"The Love that dare not Speak its Name:" Oscar Wilde's Early Prose and Discourses of Sexuality in *Fin-de- Siècle* England

By

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ABSTRACT

Focusing on the early prose of Oscar Wilde this project examines through a New Historical lens the discourses that shaped and influenced the discourse of sexuality, which is evident in Wilde's writing. Focusing on *The Picture of Dorian Gray* I will examine the corrupt influence medical and legal discourses had on some homosexual men living in Victorian England by closely analyzing the three main characters. The argument then examines some of the fairy tales from *The Happy Prince* and *The House of Pomegranates* by focusing on the discourse of Greek love.

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INTRODUCTION

In the late Victorian era, as Foucault demonstrates, a wide array of discourses began to label, organize, and categorize sexuality in nearly all aspects of cultural and social life, including education, law, and medicine. These discourses, like Richard von Krafft-Ebing's popular contribution to the emerging field of sexology, *Psychopathia Sexualis,* produced a proliferation of new "perversions," including the newly created "species" of sexual creature: the perverse homosexual.[1] Foucault argues that what appeared to be repression by such discourses was in reality the exact opposite, as sexuality exploded into all facets of life, giving shape, name, and existence to new modes of "peripheral sexualities" (42). Closely studying the literature and life of Oscar Wilde allows for a window into how these sexual discourses operated on the individual level, and how they could be internalized by individuals in damaging ways. While the proliferation of sexual discourses through the various branches of society may have been beneficial in giving shape to the existence of unique sexualities and "polymorphously perverse" sexualities, it was repressive to individuals that practiced acts outside of the accepted norm. I propose to examine Oscar Wilde's prose fiction works, specifically his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and his two collections of fairy tales, in view of the late Victorian sexologists' pathologizing discourse of male same-sex desire.

Chapter One examines the influence of medical and legal discourses on homosexuality in Victorian England, and Wilde's metaphorical coding of sexuality that he employs in order to project male passion into *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. By closely examining the three main characters, Basil, Lord Henry and Dorian, a parallel world to Wilde's nineteenth-century

[1] See Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, Part Two, Chapter Two, "The Perverse Implantation": "Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species" (43).

environment is revealed. In the book, however, Wilde reveals how an unaccepting public interpellates their negative beliefs about men who love other men onto those practicing "gross indecency," causing the individual to become corrupt. Wilde exposes the harmful effects of sexual discourses while keeping the sexual desires of his character's an allegorical secret.

The late nineteenth-century saw the publication of works by sexologist such as Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis, who provide detailed medical records and case histories concerning their patients' "conditions." Among those they treated were men who preferred sexual relations with other men, and their case histories disseminated a negative discourse that labeled homosexuality as "sexual inversion," a decadent and unnatural passion. I argue that Wilde constructs Lord Henry's character to mimic the doctors who experimented with "sexually inverted" men. Once Lord Henry establishes control over Dorian, he employs various methods of influence over him in order to examine the results. The results of these experiments are manifested in the increasingly corrupt appearance of the picture of Dorian, which is a projection of his own interior state. I argue that Dorian internalized the oppressive discourse of Lord Henry, who is Wilde's coded representation of nineteenth-century sexologists, whose discourse encouraged men who loved other men to lead a double life, hiding their desire for other men under the guise of a heterosexual life. The harmful effects of the sexologists' discourses are given coded representation in Lord Henry's experiments and in their consequences, which become manifest in the painting as it grows deformed and hideous. Wilde creates these characters to explore in a coded way the corrupting influence of late Victorian beliefs about male same-sex passion when these discourses are internalized by individuals.

In its discussion of the legal discourse of same-sex desire, Chapter One examines the notorious public sex scandals, such as the Cleveland Street scandal, and the passing of the

Labouchere Amendment, the law that defined "gross indecency" as illegal, and encouraged the prosecution of men who engaged in male same-sex relationships. Such legal discourse heightened public homophobia and caused some men who desired same-sex passion to hide their sexuality out of fear of physical punishment.[2] I argue that Wilde explores, in a coded way, the corrupting influence of both medical and legal discourses as they interpellate individuals and as they are internalized by men who loved other men.

Chapter Two examines Wilde's fairy tales in *The Happy Prince* (1888) and *The House of Pomegranates* (1891). By examining the relationships of the characters in these tales, I argue that Wilde creates a positive counterdiscourse about homosexuality through coded representations of Greek love. The fairy tales work to subvert or oppose the dominant homophobic discourse on same-sex eroticism either by stressing the positive, ennobling and spiritual quality of love between men or by showing the damaging effects of denying men their capacity to love or achieve their heart's desire. This is proved by examining the tales through the lens of Greek love and how the ancient ideals practiced by the Greeks are unaccepted in Victorian society. I demonstrate Wilde's coded support for Greek love by beginning with an examination of his trials when he invokes the purity of devoted friendships as a defense mechanism for questions concerning the perceived homosexuality of his work and life. The chapter continues with an explanation of Greek love as articulated in the work of John Addington Symonds, an early apologist for love between men. It then looks at Linda Dowling's argument about homosexuality in Victorian Oxford University as a context for understanding some of the tales in *The Happy Prince*. In the discussion of the tales in *The House of*

[2] Joseph Bristow offers a full explanation of how the La Bouchere Amendement encouraged prosecutions and was even known popularly as the "blackmailers' charter" because it encouraged allegations of "gross indecency" between men. See "*Wilde,* Dorian Gray, *and Gross Indecency.*"

Pomegranates, I argue that Wilde uses the mask of fantasy as a shield, as he codes same-sex, non-procreative sexual relationship under the cover of cross-species pairings. In these unlikely pairings of mermaids and mortals or ducks and linnets, I argue, Wilde examines the value and worth of Greek love while suggesting how society's rejection and shaming of it in his own era will someday be transformed into acceptance.

"The Love that dare not Speak its Name:" Oscar Wilde's Early Prose and Discourses of Sexuality in *Fin-de-Siècle* England

Chapter 1

The Picture of Dorian Gray

Fin-de-siècle England witnessed turbulent ideological changes that redefined legal and medical discourses, profoundly altering the lives of men who had begun to be categorized as "homosexual" in those discourses. Originally published in novel form in 1891, Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was met with some heavy opposition for its content, which some astute critics suspected as "homosexual."[3] Michel Foucault argues that the development of legal and medical discourses was part of an explosion of discourse on sex during the nineteenth century. Although he describes this proliferation of discourse on sex as positive, it can also be seen as harmful on the individual level for men categorized as "homosexual," who became marginalized as deviant outcasts and criminals. In *The Picture of Dorian* Gray, Wilde not only explores the dynamics of internalized oppression caused by the pathologizing and criminalizing discourse on "homosexuality" in *fin-de-siècle* England; further, he suggest how this internalized oppression can even corrupt love between men, turning it into something that is destructive of the self and one's relationships. The three main characters in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Basil,

[3] Found in *The Picture of Dorian Gray: An Annotated, Uncensored Edition*. Ed. Nicholas Frankel. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2011. Print. W.E. Henley states: "Why go grubbing in muck-heaps? The world is fair, and the proportions of healthy-minded men and women to those that are foul, fallen, or unnatural is great. Mr. Oscar Wilde has again been writing stuff that were better unwritten; and while *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* which he contributes to *Lippincott's*, is ingenious, interesting, full of cleverness, plainly the work of a man of letters, it is false art – for it's interests is medico-legal; it is false to human nature – for its hero is a devil; it is false to morality – for it is not made sufficiently clear that the writer does not prefer a course of unnatural iniquity to a life of cleanliness, health, and sanity. The story – which deals with matters only fitted for the Criminal Investigation Department or a hearing *in camera* [out of public scrutiny] – is discreditable alike to author and editor. Mr. Wilde has brains, and art and style; but if he can write for none but outlawed noblemen and perverted telegraph boys, the sooner he takes to tailoring (or some other decent trade) the better for his own reputation and the public morals" (6-7).

Dorian, and Lord Henry, are constructed as a reflection of the society, discourses, and potential for internalized sexual oppressors that characterized *fin-de-siècle* England. Wilde employs the themes of aestheticism and Greek love throughout the novel in order to explore homosexuality in a coded way. Through this coding, Wilde explores the consequences of internalized sexual oppression on men who love other men, while keeping it secret at the same time.

In analyzing *Dorian Gray* one critic even argued that "[d]ullness and dirt are the chief features of *Lippincott's* this month" (342). [4] This condemnation was the direct product of turn-of-the century discourses that shaped social thought and opinion about homosexuality as a deviant and gross practice. Being forced to hide one's true desires and act upon them only in secret because they are defined as perverse, pathological, and criminal can lead to internalized oppression.[5] A long way from the socially acceptable Greek love of the ancients, homosexuality in Victorian England was defined and categorized as abnormal, imprisoning the individual in the shadows of "gross indecency."[6] Oscar Wilde was the guide whom many followed into restricted openness, although not without consequence. A close examination of Basil, Lord Henry and Dorian, reveals how the sexuality of men who loved other men became thwarted or corrupted, to the extent of a symbolic or physical death of some of the characters because of the stigmatizing discourses placed upon them, which they internalize. Being labeled as "abnormal" in *fin-de-siècle* England was a product of the sexual explosion Foucault rightfully observes, although Wilde's literary publications and his arrest and imprisonment for "gross indecency" are proof

[4]Review written by Stuart Mason and published in *the Daily Chronicle* in June of 1890. This quote was located in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. A Norton Critical Edition. Ed. Donald L. Lawler. New York: Norton, 1988. Print.

[5] Gregory M. Herek. "Beyond 'Homophobia': Thinkg about Sexual Prejudice and Stigma in the Twenty-First Century." *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* 1.2 (2004): 6-24. Further discussion of internalized homophobia may be found in: Iain R. Williamson. "Internalized Homophobia and Health Issues Affecting Lesbians and Gay Men." *Oxford Journal of Medicine, Health Education Research*15.1 (1998): 97-107.

[6] Bristow, Joseph, ed. "Wilde, Dorian Gray, and gross indecency." *Sexual Sameness: Textual Differences in Lesbian and Gay Writing*. New York: Routledge, 1992. Print.

that such a proliferation of sexual discourses was not always as positive as Foucault argues.

