrafung der Urningsliebe" ("Critical Arrows: Memoir of the Punishment of Uranian Love," 1880). "From the day when you sent me your writings—I believe it was in 1866—I have turned my full attention to this phenomenon . . . ; and it was only the knowledge of your books which motivated me to study this highly important area" (*The Riddle of "Man-Manly" Love* 2: 685) ("Von dem Tage an, wo Sie mir—ich glaube, es war 1866—Ihre Schriften zusandten, habe ich meine volle Aufmerksamkeit der Erscheinung zugewendet . . . ; und die Kenntniß Ihrer Schriften allein war es, was mich veranlaßte zum Studium in diesem hochwichtigen Gebiet"; *Forschungen* 4: 92). Krafft-Ebing eventually came to support the cause of homosexual liberation by signing Hirschfeld's petition for the amendment of Paragraph 175 (Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren of Nature* 172–73). Thus, these two schools of thought, the two medical conceptions of homosexuality were not always and in every respect in conflict. In Krafft-Ebing's last piece of writing on homosexuality, which was published in the third edition of Hirschfeld's *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* in 1901, he spoke against his earlier degenerative hypothesis, arguing that same-sex desire was not only a fixed orientation, but should be viewed neither as vice nor even as sickness (Beachy, "The German Invention of Homosexuality" 819).

In the late nineteenth century, at a time when most viewed same-sex acts as sins or crimes, leaders in the medical community, such as Westphal and Krafft-Ebing, as well as Albert Moll (1862–1939) and Iwan Bloch (1872–1922), saw this behavior as a matter for special medical and psychological attention. For many of these researchers, homosexuality was an indicator of underlying moral, mental, and physical degeneration. The taint of depravity associated with sexual relations between men remained, only from then on it suggested a diseased body and mind rather than a corrupt soul. "Though the terminology and scientific scaffolding were new," writes David Greenberg, "the fundamental opposition between normal sex and abnormal paresthesias was largely based on traditional oppositions. Sex was perverse if reproduction was not its goal" (*The Construction of Homosexuality* 414). For the literary texts of the following decades, these medical conceptions remained central, with all four works responding to this epistemological rebranding. In *Puppenjunge*, as well as *Imre* and *Maurice*, this influence is in terms of clear reaction: consequently these texts assert the health, vitality, and manliness of their protagonists in order to negate degeneration. *Der Tod in Venedig*, in contrast, is informed to a significant extent by degenerationist theories, but not these theories alone. Both of the degenerationist and third-sex conceptualizations of homosexuality are influential in the shaping of Mann's treatment of Aschenbach's desire.

Homosexual Love in the Time of Cholera

An oft-cited letter to Carl Maria von Weber written in 1920 assists in locating the views that directed Mann's portrayal of homosexual desire in *Der Tod in Venedig*. In the letter, the author explains that the depiction of Aschenbach's passion for Tadzio was determined in large part by "the naturalistic bent of my generation . . . which compelled me to see the 'case' *also* in a pathological light" (*Letters* 94) ("die *naturalistische* . . . Einstellung meiner Generation, die mich zwang, den 'Fall' *auch* pathologisch zu sehen"; *Briefe* 177). Mann argues to Weber, a young poet, that pathology, degeneration, effeminacy, and gender intermediacy are not necessarily bound together with same-sex passions—for instance, he references Michelangelo, Frederick the Great, Winckelmann, Platen, and Stefan George as exemplars of those who are by no means "unmanly or feminine men" ("unmännliche oder weibische Männer"). Yet degeneracy is a factor, argues Mann, which experience teaches often is the root of same-sex sexuality. "Experience refutes the idea that an attraction to the same sex is necessarily allied to 'effeminacy.' Experience also teaches, to be sure, that degeneracy, hermaphroditism, intermediate creatures, in short, repulsively pathological elements may be and frequently are involved" (95) ("Die Erfahrung widerlegt die Behauptung, daß 'Effemination' dazu gehöre, damit es sich vom gleichen Geschlecht angezogen fühle. Sie lehrt freilich auch, daß Entartung, Zwittertum, Zwischenstufenwesen, kurz, abstoßend Pathologisches der Grund sein kann und häufig der Grund ist"; 178). The letter provides documentary evidence which serves to highlight the influence of medical, specifically degenerationist, theories of homosexuality on the

novella. In order to understand the novella's portrayal of homosexuality as pathology, it is essential to note that in the letter Mann views two distinct branches of sexological thought as one. On the one hand is the belief that homosexuality is resultant from degeneration and pathology, which was disseminated in the writings of a group of psychiatrists which includes Krafft-Ebing; and on the other hand is Hirschfeld's intermediate-sex theory. Homosexual men and women, argued Hirschfeld, formed a third or intermediate sex between the male and female sexes. Such intermediaries were not the product of physical and mental degeneration, but rather were naturally occurring anomalies. But this seems not to be the case for Aschenbach. He is a crossing of the bourgeois and the bohemian, of male and female; his intermediacy seems to underlie the degeneration which manifests itself in the form of homosexuality.

The letter to Weber also serves to show that Mann was uneasy allying homosexuality with degeneration and medicine. "Stefan George has said that in *Death in Venice* the highest is drawn down into the realm of decadence—and he is right; I did not pass unscathed through the naturalistic school. But disavowal, denunciation? No" (96) ("[Stefan] George hat zwar gesagt, im 'T. i. V.' sei das Höchste in die Sphäre des Verfalls hinabgezogen,—und er hat recht; nicht ungestraft bin ich durch die naturalistische Schule gegangen. Aber Verleugnung, Verunglimpfung? Nein"; 179). He insists it was not his intent to condemn, disavow, or vilify the all-consuming passion of a middle-aged man for a fourteen-year-old boy. After all, same-sex desire is the force that Mann recognized, writes Hans Valet, as "the most vital source of his creativity" ("Confession and Camouflage" 585). Yet, on the other hand, neither does the novella present an unequivocal defense of this passion. There are three ways in which sexological concepts influence the text. The first is in the metaphor which likens homosexuality to disease, in the overt parallel trajectories of the cholera epidemic which overtakes Venice and Aschenbach's homosexuality and overruns his reserve and consumes him. Second are the physical markers displayed by Tadzio that suggest that he, like the character Hanno Buddenbrook from Mann's debut novel, is the scion of a degenerate line. And the third, the least explicit, is the text's casting of the protagonist as a sexual intermediary.

