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Reconsidering the Emergence of the Gay Novel in English and  
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## Chapter 7

### Das Bildnis des Oskar Wilde

Looking back at the foundation of the *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee*, in the 1902 edition of his treatise *Sappho und Sokrates; oder, Wie erklärt sich die Liebe der Männer und der Frauen zu Personen des eigenen Geschlechts?* (Sappho and Socrates; or, How Does One Explain the Love of Men and Women to Persons of Their Own Sex?, 1896), Hirschfeld cites the "lamentable" trials of the "English poet Oskar [sic] Wilde" as a major impetus toward organization (Hirschfeld 27–28; see also Herzer, *Magnus Hirschfeld* 53; Keilson-Lauritz, *Die Geschichte der eigenen Geschichte* 25; Ivory, "The Trouble with Oskar" 141–42). The Wilde scandal was not confined to the English-speaking world; indeed, it was an international phenomenon. A result of his notoriety is that, in Germany, Wilde experienced a literary renaissance. Sander Gilman writes that "Wilde's popularity in Germany grew almost in inverse proportion to its decline in Britain" ("Strauss, the Pervert, and Avant Garde Opera of the Fin de Siècle" 40). Before the trials, Wilde's aesthetic theories found some favorable reception, particularly in Austria (Bridgwater, "Some German Oscar Wildes" 237). The Austrian writer Hugo von Hofmannsthal can be counted amongst the early admirers of Wilde's aestheticism. By this point, though, only the essay in dialogue form "The Decay of Lying" (1891) had been translated into German. Yvonne Ivory points out that "Oscar Wilde was not a household name in Germany when the scandal broke," and therefore most of the journalists who reported on the scandal in the German press "found they needed to clarify who Wilde was" ("The Oscar Wilde Scandal in the German Press" 223). Only afterwards did the German-speaking world's fascination with Wilde truly begin (Kohlmayer and Krämer, "Bunbury in Germany" 189). Between 1900 and 1934, especially after André Gide's biographical essay "Hommage à Oscar Wilde" (1902, translated into German 1903) and the publication of *De Profundis* in German in 1905, there were more than 250 translations of Wilde's work, this totaling more than any other British writer except Shakespeare. During the 1903–04 theater season alone, there were 248 performances of his plays. The most widely performed was *Salomé*, with 111 performances, following Max Reinhardt's production in 1902 (Funke, *Oscar Wilde*

in *Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* 7). The Wilde estate became solvent and put in credit, writes H. Montgomery Hyde, in large part on account of "the royalties from German translations of his books and the receipts from productions of his plays in Germany." Hyde highlights the irony of this development: "The fact that Wilde's literary rehabilitation should have begun in so pronounced a manner in Germany would certainly have surprised the author, who was inclined to deride the Germans for being so serious-minded and lacking a sense of humour" (*Oscar Wilde* 380). Not only were the theater-going and reading public enthralled by Wilde, but many German-speaking writers were influenced by Wilde's aesthetic theories, explains Robert Vilain. "Wilde came to be seen in Germany and Austria as the very embodiment of one of the most fascinating aspects of the intellectual and aesthetic temper of his age, the aesthetic movement" ("Tragedy and the Apostle of Beauty" 174). These writers, including Mann, saw Wilde as an "apostle of beauty" and individualism challenging Victorian Philistinism (Vilain 187). Wilde became, writes Gilman, "the symbolic artist persecuted by the forces of aesthetic conservatism" (43).

In the wake of his trials and death, writers from across Europe, many of whom were man-loving men, began treating same-sex desire and homosexual characters in their fiction. In his essay, Wolfgang Popp examines the images of homosexuality the texts responding to Wilde's legacy create. The works he considers include, among others, André Gide's *L'Immoraliste* (*The Immoralist*, 1902), Stefan George's pederastic poetry, Mann's short story "Tonio Kröger" (1903), Herman Bang's novel *Mikaël* (Michael, 1904), Louis Couperus's novel *De berg van licht* (*The Mountain of Light*, 1905–06), and Mikhail Kuzmin's novel *Wings* (1906). For Popp, this moment of liberality was cut short by the Eulenburg Affair, Germany's own homosexual scandal. The denunciation of two leading advisors to Kaiser Wilhelm II, Prince Philipp zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld and Kuno Count von Moltke, in the journal *Die Zukunft* (*The Future*) by the editor Maximilian Harden in 1907 set off a series of court cases with an ensuing media circus (Steakley, "Iconography of a Scandal" 235). Like the Wilde trials, the Eulenburg affair made homosexuality a topic of public discourse, literally putting "homosexuality" into the dictionaries (Steakley, "Iconography" 251). Between these two events, the Wilde and Eulenburg affairs, Popp argues, "in this eleven year time frame, not only did the most eminent authors of the time engage with the topic of homosexuality more intensively than ever before, but they also formulated images of homosexual masculinity" ("In diesen gerade einmal elf Jahren haben sich nicht nur die bedeutendsten Autoren der Zeit intensiver als je zuvor mit dem Thema Homosexualität beschäftigt, sondern sie haben auch homosexuelle Männlichkeitsbilder entworfen"; "Zwischen Wilde-Prozess und Eulenburg-Affäre" 102). He identifies images of homo-masculinity ranging from reactions to the effeminacy model to rehabilitations of the homosexual aesthete and artist figure. An example of the latter is the character Ménalque in Gide's novel, a sort of nomad aesthete who speaks in epigrams (Gide, *The Immoralist* 74–78, 80–82, 83–86). Another is in Bang's novel, which has not been translated into English but is accessible to English-speaking audiences through Carl Theodor Dreyer's silent film adaptation, *Michael* (1924), in which

the hero, the artist Claude Zoret, tragically loves Michael, his faithless muse/protégé. "The shock of the Wilde trials not only led, in the intellectual and literary milieu of Europe, to opposition to the discrimination and criminalization of homosexuality, but also produced in Germany the first emancipation movements of homosexual men. The Eulenburg Affair, which precipitated above all a political scandal, could only temporarily influence these developments" ("Der Schock der Wilde-Prozesse hat sich im Geistes- und Literaturleben ganz Europas nicht zuletzt dahin ausgewirkt, dass sich überall Widerstand gegen die Diskriminierung und Kriminalisierung der Homosexualität regt und in Deutschland die erste Emanzipationsbewegung homosexueller Männer entsteht. Die Eulenburg-Affäre, die vor allem einen politischen Skandal auslöste, konnte diese Entwicklungen nur vorübergehend beeinflussen"; Popp, "Zwischen Wilde-Prozess und Eulenburg-Affäre" 102). The recourse to coding and concealment of homosexual subject matter in literature published in the fallout of the second scandal was temporary, as is demonstrated, argues Popp, by the literary treatments of same-sex desire which flourished in the interwar era.