The original and shorter publication of *Dorian Gray* in *Lippincott's Magazine* in 1890 offers a window into the past, and suggests how same-sex sexuality was received by Victorian society. After the labeling and categorizing of sexuality that Foucault explains occurred in the mid-nineteenth century, British social thought by the turn of that century deemed homosexuality as sinful, illegal, and corrupting. Some of those who first reviewed *Dorian Gray* failed to recognize the coded homosexuality within the text, while those who did strongly opposed it as vulgar and worthy of legal prosecution. The review in the *St. James Gazette* called Wilde's work a "stupid and vulgar piece" that "ought to be chucked in the fire" (335). The editor of the *Daily Chronicle* also found the story "vulgar," for the way in which Basil talked of Dorian in the manner most men speak of women (343). [7]

The criticism *Dorian Gray* was met with altered over time and gradually reveals a more positive reception of the book. One hundred years later in the 1990s various criticisms were published focusing on the influence of sexuality, Irish nationality, and aesthetics in the book.[8] Contemporary critics of *Dorian Gray* who focus on issues of sexuality tend to view the work either through a 21st-century lens or a very open and homoerotic novel. [9] On the other end of the spectrum are critics who argue the book, and in some cases its author, were not open about homosexual relations and hide behind a mask to conceal same-sex love.[10] Using a combined method of a 21st-century gay-affirming perspective as well as a view of the surrounding

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[7]Among those who believe Wilde and his characters to be offensively open with their sexuality in early reviews are the editors of *St. James Gazette*, *Daily Chronicle*, and *Scotts Observer*. Julia Hawthorn and Walter Pater were among the only few to speak approvingly about t *The Picture of Dorian Gray* proceeding publication.

[8] See Bruce Brush Bashford's article "When Critics Disagree: Recent Approaches to Oscar Wilde." Joseph Pine, Josephine Guy, Ian Small, and Jerusha McCormack have all published on Irish related topics. Alan Sinfield examines sexuality and art, while authors such as Julia Prewitt Brown, Regina Gagnier focus on topics of materialism and idealism.

[9]Alan Sinfield argues Wilde was capable of writing in such a homoerotic manner because today's stereotypes of same-sex relationships were shaped around Wilde's fashions and actions.

[10]Neil McKenna.

discourses that shaped sexuality in Victorian England to contextualize Wilde's novel, I argue that Wilde wrote under the limitations of contemporary sexual discourses. He did not hide same-sex love out of shame; rather, he used a brilliant style of coding to suggest the corrupting and corrosive effects of discourses of sexuality that attempted to limit the lives of men who loved other men in Victorian England.

The need for same-sex love to be concealed in the nineteenth-century is the product of the sexual proliferation that Michel Foucault examines in *The History of Sexuality*. As he explains in his rejection of the repressive hypothesis, a whole new and copious sexual discourse was created. The more a society preoccupied with controlling sex, the more it occurs, the more it forces speech about sex and the more it is "spoken about, to discover who does the speaking, the positions and viewpoints from which they speak, the institutions which prompt people to speak about it and which store and distribute the things that are said" (11). Out of this new discourse of sex, as Foucault mentions, the term "homosexual" was coined in 1870; there was now a name and identity placed on what had previously been considered an action that anyone could engage in: "[T]he homosexual was now a species" (43). This category of "species" was not left out of the legal and medical discourses of the Victorian era. Jonathan Katz explains how the nineteenth-century medical discourse used by sexologist's labeled, separated, and ostracized those considered to be sexually abnormal. This type of discourse thrives on terminology such as "good and bad," "perverts," "abnormal," and "invert," when discussing what was discursively constructed as abnormal homosexual impulses, creating a potentially harmful environment for those who interpellate these concepts as their subjectivity is shaped by them (84). Katz supports his argument of harmful discursive terminology by quoting sexologist Havelock Ellis in saying that abnormal hetero and homosexuals "poisoned the springs of feeling" (88). Katz's later

discussions of sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing reveals a similar oppressive discourses that defined nineteenth-century medical studies of same-sex and so-called "deviant" desires.

Using aesthetics as to encode male passionate desires, the opening scene of *Dorian Gray* presents an aesthetically rich introduction to Basil's studio that contains Persian saddlebags that Lord Henry lounges upon, tussore silk curtains, and air that is filled with the aroma of lilac and laburnums. Amid the sounds of buzzing bees and gracefully mobile birds, Wilde places in the middle of the scene the most artistically pleasing painting "of a man of extraordinary personal beauty," crafted by the hand of Basil Hallward (4). This is the first of various scenes that entices the senses of the reader to imagine an artistically beautiful setting, that is both aesthetically pleasing and sensually provocative. Constructing such overwhelmingly sensuous imagery was a coding tool Wilde strategically employs throughout the text. By appealing to the senses in a pleasing manner he is evoking the major concept of the Aesthetic Movement that was heightening in its existences towards the end of the Victorian era. The Aesthetic Movement became one that was associated with homosexuality. In his book *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885-1914*, Matt Cook explains the connection of art to sexual deviance, stating that art was both pleasing to look at, and also a "novel experience and experimentation for all the senses," tying it in with radical sexual behavior (97). Art allowed for a space where beauty and physical expression could take place, posing a threat to the tightly wound social conformity that British society was under the spell of, and becoming an interchangeable concept with deviant sexual practice. Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst include in their compilation of publications an 1895 excerpt written by Hugh E.M. Stutfield. In the excerpt Stutfield examines the aesthetes of British society and his dislike for them. He expresses the popular repugnance the public feels towards aesthetes, noting they "form a species of artistic aristocracy apart from the common

herd, but the contempt has since deepened into disgust" (122). Even more interesting, Stutfield makes a direct reference to Wilde's imprisonment and claims the scandal must "surely have opened the eyes even of those who have hitherto been blind to the true inwardness of modern aesthetic Hellenism, and perhaps the less on this subject now the better" (122). This was a commonly circulated opinion regarding artists in *fin-de-siècle* England, and proof that artistically driven individuals were looked upon by society as symbols of their decaying standards and conventions.

The opening scene is saturated with aesthetic descriptions that appeal to a variety of senses and immediately infuse the book with homoeroticism as Basil describes to Lord Henry the man in the painting, Dorian Gray. Wilde describes most of the people at this crush as academics when Basil sees Dorian for the first time, and becomes nervous in the presence of his beauty. Upon making eye contact with Dorian, Basil felt that he had met someone "so fascinating that, if I allowed it to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself" (8). Wilde mentions Basil's losing color in his face, and being so overcome by Dorian's beauty that he was overtaken by nerves so strong he wished momentarily to flee. Upon meeting the beautiful man he observed in astonishment, Basil tells Lord Henry that "for the first time in my life I saw in the plain woodland the wonder I had always looked for, and always missed" (12). *The Picture of Dorian Gray* revolves around art, as the three main characters are represented within the painting. When Basil suggests the painting is his best work, Lord Henry pompously opposes the painter's refusal to publicly display his own painting. Basil gives his reason for refusing to show the painting: "I have put too much of myself into it," further explaining, "[t]he reason I will not exhibit this picture is that I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my own soul" (4, 7). Basil fears that exposing the painting will reveal his sexual desires. Wilde

uses the painting, the main work of art, as a canvas on which to displace the homosexual desire that all three main characters project upon it, allowing Wilde to at once reveal but also conceal the three main characters' socially forbidden sexual appetites making them an open secret. The painting is used as a medium to suggest what it means to live a double life. In this case the work of the artist contains his identity; Basil projects his love for Dorian into the painting and initially fears its being revealed. Dorian's good nature, his virtue and his beauty allow Basil to comfortably expose his sexuality through his art. Dorian has the most powerful displacement of sexuality into the painting as he projects his entire soul into the canvas. He lives as a young and innocent man in public, while hiding his other true identity in a dusty schoolroom, the one that becomes marred and corrupted by his internalizing of social discourses of sexuality that pathologized and criminalized same-sex love. Lord Henry also lives a double life through Dorian by exerting influence over his actions to see how far he can manipulate his activities. Lord Henry is the corruptor of Dorian and the cause for the disfigured art. Julia Pewitt Brown remarks that Wilde uses this form of coding because "paradox takes our attention away from the moral dimension of the work" (70). Wilde uses this projection of Basil, Dorian, and Lord Henry's sexuality onto the painting as means of inserting same-sex eroticism into the novel while simultaneously keeping it veiled in secrecy.

The physical painting itself becomes the object that allows Wilde to construct these openly secret characters. Wilde represents Basil's painting of Dorian as his way to openly express his true nature; he poured his entire self into the painting, his entire sexuality. Basil explains in the beginning that "[i]t is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the colored canvas, reveals himself" (7). Julia Prewitt Brown explains Wilde's belief that art is not a representation of the artist; rather, the artist is a reflection of art. She quotes

Wilde as having said, "Life imitates art. […] Scientifically speaking, the basis of life – the energy of life, as Aristotle would call it – is simply the desire for expression, and Art is always presenting various forms through which this expression can be attained" (72). Dorian is the inspiration for Basil to express his sexual identity on canvas, but with too much of his sexuality being exposed within the painting, he cannot let the public eye gaze at his true art for fear of negative reaction. The painting allows for an area where all three characters can fully express their sexual identity while also keeping it shielded from the public.

Wilde metaphorically reveals in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* the double life that some homosexual men in Victorian England were forced to live. He does this by displaying male eroticism between the three leading characters and projecting the feelings into the painting, symbolizing the concept of keeping unacceptable sexuality hidden. Ed Cohen argues that Wilde displaces Basil's love for Dorian through his painting, allowing for Dorian's body to be both erotically and aesthetically pleasurable for Basil. Basil finds the attractiveness of Dorian's physical body to be of such magnificence that it enables his art to be just as beautiful. Through Dorian, Basil expressed himself aesthetically and sexually, as Dorian revealed to him the beauty and emotion that he was capable of having with another man (802-807). Metaphorically speaking, his love for another man helps him express his true feelings through his art while simultaneously keeping the secret hidden within the painting. Likewise, Lord Henry uses the art of discursive experimentation on Dorian, seducing Dorian with his clever language and glib paradoxes. In doing so, Lord Henry becomes obsessed with Dorian, essentially making Dorian's life Lord Henry's work of art; manipulating Dorian's life becomes Henry's mode of expressing his homosexual desire. Dorian is at the center of desire between both men, as the homoerotic nature of all three characters reveals itself gradually throughout the book. Interestingly enough,

Wilde represents all three characters as dominated by the limiting and corrupting sexual discourses of the late nineteenth century, which Wilde envisioned as forcing them to push their sexual desires into the concealing shadows for fear of public ridicule and possibly physical punishment.

Much of Wilde's coding could have been motivated by fear not only of the harmful medical discourses that heavily invade public thought, but also out of fear of legal persecution. As Joseph Bristow examines, the Labouchere amendment was passed in 1885 banning all "gross indecency," which included intercourse between same –sex individuals (49). Bristow argues that "the law sought to obscure sexuality – of any kind – from public view," making the 1885 Act significantly repressive towards individuals practicing any form of unacceptable sex (49). The attempt to use law to do away with deviant sexuality increased public recognition and knowledge of homosexuality (as well as others sexual outcasts) and elevated the status of physical punishment through imprisonment and hard labor.