In the first chapter, Aschenbach's encounter with the nemesis figure invokes in him distant visions of the jungles of the Ganges Delta: "a tropical swampland under a cloud-swollen sky, moist and lush and monstrous, a kind of primeval wilderness of islands, morasses and muddy alluvial channels" (199) ("ein tropisches Sumpfbgebiet unter dickdunstigem Himmel, feucht, üppig und ungeheuer, eine Art Urweltwildnis aus Inseln, Morästen und Schlamm führenden Wasserarmen"; 64). Later in the narrative, the English travel clerk describes a similar scene: "that wilderness of rank useless luxuriance, that primitive island jungle shunned by man, where tigers crouch in the bamboo thickets" (256) ("jener üppig-untauglichen, von Menschen gemiedenen Urwelt- und Inselwildnis, in deren Bambusdickichten der Tiger kauert"; 142). Aschenbach sees the breeding ground of the cholera epidemic to which Venice eventually succumbs (Reed, "Notes" 159). Also in the vision, there is lying in wait in this ancient tropical wilderness a "crouching tiger" ("kauernde[r] Tiger"), ready to spring from its

hiding place in a bamboo thicket. This tiger is not only a metaphor for the disease, but also for Aschenbach's latent sexuality, the confrontation with which makes "his heart throb with terror and mysterious longing" (200) ("sein Herz pochen vor Entsetzen und rätselhaftem Verlangen"; 65). He desires this confrontation, for it to be revealed to him, and yet he fears the consequences. After Aschenbach admits to himself his love for Tadzio at the climax of the fourth chapter (244; 126), at the beginning of the fifth the cholera outbreak becomes apparent to him and other hotel guests despite the Italian authorities' best efforts to cover the epidemic up. Does this visibility also extend to the protagonist's desire? The disease invokes in Aschenbach an irresistible urge to remain in Venice, similar to the mysterious longing that brought him to the city in the first place. "Thus Aschenbach felt an obscure sense of satisfaction at what was going on in the dirty alleyways of Venice, cloaked in official secrecy—this guilty secret of the city, which merged with his own innermost secret and which it was also so much in his own interests to protect" (246) ("So empfand Aschenbach eine dunkle Zufriedenheit über die obrigkeitlich bemäntelten Vorgänge in den schmutzigen Gäßchen Venedigs,—dieses schlimme Geheimnis der Stadt, das mit seinem eigensten Geheimnis verschmolz, und an dessen Bewahrung auch ihm so sehr gelegen war"; 128). As the city is increasingly consumed by plague, Aschenbach's desublimating homosexuality ever more rapidly consumes him; he takes pleasure in both. He frantically pursues Tadzio on his forays through the filthy narrow alleyways and infested canals of Venice, surrendering himself to the mania of his passion, to which he symbolically succumbs by eating soft overripe strawberries, an act which also infects him with the disease (see Kitcher, 125–91 for an alternate interpretation).

The allusion, the affinity between homosexuality and cholera, was not lost on the novella's early critics. As cited above, the poet Stefan George lamented that in the work "das Höchste" (George believed that pederastic Eros structured upon ancient Greek models was the "highest" form of love) was drawn down into "the realm of decadence" (*Letters* 96) ("die Sphäre des Verfalls"; *Briefe* 179). And Kurt Hiller, writing in an essay published in Hirschfeld's *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* in 1914, describes the novella's portrayal of homosexual desire, in which "it is diagnosed as a symptom of decline and described almost like cholera" ("[es] wird da als Verfallssymptom diagnostiziert und wird geschildert fast wie die Cholera"), as "an example of moral narrowness" ("ein Beispiel moralischer Enge") (qtd. in Shookman, *A Novella and Its Critics* 24–25). And this aspect of the novel has been discussed by contemporary Mann scholars. T. J. Reed notes the complicity between Aschenbach and the city of Venice: to the protagonist, the "cholera seems not a threat but a confirmation, an accomplice even, of his passion; the city has its own dark secret, and one kind of disorder winks at another" (*Making and Unmaking a Master* 61; see also Binion, *Sounding the Classics* 37–38). This "naturalistic bent" serves a necessary practical function. The ambivalent treatment, which considers the pathological side of the protagonist's case (thus reflecting the direction in which Krafft-Ebing and Moll had taken the fin-de-siècle study of sexual perversions) ensured against scandal. Reed writes that "there was no expression of moral outrage from the guardians

of public decency; there were repudiations of homosexuality, but no suggestion that Mann had been defending it. It was clearly assumed that a specialist in decadence had treated another aspect of it" ("Homosexuality and Taboo and *Der Tod in Venedig*" 130–31).

Second, the influence of degeneration theory shows up in the object of desire. Tadzio himself is "real" but also not entirely of this world. For Aschenbach, he is Hermes Psychagogos, who summons Aschenbach's soul to the eternal; his beauty is ethereal and is not associated with health and vitality (as in the case of the other objects of desire from the texts under discussion in this study) but is associated with illness and death. Aschenbach first notices this motif in connection with the youth's skin. "Was he in poor health? For his complexion was white as ivory against the dark gold of the surrounding curls" (220) ("War er leidend? Denn die Haut seines Gesichtes stach weiß wie Elfenbein gegen das goldige Dunkel der umrahmenden Locken ab"; 92). This contrast is at once aestheticized: his skin is like ivory against golden locks. This simile further objectifies the boy; he is an object of art, a living statue. Although this simile describes his poor health, it further reinforces his beauty. It serves to suggest the linkages between beauty and disease as well as love and death. Other factors indicate Tadzio's weakness and poor health; they occur twice in the narrative as Aschenbach notes Tadzio's teeth. "He had noticed that Tadzio's teeth were not as attractive as they might have been: rather jagged and pale, lacking the lustre of health and having that peculiar brittle transparency which is sometimes found in cases of anaemia. 'He's very delicate, he's sickly,' thought Aschenbach, 'he'll probably not live to grow old.' And he made no attempt to explain to himself a certain feeling of satisfaction or relief that accompanied this thought" (228) ("Er hatte jedoch bemerkt, daß Tadzios Zähne nicht recht erfreulich waren: etwas zackig und blaß, ohne den Schmelz der Gesundheit und von eigentümlich spröder Durchsichtigkeit, wie zuweilen bei Bleichsüchtigen. Er ist sehr zart, er ist kränklich, dachte Aschenbach. Er wird wahrscheinlich nicht alt werden. Und er verzichtete darauf, sich Rechenschaft von einem Gefühl der Genugtuung oder Beruhigung zu geben, das diesen Gedanken begleitete"; 103). And, towards the novella's climax, Aschenbach notes it again. "'He's sickly, he'll probably not live long,' he thought again, with that sober objectivity into which the drunken ecstasy of desire sometimes strangely escapes; and his heart was filled at one and the same time with pure concern on the boy's behalf and with a certain wild satisfaction" (255) ("Er ist kränklich, er wird wahrscheinlich nicht alt werden," dachte er wiederum mit jener Sachlichkeit, zu welcher Rausch und Sehnsucht bisweilen sich sonderbar emanzipieren; und reine Fürsorge zugleich mit einer ausschweifenden Genugtuung erfüllte sein Herz"; 140). Critics have attempted to elucidate the "Genugtuung" Aschenbach receives from the indicators of Tadzio's mortality. Esther Lesér for instance explains that "The motif of physical weakness is closely related to the theme of decadence, and Beauty is not related to life, but to Death; for the Greeks, it never referred to fruitfulness and fertility. Tadzio's fragility suited Aschenbach's mental concept of Beauty because he related the boy's beauty to the unearthly and the eternal" (*Thomas Mann's Short*