This chapter builds and expands on Popp's valuable claims. Since the time-frame his study considers, the period between 1895 and 1906, ends at the point when he argues that gay literature went temporarily back into the closet, it does not take into account the effect the later scandal had on further forming homosexual images and reinforcing homosexual roles. The Eulenburg Affair triggered wide-ranging shifts in and outside Germany. In France, for instance, homosexuality was called "le vice allemand" (the German vice) because it was perceived to be "more widespread there than in any other country in Europe" (Willy, *The Third Sex* 15). Berlin gained the appellation "Sodom-on-Spree," and Germans were called "Eulenbuggers." "In the men's toilets," Florence Tamagne writes, "homosexual come-ons took a new form: 'Do you speak German?'" (*A History of Homosexuality in Europe* 19). Both the Wilde trials and the affair, Steakley argues, "were labeling events that dramatically accelerated the emergence of the modern homosexual identity by stimulating and structuring public perceptions of sexual normalcy and abnormalcy" (Steakley, "Iconography" 235). Despite the backlash, "a subtle dialectic was at work tending to proliferate sexual practices and identities" (235). Not only did gay literature rebound, but the event certainly spurred greater literary treatments of homosexuality in much the same way that the Wilde scandal had done. One example of such a response is Gide's defense of the "normal pederast" in *Corydon* (1924), which makes reference to both the Wilde and Eulenburg scandals (Gide, *Corydon* 3, 8). This chapter considers the German responses to Wilde in Thomas Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig* and then John Henry Mackay's *Der Puppenjunge*, representing two different responses to the Wildean homosexual model. Whereas *Der Tod in Venedig* explores both the positive and negative sides of homosexual effeminacy, with its associations with aestheticism as a form of protest, Mackay's novel foregrounds masculine pederasty before other styles of same-sex sexuality.

Especially in Mann's early works, the ties that bind art with effeminacy and homoeroticism as products of decadence are recurrent themes. Amongst these works,

*Der Tod in Venedig* stands at the forefront, in which the exploration of decadence reaches its culmination. Hannelore Mundt writes that *Der Tod in Venedig* incorporates both the negative and the positive aspects of decadence: "decadence was presented as an artistic force that could produce art that transcends bourgeois norms and conventions. This ambivalence, bestowing both negative and positive meanings upon decadence, is a central key to our understanding of Aschenbach's departure from his bourgeois existence" (*Understanding Thomas Mann* 89). Wildean dandy-aestheticism figures prominently in this ambivalent treatment of decadence. Patrick Bridgwater and Robert Vilain, in their respective essays, discuss the importance of Oscar Wilde for Mann. Bridgwater points out that Mann's notebooks demonstrate the impact of Wilde and his aestheticism on the German writer's works. He writes that Mann certainly "had Wilde/Dorian Gray in mind when he produced the 'criminal' artist/aesthete figures (Tonio Kröger, Gustav von Aschenbach, Felix Krull) of whom Aschenbach is in a number of ways closest to Wilde/Gray, among them the fact that he illustrates Lord Henry's *mot* 'The only ways to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it'" ("Some German Oscar Wildes" 237). For Mann, writes Bridgwater, the dandy was an artist: both roles are necessarily egocentric, and like the artist, the dandy likes to relate to the public but prefers his own company. Mann was particularly fascinated by Wilde's dandyism. The idea that the artist/aesthete is not suited for ordinary life because the artistic temperament involves such a high degree of alienating self-awareness and narcissism, asserts Bridgwater, extends throughout Mann's oeuvre and is particularly important with regard to the portrayal of Aschenbach ("Some German Oscar Wildes" 238). Robert Vilain suggests that "Mann's homosexuality, largely suppressed throughout his life, may have been a factor in the fascination that Wilde exercised over him; he may have seen and admired a degree of courage in the face of public approbation that he could not himself muster" ("Tragedy and the Apostle of Beauty" 187). Their studies are valuable overviews which the first section of this chapter seeks to build upon by undertaking a close reading of Mann's classic in order to explore the manifestations of Wilde in the novella (see also Wilper "Wilde and the Model of Homosexuality in Mann's *Tod in Venedig*").

On the other hand, Mackay's designation of same-sex love as "nameless" in his writings suggests the influence of Wilde through his citation of "the Love that dare not speak its name" from Douglas's poem "Two Loves" (1894) (Douglas 297). Mackay explains in the introduction to *Die Bücher der namenlosen Liebe* that this form of love "since no name yet correctly names it today" (15) ("da kein Name sie heute recht noch nennt"; 13). And with this strategy, he circumvents the discursive baggage with which most contemporary names for love between males were laden. Mackay is not the only writer of the era to take up his pen in support of same-sex desire only to be confronted with a paucity of opprobrium-free nomenclature. Symonds writes in the introduction to "A Problem in Modern Ethics" by stating that he could "hardly find a name" for discussing same-sex love "which will not seem to soil this paper" (*Symonds and Homosexuality* 128), Carpenter coined the expression "homogenic love," and Elisar von Kupffer created "Lieblingminne." The term "peder-

asty" would carry with it connotations which Mackay would naturally have wanted to avoid (see J. Bauer, "On the Nameless Love and Infinite Sexualities" 9). Opting for namelessness was by no means an untested strategy (see Cocks, *Nameless Offences* 158–61), with Wilde's mobilization of Douglas's poem as perhaps the most famous instance. Wilde's highly publicized citation has "assumed quasi-mythic status," writes Richard Bozorth, as "a gesture of defiance against persecution" ("Naming the Unnameable" 203). Lawrence Danson writes that "In a century that could not name Wilde's love without making it 'unnatural,' the deferral of naming was a necessary act of resistance" ("Oscar Wilde, W. H., and the Unspoken Name of Love" 997). Walter Fähnders, Wolfgang Popp, and Hubert Kennedy write in reference to Mackay's works that the namelessness of homosexual love is a direct reference to Wilde (Fähnders, "Anarchism and Homosexuality in Wilhelmine Germany" 142; Popp, "Zwischen Wilde-Prozess und Eulenburg-Affäre" 95; Kennedy, *The Anarchist of Love* 11). J. Edgar Bauer, though, dissents from this assessment, arguing that "the motivation of Mackay's strategy of avoidance essentially differs from the one underlying Alfred Douglas's poetical periphrasis." He posits that "While Douglas stresses the shrinking back from daring to pronounce the 'true' name of homosexual love, Mackay refuses to name his love with the names offered to him by a Zeitgeist saturated by the displacements of Christian culture" ("On the Nameless Love and Infinite Sexualities" 10). Bauer distinguishes between two uses of namelessness: whereas Douglas is passive, "shrinking back" from articulating the name of same-sex love, Mackay is active in avoiding unsuitable naming systems. But read differently, "Two Loves" expresses, writes Bozorth, "the drive to put such love into language—to speak it in the face of forces that would make it *unspeakable* in every sense" (204). Even if Douglas does shrink back from naming homosexual love in the poem, as Bauer suggests, Wilde's citation most certainly does not. His courtroom defense deploys strategic namelessness in the same mode as Mackay; Wilde avoids the terms loaded with "the displacements of Christian culture," that is, sodomy, buggery, "gross indecency," as Mackay avoids similar terms, in addition to those that carry medico-psychopathological connotations, that is, "inversion," "homosexuality," "contrary sexual feeling."