The Picture of Dorian Gray was published during the same time as the Cleveland Street scandal that was making front-page headlines from the fall of 1889 to the spring of 1890, a controversy that would have influenced Wide's writing. This scandal involved a male prostitution house that drastically heightened public homophobia once the sexual relations among upper-class men and male prostitutes became the subject of prosecution and public outcry. The police uncovered the scandal while working cases of minor theft among the Post Office, where they discovered the boys who delivered telegraphs were also employed part time at a local brothel. Although in the opening scene of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* Basil's studio is set with the foundation of robust homoeroticism, Wilde was very careful to code the homosexual passion perhaps for fear of facing the same legal fate as the men caught up in the Cleveland

Street scandal, who were being sensationalized and documented in the media. The pathologizing sexologists' discourses, new laws and contemporary scandals such as these arguable heavily affected Wilde's actions and writing as he was forced to keep his sexuality, and that of his characters, masked in a level of secrecy that made proving their homosexuality difficult. Wilde was therefore as open as he could be in relations to the harmful discourses that threatened with physical punishment anyone or anything that was openly homosexual.

Michel Foucault's[11] examination of the repressive hypothesis explains that sexuality proliferated into many arenas of life, including the field of psychology.[12] Viewed through a New Historical lens, this opening scene also contains a coded examination of the medical discourses that defines and ostracizes homosexuality. Lord Henry's actions parallel those of nineteenth-century sexologists such as Richard Von Krafft-Ebing[13] and Havelock Ellis,[14] as he carefully chooses and manipulates his words in order to observe Basil's reactions, and eventually Dorian's. Recognizing the absurdity of Lord Henry's comments about the bourgeoisie, Basil argues, "I don't agree with a single word that you have said, and, what is more, Harry, I feel sure you don't either" (11). Henry assures Basil in his correctness that "if one puts forward an idea," much like an experimental scientist, "he never dreams of considering whether the idea is right or wrong," rather, he is concerned more with observing and analyzing the response (11). Lord

[11] In *The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, Michel Foucault explains the historical evolution of sexual ideology. Sexuality was a topic of openness prior to the seventeenth century and with an increase in population, the need to regulate and control human actions became a priority of bourgeois society in order to maintain power. Attempts to regulate sexuality had the reverse effect; in order to repress it it needed to be discussed, categorized, and labeled.

[12] Foucault's argument examines such sexual explosion in a positive light, for its expansion of the recognition and knowledge of varying types of sexuality. Through the lens of sexuality as a whole, he is correct; however to take the theory a step further, these proliferating sexual discourses negatively affected individuals labeled as a sexual minority and then persecuted as such or subjected to punishing therapies to change them.

[13] Krafft-Ebing, author of *Psychopathia Sexualis*, examines 238 cases of people that were medically defined as sexually deviant. He was sympathetic towards those who were institutionalized for sexual disorders and fought for the decriminalization of these practices, even as he defined them as victims of pathological perversions.

[14] Ellis, author of *Sexual Inversion*, was also sympathetic towards homosexuality and recognized it was socially constructed as a deviant act. However, both Ellis and Krafft-Ebing were still prominent figures in the shaping of common medical discourse that were used to ostracize homosexual men.

Henry actively takes the same measures with Dorian. He gains immense pleasure out of influencing Dorian, regardless that it leads him into social ruin. Basil attempts to protect Dorian from Lord Henry before their first introduction, urging him, "Don't try to influence him. Your influence would be bad. […] Don't take away from me the one person who gives to my art whatever charm it possesses: my life as an artist depends on him" (16). Basil's talent as an artist provides him an aesthetic code for his desire for men and he is attempting to protect Dorian from the harmful outcome that he knows lies within Lord Henry's influence that mirrors the detrimental effect of medical and scientific discourses that infiltrated popular social opinions about homosexuals.

Wilde constructs Lord Henry's character to embody the traits of harmful medical discourses through this character's rotten influence, while simultaneously including his witty and demeaning thoughts about the institution. Terence Sellers' introduction to *Psychopathia Sexualis,* Krafft-Ebing's study of 238 patients offers great insight to the horrifically oppressive belief that his patients needed to be directed away from their feelings of "unnatural" sexual desires. Krafft-Ebing's treatment would begin with prying deep into his case studies thoughts and behaviors concerning their sexual appetites, and then prescribing a cure. Case #125 for example sought the help of the sexologist to find a cure for his "abnormal condition," one that he asked would "transform [him] into a man of normal feeling," and stop his attraction to men (119). After hearing the detailed natures of his case studies "disorders" Krafft-Ebing would prescribe a variety of experimental treatments until the patient claimed the "unnatural" desires had ceased. Case #125 was institutionalized in an asylum for two years before being discharged under the belief that he now felt only heterosexual desires. Case #127 was treated for "sexual decadence" for his "shameful passion" towards other men, as was case #128 (123). Krafft-Ebing

would often times "strengthen the sexual inclination for the opposite sex," by prescribing to men frequent trips to brothels and forced intercourse with women (146). When such experiments failed to steer patients into heterosexual passions, the man would then be encourage to get married, or be committed to an asylum to undergo intense therapy.

Krafft-Ebing's recorded studies make accessibly the harmful medical discourses that were prevalent among society during the nineteen-century. After being treated with prostitutes and masturbation, case #138 was then convinced to "cure his abnormal passion" with marriage (153). Not being capable of refraining from the company of men, as he was advised, the man become a heavy alcoholic (153). These men would live their lives in shame and embarrassment after interpellating the oppressive discourses that continuously referred to their desires as "decadent," "unnatural," "appalling," and even "disgusting." These experiments aimed at manipulating some men into experiencing heterosexual desires consisted of a series of dangerous experiments that resulted in serious harm both physical, in some cases, as well as mental. Thus, we can see that in actual fact, medical and scientific discourses, when internalized by subjects, became corrupting and corrosive forces, driving men to depression or alcoholism. Lord Henry in a very similar manner conducts a series of experiments with Dorian, attempting to see the young man's reaction to various discourses meant to direct his behaviors.

Lord Henry treats and experiments with Dorian in a similar fashion as Krafft-Ebing. In chapter two Lord Henry continually explains how giving into one's pleasures "is what each of us is here for" (20). Basil explains to Dorian that Lord Henry "has a very bad influence over all his friends," excluding himself, yet Dorian is intrigued by the man and begs that he remain at the studio (19). Lord Henry explains to Dorian that his influence is "immoral from the scientific point of view," symbolically representing the harmful medical experimentations and

documentation of homosexuality as a sickness. Lord Henry begins the manipulation of his youthful test subject by explaining the power of exerting one's influence over another person, making that person "an echo of someone else's music," as he speaks to Dorian in his own "musical voice," and begins exerting his powerful influence over Dorian and his actions (20). Lord Henry embodies the harmful oppressive nature of sexologist like Krafft-Ebing, a consistent trait throughout this character's relationship with Dorian.

The Picture of Dorian Gray revolves around art, as the three main characters are represented within the painting. Dorian becomes a product of Lord Henry's powerful influence that is paradoxically supporting the grandeur of aesthetically living a life of pleasure, while at the same time reassuring Dorian that "the bravest man among us is afraid of himself" (20). Lord Henry quickly embeds this paradox into Dorian and convinces the character that youth, beauty, and giving in to desired temptations are the only path to truly living. At the same time, however, we see that Lord Henry leads a secret double life, as does his wife. The text strongly suggests that both have extra-marital affairs, but the exact nature of those affairs is not quite clear. The narrative hints that Dorian and Henry slip off to Algiers for extended periods of time, Algeria and Northern Africa being places associated with male prostitution, but it not explicit about what they do there. Though Lord Henry urges Dorian to give into every pleasure, we also see that when Henry exercises his own pleasures, there is something secretive, hidden, and shameful about them. Later Dorian slinks around sordid places like the docks and opium dens, suggesting that there is shame about giving into his pleasures. As Krafft-Ebing's sexology suggests, same-sex attraction between men were condemned as shameful, unnatural, and in need of a cure.

As Dorian begins to recognize the aesthetic value in his beauty Lord Henry continues: "I must tell you something about yourself […] Our limbs fail, our senses rot. We degenerate into

hideous puppets. " Consequently, Dorian "recognized himself for the first time" and became fully aware that his beauty would tarnish (26-27). Dorian is so overcome by the harsh and paradoxical identity that Lords Henry recreates for him that he retreats outside, and at that "precise *psychological* [sic] moment," Lord Henry knew "to say nothing" (22). The narrative suggests that Henry has intentionally said this to Dorian in order to work some psychological effect upon him. Dorian's response to this aspect of his identity that he recognizes for the first time horrifies Basil, as Dorian claims, "[w]hen I find that I am growing old I shall kill myself," and as he feels exceedingly "jealous of the portrait," that will forever remain beautiful and untainted by time's damaging effect (29). Dorian from this moment sees within himself, something ugly and corrupt – something that will decay and grow hideous. Dorian's sense of the degenerate hideousness into which he will descend has been instilled in his beliefs through the influence of Lord Henry, which is analogous to the powerful medical discourse that constructed homosexuality as a vile perversion. Dorian's response of revulsion at what he will become is analogous to the internalized sexual oppression that we see in some of Krafft-Ebing's case studies and that is the consequence of the pathologizing medical discourse of the sexologist.

Following Lord Henry's introduction to Dorian he acquires more information about the youth from an uncle who knew the Gray family. Wilde uses a form of homosexual coding with the construction of this character by insinuating Lord Henry's sexuality through the locations he observes while on this mission to find Dorian's uncle. In *A New City of Friends: London and Homosexuality in the 1890s*, Matt Cook dives into the connection of locality and homosexuality. He claims that by the 1890s "London's sexual underworld was exposed," leaving "normal" heterosexuals in fear of the supposed predators (35). Using *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as an example, Cook argues that *fin-de-siècle* literature was often infused with coded homosexuality

though the mention of popular hangouts for men who loved other men. He argues that often these scenes would go unnoticed by a reader who was unfamiliar with the British sexual scene (36). Oscar Wilde codes homosexuality within geographic location throughout the novel. For example, "As Lord Henry Wotton strolled Curzon Street over to Albany," he passes many stores and landmarks that were popularly known as homosexual hangouts (Wilde 34). On Lord Henry's journey he passes many homosocial arenas, such as St. James bar, Provincial Turkish Baths on Jermyn Street, Piccadilly Circus, and the Criterion Bar- according to Cook, all of which are known places of "sin." Cook reflects on a literary publication of this sort by concluding that the mapping out of London's east end was "a shared circuit and subcultural knowledge," that would be easily recognized by men who sought the pleasure of other men (36). This form of literary coding was suggestive of a connection between location and "gross indecency."

