DOKTORI DISSZERTÁCIÓ

Wilde, Stenbock, Prime-Stevenson:
Homophilia and Hungarophilia in *Fin-de-Siècle* Literature

Bojti Zsolt

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INTRODUCTION: HOMOPHILIA AND HUNGAROPHILIA

“Homophilia” is probably the best and most neutral term to apply to texts that pertain to same-sex desire and/or male-to-male love with any degree of sympathy, without excluding non-homosexual authors. Coined by German psychoanalyst Karl-Günther Heimsoth in the 1920s (Whisnant 69), the term “homophile” might seem anachronistic at first glance when applied to the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that this dissertation studies. Nevertheless, it offers indispensable discursive and chronological implications that are of paramount importance to the approach of what here follows.

The word “homophile” was coined to challenge the connotations of the term “homosexual.” The latter, by the 1920s, was perceived as a medical term that focused almost exclusively on sex per se with its consequent stigmatisation. The compound of the Greek homo- (same) and -phile (beloved) was designed to free same-sex desire from the medical discourse and de-emphasise the physical aspect, allowing discourse on the amatory aspect of the attraction between men (Whisnant 69; Myers 6, 204). Such endeavours have their origins—we shall see—at the fin de siècle, which brings us to the chronological implications of the term.

JoAnne Myers, in Historical Dictionary of the Lesbian and Gay Liberation Movements, defines “homophile” as a “term used in the twentieth century (until 1969)” (204)—that is until the Stonewall Riots, which designated a shift in the terminology and conceptualisation of non-heteronormative sexual identities, setting the wheels in motion for gay liberation movements and what we now understand as LGBTQ movements.

“Homophilia,” in this sense, is the term that is capable of demarcating what is commonly called “prehomosexual categories” of the nineteenth-century homosexual science movement from “modern homosexual identities” dating from the Stonewall riots of 1969. The difficult
point about this—no doubt we will come it—is that the various theories of the homosexual science movement cannot be reduced to a homogeneous whole, no matter how dated they might seem compared to our contemporary notions of sexuality, as they laid the foundation to modern sexual thought.

Finding an umbrella-term that is not convoluted by the multiplicity of scholarly endeavours and an ambiguous relationship with history, like “queer,” is of paramount importance, especially in the scrutiny of the turn of the twentieth century in English-speaking cultures. On the one hand, German-speaking Central Europe had produced a number of new terms pertaining to same-sex desire in the second half of the nineteenth century, which paved the way to the multifaceted sexual science movement and a new classificatory science of what in the period was commonly referred to as “sexual intermediaries.” By the end of the century, medical authors who had gained access to this knowledge had to juggle with various different terms, such as uranian, homosexual, invert, unisexual, similisexual, and their respective scripts and descriptions, when the British started to contribute to the medical discourse in the 1890s. Some of these terms are still in use and familiar to us; however, their nineteenth-century meanings are based on different conceptualisations of same-sex desire that should not be equated with our contemporary understanding or use of the words, or how queer theorists have conceptualised them in terms of the post-Stonewall gay rights movements. On the other hand, these various terms belonged to the medical register. Medical advances on same-sex desire, however, were not public knowledge and were virtually inaccessible to those who only read in English, as British and American censorial laws treated these medical treatises much like pornography at the time. “Homophilia,” as a result, may serve as an umbrella term that allows me to discuss ideas and texts of different nineteenth-century discourses together in their own cultural and historical contexts.
In the past few decades, scholars have paid renewed attention to the European sexual science movement. Monographs, such as *Peripheral Desires: The German Discovery of Sex* (2015) by Robert Deam Tobin and *Vita Sexualis: Karl Ulrichs and the Origins of Sexual Science* (2016) by Ralph M. Leck, offer an invaluable insight into the birth of a new classificatory science of same-sex desire to which we own, among other things, the coinage, “homosexual.” However, other than Ivan Crozier’s marvellously lucid introduction to his critical edition of *Sexual Inversion* (1897) by Havelock Ellis, there has not been a study that would, in length, present how sexology came to be in English-speaking cultures. Monographs, such as *Nameless Offences: Speaking of Male Homosexual Desire in Nineteenth-Century England* (2003) by H. G. Cocks, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885–1914* (2003) by Matt Cook, and *Before Wilde: Sex Between Men in Britain’s Age of Reform* (2009) by Charles Upchurch, by and large focus on the legal and societal aspects of same-sex desire in the century. Although they make marginal references to sexology and literature, these areas are not their object in chief. This is especially intriguing in light of the fact that the medical discourse was constantly reviewing homophile *belles-lettres* at the time to understand male-to-male love in addition to their case studies; and the sexual science movement firmly believed in the role of the literary discourse in promulgating knowledge on same-sex desire, which legislation tried to repress. The apparent compartmentalisation of knowledge suggests that there exists a gap that hinders the comprehensive dissection of the co-existence of nineteenth-century medical, legal, and literary discourses in English-speaking cultures. Literary texts in this dissertation, therefore, are studied for their literary devices which are assumed to reciprocate, in the shadow of censorial laws, medical and legal conceptualisations of same-sex desire.