Fiction 171). Additionally, Tazio's pale skin and bad teeth are signifiers of degeneration. These motifs are neither singular in Mann's oeuvre nor in the novella. Hanno from *Buddenbrooks* is the homosexual final issue of the degenerate eponymous family of the novel and is marked, among other attributes, by his fragility, pale skin, bad teeth, and musical genius (Schaffner, *Modernism and Perversion* 175). And in the novella they appear in the form of Tazio's antithesis—in the sense that the one figure inspires love and desire in the protagonist whereas the other inspires loathing and disgust—the aged dandy whom Aschenbach encounters on the ship to Venice. His physical condition too is neither robust nor healthy: his voice is shrill, he cannot hold his alcohol, his teeth are poor, and the reader can assume that beneath the rouge is pale skin (211; 79–80). These "characteristics are part of a package," writes Robert Tobin, "that identified the queer men in *Der Tod in Venedig*"; not just the aging dandy, but the "sickliness of Tazio reflects the general pathologization of same-sex desire by the sexologists" ("Queering" 74). The protagonist is not the only character whose homosexuality has a degenerative etiology. Beauty and pathology are also linked in the object of desire.

And finally, sexology influences the literary text through the third- or intermediate-sex theory. Mann signed Hirschfeld's petition for the abolition of Paragraph 175 (Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe* 83; Sigusch, *Auf der Suche nach der sexuellen Freiheit* 69), but in the letter to Weber he writes negatively of Hirschfeld's efforts at achieving homosexual liberation through scientific research, calling his *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee* "ghastly" (*Letters* 96) ("gräßlich"; *Briefe* 180). However, Tobin suggests in his essays that the third-sex theory influences the novella ("Third Sex" 330–33; "Queering" 67–79). Robert Martin too writes that, in *Der Tod in Venedig*, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs's and Hirschfeld's "biologicistic formula has evolved . . . into a subtle analysis of divided identity" ("Gender, Sexuality, and Identity in Mann's Short Fiction" 58). In the novella as well as in many of Mann's other works, queer characters are outsiders, "foreign" in some way; and, with regard to homosexual artists, this foreignness is internalized as the mixed-race motif. Therefore, race is a central concern of *Der Tod in Venedig*. So far in this study, I have not much discussed this issue. In *Imre*, "race" or nationality—not age, gender, or social class—is the desirable difference in the relationship between Oswald and Imre (see chapter 1). It is not surprising that race should come up when considering homosexuality, as it was during this era that both discourses emerged, not parallel to one another, as Siobhan Somerville shows, but through one another: "the simultaneous efforts to shore up and bifurcate categories of race and sexuality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were deeply intertwined" (*Queering the Color Line* 3). Carpenter and Prime-Stevenson both, in their respective writings, make analogies between race and sexuality. "Between [the] whitest of men and the blackest of negro stretches out a vast line of intermediary races as to their colours: brown, olive, red tawny, yellow" (*The Intersexes* 14). This metaphor indicates that, for Prime-Stevenson, neither race nor sex were matters of discrete binary pairs, but rather subtle variations from one pole to the other. Hirschfeld, ironically, argues

against categories of race, regarding them basically as social constructions, specifically the distinction between Jew and Aryan, while at the same time upholding categories of sex (see H. Bauer "'Race,' Normativity and the History of Sexuality"). Reflecting the attitudes of society at large, in *Der Tod in Venedig*, the crossing of sexes and genders is articulated in and is analogous to the crossing of races. The novella suggests that the homosexual artist inhabits a liminal space between sexes, races, and nationalities: a location which grants him, and others like him, special insight and self-awareness which is the wellspring of their artistic genius.

This contrasts markedly with the treatment of degeneration in *Buddenbrooks* in the character of Hanno. Although he is a crossing of the staid German Buddenbrooks and the more artistic Dutch Arnoldsens, Hanno is less an intermediary and more the final issue of two degenerate families (Schaffner, "Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia sexualis* and Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*" 490–91). He is characterized by his poor health, homosexuality, and outstanding musical talent. Aschenbach shares more in common with the eponymous protagonist of the short story "Tonio Kröger" (1903). In their cases, emphasis is upon the volatile mixing of the bourgeois and the bohemian and of the North and the South. Literarily inclined, Tonio belongs neither to his father's hanseatic mercantile world nor that of his musical, exotic mother. "My father . . . was of a northern temperament: contemplative, thorough, puritanically correct, and inclined to melancholy. My mother was of a vaguely exotic extraction, beautiful, sensuous, naïve, both reckless and passionate, and given to impulsive, rather disreputable behaviour. There is no doubt that this mixed heredity contained extraordinary possibilities—and extraordinary dangers" ("Tonio Kröger" 193–94). ("Mein Vater . . . war ein nordisches Temperament: betrachtsam, gründlich, korrekt aus Puritanismus und zur Wehmut geneigt; meine Mutter von unbestimmt exotischem Blut, schön, sinnlich, naiv, zugleich fahrlässig und leidenschaftlich und von einer impulsiven Liederlichkeit. Ganz ohne Zweifel war dies eine Mischung, die außerordentliche Möglichkeiten—und außerordentliche Gefahren in sich schloß"; *Gesammelte Werke* 8: 337). Tonio does not belong entirely to either world, nor does he fit into either sex. His first love is his foil, Hans Hansen, who embodies all that is manly, bourgeois, and German. "But my deepest and most secret love belongs to the fair-haired and the blue-eyed, the bright children of life, the happy, the charming and the ordinary" (194) ("Aber meine tiefste und verstohlenste Liebe gehört den Blonden und Blauäugigen, den hellen Lebendigen, den Glücklichen, Liebenswürdigen und Gewöhnlichen"; 338). Tonio's artistic temperament is born of his intermediacy in terms of race and sexuality. This theorization plays a central role in *Der Tod in Venedig*, for Aschenbach too is a product of racial mixing. "A strain of livelier, more sensuous blood had entered the family in the previous generation with the writer's mother, the daughter of a director of music from Bohemia. Certain exotic racial characteristics in his external appearance had come to him from her. It was from this marriage between hard-working, sober conscientiousness and darker, more fiery impulses that an artist, and indeed this particular kind of artist, had come into being" (202–03) ("Rascheres, sinnlicheres Blut