Medical discourses are also crossed with aesthetic ideals of art, which Dorian in his naiveté misinterprets. Being a master of paradox, Wilde expounds on this feature in various metaphorical ways in his characters, not only to code homosexuality into his novel but also to reveal the corruption and suffering that those considered sexually deviant were subjected to. Lord Henry embodies the discourse of medicine and aesthetics, as he analyzes Basil and Dorian "from a psychological point of view," and "suggest[s] that we should appeal to Science to put us straight," yet he preaches living a life that yields to all temptations that appease the senses (39,43). On the subject of love and romantic pleasure Dorian admits to Lord Henry that "I am putting it into practice, as I do everything you say," just as Krafft-Ebing's case studies acted on all of his suggestions pertaining to their personal lives (53). Lord Henry's influence over Dorian is experimental in his attempts to influence the youth's actions. Dorian's words clearly demonstrate Lord Henry's success, while at the same time confusing Dorian about what

aesthetics really is. He explains to Basil, "I am less to you than your ivory Hermes or your silver Faun. You will like them always. How long will you like me? Till I have my first wrinkle, I suppose" (28). He then projects his soul into the physical properties of the painting: "If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that – for that – I would give everything" (28)! This is symbolic of the dual natured confusion that inflicted some homosexual men of Victorian England as the world of science, medicine, and psychology attempted to set them "straight" while the aesthetic desire to yield to temptation was overwhelmingly powerful. Dorian became confused in the crosscurrents of these socially conflicting ideologies that defined sexuality, transforming his character into a sexually corrupt individual that kept his secret hidden in the painting and safe from public eyes. His character was fearful of exposure because he was under the guidance of Lord Henry, whose poisonous medical experiments causes Dorian to internalize oppressive beliefs about his desires.

Krafft-Ebing's case studies believed their desires to be "unnatural," after being treated and told they were for most of their lives, proving that medical discourse had a tremendous effect on the individual. What we seeing happening in Dorian as Lord Henry's influence becomes more potent in the internalization of oppression. Internalized homophobia is caused by the internalization of society's judgment of homosexuality as some members of sexual minorities begin to believe this judgment is true. A perfect example of internalized homophobia is Krafft-Ebing's case study #91, about whom Krafft-Ebing says, "[T]he result of his perverse sexual practices [with men] sobered him. He sought safety from his unnatural sexual existence by consulting a physician who sent him to me" (90). This man internalized and believed the assumptions that he was "unnatural" and "perverse" causing him to seek medical help. This type

of internalization of popular social thought creates lives of discontent and identity confusion as a result of various nineteenth-century sexual discourses.

Wilde uses various forms of homosexual coding throughout the novel including homoerotically infused aestheticism. By chapter four Dorian is under the guidance of Lord Henry's manipulative and quasi-scientific experimentation, which corrupts his understanding of art as he finds pleasure surrounding himself with material objects. However, Lord Henry's counsel offers a debased aestheticism as Dorian surrounds himself with kitsch and machine-made false replicas of pure art.

Dorian in this sense has a false idea of what art is; he falls in love with material objects and the facts behind their worth, but he does not recognize art created by the true artist. The scene opens with Dorian in "a very charming room, with its high paneled wainscoting of olive stained oak, its cream-colored frieze and ceiling of raised plaster-work, and its brick dust felt carpet strewn with silk long-fringed Persian rugs" (48). Dorian's corruption under the influence of Lord Henry's psychological experimentation then becomes more apparent through the narration of his relationship with Sybil. Wilde coils together within her character coded homosexuality through the medium of her superior artistic capabilities, acting. Through this fascinating combination of hidden homoerotic content and art, Dorian falls in love with the woman "disguised as a pretty boy in hose and doublet and dainty cap;" she was acting as Ganymede from Shakespeare's play *As You Like It* (55). Lord Henry received the news of Dorian's freshly felt passions of love with keen interest because "[i]t made him a more interesting study" (61). Again, the relationship between Dorian and Lord Henry becomes solidified through the medium of Sybil's art, as his interest in Dorian's new love creates an erotic triangle between the three characters.

In *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire,* Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick expands on the work of Rene Girard[15] and claims that in order to contextualize homosexuality with the surrounding environment, women must be taken into account. Previous work by Girard, as well as Sigmund Freud, examined through a patriarchal and heterosexist point of view the relationship of a male-male-female triangle that bonds the two men through some form of rivalry or desire to control the woman. Sedgwick suggests altering the sexuality of the men involved in order to examine the homoerotic and homosocial relationship of the men, with the woman as rival and the men as each other's object of desire. Conceptualizing the relationship between Lord Henry, Dorian, and Sybil through this idea offers a new lens by which to analyze the circuit of sexuality in the triangle. Wilde rhetorically writes Sybil into the plot as a device to cement the connection of Lord Henry and Dorian by further exploring the corrupting effects psychological discourses had on sexuality. Reader's see through this female character the paradoxical element of Lord Henry that represents both the corrupting sexologists' discourses and passionate desires towards Dorian. Just as sexologist Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Elis, Lord Henry is fascinated by this unusual love Dorian suddenly has for a lower-class actress. Ellis mentions in *Sexual Inversion* that in a "few cases we are concerned with the individuals whose moral or artistic ideals have widely influenced their fellows," which parallels Sybil's artistic influence as an actress that has cast a spell on Dorian, who falls in love with her (vi). However, Sybil is the instrument that strengthens the bond between Lord Henry and Dorian, as Lord Henry now finds his subject to be much more interesting when Sybil factors into the experimentation.

Upon learning of Dorian's new love interest "it became clear to [Lord Henry] that the experimental method was the only method by which one could arrive at any scientific analysis of

[7]Author of *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*. She examined erotic triangles claiming the woman as the link between the bond of men, which Sedgwick expands by examining three way connections through altering the gender of those involved.

the passions," causing corruption and pain to be brought to the relationship between Sybil and Dorian, which Lord Henry found to be a "psychological phenomenon of no small interest" (63). A heterosexual couple in Victorian England would be of no interest to the sexologist or Henry, but Dorian's love for Sybil not only crosses the line of class acceptability, but he falls in love with an actress in " boy's clothes," signifying a deeper suggestion of a man loving a younger boy (80). Dorian's indulgences in the aesthetic pleasures of appeasing the senses blurs the lines between art and reality, as he falls in love with the characters of Shakespeare's play and not a real woman. To be specific, he falls in love with Sybil dressed as the character Ganymede. E.C. Krupp explains that in Greek mythology Ganymede was a Trojan prince kidnapped by either Zeus himself in the form of an eagle, or an eagle sent by Zeus to collect the prince. He was relocated to the heavens to become the cupbearer and homosexual lover of Zeus (47). Author Michael Worley further analyzes the relationship of Ganymede and Zeus as Greek pederasty – in other words Greek love – where the young Ganymede learns "the rites of passage to manhood," while "the sexual relationship was only part of the initiatory phase of the youth's moral education" under Zeus 635). Wilde dresses Sybil in the costume of Ganymede as a means of coding her character into an extremely complex metaphor that embodies both Greek love – the love of an older man for a beautiful younger man – and aesthetics. Wilde also uses the relationship between Dorian and Sybil to explore Lord Henry's psychological experimentations on Dorian.

Wilde also infuses the discourse of Greek love into the relationship between Sybil and Dorian. Sybil's character also lives in a world where art is the only real meaning of life as she falls in love with "Prince Charming" and not Dorian Gray. Both characters live blissfully for a brief moment when the outside world leaves their beautiful – if delusional – construction of love

untouched. Incorporating heavily the concept of Greek love into the relationship of the two characters, Wilde has Dorian pursues the affections of the woman who represents Ganymede, leaving Dorian to confess "I have never been so happy […]it seems to me to be the one thing I have been looking for all my life" (79). The love formed between these two characters is another one of Wilde's tactics of homosexual coding as the relationship heavily reflects the bond between Zeus and Ganymede in ancient Greece. Wilde uses the metaphor of stagecraft and cross-gender disguise to paradoxically suggest the homoerotic circuit of desire between Dorian and Henry, with Sybil/Ganymede as the intermediary, while keeping the true nature of the relationship a secret.

John Addington Symonds coined the term "Greek Love," in 1873.[16] Focusing heavily on the life and literature of Homer, as well as Plato, Socrates, and various other works by ancient philosophers, Symonds explains in great detail the honor, and integrity that pederasty represented.[17] Based on these ancient ideals of men loving other men the bond between Dorian and Sybil/Ganymede was to be celebrated and encouraged. As Symonds explains, pederasty was a social institution in Greek society and culture. It was founded in honesty, respect, extremely devoted friendship, and intercourse was common between the man and the boy (22-34).[18] However, in Victorian England the tides of time transformed this union between a man and a boy into a "gross indecency" or a sexually decadent and grotesque bond. This criticism and lack of

[16] Symonds capitalizes the "L" in Greek love in this 1873 publication signifying its use as a concept. Later researchers of Greek love do not.

[17] Concentrating on the ancient Greek civilization known as the Dorians, Symonds explains that when a man was old enough to grow a beard he chose a much younger boy for the object of his manly love. The man was known as the lover and the boy the hearer, and the major objective of the relationship was to form a deep bond of honor, love, and respect, that would allow a complete openness of trust and the ability for the man to instill respectable social morals into the upcoming generation of youth.

[18] Symonds quotes from Plato's *Phaedrus* which regarded this love so highly that based on manly love alone a state could thrive, "a state or an army should be made up of lovers and their loves, they would be the very best governors of their own city, abstaining from all dishonor; and emulating one another in honour; and when fighting at one another side, although a mere handful, they would overcome the world" (25).

understanding the moral nature of Greek love offers explanation as to why Wilde metaphorically represents the love of Dorian and Sybil/Ganymede in such a complex and coded manner. Sybil/Ganymede then commits suicide in reaction to Dorian's lack of love, followed by Dorian's downward spiral into corruption. This tragic ending of Sybil/Ganymede's in death metaphorically parallels the downfall and death of the Greek practice of pederasty. Dorian's corruption that intensifies greatly throughout the remainder of the novel continues to demonstrate the corruption caused by internalized sexual oppression as he attempts to conceal, disguise and mask his sexuality, descending into a realm of secrecy that is safe from social judgment. The decline in acceptance of Greek love in Victorian England and the debasement of love between men because of internalized sexual oppression is metaphorically represented by Lord Henry's treating Dorian as his case study to be manipulated, objectified, and studied out of curiosity because Henry's own desire has been forced into hiding and driven underground.

The corruption of Dorian and Sybil/Ganymede's love was influenced by the social discourses that shaped turn-of-the century beliefs about homosexuality, in this case represented by Lord Henry. He found Dorian's marriage proposal to Sybil fascinating from a psychological point of view, which was already heavily manipulated by the influence Lord Henry exerted on Dorian's belief about seeking pleasure in art. After seeing Sybil act poorly the artistic element that kindled Dorian's love for the actress in boy's clothing was no longer aflame. She recognized the true passions of love and could no longer recreate the façade of love on the stage, finding her previous art to be disillusioning and entering into a new reality. Dorian too entered into a new reality only he found love to be lost along with Sybil's art, pushing the actress to suicide and Dorian's picture to become disfigured to match his character's soul. Dorian's character briefly repents for his wickedness before learning of Sybil's suicide but quickly turns back to corruption

under the guidance of Lord Henry, who convinced Dorian that the love was not meant to be and he was not responsible for the tragedy.