Coincidentally, a few but prominent English literary texts make references to Hungarian culture at the turn of the century, when authors were struggling with
conceptualising and providing visibility for same-sex desire. At first sight, these rather odd
textual occurrences, from Oscar Wilde to Eric Stenbock to Edward Prime-Stevenson in the
1890s and early-1900s, might be explained with Western cultures’ long-standing associations
about the figure of “the Hungarian.” A sketch entitled “The Pandour and His Princess” (1832)
might be used to demonstrate some of these. Published in Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine,
it praises heroic Hungarian men on their “immeasurable magnitude of moustache and majestic
longitude of beard” (5), as if Hungarian men were the epitome of masculinity. Matt Cook
notes that “[f]acial hair functioned as a symbol of masculinity and respectability during . . .
the late-Victorian ‘beard boom’ . . . Those without were associated with fashion,
bohemianism and an avant-garde—but also possibly worse”; i.e. degeneration, closely aligned
with homosexuality (61). One might speculate at first glance that references to the Hungarian
in homophile texts argued against the pathologisation and feminisation of gay men. This, of
course, is just a marginal example. “The Hungarian” in turn-of-the-century homophile texts
looks and behaves somewhat differently. Nevertheless, this chance instance shows that there
might be a promising dialogue between homophilia and hungarophilia to be scrutinised.

Hungarophilia, however, cannot be approached via the nineteenth-century British
history of Hungary. We find instances where “the Hungarian” received sympathy or was
associated with cultural prosperity. The British sympathised with the failed revolutionary
attempts of Hungary, as commemorated by “Sonnet to the Hungarian Nation” (1849) by
Matthew Arnold or “On Refusal of Aid between Nations” (1849) by Dante Gabriel Rossetti.
This was furthered by the well-received speeches and articles of Lajos Kossuth in 1851–1852
in Britain and in the States, as a result of which Kossuth “became the best-known Hungarian
in the English-speaking world and contributed significantly to putting Hungary on the
political map of Europe” (Sherwood 317). However, as British envoy R. B. D. Morier pointed
out to Francis Joseph I, Emperor of Austria in 1866, “not all [E]nglishmen saw Hungarian
affairs through the eyes of Kossuth” (qtd. in Frank xvii). Tibor Frank, in *Picturing Austria-Hungary* (2005), concludes that “British observers often saw in Hungarian politics what they thought to be similarities, in one way or another, with British national history, and such comparisons had a favourable influence on the assessment of the country . . . A characteristic motif is the parallel between Austro-Hungarian relations and the Anglo-Irish problem” (179–180), as seen, for instance, in Arthur Griffith's pamphlet *The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland* (1904). Based on his vast source material, Frank insists, nevertheless, that “the meagre information [the public of Victorian Britain] received did not make up a homogeneous picture, either in the mind of the individual or on a national level” and that we can only talk about “a cross-section of individual views” (177). Furthermore, “there was no separate British image of Hungary” (xv) *per se*, as the title of the second edition of Frank’s book suggests,¹ in terms of the nineteenth-century British political history of the country.