war der Familie in der vorigen Generation durch die Mutter des Dichters, Tochter eines böhmischen Kapellmeisters, zugekommen. Von ihr stammten die Merkmale fremder Rasse in seinem Äußern. Die Vermählung dienstlich nüchterner Gewissenhaftigkeit mit dunkleren, feurigeren Impulsen ließ einen Künstler und diesen besonderen Künstler erstehen"; 68–69). This mixing of "blood" produces a great artist. Clayton Koelb points out that if his readership had not recognized the pattern from Mann's previous works, they would have from Goethe's autobiography *Aus meinem Leben: Dichtung und Wahrheit* (*Truth and Poetry: From my Own Life*, 1811–1833), in which the poet recounts his parentage in similar terms. "It would seem reasonable and fitting to Mann's audience that a great artist would be born of such a mixture of the homely and exotic, the staid and the impetuous, the bourgeois and the bohemian" (Koelb, "Death in Venice" 98–99). The novella incorporates a racialized discourse of "blood" through the motif of the divided, mixed-blood identity, but this mixture, if not tainted, is at least a volatile combination. Gerhard Härle writes that with the topos of blood mixing, which is a thematic set piece in Mann's work, in the case of Aschenbach there is a trade-off. This crossing of races grants him recourse to the exotic, allows him to transgress boundaries, and is full of potential, but at the price of heightened aesthesia and morbidity (Härle, *Männerweiblichkeit* 147, 348, note 13). Tonio admits to his confidante Lisaweta Iwanowna that in this crossing of boundaries lie "extraordinary possibilities—and extraordinary dangers" (194) ("außerordentliche Möglichkeiten—und außerordentliche Gefahren"; 337).

There are key differences between these two protagonists however. "Unlike Tonio," Martin argues "who as a young man is immersed in the maternal world of feeling, Aschenbach has constructed his life out of resistance to this darker self" ("Gender, Sexuality, and Identity in Mann's Short Fiction" 63). He must overcome his own physical limitations in order to do so. His physical fragility is a recurrent topic. At the outset of the narrative, the pressures of the author's duties have overstimulated him (197; 61). In the second chapter, the narrator explains "that Aschenbach's native constitution was by no means robust, that the constant harnessing of his energies was something to which he had been called, but not really born" (203) ("daß [Aschenbachs] Natur von nichts weniger als robuster Verfassung und zur ständigen Anspannung nur berufen, nicht eigentlich geboren war"; 69). His health is too poor to allow him to attend school as a boy, and at age thirty-five he falls ill because he has lived his life like a clenched fist. "They were not broad, the shoulders on which he thus carried the tasks laid upon him by his talent; and since his aims were high, he stood in great need of discipline" (204) ("Da er also die Aufgaben, mit denen sein Talent ihn belud, auf zarten Schultern tragen und weit gehen wollte, so bedurfte er höchlich der Zucht"; 70). His motto—"durchhalten!"—epitomizes the "discipline" ("Zucht") and "composure" ("Haltung") that enables his art: the figures of Frederick the Great and Saint Sebastian embody to Aschenbach his struggle. Without this moderating force, his talent would threaten to burn too fiercely for his frail body to contain. "Aschenbach had nevertheless had to recognize in good time that he belonged to a breed not seldom talented, yet seldom endowed with the physical basis which

talent needs if it is to fulfill itself—a breed that usually gives of its best in youth, and in which the creative gift rarely survives into mature years" (203) "[Aschenbach] hatte doch zeitig erkennen müssen, daß er einem Geschlecht angehörte, in dem nicht das Talent, wohl aber die physische Basis eine Seltenheit war, deren das Talent zu seiner Erfüllung bedarf,—einem Geschlechte, das früh sein Bestes zu geben pflegt und in dem das Können es selten zu Jahren bringt"; 70). The term "Geschlecht" here is suggestive. The term has a broader meaning in German than merely biological sex or gender. David Luke, for instance, translates this passage as Aschenbach belonging to a "breed" of artist. Nevertheless it reinforces the idea that Aschenbach, like Tonio Kröger, belongs to a separate (perhaps a third) sex. The protagonist seems to recognize this in his final monologue: "yes, though we may be heroes in our fashion and disciplined warriors, yet we are like women, for it is passion that exalts us, and the longing of our soul must remain the longing of a lover—that is our joy and our shame" (265) ("ja mögen wir auch Helden auf unsere Art und züchtige Kriegerleute sein, so sind wir wie Weiber, denn Leidenschaft ist unsere Erhebung, und unsere Sehnsucht muß Liebe bleiben,—das ist unsere Lust und unsere Schande"; 153). He says that "we are *like* women" ("so sind wir *wie* Weiber"; emphasis added) thereby suggesting gender inversion, the intermediate role of the homosexual in general and the homosexual artist in particular (see Tobin, "Queering" 76). *Der Tod in Venedig* continues Mann's exploration of the relationship between racial, gender, and sexual intermediaries, variations of which would recur in later works. In addition, it reinforces the ties between homosexuality and the artistic temperament, which by this time were well established not only in medical literature. This employment of the motif of the crossing of genders and sexes is allied with the metaphor which links cholera and homosexuality. The novella's interpretation of intermediary sexuality is not the same as the developmental concepts advocated in the research of Ulrichs and Hirschfeld, which conceived *sexuelle Zwischenstufen* as a form of naturally occurring, not necessarily pathological, sexual variation. Instead the text situates it as the root of decline and degeneration, a volatile mixing of North and South, artistic and mundane, of man and woman, and of masculine and feminine: but a mixing from which vitality and creativity can also spring.