Greek civilization that rested heavily on the homosocial bonds of men also met a tragic ending. Gradually the idea of Greek love that was central to Athenian culture became transformed by the corrupting and unjust discourse of homosexuality of *fin-de-siècle* England. Symonds explains when the Roman Empire dominated Greece they were not familiar with the moral importance of pederasty and condemned the entire practice of Greek love as a whole, viewing any and all acts of sex between men as indecent and gross (78-80). The pederastic ideals of love, respect, and honor were from this point on ostracized, and eventually the entire practice was eradicated from Greek civilizations, leaving behind a wake of oppression that still continues to follow homosexuality through time and place. Wilde paradoxically replicates this downfall of loves lost beauty between men with the loss of love Dorian has for Sybil. Wilde also suggests Dorian's subsequent corruption as it is traced in the painting following its first occurrence after Sybil's suicide after Dorian rejects her. Even in her death Dorian fails to recognize the situation as a lost life. He mentions, "I must admit that this thing that has happened does not affect me as it should. It seems to me to be simply like a wonderful ending to a wonderful play" (104). The novel now contains the gothic elements of fear, mystery, and suspense as readers predict a continuing downfall of Dorian's character. Wilde suggests the downfall of Greek love and aestheticism within the relationship of these two characters.

Following Sybil's suicide, Wilde deepens Dorian's corruption under the influence of Lord Henry's metaphorical scientific guidance through a powerful scene with the character, Basil. Wilde injects a brief moment to suggest Dorian's misunderstanding of art as he gloats about his love for his garish collection of material items and art objects. Basil expresses his

desire to lay eyes on his masterpiece painting and his decision to exhibit the artwork in Paris. "A cry of terror broke from Dorian Gray's lips," revealing the terror he felt at the suggestion of exposing his secret (115). Within the painting lies the secret of Dorian's homosexuality, which at this point has become so corrupt by the medical labeling of "abnormal" that Dorian lives in fear of its discovery. At the thought of exposure, "the lad was actually pallid with rage. His hands were clenched, and the pupils of his eyes were like disks of blue fire. He was trembling all over" (115). Basil, on the other hand, overcomes his fear of social judgment and has successfully shed the corruption of the discourses that led many to believe their sexual identities were grotesque and wrong. This is evident in his decision to publicize the painting that contains himself - and his sexuality. Dorian's corruption reaches its apex when he murders Basil to keep their secret hidden.

Just as Dorian's corrupt sexuality is revealed in this scene, Wilde also continues to expose Basil's love for other men and his desire to openly exhibit his sexuality, by using the painting as a metaphorical canvas for both characters' views of publically exposing their true desires. Basil admits to the lad he once painted that he originally could not conceive of exposing the painting because it had too much of himself in it, too much of his feelings for Dorian. He confesses, "I worshiped you. I grew jealous of everyone to whom you spoke. I wanted to have you all to myself," and when Dorian was not physically present he still had him in his art (117). To let society in on these feelings would have ostracized the artist, and possibly would have led to his legal prosecution for "gross indecency." Wilde metaphorically provides the outcome of some men who chose to live as open homosexuals in Victorian England through the death of Basil. When Basil suggests revealing the painting, Dorian is so overcome with fear that he locks the painting away in the dark schoolroom of his childhood where it is not exposed to the light of

day, and more importantly to anyone who may cast his or her eyes upon it. As Dorian's descent into corruption through the interpellation of harmful societal discourses hastens alone, he chooses murder over the exposure of his sexuality. When Basil first suggests exhibiting the piece of art, Dorian felt "a strange sense of terror creeping over him. Was the world going to be shown his secret? Were people to gape at the mystery of his life? That was impossible. Something – he did not know what – had to be done" (116). That something was physical elimination of the threat as Dorian murders Basil.

Art in this sense is killed metaphorically by medical discourse that rendered some homosexual men fearful that their identity might be exposed, and literally by science that is corrupted through blackmail when Dorian brings in Alan, a chemist, to dispose of Basil's body. Alan, like Dorian, is another example of the artist being corrupted by the field of science. The narrative relates that earlier in life Alan became so enamored with experimentation that he completely gave up his musical talents. After meeting Dorian the highest form of art becomes eradicated out of Alan's life, as he became "more interested in biology, and his name appeared once or twice in some of the scientific reviews, in connection with certain curious experiments" (170). Wilde again uses coding to suggest sexual secrecy. The novel suggest that Dorian is blackmailing Alan about their past sexual relationship by threatening to expose the "eighteen months their intimacy lasted," implying that Alan is fearful his sexuality will be exposed to public-knowledge, a feeling Dorian's character also experiences with great familiarity (170). Alan's refusal to help dispose of the body is quickly countered by Dorian who writes a secret on a piece of paper and pushes it in his direction. The reader never sees what is written on the note, but Alan's reaction is similar to Dorian's when Basil mentions exhibiting the painting. Alan's "face became ghastly pale, and he fell back in his chair. A horrible sense of sickness came over

him" (174). He, too, seems to be harboring a secret and forbidden sexuality, and he is corrupted by social beliefs about homosexuality to the extent that he becomes an accessory after the fact in Dorian's murder to avoid his secrets being exposed. The artist's body is dissolved chemically by the scientist, and disposed of, a parallel to the attempts of nineteenth-century sexologist and doctors to define men's "decadent" desires and rid men of them. In addition to this form of coding, Wilde also incorporates heavy references to locations that metaphorically insinuate the sexual nature of Dorian and Lord Henry's characters.

The discourses of sexuality that pushed men to live a double secret life once again in the book brings the location of the characters into play. In addition to mentioning Dorian and Lord Henry's frequent stays together in Algiers, a place commonly associated with homosexual activity, where Victorian men traveled to pick up male prostitutes or "street Arabs." Wilde also expands upon Dorian's corruption toward the end of the novel with his lurking around the dock district. Dorian is in possession of "curious disguises," which Wilde mentions when Dorian hides Basil's belongings with them; Dorian uses these disguises to hide his identity when he travels to the East End. This use of coding through location signifies the relevance of living a double life that allows for giving into one's pleasurable desires while having to confine it to a disguise at the same time. Opium dens in the dock areas, public houses and Molly houses, where men went to find other man-loving men, were well known homosexual arenas in turn-of-the-century London. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick explains in "Toward the Gothic: Terrorism and Homosexual Panic," a chapter published in *Between Men*, that late seventeenth-century England bore witness to the first ever public emergence of what was later labeled "homosexuality" through the establishment of Molly houses. She explains these houses were a social gathering place for men only, who often had sexual relations with one another, although such actions were

hidden and denied publicly (84-87). Public denial, however, did not completely eradicate suspicion making locality an indicator of homosexual practices, which Wilde strongly infuses in Dorian's character with the places he frequents.

The scene of Basil's death combines the influence of medical discourse with aesthetics. Basil showed Dorian his true identity through art, and that identity corrupted through Lord Henry's experiments and influence on Dorian. Again, having the wrong conception of aesthetics, Dorian blames Basil and his painting for the torment that is truly in the hands of Lord Henry. This epic ending of Dorian's death through stabbing the painting is another way in which Wilde symbolically suggests the corrupting and deadly power the field of pseudo-scientific sexology has over the truth, which can be and in this case is, revealed through art. Dorian was forced into living a double life, one that was seen as beautiful while the other was a hideous hidden secret. Both were corrupted by the discourses that labeled homosexuality as a wrongful sin and made living in a world of fear of discovery a necessity for survival. The beauty of the painting was horrifically marred through the tainted influence of these discourses of Victorian England, including the legal discourses that aided in Wilde's conviction on charges of "gross indecency"-- charges that were supported by evidence from *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Examining the trial of Oscar Wilde, Alex Ross explains that Wilde's frustration grew as the prosecutors used the book as if it were describing Wilde's own personal life; they failed to separate Wilde's characters from his real self. When confronted about the book, Wilde responded with clever witticism and at one point, while defending the love he and Bosie shared, his words echoed the feelings Basil had for Dorian. After being asked to defend the poem he and Bosie wrote together, "The Love that Dare not Speak its Name," Wilde daringly described the love between an older male and younger man as being noble. Ross quotes from a transcript of

the second trial, Wilde proclaimed his relationship "as pure as it was perfect [; …] [it] pervades great works of art like those of Shakespeare and Michelangelo" (65-68). Wilde compared their relationship to the Greek love expressed by the ancients, such as Plato, and defended the poem as not having any homosexual nature, yet the explanation was still received with much disgust (68-70). Redirecting questions about his sexuality away from an affirmative answer as to his preference of male partners became a common trait throughout the trial, suggesting to an extent Wilde's own internalized homophobia. Although Wilde did not perceive his actions as a gross indecency, he still chose to contain his sexuality in a shroud of secrecy while in the courtroom to protect himself from a condemning legal system. Such fears and anxieties about revealing his true self are all signs of the negative outcome associated with the proliferation of what Foucault calls "peripheral sexualities," and discourses that constructed them. The homoerotic nature of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and many other writings of Oscar Wilde were used throughout the trials as an aid that secured his conviction.

Morris B. Kaplan examines the "deliberate strategy on the part of Queensberry's attorneys," that used Wilde's literary profession to influence the verdict that brought judgment upon his sexuality (114). One of the major unjust factors he points out in the trials was the prosecution's deliberate bringing up of the Cleveland Street Scandal in ways that suggested Wilde's participation in that male prostitution ring. By exploiting Wilde's previous actions, the prosecution had painted him as a sexual criminal, all of which they further proved by invoking passages from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and other texts Wilde had written. Kaplan argues the absurdity of using literary fiction as fact in a legal proceeding, especially one that led to a conviction. The characters in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* reflect both how important living a double life in England was to a peaceful existence, yet how corrosive that double life can

become as it breeds shame and the corruption of a potentially ennobling love. The author brilliantly used homosexual coding to construct his characters, who paradoxically act as open homosexual men while remaining in a haze of secrecy. The importance of Wilde's homosexual coding is that it simultaneously suggests the potentially ennobling power of love between men while exploring the corrupting and corrosive effects that the emerging discourse of the sexologists had upon that love. Wilde suggests the corrupting power of sexological and legal discourses that forbade the love between men to speak its name.