That the British view of Hungarian people and culture could be easily turned into something else is seen in a common cultural and geographical association: Hungary is where Western and Eastern cultures meet. In the words of “The Pandour and His Princess”, “[h]alf oriental, half western, the Hungarian is next in magnificence to the Moslem” (7). The same notion can also be found at the end of the century in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897): “Buda-Pesth seems a wonderful place . . . The impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East; the most Western of splendid bridges over the Danube . . . took us among the traditions of Turkish rule” (5). This association of the Hungarian with the Orient, however, could be easily turned into suspicion. Regarding the Whitechapel murders between 1888 and 1891, a journalist of *The Pall Mall Gazette* claimed that such crimes had been unprecedented in England and could only happen in the “wilds of Hungary” (qtd. in

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Greenslade 87), suggesting that such sex-crimes are only plausible in Oriental “Hungary” in the Western imagination.

Following the British imagination regarding Hungary, therefore, would not result in a comprehensive analysis. Firstly, and stating the obvious, endeavouring to write the British history of Hungary would divert attention from the manifestation of the particular “Hungarian” in homophile literature per se. Secondly, a synthesis of the above heterogeneous views about the Hungarian with homophilia would simply rehearse the obvious: same-sex desire was frowned upon at the turn of the century and authors had to rely on a coded language to provide some visibility to male-to-male love in their texts. This approach would be unsuitable to address the issues with the conceptualisation of same-sex desire in the period and the circumstances of publication, and how these texts worked both for and against the legitimisation of homosexuality, despite their best efforts. More importantly, it would not enable me to accentuate how authors evaluated and re-evaluated the uses of “the Hungarian” in homophilic texts in light of new knowledge on same-sex desire and prior literature.

The first text under scrutiny for a hypothesised link between homophilia and hungarophilia is The Picture of Dorian Gray (1890/1891) by Oscar Wilde (1854–1900), which needs no extensive introduction. In 2004, Richard A. Kaye published an intriguing call for new approaches to Wilde’s role and inevitable oeuvre in the history of gay literature:

   In a culture increasingly indifferent to the strictly literary, a writer such as Wilde, whose work translates so smoothly into non-literary modes, has a promising future. Moreover, with his fascination with questions of truth and artifice in the presentation of social selves, he seems to have anticipated the concerns of many Gender-Studies critics. For Gay-Studies and Queer critics alike, there are still sizable parts of Wilde’s life, oeuvre, and reputation that cry out for new interpretations. (219)
And, indeed, time has proved the legitimacy of Kaye’s call despite the innumerable studies that had been published about the sexual non-conformism apparent in Wilde’s life and text. In 2011, the so-called “uncensored” Dorian Gray, Wilde’s original typescript of the novel became available to both scholars and the general readership. What makes this volume interesting for my purposes is not its literary qualities but what it suggests about the circumstances of publishing homophile texts in the 1890s. The first, thirteen-chapter version of the novel was published in 1890 in Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine. A year later Wilde extended the novel with seven chapters and a preface, and published it as an individual volume. The comparison of the two published versions could only reveal how Wilde intended to deflect negative criticism of the novel that he received after the thirteen-chapter version. The “uncensored” Dorian Gray, however, can also comment on the editorial intervention in the composition of the novel. The editor of Lippincott’s, Joseph Marshall Stoddart and his associates deleted approximately five-hundred words from the typescript that would make even the slightest hint at homophilia (Frankel 38). Although these phrases and sentences would not have prevented the publication of the novel, the editors would have been held liable for endangering public morals by the public circulation of the text, in case The Picture of Dorian Gray had ever become tried for obscenity.