The psychopathological view of homosexuality has a great degree of impact upon the text, by the author's own admission. Mann writes in his letter to Weber that not unpunished did he pass through the naturalistic school, but he claims that his intent was not to condemn or disavow (*Letters* 96; *Briefe* 179). Pairing love and beauty with death is by no means a condemnation or disavowal of this love. As August von Platen writes in "Tristan," from his *Sonette aus Venedig* (*Venetian Sonnets*, 1824): "Whoever has gazed at beauty eye to eye / Is given over, signed and sealed, to death" ("Wer die Schönheit angeschaut mit Augen / Ist dem Tode schon anheimgegeben"; Platen 172–73). Mann's essay on Platen (as in chapter 2) can help illuminate the themes of the novella. The two figures, the poet and the fictional author, are meant to belong to the same "Geschlecht" of artist. Mann writes of Platen in a way that indicates that he was a model for the fictional character: "At thirty he

was already showing serious organic symptoms of tension and exhaustion. After a further nine years' stress of emotions and their suppression, he died at Syracuse of a vague typhus attack which was nothing but a pretext for the death to which obviously he was devoted from the first" (*Essays of Three Decades* 269) ("Mit dreißig schon treten schwere organische Anzeichen der Überreizung und Erschöpfung zutage. Nach neun Jahren weiterer Gefühlsüberlastung und -abschnürung stirbt er zu Syrakus an einer undeutlich typhösen Krankheit, die nichts war als der Vorwand des Todes, dem er von Anbeginn wissentlich anheimgegeben war"; *Gesammelte Werke* 9: 280–81). Both writers possess talent of too great an intensity for their bodies to contain. Aschenbach ought not to have made it to age fifty. The *Zucht* that rules his life can be credited with this feat; it has harnessed and tamed his creative genius and extended his life, but may have done so at the cost of reaching his full artistic potential. The repression of his maternal legacy has earned him acclaim, respectability, and a title of nobility, yet, as Caroline Picart argues, "the tyranny of the Apollonian in him leaves him decadent and effete rather than healthy and vital" (*Thomas Mann and Friedrich Nietzsche* 20). The artist cannot worship at the altar of Apollo alone, neither can he forsake the former god and turn all his attention to Dionysus. In Mann's world, the artist was an intermediary figure, a bridge between intellect and sexuality, between the masculine and the feminine, Harry Oosterhuis explains ("The Dubious Magic of Male Beauty" 185). Schaffner writes that "in Mann's representations of the homosexual artist, the highest and the lowest coexist, the degenerate is also the sublime," through which he invests "the pathological with metaphorical significance" (*Modernism and Perversion* 181). In *Der Tod in Venedig* death and disease are linked to artistic genius, as well as "beauty, love, [and] eternity" (*Essays of Three Decades* 261) ("Schönheit, Liebe, [und] Ewigkeit"; *Gesammelte Werke* 9: 271).

"False and dangerous" Theories

Hirschfeld's theory of the third sex and sexual intermediaries was not without vocal critics. One of the quarters from which this opposition was voiced was the segment of the German "homosexual" community that promoted the masculine model of same-sex relations. In Adolf Brand's journal *Der Eigene*, in Elisar von Kupffer's literary anthology, *Lieblingminne und Freundesliebe in der Weltliteratur*, and in Benedict Friedländer's studies, the third-sex and masculine models were viewed as largely mutually exclusive. The program proposed by the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* and the nameless love fictionalized by Mackay resist medical typology and nomenclature essentially on the same grounds. First, they argue that love and desire between men is not pathological, not a manifestation of inherited degeneration. Second, they insist that this love is a thoroughly manly impulse. They object to the reification of gender, basic to the third-sex theory, whereby love for a man is characterized as a fundamentally female drive. Thus they reject the cross-sex or cross-gender hypothesis. For them, the man-loving man is just that: a man who loves other men.

The leaders of the GdE rejected and opposed various aspects of modern life, perhaps none more so than sexology and its minoritizing concept of same-sex desire. Kupffer, in his essay "Die Ethisch-politische Bedeutung der Lieblingminne" (1899), and Friedländer, in *Renaissance des Eros Uranios*, both cite and dismiss Ulrichs's theory of the third sex. Kupffer writes: "It has now become the fashion in humane-scientific and, on the other hand, closely concerned circles to speak of a 'third' sex, whose spirit and body are said not to agree with one another" ("The Ethical-Political Significance of *Lieblingminne*" 36) ("Es ist nun mal in human-wissenschaftlichen und andererseits in nahbeteiligten Kreisen Mode geworden, von einem 'dritten' Geschlecht zu reden, dessen Seele und Leib nicht zusammenstimmen sollen"; *Lieblingminne und Freundesliebe in der Weltliteratur* 3). He insists that it has become "a moral duty" (36) ("eine moralische Pflicht"; 3) to contradict such a "mire of lies and filthiness" (36) ("Sumpf von Lügen und Unflätigkeiten"; 3), which, of course, is the aim of his writings. Friedländer, approaching the subject from a scientific rather than a cultural-historical point of view, argues that "the main error of Hirschfeld's intermediate-sex theory" ("der Hauptirrtum der [Hirschfelds] Zwischenstufentheorie") is that it considers "same-sex love as exclusively the affair of a small, almost always unmarried minority" ("die gleichgeschlechtliche Liebe ausschliesslich [als] die Angelegenheit einer kleinen, fast immer unverheiratheten Minderzahl"; *Renaissance des Eros Uranios* 264). His study details a biological, physiological, and historical basis for universal bisexuality. Love and desire for a man is not an essentially feminine drive, rather, man possesses "the capability to love in both directions" ("[die] Fähigkeit zu beiden Richtungen des Liebestriebes"; 263), but Judeo-Christian asceticism forces most men to repress their homoerotic and homosocial desires. The central issue to which the German masculinist movement objected was sexology's casting of same-sex desire as a trait found in a segment of humanity, regardless of whether the scientists believed that this segment suffered from hereditary mental illness (Krafft-Ebing) or that their sexuality was a harmless natural anomaly resultant from cross-gendering (Ulrichs, Hirschfeld). They sought to counter these conceptions in their writings.