Chapter 2

"Love is better than wisdom and more precious than riches": The Influence of Greek Love on the Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde

The Happy Prince and *The House of Pomegranates*, Oscar Wilde's two collections of fairy tales, are perhaps the most fascinating, sexually saturated, and understudied of his prose works. They are both slim volumes, the first containing five tales and the second four. Although scholarship on Wilde's fairy tales is not plentiful, critics tend to focus on one of four main interests: religious elements or Christian parallels in the tales, aesthetic appreciation of the tales, the influence of Irish folk culture on the tales, and issues of sexuality hinted at in the tales. I argue that a major theme that persists throughout many of the tales in *The Happy Prince* and *The House of Pomegranates* is Greek love, a subject that has received little attention in previous scholarship on the tales. I focus on Wilde's encoding of Greek love, an ancient social institution, in his nineteenth-century tales. Carol Tattersall quotes Wilde's description of the fairy tales: "They are an attempt to mirror modern life in a form remote from reality – to deal with modern problems in a mode that is ideal and imitative" (135). Wilde uses fantasy as a means of coding the sexual nature of his fairy tale which would otherwise not be acceptable. The need to encode is reflection of society' The representation of Greek love is quite veiled in Wilde's fairy tales and is encoded in the fantasy relationships between various unlikely characters, such as Mermaids and Water-rats. This is perhaps the reason why the tales received little attention for their sexual content during the Victorian era. Wilde makes coded allusions to the discourse of Greek love to create a positive fantasy representation of same-sex love between men; in doing so, he creates a homosexual counterdiscourse that is positive, unlike the negative discourses that defined homosexuality in f*in-de-siècle* England. Through both books of fairy tales, Wilde creates

imaginative and creative characters that mimic and represent the experience of some men who desire the love of other men in Victorian England. The Greek love encoded in the tales both honors and promotes the devotion of those who practice and understand the ancient ideals of love between men, while simultaneously displaying the harmful effects of contemporary Britain's lack of acceptance of such erotic friendships between male partners.

Shortly after the publication of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde would become enamored with love and affection for a pretty faced rich man, Lord Alfred Douglas, or as he was referred to by Wilde "Bosie" (Young 24). Morris Kaplan discusses the situation, noting the anger of Bosie's father, the Marquess of Queensbury, who called for Wilde on February 18, 1895, at the Albemarle Club with a note addressed to "Oscar Wilde, posing somdomite" (116-118). Endorsing his own disastrous fate, Wilde decided the best course of action was to bring criminal charges against the outraged father, which led to the reversal of the legal prosecution as Wilde was put on trial for "gross indecency" under the La Bouchere Amendment, section 11 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885. [19]

The transcripts of these trials reveal Wilde's acceptance belief in the legitimacy and power of Greek love, as well as his awareness of the oppressive discourses that stigmatized and shamed the institution. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* would become the most powerful prosecutorial weapon in Wilde's conviction on charges of "gross indecency", as his characters implied sexuality became inseparable from his own. Alex Ross explains that when confronted about the book, Wilde responded with clever witticism while defending the relationship he and

[19] See Joseph Bristow's article on *Dorian Gray* and "gross indecency" for a full analysis of how this amendment affected Wilde and other men who were prosecuted for their same-sex activities.

Bosie shared through advocated the devoted erotic friendship of Greek love. In his defense of the poem about male same-sex desire, Wilde states:

> The Love that dare not speak its name" in this century is such a great affection of an elder for a younger man as there was between David and Jonathan, such as Plato made the very basis of his philosophy, and such as you find in the sonnets of Michelangelo and Shakespeare. It is that deep, spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect. It dictates and pervades great works of art like those of Shakespeare and Michelangelo, and those two letters of mine, such as they are. It is in this century misunderstood, so much misunderstood that it may be described as the "Love that dare not speak its name," and on account of it I am placed where I am now. It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection. There is nothing unnatural about it. It is intellectual, and it repeatedly exists between an elder and a younger man, when the elder man has intellect, and the younger man has all the joy, hope and glamour of life before him. That it should be so, the world does not understand. The world mocks at it and sometimes puts one in the pillory for it. (65-68)

Wilde compares the relationships between men to those of the ancients, invoking the ideal concept of Greek love. He is, however, on trial as the result of British society's shaming same-sex relationships. This concept of Greek love which influences almost all of the fairy tales is a relatively untouched topic among Wildean scholarship on the tales. Wilde establishes though his

tales a counterdiscourse about Greek love that is positive, which contests Victorian England's predominately negative view of male same-sex love as a shameful and unacceptable passion.

Much of the scholarship pertaining to Oscar Wilde's fairy tales tends to focus either on his Irish heritage, religion, or, in fewer instances, sexuality. Jarlath Killeen published in 2007 the only full length analysis of the fairy tales that focuses on the Irish-Catholic influence that is behind the tales. Focusing discussion on each individual fairy tale, Killeen ties them together with his thesis that argues that Wilde infused the tales with traditional traits of religion while simultaneously including subversive metaphors. Christopher S. Nassaar analyzes the fairy tales in relation to the poetry of Yeats and Blake, as well as Wilde's Irish nationality, while authors Gary Schmidgall, John Charles Duffy, and Naomi Woods focus on sexuality but do not analyze the discourse of Greek Love in the tales. To offer an original addition to these contributions, the following analysis focuses on using Greek Love as a lens to examine the coded sexuality that is present in many of the tales. Under the disguise of children's literature, Wilde uses the ideal friendship of Greek love to encode homosexual passion in both books.

Over two thousand years before homosexuality was defined as a deviant identity in Victorian society, the act of an older man establishing a relationship with a younger male was not only common within classical Athenian society but a socially accepted institution.[20] The ideal of Greek love was supported by Wilde and it frequently infiltrates the fairy tales through coded texts; such relationships were not respected among British society as they once were in

[20] The earliest study of the socially accepted institution of paiderastia in Athenian society is Kenneth J. Dover's *Greek Homosexuality* (1978). In "Sex before Sexuality: Pederasty, Politics, and Power in Classical Athens," David Halperin argues that classical Athenian society accepted the institution of paiderastia. However, he rejects the use of "homosexual" to describe the institution, since modern understandings of sexual practices and a sexual identity misread the social meaning of male same-sex practices in ancient Athens. More recently Thomas K. Hubbard offers a much more complex analysis of many different types of same-sex practices in Greece and Rome, including pedagogical pederasty, some of which were accepted and some condemned. Interestingly, he argues—contrary to Halperin and Foucault—that "some forms of sexual preference were, in fact, considered a distinguishing characteristic of individuals" (2).

ancient Greece. John Addington Symonds wrote *A Problem in Greek Ethics* in 1873 in order to explore how the once ideal institution of male devotion among the ancients was misunderstood and defined as a perverse passion in later societies. Addington's work sheds an abundance of light on the discourse used to speak of men who loved other men. The term "homosexual" was coined during the Victorian era but not yet popular in its use, making Greek love a more fitting description for male passions. Symonds explains the boy-man relationships common in ancient Greek society as beginning when a man was old enough to grow a beard and chose a much younger boy as his subject. The man was known as the lover and the boy the hearer, and the major objective of the relationship was to form a deep bond of honor, love, and respect that would allow for complete openness and trust. The relationship of the older to the younger man was a way to instill civic virtue and respectable social morals in the upcoming generation of youth. According to Symonds, *paiderastia* was a major staple in Greek society and culture. It was founded upon honesty, respect, and extremely devoted friendship; sexual intercourse was common and accepted between the man and the boy (Symonds 22-34). By the nineteenth century this type of relationship was completely unacceptable in England and was hidden under a mask of sexual coding in Wilde's fairy tales, often under the guise of devoted friendships.

The act of an older male teaching a younger in an intimate mentoring relationship that was at once pedagogical and pederastic formed the backbone of Athenian Greek love;[21] it was also a practice that Wilde himself must have been well aware of as a scholar of classical literature at Oxford. As Linda Dowling explains, the discourse and practice of devoted friendships at Oxford became well established in the 1860s with Benjamin Jowett, professor of

[21] Hubbard argues that this institution of "pedagogical pederasty" was not the only form of male same-sex relationships in classical Greece: "Greek homosexual activity, despite popular misconceptions, was not restricted to man-boy pairs" (5).

Greek studies, and the highly respected mentor of Symonds. She argues that "Greek studies operated as a 'homosexual code' during the great age of English university reform," during which time "a homosexual counterdiscourse able to justify male love in ideal or transcendental terms" developed (xiii). During his time at Oxford, Symonds "met weekly for almost two years," with Jowett "whose beloved presence he never stepped into without acute emotion" (32). According to Dowling, although Jowett denied that Greek love and devoted male friendships as practiced by the Ancients were sexual, many young men and their tutors at Oxford saw in the classics an idealized reflection of same-sex relationships between men. Relying on the support of Plato, Symonds published on the powerful emotions that existed between an older and younger man. He quotes Plato as having said, "I know not any greater blessing to a young man beginning life than a virtuous lover, or to the lover than a beloved youth" (25). This establishment of a coded counterdiscourse that validated male same-sex love through invoking the notion of Greek love was also practiced by Walter Pater and transmitted to his student, Oscar Wilde. According to Dowling, Pater, after a near scandal when his romance with a Balliol College, Oxford, undergraduate was disclosed, chose to live a celibate life (Chapter 1). Oscar Wilde, however, not only practiced a coded counterdiscourse on Greek Love in the fairy tales, but sought out sexual relationships with other men. Wilde's early prose is saturated with the discourse of Greek love that established a devoted and loving bond between two men, sometimes an older male and a younger boy, sometimes a teacher and his pupil. Combining the discourse of Greek love with elements of fantasy makes Wilde's fairy tales uniquely coded.

To take just one preliminary example of this coding, in the "Happy Prince," Wilde's first fairy tale in the book *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (1888), Greek love is delicately woven into the tale in a very interesting and complex coded manner. The tale begins with a criticism of

heterosexual love as the male Swallow falls in and out of love with a female Reed. The relationship was deemed unacceptable by the Swallow's family because of his love for a woman of a different species. This concern for such "a ridiculous attachment," would quickly dwindle as the Swallow falls out of love with her because she "has no conversation," and is not capable of traveling with him (11). This love that burns out as quickly as it ignites is just the opposite of the love the Swallow develops for the Happy Prince. Memorialized as a statue after his death, the Happy Prince stands high above the city he once lived in as a mortal. He stands high enough in his statue of gold that he gazes throughout the streets with eyes made of gold and notices the poverty stricken people who are subject to his family's crown. The swallow falls in love with the much older Prince, who literally, at this point, is aged in death, and directs the little bird, "Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow, said the Prince, "do as I command you" (16). On the second day of the Swallow's visit, the Prince asks him to stay one more night and aid him in helping the poor of the city. The Swallow's acceptance of the invitation to stay the night marks the beginning of a devoted friendship that quickly develops between the two male characters. On the third night, the "Swallow, who really had a good heart," remained yet another evening to help a writer that was cold and hungry, despite the threat that the harsh weather posed to his warm-blooded body (16). Unlike the relationship the Swallow had with the Reed, which quickly fell apart for lack of common interests and good conversations, the love that develop between the Swallow and the Happy Prince occurs out of the selfless acts of giving to the poor of the Prince's city. They have a mutual devotion to one another in order for the circumstances to work; the Prince obtains the ability and knowledge to direct the Swallow in what direction he must go in order to bring help to the poor. The devoted friendship mimics that of a teacher and student when taking into consideration the Happy Prince's ability to see beyond the immediate horizon,

and the Swallow's devotion to him to undertake the suggested journeys. This parallel between an older male instructor providing guidance to his younger male subject is not only reflective of the ideal boy-man relationships of the ancient Greeks, but was also practiced and well developed at Oxford University before and during Wilde's time there. Dowling demonstrates that Jowett encouraged intense relationships between the older Oxford tutors and their pupils by commandeering for his own more secular purposes certain institutional structures, including "the college tutorial as [an …] intimate personal relationship, a recent Tractarian tradition of intense undergraduate male friendship" (xiv).