Apart from the circumstances of publication, studying Wilde’s texts in light of Victorian commodity culture has also proved to be fruitful in recent critical literature. A case in point is Catherine Maxwell’s Scents and Sensibility: Perfume in Victorian Literary Culture (2017). The scrutiny of Victorian objects is not entirely new. It has been around for at least four decades; however, more recent scholarship has turned to study nineteenth-century objects “in order to take account of the complexities of the object as a signifier” (Sattaur 347, emphasis added). An invaluable example is Elaine Freedgood’s monograph, which complains that “the ‘things’ of novels still do not get taken seriously—that is to say, they do not get
interpreted—much of the time”; consequently, *The Ideas in Things* (2006) “assumes that critical cultural archives have been preserved, unsuspected, in the things of realism that have been so little or so lightly read” (1). The novelty of Maxwell’s monograph is that it is the first book-length treatise that would focus solely on perfumes in Victorian literature. Concerning Wilde’s fiction, *Scents and Sensibility* shows a scented trace of literary and personal influence on Dorian through Henry Wotton and *A Rebours* (1884) by Joris-Karl’s Huysmans. In the catalogue of the protagonist’s other fashions, scholars have also probed Dorian’s change in taste of music that, in similar fashion to the ekphrastic Leitmotif of the novel, indicates his moral decay. Studying music in the novel, therefore, is not entirely new; nevertheless, scholars have never made a genuine attempt to explain why Dorian becomes interested in Hungarian music in particular, among other things.

The critical neglect to scrutinise Hungarian music *per se* is especially puzzling when *Teleny; or, The Reverse of the Medal: A Physiological Romance of To-Day* (1893) is taken into consideration. This erotic novel was printed privately in two-hundred copies by Leonard Smithers, publisher to the Decadents and a series of pornographic works, and is attributed by scholars to Oscar Wilde and his circle. Wilde’s name is associated with the novel due to an anecdote by Charles Hirsch, a bookseller in the London of the 1890s. According to Hirsch’s story, Wilde himself showed up in his bookstore one day and dropped a wrapped parcel with the instruction that only men with his calling card could pick the parcel up. And so, they did. Men came into his shop, took the parcel and returned it. After a few rounds, curiosity got the better of Hirsch and he opened the parcel, which contained the manuscript of *Teleny* written by different hands. It is unclear how the manuscript got to Smithers. But it was also Hirsch who alleged that Smithers snipped the beginning of the novel (Nelson 35, Cook 104). Hirsch’s story might explain the novel’s uneven style and the abrupt start of the narrative. However, the manuscript has not been found and there is no direct evidence that would
support his story. Other than that, academic opprobrium did not let Wilde’s name be associated with Teleny. John McRae recounts that a friend of the most authoritative biographer of Wilde, Richard Ellmann “told [him] ... that Richard would never accept that ([he] quote[s]) ‘something like Teleny’ was Oscar’s work.”

The story of Teleny is narrated by Camille Des Grieux. He confides in an unnamed narratee how he met and let René Teleny (a pianist of Hungarian origins) initiate him into the homosexual underground of the city. Hungarian music plays a more prominent role here than in Dorian Gray. It was Teleny’s mesmeric rendition of a Hungarian rhapsody and “czardas” that first attracted Camille to him. Although this correlation with Dorian Gray does not prove Wilde’s authorship of Teleny, it most certainly indicates a trace of reading and influence: either Wilde himself authored Teleny and used Hungarian music again in his other, more well-known text, or the unknown authors picked up on hungarophilia in Wilde’s infamous, publicly available novel.

A remote member of the Wilde coterie apparently also picked up on this hungarophile element in one of his homophile texts of the early 1890s. Count Stanislaus Eric Stenbock (1860–1895), an eccentric Decadent poet and author did not only write but lived in the Gothic style. Having published two volumes of poetry, he authored a collection of short stories, Studies of Death (1894). The penultimate story in the collection is “The True Story of a Vampire,” in which the narrator Carmela recounts an incident in her childhood, where a Hungarian vampire, Vardalek paid a visit to her family. The seemingly benevolent vampire, also a pianist like Dorian and Teleny, mesmerised her little brother, Gabriel with a Hungarian czardas and a rhapsodic rendition of Chopin’s nocturne, which ultimately led to the death of the little boy. Stenbock’s oeuvre is not esteemed with high literary values. Scholars usually probe “The True Story of a Vampire” for possible codes of homophilia in terms of gay vampire fiction. Little attention has been paid to the nationality of Vardalek and his music.
despite the fact that it is his musical performance that first establishes the homophile nature of the short story.