Mackay's fiction, which would otherwise share this opposition to medico-scientific conceptions of homosexuality, differs in one essential way. Despite its protestations against the sexologists' placing of individuals into pigeon-hole intermediary levels, it depicts love between males in minoritizing terms. Although the mode of relations portrayed is intergenerational, like *Lieblingminne*, Mackay's protagonists do not love in both directions; instead their sexualities are fixed and directed only toward teenage boys. A particular passage from the first book "Die Namenlose Liebe: Ein Bekenntniss" seems to suggest the universality of same-sex attraction: "a Greek inheritance ineradicably lives on in the breast of each man, each youth" (*Books* 56) ("ein hellenisches Erbteil in der Brust jedes Mannes, jedes Jünglings unausrottbar weiterlebt"; *Bücher* 78). Not each man who loves men, but this inheritance lives on in the hearts of *all* men. This is not, however, the conception of same-sex desire portrayed in Mackay's fiction. Skaller in the novella and Graff in the novel are "those who from youth on felt themselves draw to their own sex, who as boys and adoles-

cents, and as adults, always loved only their own sex" (*Books* 125) ("einmal Die, die sich von Jugend an überhaupt nur zu ihrem eigenem Geschlecht hingezogen fühlten, die als Knaben und Jünglinge, wie als Erwachsene immer nur ihr eigenes Geschlecht lieben"; *Bücher* 223). Thus, unlike the vision championed by the GdE, Mackay's characters are a minority marked by their same-sex desire, whose orientation is fixed. Moreover, sexological studies play a key role in Fenny Skaller's development, allowing him to forge an identity resistant to theories of psychopathology and sexual intermediacy. It can be inferred from the novel *Der Puppenjunge* that Herman Graff undergoes a comparable confrontation with sexological writings on same-sex desire. As a consequence, Graff can conceive of his love as natural, self-evident, and thus in no need of medico-scientific explanation.

Mackay's resistance and opposition to sexological inquiry translates into his fiction as an effort to portray same-sex subjectivity and same-sex love beyond the medical model, an aim which, in terms of his nameless love writings, is most successfully realized in the novel *Der Puppenjunge*. In large measure, the novel's lack of interest in sexology owes something to the writer's earlier working-through of his anxiety about being classed with the mentally ill and third-sex psychic hermaphrodites in the autobiographical novella *Fenny Skaller: Ein Leben der namenlosen Liebe*. The novella vehemently reacts against sexological thought, especially the third-sex theory, because this conception's emphasis on gender inversion seems to represent to the protagonist a direct threat to his masculinity and identity as a manly lad-lover. Despite this rejection of both major schools of sexual science, the text does not adopt the universalizing and retrogressive cultural-historical stance common to the writings of other contributors to Brand's literary journal. In the novel, which was published thirteen years after *Fenny Skaller*, the masculine, lad-lover identity with its essentialist and minoritizing understanding of sexuality appears again, while the unconcealed vitriol directed at the perceived imperialistic expansion of sexual science into the realm of love between men takes on a subordinate role in the narrative. The following charts the overt reaction to sexological thought in the earlier work of fiction and then considers how the positioning of the Sagitta texts in relation to this discourse is articulated more subtly in *Puppenjunge*.

In Prime-Stevenson's *Imre*, the man of science assumes the role of champion, but in Mackay's writings the physicians and sexologists are conquerors. The author positively rejects the scientific study of sexuality, terming it a misguided intellectual effort that seeks artificial unity of sexual diversity, forcing love into categories devised from observations made by doctors on patients in asylums. In the polemic introduction to *Die Bücher der namenlosen Liebe*, he spells out his repudiation. "This love, persecuted by judges and cursed by priests, has fled to the medical doctors as if it were a sickness that could be cured by them. But it is no sickness. Doctors have as little to look for and examine here as judges, and those who have accepted it as a sickness taken them on as if they are not ill are mistaken if they believe they can free themselves from the clutches of power by making a pact with this power" (45) ("Diese Liebe, verfolgt von den Richtern und verflucht von den Priestern hat sich

zu den Ärzten geflüchtet, als sei sie eine Krankheit, die von ihnen geheilt werden könne. Aber sie ist keine Krankheit. Ärzte haben hier so wenig zu suchen und zu untersuchen, wie Richter, und die sich ihrer angenommen haben wie keiner Kranken, irren sich, wenn sie glauben, sie könnten sie aus den Fängen der Gewalt befreien, indem sie mit dieser Gewalt paktieren"; 62–63). They are a newly emergent power, fulfilling a role once held by the priest and judge. J. Edgar Bauer writes that "The 'physicians' Mackay depicts support a long-standing cultural pattern of using social pressure to deny natural differences in sexual constitution and thus distort the true nature of the 'nameless love'" ("On the Nameless Love and Infinite Sexualities" 9). And those who think they can broker a deal with this social force—here Mackay indicates Hirschfeld and the WhK—are deluding themselves. On the whole, this summarizes how *Fenny Skaller* treats the scientific study of same-sex sexuality. This is not to say that sexology in this novella is cast solely in an antagonistic role. For instance, the protagonist's reading of sexological studies plays a central function in the formation of his own sexual identity.

Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* appears in the novella as "a large, yellow book" which has "a curious Latin title, a title in two words" (*Books* 119) ("einen seltsamen lateinischen Titel, einen Titel in zwei Worten"; *Bücher* 211). Mackay's biographers point to the scene as a dramatization of the author's own reckoning with his sexual desire. Walter Fähnders and K. H. Z. Solneman write that Mackay became aware of his homosexuality at around the age of twenty-two, certainly by 1886, when he read Krafft-Ebing's study, whose first edition appeared that year (Fähnders, "Anarchism and Homosexuality in Wilhelmine Germany" 141; Solneman, *Der Bahnbrecher John Henry Mackay* 210). Thomas Riley writes that the novella seems "to describe the whole sexual development of Mackay himself, a case history turned into a novel by a master poet" (*Germany's Poet-Anarchist* 108). In the novella, the sexological study and the others which Skaller would eventually seek out fulfill a complementary, twofold role in the narrative: first, through the study he learns that he is not alone and second, sexological methodology and pronouncements set the protagonist against this field of knowledge. Through sexology he begins to learn about his desire and eventually fashions his identity in opposition to it.

The case histories that Skaller reads shock and excite him in equal measure. "But he reads and reads. About things he has never heard of, and which he nevertheless knows; which he had never held to be possible, and which he nevertheless understands; which he had never imagined, and yet recognizes; he reads of things monstrous" (*Books* 119–20) ("Er aber liest und liest . . . Von Dingen, von denen er nie gehört, und die er doch weiß; die er nie für möglich gehalten und die er doch versteht; die er nie geahnt und doch gekannt, von Dingen liest er, ungeheuerlichen"; *Bücher* 213). Skaller discovers himself in the scientific study, but his initial response is one of mixed emotions. He knows not whether his excitement is jubilation or outrage. "*There are others like him!* He is no longer alone among people, no longer alone on this earth! Now it is to be his too, this earth. . . . He no longer had a horror of himself. Quite secretly, inwardly, there arose a shy hope: that he, too,