Wilde's influence on the *Bücher der namenlosen Liebe* reaches beyond the designation of same-sex love as "nameless." In particular, *Der Puppenjunge* responds to Wilde's legacy in two key ways. On the one hand, the novel records a neophyte's entry into the homosexual underworld, coming across a wide range of homosexualities, including many that appear to be embodiments of the stereotypes of Wilde. Therefore, Wilde impacts the novel in regard to fictionalizing the models and archetypes of homosexuality coined during and in the wake of his trials. On the other hand, the novel responds to Wilde's aftermath in terms of reacting to effeminacy, taking this reaction further than Forster's and even Prime-Stevenson's novels. And thus it becomes evident in the second section of this chapter that there is a tension in the novel between its documentary navigation of Berlin's homosexual subcultures from Günther's perspective and the repudiation of these communities from Graff's perspective.

## The Homosexual Rebels: Wilde and Aschenbach

Mann understood the seriousness that underlies dandyism and especially aestheticism, and this is why, in "Nietzsches Philosophie im Lichte unserer Erfahrung" ("Nietzsche's Philosophy in the Light of Recent History," 1947), he compares Wilde to Nietzsche. These two figures are leading voices in "the first head-on assault [of the European intelligentsia] upon the hypocritical morality of the middle-class Victorian age" (*Last Essays* 157) ("d[em] ersten Anrennen der europäischen Intelligenz gegen die verheuchelte Moral des viktorianischen, des bürgerlichen Zeitalters"; *Gesammelte Werke* 9: 691). Mann writes that many of Nietzsche's philosophical tenets could have appeared in Wilde's comedies, shocking and delighting audiences (158; 692), and, conversely, Wilde's epigrams are distinctively Nietzschean:

When Wilde declares: "For, try as we may, we cannot get behind the appearance of things to reality. And the terrible reason may be that there is no reality in things apart from their appearances"; when he speaks of the "truth of masks" and the "decay of the lie"; when he bursts out: "To me beauty is the wonder of wonders. It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible"; when he calls truth something so personal that the same truth can never be recognized by two different minds; when he says: "Every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the mind and poisons us . . . The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it"; and: "Don't be led astray into paths of virtue!"—we cannot help seeing that all these quotations might have come from Nietzsche. (157–58)

(Wenn Wilde erklärt: "For, try as we may, we cannot get behind the appearance of things to reality. And the terrible reason may be that there is no reality in things apart from their appearances"; wenn er von der "Wahrheit der Masken" und von dem "Verfall der Lüge" spricht, wenn er ausbricht: "To me beauty is the wonder of wonders. It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible"; wenn er die Wahrheit etwas so Persönliches nennt, daß niemals ein und dieselbe Wahrheit von zwei Geistern gewürdigt werden kann, wenn er sagt: "Every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the minds and poisons us ... The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it," und "Don't be led astray into paths of virtue!"—so könnte das alles sehr wohl bei Nietzsche stehen.; 691–92.)

For Mann, aestheticism is their protest against nineteenth-century moral hypocrisy. "It is curious, although comprehensible, that aestheticism was the first manifestation of the European mind's rebellion against the whole morality of the bourgeois age. Not for nothing have I coupled the names of Nietzsche and Wilde—they belong together as rebels, rebels in the name of beauty" (172) ("Es ist merkwürdig genug, obgleich

wohl verständlich, daß die erste Form, in der der europäische Geist gegen die Gesamtmoral des bürgerlichen Zeitalters rebellierte, der Ästhetizismus war. Nicht umsonst habe ich Nietzsche und Wilde zusammen genannt—als Revoltierende, und zwar im Namen der Schönheit Revoltierende gehören sie zusammen"; 707). Although this essay was published thirty-five years after the novella, it gives the reader some indication of what may have been Mann's attitude to Wildean dandy-aestheticism when he created Aschenbach. Towards the end of the narrative, the protagonist, like Nietzsche and Wilde before him, becomes a "rebel in the name of beauty." But Aschenbach is not alone in this role. The first of these dandy-aesthete rebel characters is the old man whom Aschenbach encounters on the ship to Venice. This character is generally identified as a foreshadowing device which signals the protagonist's coming downfall, however, I argue here that the reader never receives an objective or unbiased description of this character. The narrative style is "erlebte Rede," or free indirect discourse, which means that the narrator reports immediately from Aschenbach's experience (Reed, Introduction 28), and thus our negative impression of him is as a result of Aschenbach's repulsion. His reaction to the dandy reflects more on the protagonist's gender and sexual identity, its potential to be undone, than it is an objective characterization of this figure. If the reader can assume that in the novella aestheticism is a form of rebellion, then Aschenbach's final transformation, rather than indicating his final disgrace before his death, could enact a will to freedom that challenges contemporary value systems. Death in this case is not Aschenbach's punishment for violating bourgeois norms, but instead his release from them.