In *The Happy Prince* an emotional bond develops between the older and wiser Prince, who instructs the Swallow in selfless acts of courage to alleviate the suffering of others. Unlike the relationship the Swallow experienced with the female Reed, this one leads to a love that both the Swallow and the Prince die for. Having remained too long in the winter weather, the Swallow "kissed the Happy Prince on the lips, and fell down dead at his feet" (20). Symonds explains that the emotion of Greek love encompassed the willingness to die for a lover and was a powerful enough emotion that one could build states and armies with it. The Greek love between a boy and a man developed bonds that focused on "emulating one another in honour," and dying for each either in time of war (25). The war Wilde was symbolically representing in the death of the Sparrow and the Prince was not a war fought by the ancients, but rather the current battle many homosexual men were facing since the 1885 passage of the La Bouchere Amendment of the Criminal Law Amendment Act that labeled and prosecuted sex between men as acts of "gross indecency." This beautiful notion of Greek love had died with the passing times, and the law transformed male passionate desire into a monstrous act. The death of the Swallow and the Prince he loved symbolizes the sorrowful death of Greek love in the British

social structure of Wilde's time.

An important element to the Greek love that Wilde weaves through his tales is also his ability to display the failure of love between a man and a woman, which further supports the love that is lasting between two male characters. The strategic placement of "The Nightingale and the Rose" is a rhetorical device employed by Wilde to position a critique of heterosexual love between two tales that contain a heavily coded positive discourse of Greek Love. Following *The Happy Prince* and preceding *The Devoted Friend*, this tale is an aesthetically beautiful story about another bird who sacrifices her life in an attempt to advance the love that a male Student has for the object of affection, the Professor's daughter. Wilde presents these characters as the first humans in the book of tales whose situation involves courtship and love. The relationship between the two young lovers ends in a complete disaster and is Wilde's metaphorical suggestion that the heterosexual love that the majority of British society widely receives as acceptable is in reality materialistic and false when compared to the practice of Greek love. The Student expresses with concern his inability to acquire a single red rose to present the Professor's daughter in return for a dance. The Nightingale literally sings her heart out in order to transform a white rose into a red one with the tint of her own blood. She believes the love between a man and a woman is worth her own life and while observing the Student's need for a red rose she claims that "[h]ere indeed is the true lover" (24). Her beliefs about the love of a man and woman would quickly be proven wrong when in the end the Professor's daughter chose the suitor with money and the Student carelessly threw the rose to the streets and admitted he would rather spend his days with science books than a female companion. Readers are left mourning the beautiful bird that died for the ungrateful and unworthy love of the man and the woman. Placing *The Nightingale and the Rose* between two tales with strong encodings of a positive discourse of

Greek love emphasizes the positive nature of Wilde's counterdiscourse that is embodied in the characters in the two tales framing "The Nightengale and the Rose."

After exposing the selfish nature of a failed relationship, Wilde rhetorically follows this tale with another one that is strongly saturated in the virtuous ideals of Greek Love. Interestingly enough, this next tale mirrors the Tractarian movement at Oxford which exposes the downfalls of those who deny and oppress the sexual element of Greek love.

Linda Dowling explains that Benjamin Jowett was one of the leading figures at Oxford who advocated a pedagogical and curricular reform away from a theological focus to one centered on the liberal and ethical values embodied in the Greek Classics, modifying for secular purposes some of the reforms of the earlier Tractarian Movement (xiv). Teaching the ancient Greeks classics, especially Plato, created an atmosphere that celebrated and embraced the ideals of Greek lve. It is essential to note, however, that Jowett was not supportive of the physical connection between the male students and their mentors, and he denied that the pederastic relationships seen in Plato's works were in any way sexual (Dellamora 158-64). He accepted the love and devoted friendship between two men but cast shame and rejection upon those who were physically involved. This shaming of Greek Love was typical of the Victorian era and created the "central contradiction within Oxford homosocial Hellenism – its willful denial of the paiderastia so crucial to the Greek culture it otherwise held up to emulation and praise" (Dowling 88). Denying this crucial aspect of Greek love was not an opinion Jowett could impose on many of the next generation at Oxford. As Dowling asserts, "Pater and Wilde and the Uranian poets could not be denied the means of developing out of this same Hellenism a homosexual counterdiscourse able to justify male love in ideal of transcendental terms," a discourse strongly established and visible in Wilde's fairy tales (xiii).

Jowett's partial acceptance of Greek Love but denial of its sexual component had devastating effects on his students, such as Symonds, who fully accepted devotion *and* sex. As Dowling explains, Symonds was involved in two same-sex scandals after his time at Oxford. He was influenced by Jowett's pedagogy of Greek love, which he fully accepted and practiced, but was ostracized for the sexual element in relationships between the teacher and the student. Victorian society, and Jowett, accepted the sheer devotion and commitment of Greek love, as long as it was not *too* devoted. During the sex scandals that "nearly ruined his [Symonds] life," Jowett was faithfully by Symonds' side; however, as Dowling argues, the former student was coming "to recognize how cruelly equivocal Jowett's Oxford Hellenism was" (88). Jowett encouraged and supported Greek love, and although Symonds "remained grateful for Jowett's help," it was very damaging for Symonds to be shamed for his full support of all dimensions of Greek love that included same-sex pleasure (88).

Wilde constructs a relationship in *The Devoted Friend* that illustrates the cruelty of denying the sexual element of a relationship between men who practice Greek love. The relationship in the tale mirrors the cruel equivocation of Jowett's promotion of the Greek classics, while shaming the same-sex love that students like Symonds found in themselves and in the texts they studied together.

The Devoted Friend is perhaps Wilde's most clever and wittiest fairy tale. This tale strongly suggests male same-sex love and criticizes, in a coded way, how Victorian society denies men the experience of Greek love by repressing the sexual dimension of such devoted erotic friendships. In observing disobedient duck children, the Water-Rat proclaims to the Green Linnet that he is "not a family man," and in fact he knows "nothing in the world that is either nobler or rarer than a devoted friendship" (41). The Water-Rat immediately professes the

superiority of the friendship of Greek devotion between two men, and labels it as "nobler" than the love between those who procreate children. The bird with whom he speaks does not understand the concept and proceeds to tell a story about two male (and human) friends that is a vividly coded interpretation of how selfless, genuine, and passionate the bond between two devoted men is in contrast to the union of a procreating married couple.

The two male characters are described as Big Hugh the Miller and Little Hans the Gardener, insinuating the superiority of the Miller. The Miller is also rich while Hans struggles in the winter without any flowers to sell or a garden to live off of, yet Hans remains humble even when his "devoted friend" refuses to visit him or help him in his time of need. The Miller explains to his wife "[t]hat at least is my idea about friendship, and I am sure I am right," which she promptly agrees with (43). This scene implies the Miller and his wife accept the virtues of devoted Greek friendship, but only to a certain limit as the Miller allows for his Hans to go without food and heat. The Miller's son is, however, attentive to the undivided protection and sympathy that an older male is to provide for the younger male in a truly devoted friendship of Greek love that is evident when he proposes that his father bring Hans in for the winter and care for him. The Miller resembles men like Jowett in his acceptance of devotion with limitations, while his son wants to fully extend the friendship in all areas. In showing that the boy is capable of the emotions that accompany Greek love, Wilde is suggesting that the character's own sexuality desires the attention of men. The Miller's son's desire to live with Hans evokes male same-sex desire and passion in a coded way, extending the ideals of Greek love in a similar fashion to those who accepted Greek love in its entirety. The boy is immediately reprimanded by his father for suggesting such an act, and the boy "felt so ashamed of himself that he hung his head down, and grew quite scarlet and began to cry into his tea" (44). The unaccepting father is

in this sense a parallel to Victorian society, which during Wilde's time did not accept the ideals of Greek Love. Even more interestingly, the Miller could be a coded representation of the older generation of reformers at Oxford under the leadership of Benjamin Jowett, who as previously mentioned made the rigorous study of the classics the centerpiece of education and of mentoring relationships between the Oxford tutors and their students, but who also denied that the devoted relationships between men in the *Dialogues* of Plato, of example, were sexual. The failure of British society to recognize the virtues and importance of boy-man relationships is represented through the obvious corruption of Hans and the Miller's friendship.

The friendship between the Miller and Hans is far from reciprocal, which is the exact opposite of the adoration two male figures share when joined through the devotion of Greek love. Thus, the title of the tale drips with sarcasm when the reader sees just how "undevoted" the Miller is to young Hans and how deadly is the effect of that lack of devotion. As opposed to guiding Hans and instructing him with good advice on how to live a more fulfilling life, the Miller greedily takes various items from Hans, such as his flowers and plank of wood. Hans, who is symbolically in the position of the younger student, believes his older instructor is correct in his treatment and even though he is struggling to survive under his guidance is still grateful he "did not refuse the Miller, for he is my best friend" (49). Again, Wilde can be seen as alluding, in a coded way, to the pernicious consequences of Jowett's and the other Oxford reformers' denial of the sexual dimension of Greek love. Jowett and his fellow classicists opened up a world of erotic possibility to their students in their study of the Ancients. Yet they also cruelly denied the very passions that the texts and the close mentoring relationships with tutors provoked in the younger generation of classical scholars like Pater, and after him Symonds and Wilde (Dowling x-xiii). The tale even mentions that the Miller was "a very good scholar," paralleling

the student-teacher relationship that was common among the pupils of Oxford (52). As the subject of his teacher, Hans continues to neglect his own needs and his dying garden to do as the Miller bids, just as the younger generation of man-loving men at Oxford were subjected to their Masters' denials of the legitimacy of male same-sex love. Again, as a coded representation of Jowett, this obvious lack of devotion reflects Jowett's decision to block Walter Pater from the proctorial elections at Oxford due to a previous affair Pater had with a student (Dowling 101-103). Jowett's actions in embracing the pedagogy of Greek Love shows his acceptance of some Greek ideals, while simultaneously revealing a shameful attitude towards the sexual desires of the men who love other men. The study of the classics gave an exalted name and textual embodiment to their love of other men, thus validating their sexual needs, but then the older male scholars like Jowett defined those needs as inappropriate—denying their "garden" the attention it needed.