would one day be fortunate in this love" (120) ("Es giebt Andere gleich ihm! Er ist nicht mehr allein unter den Menschen, nicht mehr allein auf dieser Erde! Nun soll sie auch die seine werden, diese Erde, und er will auf ihr leben! . . . Ihm graute nicht mehr vor sich selbst. Ganz heimlich, in seinem Innern, erhob sich eine schüchterne Hoffnung: daß auch er einmal glücklich sein würde in dieser Liebe"; 213–14). This text is a conduit to a wider community where same-sex desire, sexual identities, and emotions associated with it and its repression are shared experiences. Skaller is still isolated and cannot speak about his love, "But he kept silent no longer within himself, and from then on no longer silent about his love" (120) ("Aber zu sich selbst schwieg er fortan nicht mehr von seiner Liebe"; 214), he no longer must carry the burden and guilt of his isolation. Once he begins to grasp the import of his newly acquired knowledge, Skaller questions whether it truly describes his love and whether it opens the door to a community with which he wants to associate. "He understood only so much: they had locked up his love in science's wax-figure cabinet of monsters, of deformities and monstrosities of all kinds—there they had also classified him: among people with whom he had nothing in common, and could and would have nothing in common. But the love *existed*. It was there, and among those pages, filled with the confessions of the desperate, who did not understand themselves and who hoped for salvation from the doctor" (120–21) ("Nur so Viel begriff er: in ein Wachsfigurenkabinett der Wissenschaft von Scheusäligkeiten, von Mißgeburten und Monstrositäten aller Art hatte man auch seine Liebe gesperrt—dorthin hatte man auch ihn klassificiert: unter Menschen, mit denen er Nichts gemein hatte und Nichts gemein haben konnte und wollte. Aber die Liebe gab es. Sie war da . . . zwischen diesen Blättern, gefüllt mit den Bekenntnissen Verzweifelter, die sich selbst nicht kannten und Rettung von dem Arzte erhofften"; 214–15). As described above, *Psychopathia Sexualis* is a compendious study which treats a broad range of sexual behaviors that deviate from societal norms, and an early edition, from which the protagonist is likely to be reading, would contain shorter, more factual accounts collected from hospitalized patients. Skaller feels himself a cut above the subjects of the study. His love is not an illness; it does not belong among what he views as the confessions of desperate individuals whom the medical community brands mentally ill degenerates. He rejects the idea of seeking absolution from physicians, which is a position that is one of the benchmarks of the author's liberationist campaign for the nameless love. Nonetheless, the text is useful to Skaller in proving that he is not alone. Further reading of sexology conducted years later provides the protagonist with what he considers a more complete perspective of the field of scientific inquiry into same-sex desire.

From his critical reading, Skaller observes that two schools of sexology exist: on the one hand is the segment of the medical community who, viewing same-sex desire as mental illness, attempt to cure this condition, whereas on the other is a camp who, recognizing that same-sex desire is not illness and cannot be cured, attempt to liberate this love as the third sex. "Cursed by parsons of all religions and all sects as an unmentionable sin; prosecuted by judges . . . , it had now luckily

fallen into the hands of the doctors, some of whom still sought to cure it as a sickness, but the others, who knew that it could not be a sickness, sought to rescue it by placing it between the sexes" (148–49) ("Von Pfaffen aller Religionen und aller Art als unnennbare Sünde verflucht; von den Richtern . . . als Verbrechen verfolgt, war sie nun glücklich in die Hände von Aerzten gefallen, von denen die einen sie immer noch als eine Krankheit heilen, die anderen aber, die wußten, daß sie keine Krankheit sein konnte, sie zu retten versuchten, indem sie sie zwischen die Geschlechter stellten"; 264). But this emancipationist platform only perpetrates, for Skaller, an error as egregious as casting this love in the role of sin, crime, or disease. In defiance of the newly constructed third sex and the artificially unified categories that he considers these physicians employ to systematize human emotion into "intermediates" ("Übergänge"), Skaller argues for infinite sexualities, "the tremendous variety of love" (125) ("[die] ungeheur[e] Verschiedenheit der Liebe"; 223) (see J. Bauer, "On the Nameless Love and Infinite Sexualities" 11). In support of his vision, he points to the diversity of homosexual experience. "Within the circle of this love for the same sex there was a huge, unbridgeable contrast . . . : that between the masculine man, whose masculine inclination was for masculine youth—the ancient love of the Greeks—and that of the man with a feminine disposition, or perhaps better said, of the outwardly masculine female who is inclined to men" (148) ("Es [gab] innerhalb des Kreises dieser Liebe zu dem eigenen Geschlecht einen ungeheuren, durch Nichts zu überbrückenden Gegensatz . . . den zwischen dem männlichen Manne, dessen männliche Neigung der männlichen Jugend galt—die alte Liebe der Hellenen; und dem des weiblich gearteten Mannes, oder, wohl besser gesagt, des äußerlich männlich gearteten Weibchens, das sich dem Manne gab"; 263). Skaller identifies two extremes in the spectrum of men who are drawn to their own sex, and owing to this irreconcilable diversity he considers the third-sex category a fiction constructed by physicians. This is by no means an unreasonable argument. He resists being typologized by sexology; but he does not evade typology. He defines himself in the narrative by way of his desire for young men. He argues for the specificity of his own form of same-sex sexuality. However, his protestations against sexological imperialism are undercut by the frankly denigratory language he employs in regard to effeminate homosexual males in this passage and at other points in the narrative. Skaller inverts the language of the third sex and thereby constructs a foil against which to justify his mode of desire via its masculinity. "He, Skaller, was a man and he felt himself entirely as such. Noting in his being, his manner, his inclination was feminine. So much so, that everything called feminine repelled him, above all in love" (148) ("Er, Skaller, war ein Mann, und er fühlte sich ganz als ein solcher. Nichts in seinem Wesen, seiner Art, seiner Neigung war weiblich. So sehr, daß Alles, was weiblich hieß, ihn abstieß, vor Allem in der Liebe"; 264). It is clear that he finds the basis of the third-sex theory insulting, the idea that love for a man is essentially a feminine attribute, and thus a man who loves men must have a female/feminized soul. Again, this is not an unreasonable objection owing to the fact that this rei-