In the depictions of the two Wildean homosexuals, perception is skewed to the extent that the reader never can fully ascertain an unbiased sense of these characters. In the first instance, the reader experiences the aging dandy primarily through Aschenbach's perception and thus partakes in Aschenbach's disgust. In the second instance, the protagonist, the narrator, and the barber assess Aschenbach's transformation as a successful one, and yet the image persists that he has become a garishly made-up, maudlin old fool. The first scene occurs on the ship to Venice where Aschenbach feels a spasm of horror when he beholds that one of a group of young Italian men is not young at all, but instead that "the man's youth was false" (211) ("der Jüngling falsch war"; 79). "He was old, there was no mistaking it. There were wrinkles round his eyes and mouth. His cheeks' faint carmine was rouge, the brown hair under his straw hat with its coloured ribbon was a wig, his neck was flaccid and scrawny, his small stuck-on moustache and the little imperial on his chin were dyed, his yellowish full complement of teeth, displayed when he laughed, were a cheap artificial set, and his hands, with signet rings on both index fingers, were those of an old man" (211) ("Er war alt, man konnte nicht zweifeln. Runzeln umgaben ihm Augen und Mund. Das matte Karmesin der Wangen war Schminke, das braune Haar unter dem farbig umwundenen Strohhut Perücke, sein Hals verfallen und sehnig, sein aufgesetztes Schnurrbärtchen und die Fliege am Kinn gefärbt, sein gelbes und vollzähliges Gebiß, das er lachend zeigte, ein billiger Ersatz, und seine Hände, mit Siegelringen an beiden Zeigefingern, waren die eines Greises"; 79–80). This cha-



racter differs to Aschenbach in some fundamental ways, first in clothing: the old dandy, "who wore a light yellow summer suit of extravagant cut, a scarlet necktie and a rakishly tilted Panama hat" (211) ("in hellgelbem, übermodisch geschnittenem Sommeranzug, roter Krawatte und kühn aufgebogenem Panama"; 79), contrasts to Aschenbach and his sober accoutrements. Second they differ in their public presence: of the high-spirited group of men, the dandy "was the most conspicuous of them all in his shrill hilarity" (211) ("tat sich mit krähender Stimme an Aufgeräumtheit vor allen andern hervor"; 79) which contrasts to the protagonist's dignified reserve. Finally, the dandy's unbounded sexuality, he was "full of wretched exuberance, clutching at everyone who approached him, . . . and licking the corners of his mouth with the tip of his tongue in a repellently suggestive way" (213) ("zeigte er einen jammervollen Übermut, hielt jeden, der sich ihm näherte, . . . und leckte auf abscheulich zweideutige Art mit der Zungenspitze die Mundwinkel"; 83), contrasts to Aschenbach's repression. The protagonist's strong emotional response indicates a reaction to a countertype to the form of manly austerity he has fashioned for himself. The text shows this character to be Aschenbach inverted. He haunts Aschenbach and twice causes him to feel a growing estrangement from the world. The first instance is after the protagonist discovers that "the man's youth was false". "He had a feeling that something not quite usual was beginning to happen, that the world was undergoing a dreamlike alienation, becoming increasingly deranged and bizarre" (211) ("Ihm war, als lasse nicht alles sich ganz gewöhnlich an, als beginne eine träumerische Entfremdung, eine Entstellung der Welt ins Sonderbare um sich zu greifen"; 80). And the second is after he notes the way in which the man licks the corners of his lips. "Aschenbach watched him with frowning disapproval, and once more a sense of numbness came over him, a feeling that the world was somehow, slightly yet uncontrollably, sliding into some kind of bizarre and grotesque derangement" (213) ("Aschenbach sah ihm mit finsternen Brauen zu, und wiederum kam ein Gefühl von Benommenheit ihn an, so, als zeige die Welt eine leichte, doch nicht zu hemmende Neigung, sich ins Sonderbare und Fratzenhafte zu entstellen"; 83). As Aschenbach disembarks onto the quay, the dandy accosts him with another suggestive sign (214; 84). But, as this character only seems to affect Aschenbach, there is the possibility that the character is not as horrifying as he perceives. After all, the man's companions not only tolerate him, but seem to accept his presence, and he causes no major concern for other passengers. His intense reaction indicates the threat this character poses to the protagonist as his antithesis. He represents decadence, aestheticism, dandyism, anti-bourgeois behaviors and values. The protagonist attempts to define himself against such a figure through his reverence for masculine virtues of self-sacrificing heroism, austerity, civic mindedness, and discipline, but this figure undermines his manly reserve. Aschenbach rejects a hidden potential, subconsciously recognized at most, the repressed elements of himself projected upon this figure (see also Webber, "Mann's Man's World" 74–75).

Aschenbach is insecure in his gender role, a fact which is made further evident by his attitude towards his profession, his calling as an artist. His art is de-

scribed in terms of "a war, an exhausting struggle" (249) ("ein[em] Krieg, ein[em] aufreibende[n] Kampf"; 132), through which he attempts to justify his life. "A life of self-conquest and defiant resolve, an astringent, steadfast and frugal life which he had turned into the symbol of that heroism for delicate constitutions, that heroism so much in keeping with the times—surely he might call this manly, might call it courageous?" (249) ("Ein Leben der Selbstüberwindung und des Trotzdem, ein herbes, standhaftes und enthaltsames Leben, das er zum Sinnbild für einen zarten und zeitgemäßen Heroismus gestaltet hatte,—wohl durfte er es männlich, durfte es tapfer nennen?"; 132). The hallmark of Aschenbach's life and work is his effort to transform the production of art into a manly, proactive, and civic-minded undertaking by conquering its effeminate, egocentric, and asocial aspects. This was a site of anxiety, writes James Eli Adams, for many nineteenth-century writers. With intellectual labor during this century beginning to be characterized as an "unmanly" or "effeminate" pursuit, these writers drew upon modes of masculinity which were "understood as the incarnation of an ascetic regimen, an elaborately articulated program of self-discipline," one of which was that of the soldier (*Dandies and Desert Saints* 2). Aschenbach likens struggle in the name of art to the lives of Frederick the Great and Saint Sebastian. "For composure under the blows of fate, grace in the midst of torment—this is not only endurance: it is an active achievement, a positive triumph, and the figure of Saint Sebastian is the most perfect symbol if not of art in general, then certainly of the kind of art here in question" (205) ("Denn Haltung im Schicksal, Anmut in der Qual bedeutet nicht nur ein Dulden; sie ist eine aktive Leistung, ein positiver Triumph, und die Sebastian-Gestalt ist das schönste Sinnbild, wenn nicht der Kunst überhaupt, so doch gewiß der in Rede stehenden Kunst"; 72). Both are soldier figures (not to mention homosexual icons) who maintained their resolve in the face of adversity. Aschenbach idolizes the manliness "of a youth who clenches his teeth in proud shame and stands calmly on as the swords and spears pass through his body" (205) ("die in stolzer Scham die Zähne aufeinanderbeißt und ruhig dasteht, während ihr die Schwerter und Speere durch den Leib gehen"; 71–72). With these Olympian figures of manly virtue as his guides, Aschenbach produces civic-minded art which possesses moral weight. The style of its balanced classicism is held up as a model for German school boys.