Interestingly enough, the male character that Hans gives his life for is the one who understands the true ideals of being a devoted friend, the Miller's son. After sustaining a serious injury from a fall, the boy's own father does not want to expose himself to the elements of a vicious storm to call on a doctor, so he sends Han's instead. In describing the powerful emotional attachment that accompanies Greek love, Symonds questions, "who would desert his beloved or fail him in the hour of danger" (25)? The Miller, by shaming his son about his desire to care for Hans, forces his boy to repress his affection for Hans, suggesting, in a coded way, how Victorian society and its guardians attempted to forbid love between men.

The "devoted friendship" that the Miller could have had with Hans was corrupted through the Miller's shaming of the concept of love between men; the Miller's inability to form such a relationship reflects the nineteenth-century denials that *Paiderastia* was an ennobling

institution that included a sexual element. To Symonds, the Greek practice of boy-man relations embodied noble passions, a devotion so deep that the future existence of Greek culture and morals relied upon it. Symonds explains, "The lover taught, the hearer learned; and so from man to man was handed down the tradition of heroism" (33). The Miller's misunderstanding of Greek love makes him incapable of treating Hans with true devotion, or teaching him any moral values to carry into his own life. As the learner who is relying on the teacher for guidance, Hans becomes tainted by the Miller's shaming of same-sex passions and meets his death. The text suggests that denials of the legitimacy of deeply erotic and sexual passions between men leads to the destruction of men who experience these passions for each other. The Miller shames his own son to tears for feeling passionate towards Hans, and eventually the Miller sends Hans off to his death to save his son. It is as though the Miller believes he must destroy Hans and the affection his son feels for Hans if his son is to live a "healthy" life. The Miller's attitude of ignoring the suffering of his friend and continuously placing his own self-worth above the needs of Hans is the reason for Hans' pain and death, which the Miller never recognizes. He carries on throughout the entire tale with what Wilde rhetorically displays as sheer ignorance and disgraceful arrogance, mirroring the nature of Victorian England's attitude toward, and misunderstanding of, Greek love—and, perhaps, mirroring the arrogance of the older generation of Oxford reformers, like Jowett, who presumed to define and limit the interpretation of the Ancients and their once exalted concept of *Paiderastia*. The two characters that display an understanding of male passions are either dead or in pain by the tales end. The Miller's son is physically in pain from his fall and metaphorically in pain from the shame his father brings upon him for feeling desire towards another man.

Three years after the publication of *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, Wilde published *The House of Pomegranates* (1891), in which he explores further the theme of devoted Greek love and critiques how British society attempts to deny, stigmatize, or repress it. The coded representation of the discourse of Greek Love found in the second book of Wilde's fairy tales is considerably more intricate and subtle than in the first. The tales in this book become more complex in subject matter and are not as easily accessible to a wider audience, both during the Victorian Era as well as now. A majority of the ideal relationships that offer coded representations of Greek love are between male and female characters but with a difference in their species, or with a blood relation, making the coded message more difficult to analyze. Putting gender and blood relation aside and focusing solely on the construct of the relationships Wilde portrays in his fairy tales are crucial to decoding the discourse of Greek love. John-Charles Duffy argues that many relationships in Wilde's fairy tales are marked by the inability of the couple to procreate, which he argues is a clear code for homosexuality: "In response to the charge that homosexuality is reprehensible because it is non-reproductive, Wilde's fairy tales cast non-reproductive sex acts and non-reproductive love in a supremely positive light" (333). Recognizing the overall construct of the relationship though the interspecies love affiliations extends this analysis of Greek love further than just the ability to procreate. What the relations do produce is a positive homosexual counterdiscourse that illuminates the virtuous nature Greek love and those who practice it. The relationships are positive in their celebration of devoted love between two men but were typically rejected by Victorian society. Wilde used non-procreative relationships in these tales as a way to code erotic and passionate relationships between men.

The Fisherman and His Soul portrays the tale of a man whose feelings towards another are considered forbidden in the eyes of his society. The love the public cannot accept in this tale is the devoted love between the Fisherman and the Mermaid, which serves as a coded representation for the way in which British society rejected the non-procreative love between men. After falling in love with a Mermaid, the Fisherman is confronted with the issue of his soul. In order to marry the one he loves both partners realize that he must cast away his soul in order to enter the realm of "the Sea-folk," who "have no souls" (134). The Fisherman is chastised by all of society, who reflect British attitudes towards men who love other men. In this tale, the Priest, witch and the merchants all believe the Fisherman's love is an ill-conceived relationship with the soulless sea creature, just as the institutions of Victorian England rejected and attempted to repress same-sex relationships between men.

The text explores the level of disgust that is directed towards the Fisherman for his decision to engage in a relationship with the Mermaid when he is attempting to do whatever possible to be with his love, a devotion founded in Greek love. The Priest warns the Fisherman about the company he desires to keep: "[T]hey are as the beasts of the field that know not good from evil, and for them the Lord has not died" (135). The Priest curses the partner he has chosen and all of the people who live under the sea and "drove him [the Fisherman] from his door" (136). The "creatures" that live in the lower depths of the sea whom the Priest deems as unacceptable erotic partners for the Fisherman are a coded representation of men who love other men. After contemplating how he can possibly be united with his partner in marriage, the Fisherman seeks the help of a Witch, who like the Priest does not believe the union to be ideal. "The Witch grew pale, and shuddered, and hid her face in her blue mantle," at the Fisherman's stated desire to lose his soul to be with his love (138). Surrounded by pagan imagery of gothic

caves for housing, and spells that can control the winds and waters, it becomes clear that the (Greek) love the Fisherman has for the Mermaid is thought of as so scandalous that it is not accepted by heaven or hell. Like the lover in the devoted friendships among the Greeks that Symonds describes, the Fisherman is willing to sacrifice even his soul to be with his partner, but he cannot do so without the consequences of harsh treatment from an unaccepting British society.

Wilde suggests through this coding that when the Greek love that exists between two partners is not accepted it can cause some man-loving men to lead a double life, their hearts belonging in one place while they live empty, loveless livesanother. After successfully separating from his soul, the Fisherman is asked by his previous shadow, "[G]ive me thy heart, for the world is very cruel, and I am afraid" (145). Looking into the eyes of the man who is identical to himself, he turns down the pleading of his soul and enters into the sea while his other heartless half remains on land. The soul that dwells among humans routinely tries to bribe the Fisherman with wisdom and riches to reunite with him on land and live with those who have souls. The Fisherman successfully resist returning to a loveless, heartless life that does not make him happy but is eventually unable to resist the pressure, and is tempted by lust to exit the sea. The Fisherman quickly realizes that his soul had walked alone with no heart for so long that it was corrupt, causing him to steal, murder, and lie. Having been deceived by his soul, the Fisherman was unable to return to the sea, after spending two years living in one world while desiring nothing more than to be in the other. Wilde uses this deception and confusion as an interesting suggestion of how life may have been for men who wanted to devote themselves to other men, while they were forced to hide this desire under the guise of heterosexuality.

The ending of *The Fisherman and His Soul* contains some of Wilde's most daringly coded suggestions of a positive homosexual counterdiscourse. Ignoring the urgings of his conniving soul to come back to his previous life with the humans, symbolically a sexually acceptable life, the Fisherman realizes that "[l]ove is better than wisdom, and more precious than riches, and fairer than the feet of the daughters of men" (175). Holding his dead lover in his arms the Fisherman chooses to die with his partner rather than return to living a false double life caused by a society that does not understand the virtues of his devotion to his forbidden lover. The symbolic death at the whim of society has been threaded throughout many of the fairy tales but what happens next is arguably more controversial than any of the previous fairy tales' endings. In accordance with typical Victorian era customs, the Priest continues to curse the love between the Fisherman and the Mermaid and casts them into an unmarked grave that later grows enchanting flowers. The death of both the Fisherman and the Mermaid follows the Greek ideal of love between men described by Symonds as so intense and devoted that, "[i]n his misfortune he suffers, and at his death he dies with him" (22). The Priest did not see the beauty in the love shared between the two, even in death, but he recognizes it in the beauty of the flowers "and there came another word into his lips, and he spake not of the wrath of God, but of the God whose name is Love" (178). After discovering the flowers came from the grave of the Fisherman and the Mermaid, he blessed the seas and "all the wild things that are in it," and "the people were filled with joy and wonder" (179). Previous fairy tales end with the lovers going to heaven, but this one daringly portrays a Priest who not only blesses this forbidden love between a human and a mermaid, but spreads the word about the beauty of it among his people. The tale suggests that eventually an affirming and positive discourse about same-sex love—like the

Ancients' discourse of Greek Love--will emerge from the very institutions that forbade it in *fin-de-siècle* British society.

The homosexual discourses that pervaded popular thought in *fin-de-siècle* England were damaging to the individual due to the extremely negative beliefs that were constructed about men who love other men. Oscar Wilde writes a positive counterdiscourse that admires Greek love and suggests that society as a whole will eventually shed ignorant beliefs for more fitting ones, like those previously held by the ancient Greeks. Greek love was practiced between an older male and a younger male, occasionally described as a teacher and a student; it was founded in extreme devotion, friendship, and love. Under the mask of children's literature Wilde uses the disguise of non-human characters, such as birds, statues, and Mermaids to symbolically code the devoted, passionate and erotic friendship that occurs between men. As Symonds argues, in ancient Greece sexual practices between two men were not forbidden; neither were they the focal point or main interest of the relationship. Aside from physical passions, the bond that was formed was the center of the pedagogical relationship, which in ancient Greece was responsible for passing morals and civic education onto the next generation to insure the survival of the state. These morals and lessons included various aspects of political and social life, all which led to an intense bond between the boy and the man that was powerful enough that both parties would die for the one he loved. Wilde's characters symbolically embody many of these characteristics. In *The Happy Prince*, the Swallow and the Prince both die for one another, as do the Mermaid and the Fisherman in *The Fisherman and His Soul*. While all four characters are alive, they display devotion and love for one another that is not accepted by the public. The relationship between the Miller and Hans displays how destructive the pedagogical relationship can be when the ideals of Greek Love are misunderstood and the older Master denies or shames the erotic desires

implicit in these relationships. Through the events and lives of the characters in his two collections of fairy tales, Wilde suggests a new positive counterdiscourse on homosexuality that not only displays the negative impact of society's rejection of same-sex desire but also extols the harmonious atmosphere that can be sustained in a society that welcomes the open expression of this form of love.

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