fiction of gender is the greatest weakness of the third-sex concept. But what is unreasonable is that when the protagonist presents his own classifications of male sexuality, which comprise four orientations, his plan is far more restrictive than that which is on offer from Hirschfeld and other third-sex advocates. According to Skaller, men can be divided into four groups: (1) heterosexual men; (2) those like him who "from the very beginning on were drawn *only* to the younger one of their own sex, always so strongly only to the younger that for them the love for an older one was completely impossible" (126) ("die es ebenso von allem Anfang an nur zu dem Jüngerem ihres Geschlechts hinzog, so stark immer nur zu dem Jüngerem, daß ihnen die Liebe zu einem Aelteren gänzlich unmöglich war"; 224); (3) effeminate men who always love adult or older men; and (4) the elusive group within which Skaller can find mutual attraction and love: "those who in their youth were able to return the love of an older one of their sex just as well as later that of a woman, whose feelings in their youth did not yet go in a definite direction" (125–26) ("Die, welche in ihrer Jugend die Liebe eines Aelteren ihres Geschlechts ebensogut erwidern konnten, wie später die einer Frau; die, deren Empfinden in ihrer Jugend noch in keiner bestimmten Richtung ging"; 224). He admits that "these were theories which life would never exactly fit" (126) ("dies waren Theorien, in die das Leben sich nie so fügen würde"; 224), but it is from this perspective, utilizing this biased view of male sexuality, that homosexual subcultures are presented in the novella (150–51; 267–68) and through this that the author's own exclusively intergenerational mode of desire is championed. This is not the idea of infinite sexualities, the diversity of love, which the text advocates only shortly before in the narrative. The greatest failing point of the novella, in terms of didactic intent, is this inconsistency.

Der Puppenjunge engages with sexology less directly than *Fenny Skaller*. Medical science is personified by only one figure in the novel. This physician is an agent of the state, employed by the prison to conduct an examination of Graff after having been incarcerated for violating Paragraph 175. Graff finds the specialist's insistence that he is ill preposterous. "Sick? No, he was not sick. Nothing was the matter with him. What indeed was supposed to be the matter with him?" (280) ("Krank? . . . Nein, er war nicht krank.—Ihm fehlte Nichts. Was sollte ihm wohl fehlen?"; 323). Like the judges and the jailers who place him in prison, this character is merely the functionary of the repressive regime. Furthermore, whereas Skaller's emotional reckoning with his desire is graphically depicted as he peruses the case histories of *Psychopathia Sexualis*, Graff has progressed past this point in his personal trajectory. "He knew his sexual disposition. He knew how it stood for him. He still read a great deal, but did not trouble himself for an explanation where there was nothing to explain. What was self-evident, natural, and not in the least sick did not require an excuse through an explanation. Many of the theories now posed he held to be false and dangerous. It was a love just like any other" (158) ("Er kannte seine Veranlagung. Er wußte, wie es um ihn stand. Er las noch immer Viel, bemühte sich aber nicht um Erklärungen, wo es Nichts zu erklären gab.—Was

selbstverständlich, natürlich und nicht im Geringsten krankhaft war bedurfte nicht der Entschuldigung durch eine Erklärung. Viele der jetzt aufgestellten Theorien hielt er für falsch und gefährlich. Es war eine Liebe wie jede andere Liebe auch"; 184). Graff understands his "disposition," but the narrator withholds how the protagonist gains this knowledge. This is partially answered, though, when the narrator acknowledges that Graff still reads much but is not concerned with "an explanation where there was nothing to explain." What and why he reads is still withheld. In light of the scene from the 1913 novella explored above, it is reasonable to assume that Graff is reading medical, scientific, and possibly cultural-historical treatments of homosexuality. And since he does not seek an explanation, or at least is not seeking one any longer, Graff must read for the same reason that Skaller furtively immersed himself in Krafft-Ebing's sex study. These unnamed texts serve as his only conduit to a wider community of man-loving men; they are a means to enter the experiences of other persons, to discover that one is not alone and that, despite the taboo, same-sex desire is a shared experience. Thus, Graff accepts and understands his sexual desires, not in spite of sexological studies, but rather because of these works. His reading of these case histories allows him to shape his understanding of his desire for other men in terms of its self-evidence and naturalness: a love like any other. In this way, as Oosterhuis's study shows, the character Hermann Graff has this in common with many late nineteenth-century homosexual readers of *Psychopathia Sexualis*. The sexological texts initiate awareness and allow Graff to progress beyond a reliance on these frameworks of knowledge.

Sexology, in the books of the nameless love, is presented as a force, like religious and legal structures, that perpetuates myths, errors, and misconceptions about same-sex love. In *Puppenjunge*, the theories are declared "false and dangerous." And yet, in the same way that sexological writings on homosexuality empower Fenny Skaller to forge an identity in opposition to sexological pronouncements, for Herman Graff they are a point of reference against which he can build an identity as a healthy, manly lad-lover. The nameless love, in spite of its contradictions and denigration of effeminate models, is nevertheless a powerful image and conceptualization of male-male love. For the numerous men who struggled against medical concepts and felt more constrained than liberated by the third-sex identities, *Die Bücher der namenlosen Liebe* and *Der Puppenjunge* offer other alternatives. Mackay's writings are a means of building an affirmative concept of oneself as a lover of other males. And, for the modern reader, the novel's disruption of discourse means that the narrative is not dated in the same way as in Edward Prime-Stevenson's *Imre: A Memorandum*. *Der Puppenjunge* has the advantage of its accessibility. It refuses to name this desire with contemporary terms (most of which are now antiquated) while depicting the protagonist's love for a young man within recognizable literary conventions. Mackay's novel is more accessible despite the fact that the love relationship between Oswald and Imre is one that we today recognize, egalitarian and between two adults, in contrast to Mackay's ephebophilia which seems a throwback to earlier Victorian writings.

Conclusion

The scientific study of sexuality, particularly same-sex sexuality, was a pervasive cultural force from the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth, especially in Germany and Austria, where the inquiry was most active. *Der Tod in Venedig* demonstrates influence from degenerationist and third-sex theories, as well as from Freud. The intermediate-sex individuals in Mann's fiction are gifted with special insight, which is the source of their artistic powers, but are at the same time cursed with "sympathy with the abyss" (207) ("Sympathie mit dem Abgrund"; 74). In *Der Tod in Venedig*, as well as others of Mann's works of fiction, from degeneration springs artistic genius, beauty, and passion. On the other hand, *Der Puppenjunge* strives to treat love between members of the same sex outside of sexological discourse, but, like the author's earlier, autobiographical novella, *Fenny Skaller*, it betrays some influence from sexology, in particular in the form of opposition. Mann's novella is the odd one out in that it is the only work of fiction under discussion not to take an unambiguous stance against psychopathological models of homosexuality. Perhaps writing for a broader audience meant making concessions to these scientific and cultural discourses. But Mann's novella also subverts these discourses by privileging Krafft-Ebing over Nordau, by allying regeneration through the production of art with degeneration. Hence Mann comments on this school of sexological thought more subtly than, but nonetheless as effectively as, the other works of fiction.