In this struggle, his crowning achievement is his novel *Ein Elender* (*A Study in Abjection*), in which the "forthright words of condemnation . . . weighed vileness in the balance and found it wanting—they proclaimed their writer's renunciation of all moral scepticism, of every kind of sympathy with the abyss; they declared his repudiation of the laxity of that compassionate principle which holds that to understand all is to forgive all" (207) ("Die Wucht des Wortes, mit welchem hier das Verworfenne verworfen wurde, verkündete die Abkehr von allem moralischen Zweifelsinn, von jeder Sympathie mit dem Abgrund, die Absage an die Laxheit des Mitleidssatzes, daß alles verstehen alles verzeihen heiße"; 74). Yet, as he pursues Tadzio through the labyrinth of Venice, Aschenbach is confronted with the conflict between his artistic nature and his paternal legacy. He gauges his life against his forebears' sobriety and

manliness; they were "men who had spent their disciplined, decently austere life in the service of the King and the state" (202) ("Männer, die im Dienste des Königs, des Staates ihr straffes, anständig karges Leben geführt hatten"; 68). His ancestors, to him, represent the embodiment of moral and civic manliness. "And [Aschenbach] thought of them even here and now, entangled as he was in so impermissible an experience, involved in such exotic extravagances of feeling; he thought, with a sad smile, of their dignified austerity, their decent manliness of character. What would they say? But for that matter, what would they have said about his entire life, a life that had deviated from theirs to the point of degeneracy, this life of his in the compulsive service of art" (249) ("[Aschenbach] dachte ihrer auch jetzt und hier, verstrickt in ein so unstatthaftes Erlebnis, begriffen in so exotischen Ausschweifungen des Gefühls, gedachte der haltungsvollen Strenge, der anständigen Männlichkeit ihres Wesens und lächelte schwermütig. Was würden sie sagen? Aber freilich, was hätten sie zu seinem ganzen Leben gesagt, das von dem ihren so bis zur Entartung abgewichen war, zu diesem Leben im Banne der Kunst"; 132). This passage indicates that not only does Aschenbach fall short of his manly ideal whilst surrendering himself to his emotion and desire, but he has never, in his mind, been able to live up to it. That Aschenbach feels the need to clothe the production of art in notions of manliness and heroism indicates that he does not truly believe art to be an inherently masculine pursuit. The fact that he asks the question implies that the answer is no. If he believed it were true, then there would be no angst. And the struggle has been in vain. If Aschenbach is punished, it is not for his transgression of bourgeois norms, but for enslaving his emotions which take their revenge upon their master.

The second Wildean homosexual is Aschenbach himself after his metamorphosis at the hands of the hotel barber. Not long after he gives voice to his love, Aschenbach has a dream which is at the same time more than a dream, "a bodily and mental experience" (259) ("ein körperhaft-geistiges Erlebnis"; 146); he witnesses an orgy in honor of the foreign god, Dionysus, which Mann based on descriptions of Dionysian rites described by the classicist Erwin Rohde in his *Psyche: Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen* (*Psyche: The Cult of Souls and the Belief in Immortality Among the Greeks*, 1894) (Lehnert, "Thomas Mann's Early Interest in Myth and Erwin Rohde's *Psyche*" 297, 299). Aschenbach is initially repulsed by and fears what he sees and hears: bare-breasted women entwined by snakes, hairy men with horns on their brows, smooth-skinned boys leading goats, chanting, shrieking, and drums beating a tattoo. "Great was his loathing, great his fear, honourable his effort of will to defend to the last what was his and protect it against the Stranger, against the enemy of the composed and dignified intellect" (260) ("Groß war sein Abscheu, groß seine Furcht, redlich sein Wille, bis zuletzt das Seine zu schützen gegen den Fremden, den Feind des gefaßten und würdigen Geistes"; 147). This dream is the point when he loses struggle that he has waged throughout his life: the struggle between reason and emotion, between intellect and intuition, between repression and sensuality. At first merely an observer, he yearns to join the rite like Pentheus in Euripides's *Bacchae*. "His heart throbbed to the drumbeats, his brain whirled, a fury

seized him, a blindness, a dizzying lust, and his soul craved to join the round-dance of the god" (260) ("Mit den Paukenschlägen dröhnte sein Herz, sein Gehirn kreiste, Wut ergriff ihn, Verblendung, betäubende Wollust, und seine Seele begehrte, sich anzuschließen dem Reigen des Gottes"; 148). And when he finally releases the reins of self-control and joins them, "The dreamer now was with them and in them, he belonged to the stranger-god . . . and his very soul savoured the lascivious delirium of annihilation" (261) ("Mit ihnen, in ihnen war der Träumende nun und dem fremden Gotte gehörig . . . und seine Seele kostete Unzucht und Raserei des Unterganges"; 148), Aschenbach forsakes the last pretenses to the Apollonian intellect which had heretofore ordered his life, giving himself over to his darker, fierier urges.

After the dreams he embraces the dandy-aesthete role:

Like any other lover, he desired to please and bitterly dreaded that he might fail to do so. He added brightening and rejuvenating touches to his clothes, he wore jewellery and used scent, he devoted long sessions to his toilet several times a day, arriving at table elaborately attired and full of excited expectation. As he beheld the sweet youthful creature who had so entranced him he felt disgust at his own ageing body, the sight of his grey hair and sharp features filled him with a sense of shame and hopelessness. He felt a compulsive need to refresh and restore himself physically; he paid frequent visits to the hotel barber. (261)

(Wie irgendein Liebender wünschte er, zu gefallen und empfand bittere Angst, daß es nicht möglich sein möchte. Er fügte seinem Anzuge jugendlich aufheiternde Einzelheiten hinzu, er legte Edelsteine an und benutzte Parfums, er brauchte mehrmals am Tage viel Zeit für seine Toilette und kam geschmückt, erregt und gespannt zu Tische. Angesichts der süßen Jugend, die es ihm angetan, ekelte ihn sein alternder Leib, der Anblick seines grauen Haares, seiner scharfen Gesichtszüge stürzte ihn in Scham und Hoffnungslosigkeit. Es trieb ihn, sich körperlich zu erquicken und wiederherzustellen; er besuchte häufig den Coiffeur des Hauses; 149.)

The barber uses his art to transform Aschenbach, dying his hair and applying cosmetics to his skin: "with beating heart he saw himself as a young man in earliest bloom" (262) ("[er] erblickte mit Herzklopfen einen blühenden Jüngling"; 150). The barber declares, "Now the signore can fall in love as soon as he pleases" (263) ("Nun kann der Herr sich unbedenklich verlieben"; 150). It would seem, then, that Aschenbach's transformation has been a successful one. The protagonist, narrator, and barber seem to be pleased. For the reader, it is equivocal. For those of us influenced by the cinematic images of Luchino Visconti's 1971 film *Morte a Venezia* (*Death in Venice*), it is difficult not to be tempted to take Aschenbach's disgust projected at the dandified old man at face value and in turn interpret this physical transformation as a fulfilment of the prophecy embodied in that character. Visconti's vision is however only one interpretation. Was the man really so awful to behold? Does Aschenbach's transfor-

mation in the same way represent a horrid masquerade of youth? The equivocalness in the characterizations of both Wildean dandy figures makes these questions impossible to answer definitively.

The essay "The Painter of Modern Life" (1863), by Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), can assist in interpreting Aschenbach's final transformation. The two figures, Baudelaire and Wilde, were not unconnected for Mann. He defends the aestheticism of both in his polemic *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (*Reflections of an Unpolitical Man*, 1918) (Vilain 238). Baudelaire characterizes dandyism as heroic, "the last flicker of heroism in decadent ages," and writes positively of the use of cosmetics ("The Painter of Modern Life" 39). Therefore, it might be possible to argue that, in similar terms, Aschenbach's use of this art form succeeds, as far as the protagonist, the narrator (at least at this point in the narrative), and the barber are concerned, in transcending nature, "to hide all the blemishes that nature has so outrageously scattered over the complexion" (46). He has "received at birth a spark of that sacred fire [he] would feign use to light up [his] whole being" (47), and in doing so he hopes to win the love of the divine Tadzio. Aschenbach makes his life into a work of art, although only briefly. The reader could view this embrace of his maternal legacy as a manner of liberation. "He no longer feared the observant eyes of other people; whether he was exposing himself to their suspicions he no longer cared" (261) ("Er scheute nicht mehr die beobachtenden Blicke der Menschen; ob er sich ihrem Verdacht aussetze, kümmerte ihn nicht"; 148). Suspicion for what, we might ask, for his homosexuality? He overcomes the shame he associates with the aspects of himself that he has worked to conquer, repress, and conceal from his conscious self and the world: his emotion, his intuition, his ability to love homosexually. At one level death is indeed a judgment upon Aschenbach, but on another level it is his liberator. And this may be a liberation he welcomes. For Baudelaire, "suicide is the supreme sacrament of dandyism" (Sartre, *Baudelaire* 140–41; see also Hiddleston, *Baudelaire and the Art of Memory* 67). When, in the frenzy of his intoxication, Aschenbach consumes "some fruit, some overripe soft strawberries" (264) ("einige Früchte, Erdbeeren, überreife und weiche"; 152) which are tainted, thereby infecting himself with cholera (Binion, *Sounding the Classics* 139), one could argue that he partakes of this final sacrament of the religion of dandyism.

Especially in the penultimate scene of the novella, the growing irony and distance toward the protagonist seems to condemn Aschenbach's liberation and discount the catharsis, which he reaches in the final Socratic monologue. It is the de-ranked product of "his half-asleep brain with its tissue of strange dream-logic" (264) ("sein[em] halb schlummernde[n] Hirn an seltsamer Traumlogik"; 153). Addressing his Tadzio/Phaedrus, Aschenbach repudiates the role of the artist as worthy citizen (264–65; 153), a repudiation which, as discussed in chapter 2, has significance for the Platonic relationship he imagines between himself and the boy. Moreover, this rejection speaks to the role of art and the artist in society. Aschenbach's art is utilitarian, civic, manly, but, at this point, he claims that art serves no moral function, art is amoral. "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" (265) ("Denn du mußt wissen, daß wir Dichter den Weg der Schönheit nicht gehen können, ohne daß Eros sich zugesellt und sich zum Führer aufwirft"; 153). The artist must follow where Eros leads, and thus the implication is that art is autotelic and divorced from utilitarianism or didacticism: art for art's sake. Hence, *Der Tod in Venedig* comments upon Wilde's legacy through its incorporation of dandy-aestheticism as well as by (at least in part) endorsing a Wildean understanding of art and the artist. Aschenbach, like Wilde, is a rebel in the name of beauty, undertaking an aestheticist rebellion against nineteenth-century moral hypocrisy, through which the novella conducts the most extensive treatment of the themes associated with Wilde's legacy of the four texts under discussion. And yet, the novella's treatment of the aesthetic homosexual model is an equivocal one. But it is this equivocal nature that invites the reader to reinterpret Aschenbach's apparent disgrace, downfall, and death. It opens the possibility of viewing this death not as a condemnation, but as liberation.

### "Feasting with panthers" in Berlin

Eight years before Christopher Isherwood's camera-like gaze recorded Berlin tottering at the edge of an abyss, Mackay's novel offered vignettes of life in Berlin's gay bars. In an example of literary documentary, the novel captures a wide array of styles of homosexual subjectivity which had proliferated after the Wilde trials and the Eulenburg Affair, attesting to the impact of these scandals upon German homosexual subcultures and thus demonstrating their impact upon the novel. Kennedy writes that, in the course of 1924, Mackay frequented Berlin's gay bars to research male prostitute subcultures (*Anarchist of Love* 40–41). The styles that the novel captures are diverse; on one end of the social ladder is "the Count" ("der Herr Graf"), an aristocratic aesthete and homosexual voyeur. He collects Günther as an *objet d'art* and treats him to a life of idle, and uneventfully boring, luxury (*Hustler* 136–56; *Puppenjunge* 161–82). On the other end of said ladder is "the refined Atze" ("der feine Atze"), an interwar Berlin "panther" who lives for feasting and wrangling more money out of his clients. "There's no such thing as love," Atze instructs Günther, "At least it's never yet happened to me. But if it did—Chick, pay attention to what I'm telling you now—if one of them was to fall in love with me, I would really take advantage of him!" (75) ("Liebe gibt's überhaupt nicht. Mir wenigstens is se noch nich vorgekommen. Wenn es sie aber gibt—Hühnchen, pass' auf, was ich Dir jetzt sage:—wenn sich aber einal Einer in mich verlieben sollte, den würde ich schön hochnehmen!"; 84). Interaction in the subculture(s) occurs mostly in the gay lounges, the "Adonis Lounge" ("Adonis-Diele") being the most frequented in the novel, which was based on a real bar called the *Marienkasino* (Kennedy 40). Found there are homosexual pairs: "No one was allowed in without a necktie. Nor, of course, was any female admitted. Only toward evening, after nine, did it become really full. Many couples show up, always an older man and a younger. They sat together and no one approached them" (48) ("Ohne Kragen wurde Niemand hereingelassen.

Ebensowenig natürlich ein weibliches Wesen. Erst gegen Abend, nach neun, wurde es richtig voll. Viele Paare, immer ein Älterer und ein Jüngerer, erschienen. Sie saßen zusammen und Keiner kam ihnen nah"; 53). These homosexual couples are part of this world, but, at the same time, they keep certain segments of this world, that is, the male prostitutes, at arm's length. They are a "respectable" element in this milieu, as is suggested by the emulation of heterosexual norms and the fact that they segregate themselves, they "sat together and no one approached them," in other words, the hustlers know that they are not interested in their services.

And, of course, there are the hustlers, the *Pupen-* or *Strichjungen*. "At mostly small tables sat more or less well-dressed, often over-elegant young men, many with affected manners and even wearing makeup, but others still quite vigorous and manly" (49) ("An den meist kleinen Tischen saßen mehr oder weniger gut, oft aber auch übermäßig elegant gekleidete junge Menschen, manche geziert in ihrem Wesen und sogar geschminkt, andere aber ganz frisch noch und männlich"; 53). On one end of a spectrum of hustler masculinity are the rough trade ("Kessen, Heißen, Starken"; 47), like "Karl the Great" ("Karl der Große"). He literary and figuratively towers over the other hustlers. "In a well-tailored suit of the best material, with his powerful, strong shoulders and his broad chest, his large, regular, handsome, and frank face, he stood there and, with a good-natured smile, looked down at the shrimps under him" (94) ("In gut gearbeitetem Anzug von besten Stoff, mit seinem mächtigen, starken Schultern und seiner bereiten Brust, mit seinem großen, regelmäßigen, hübschen und zugleich offenem Gesicht, stand er da und sah gutmütig lächelnd auf den Knirps unter ihm"; 107). There is also brutish "Sailor Otto" ("Matrosen-Otto"). "As his name indicated, he wore a sailor's uniform and one sensed under it his muscular and sinewy arms and legs. His exposed chest showed red and blue tattoos" (94) ("Er trug, wie sein Name es schon nicht anders zuließ, die Kuli-Kluft, und man fühlte unter ihr die muskulösen und sehnigen Arme und Beine. Die halbnackte Brust zeigte rote und blaue Tätowierungen"; 108). Even these masculine figures display an exaggerated quality, what was at this time in subcultures in English-speaking countries becoming known as a "camp" quality. For instance, "Sailor Otto had never been to sea" (94) ("Matrosen-Otto war nie zur See gewesen"; 108), his show of masculinity is all pretense concocted in order to attract a customer. While at the other end of this continuum are the "aunties" ("Tanten"). "An auntie," explains Atze, "well, that was just: 'Oooh nooo! an auntie—like girls when they're young and then just like old maids'" (47) ("Eine Tante—nun das war eben—huch nein!—eine Tante: 'wie die Mädchens, wenn se jung sind und dann ganz wie die ollen Weiber . . .'; 51). Amongst the supporting cast, the *Tanten* greatly outnumber the rough trade. The novel contains a number of sketches and caricatures of effeminate characters. One of these is "Josie" ("Finchen"), an effeminate young man who works at a hotel in which Günther finds himself one morning. "In elegant pajamas, with leather slippers on his dainty feet, he came dancing in. . . . Josie's real name was Joseph, but since it would have been perverse to cal him Joe, he was more appropriately named Josie. He, or rather 'she,' occupied something like a confidential position at the hotel. She

was porter and waiter at the same time, and was glad to be available (when paid, of course) as a substitute for the young guest, in case a gentleman arrived without one" (101) ("In einem hocheleganten Schlafanzug, Lederpantöffelchen an den zierlichen, nackten Füßen, kam er tänzelnd herein. . . . Finchen hieß eigentlich Joseph. Aber da es pervers gewesen wäre, ihm Seppel zu rufen, wurde er zweckentsprechender Finchen genannt. Er, oder besser gesagt sie bekleidete hier so etwas wie einen Vertrauensposten, war Portier und Kellner zugleich, und vertrat gern und hingebend [wenn es sich lohnte natürlich] die Stelle der jungen Gäste, falls ein Herr einmal ohne einen solchen hier abstieg"; 116–17). These portrayals contribute to the documentary realism of the text and attest to how visible homosexual communities had become during the interwar period, but have little effect upon the story's plot. This ensemble represents a well-established stock of types, variations which came to be associated with the homosexual world through notable scandals, thus demonstrating their influence upon the formation of homosexual stereotypes held by the public at large as well as identities adopted and adapted by individuals within these communities.

The novella *Fenny Skaller: Ein Leben der namenlosen Liebe* also treats homosexual subcultures, but in contrast to the later novel merely peeps into the homosexual world beyond the narrow confines of the protagonist's liaisons. "What Skaller saw filled him with disgust and deep sadness" (150) ("Was Skaller sah, erfüllte ihn mit Ekel und tiefer Traurigkeit"; 266). The portrayal of the hubs of homosexual subcultures, the gay bars and the men who frequent them, is disparaging. Skaller's perception is reductionary and biased by his distaste for effeminacy. The portions of *Der Puppenjunge* narrated from Graff's perspective are also biased, but not to the same extent as Skaller's. Graff's reaction to one of the novel's *Tanten* demonstrates this. The character is a work colleague and everything that the reader knows about him is second hand, filtered through Graff's reaction to him—comparable to Aschenbach's response to the old dandy on the ship to Venice. This character has tried to befriend Graff, but his offers have been evaded. When the protagonist is convicted for violating Paragraph 175, this man again offers friendship and is the only one to show sympathy. A physical impression of him comes to the reader through his hand, which is soft and boneless. This hand is a synecdoche. He gripped Graff's hand "with a sympathetic pressure" (275) ("mit einem teilnehmenden Druck"; 318). "He could not even return the pressure of this hand, so soft and boneless did it lie in his" (275) ("Er konnte selbst den Druck dieser Hand nicht erwidern, so weich, so knochenlos lag sie in der seinen"; 318). Whereas harmlessly effete and effeminate characters are described by the narrator in other parts of the novel, the reader only experiences the work colleague through Graff. "He had something (not exactly slimy, but clinging), something specifically effeminate in his whole conduct, which he could not endure for the life of him" (274) ("Er hatte so etwas—(nicht grade Schleimiges, aber doch Anschmiegendes)—so etwas spezifisch Weibisches in seinem ganzen Wesen, das er nun einmal auf den Tod nicht vertragen konnte"; 317). The difference between this *Tante* and the others is that whereas the others are oddities with whom neither Günther nor Graff sense affinity or kinship, the work colleague recognizes, through



unnamed signs, Graff's sexuality and pursues his friendship based on this. This connection, as well as the potential that he is giving off these signals, is threatening to Graff. The colleague offers support and shows solidarity with him, but his advances are rebuffed. So far Graff's interaction within the subculture has been limited to his liaison with Günther, sitting alone at the *Adonis-Diele*, and searching for Günther when he disappears with Pipel, another boy-prostitute. The work colleague could offer access to a circle of man-loving men with whom Graff might actually be able to relate as equals in terms of education, social class, tastes, and interests. But he resists an association with this character and the community to which he belongs. "He suspected a world in which he did not belong and with which he had nothing in common. A small world of its own—full of various connections, special and particular interests, and endless idle gossip" (282) ("Er hntte eine Welt, in die er nicht gehörte, und mit der er Nichts gemein hatte. Eine kleine, eigene Welt—voll mannigfacher Beziehungen, besonderen und eigentümlichen Interessen, und endlosem Klatsch und Tratsch"; 326). Like Skaller's refusal to identify with the subjects of the sexological study (*Bücher der namenlosen Liebe* 214–15), Graff resists identifying himself and his desire with a community of men with whom the only commonality is their shared desire for their own sex.

The central characters of *Imre* are also averse to identifying with and participating in effeminate homosexual subcultures: "how sordid and debasing are the average associations of the homosexual kind, how likely to be wanting in idealism, in the exclusiveness, in those pure and manly influences which ought to be bound up in them and to radiate from them!" (*Imre* 120). Imre is as disparaging of other homosexuals as Fenny Skaller. Imre "had grown to have a horror of similisexual types, of all contacts with them" (120). It is not too different in *Maurice* either, the way that Clive and Maurice regard "Risley and his set" (*Maurice* 56). Where the aversion experienced by Graff differs from those shared by Oswald and Imre and Clive and Maurice is in how they employ this in forming the boundaries of their identities. Whereas, in the English-language texts, the characters distance themselves from the effeminacy model by arguing that homosexuals are not necessarily effeminate, in the books of the nameless love the protagonists' mode of desire and related identity are posited as simply different. In *Imre*, effeminate homosexuals are regarded begrudgingly as fellow tribesmen; and Maurice is able to begin to understand his desires by at first identifying them with Risley, the effeminate Wildean character. By contrast, in *Der Puppenjunge*, as well as in *Fenny Skaller*, this is not the case. The earlier text makes this claim more explicitly: "to seek to line up here men who differ from other men in nothing but that their inclination is for the younger of their own, instead of the other sex, and only for this reason, was an absurdity only still possible in a time like ours, which allows only doctors to have the word in this matter. A new error, fateful above all for those whom it touched" (*Books* 148) ("Männern, die sich in Nichts von anderen Männern unterschieden, als darin, daß ihre Neigung den Jüngeren ihres eigenen Geschlechtes galt, anstatt dem anderen, hier einzureihen zu versuchen, und nur deshalb, war eine Lächerlichkeit und möglich allein in einer Zeit

noch, wie dieser, die nur Aerzten erst das Wort in dieser Sache gestallte. Ein neuer Irrthum, verhängnißvoll vor Allem für Die, welche er traf"; *Bücher* 263–64). Nonetheless the sentiment is common to both texts. The protagonists of Mackay's fiction resist being classified with other men based on same-sex desire. It is ironic then that a work of fiction that does so much to chronicle homosexual life during interwar Berlin's Golden Twenties is also a text which insists that the protagonist is not actually like those others. They may share attraction to their own sex, but the narrative consistently reinforces the difference between the desire "of the man with a feminine disposition, or perhaps better said, of the outwardly masculine female who is inclined to men" (148) ("des weiblich gearteten Mannes, oder, wohl besser gesagt, des äußerlich männlich gearteten Weibchens, das sich dem Manne gab"; 263) and that of the manly love of the protagonists, "the ancient love of the Greeks" (148) ("die alte Liebe der Hellenen"; 263). Thus the books of the nameless love go further than even *Imre* in their opposition to the effeminacy model. Whereas the protagonists of that text acknowledge their kinship with effeminate homosexuals as members of "the Race-Homosexual" (*Imre* 86), Skaller and Graff insist upon the recognition of the specificity of their love. Although the novel records and perpetuates homosexual images and stereotypes, it seeks to deconstruct the homosexual as a subspecies of human and instead to argue for divisions that are specific to the individuals concerned. The boy-lover is manly and "normal," not at all like those depraved effeminate beings. Indeed, theirs is a completely different mode of desire, and thus the nameless love deserves to be regarded as a love like any other and accepted by the mainstream.

## Conclusion

Mann's portrayal of Aschenbach can be taken to read some of the aspects of a Wildean legacy—particularly effeminacy, dandyism, aestheticism—positively in a mode of social critique. In this reading, Aschenbach is a sort of Nietzschean renegade against the narrow standards of contemporary bourgeois morality. But this endorsement of the protagonist's will to liberation is balanced against his apparent punishment for his desire to transgress moralistic strictures. Above I consider Aschenbach the homosexual artist as a tragic hero who, although he may have failed in his attempt, makes fathomable at least the possibility of living at odds with or even outside of conventional moral structures. And thus, Mann's literary response to Wilde and what he came to represent is the most faceted of the texts explored in this section.

Although Mackay's *Der Puppenjunge* is a vivid documentation of Berlin's interwar homosexual world, the novel and the other nameless love writings take the strategy of foregrounding masculine models of same-sex subjectivity a step further than the English texts explored in the previous chapter. The protagonists in the books of the nameless love resist being placed alongside other men with whom their only commonality is same-sex desire. Instead they deconstruct the rubric "homosexual" and insist upon recognizing the specificity of the desire of a masculine man for a

masculine youth within "the tremendous variety of love" (*Books* 125) ("der ungeheuren Verschiedenheit der Liebe"; *Bücher* 223). Hence, rather than argue that effeminacy is not indicative of moral, social, or physical disintegration—or alternately revel in the subversiveness of their crossing of genders, class divisions, and national barriers—*Der Puppenjunge* remains locked within the ideological framework offered to it by its heteronormative society. It accepts a manly/effeminate binary where the former embodies all that is good, vital, and healthy whereas the latter is bad, ineffectual, and morbid. The novel goes to great lengths to argue for the masculinity of the homosexual man and makes this argument to the point of misogyny. Similar to *Imre*, and somewhat to *Maurice*, the images of homo-masculinity on offer in *Der Puppenjunge* function to provide homosexual readers with affirmative images and to challenge the established stereotypes of mainstream readers. These aims are accomplished, especially in Prime-Stevenson's and Mackay's writings, at the cost of discounting effeminacy, censoring nongender-specific behaviors and interests, and thereby reifying the superior social worth of maleness and manliness.