It appears that hungarophilia in prior homophile literature served as a guiding light for Stenbock to conceptualise same-sex desire in his short story. The same, however, does not hold for American émigré and music critic Edward Prime-Stevenson (1858–1942). Having moved to Europe at the very turn of the century, he started working on his two major works under the pseudonym, Xavier Mayne. One is the first book-length historical treatise of same-sex desire by an American author, *The Intersexes* (ca. 1909). The other is a novelette, *Imre: A Memorandum* (1906) printed privately in approximately five-hundred copies in Italy. The story takes place in Hungary where an English gentleman in his thirties, Oswald meets a younger Hungarian soldier, Imre. The novelette is not at all action-driven, Oswald’s memoir focuses on how the two men define their own desires and put their guard down, that is, their figurative masks worn against societal opprobrium. Their confessions and apologiae are heavily indebted to the advances of the homosexual science movement, which Prime-Stevenson was extremely well-versed in, unlike his literary predecessors. Prime-Stevenson lamented in both of his major works that texts on sexology were virtually non-existent or inaccessible to those who only read in English. Having Wilde in mind among others, he found that prior literature denigrated male-to-male love and actually worked against the legitimisation of homosexuality. He intended to change that; he composed *Imre*, which to date is regarded as the first openly homosexual novel in English that allows its protagonists to have their happy ending. Possibly, it is also the first novel that its author called a “homosexual” piece of fiction *per se*. The novel’s hungarophilia, therefore, reveals a sexologically more informed author, who was motivated by, but not content with, how prior homophile literature presented same-sex desire.
In light of the above, what the present doctoral dissertation will not do for its reader is to offer another interpretation of fin-de-siècle gay literature in terms of queer or gender studies per se, heavily indebted to Michel Foucault’s work. Ralph M. Leck stresses in the afterword of his monograph, *Vita Sexualis* (2016) that “any history of the European sexual science movement must note the hermeneutic presence of an absence in both Foucauldian and gender theory. Foucault’s histories of sexuality and Butler’s theory of gender were composed in the absence of a historical analysis of the European sexual science movement and its complexities” (224). This absence in queer and gender studies led to the view that homosexual men prior to the Stonewall riots of 1969 had been passive victims of the medicalisation of same-sex desire, which completely disregarded the multifaceted voices fighting against or alongside it.

This approach reveals itself in the scholarly endeavours of David Halperin and Alan Sinfield in the early 2000s to write a new gay history. Oddly enough, they treat the works and ideas of emancipatory theorists of the nineteenth century as “prehomosexual categories” as opposed to “modern sexual identities” (Halperin, “How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality” 88, 92; Sinfield, *On Sexuality and Power* 9), which approach fails to address the modernity of a new classificatory science of the period in the making. The issue at hand is best seen in Sinfield’s analysis of *Teleny*. Among other queer theorists, “Sinfield explicitly and implicitly critiqued Ellmann’s work as diminishing Wilde as a historic and political agent. Ellmann’s biography, went the argument, harboured a naively essentialist view of homosexual acts and a blindly ahistorical notion of sexuality” (Kaye 201). On the principles of queer theory then, Sinfield celebrated “an emerging—though far from available—queer subculture” (*The Wilde Century* 18) in *Teleny*. The irony of Sinfield’s analysis is that it is just as ahistorical as Ellmann’s was, no matter how historical it tries to appear. Paying meticulous attention to the book’s subtitle, “A Physiological Romance of To-day,” Diane Mason reminds
us that the protagonists of *Teleny* “are mobilised by a *curative* rather than a celebratory discourse—a discourse whose implications limit rather than liberate the individuals and practices described” (73, emphasis added). As the novel is deeply rooted in the then-innovative conventions of the medical sciences, it appears that queering such texts is misleading—if not a dead-end.

Another problem with queering literary texts of the turn-of-the-century is the elusive meaning of what queer or queer theory is. Donald E. Hall’s *Queer Theories* (2003) “suggests that over a decade after the genesis of the term, what is often called ‘queer theory’ must be rendered plural now, given its many forms and insights, hence the ‘Queer Theories’ of its title” (5). Hall argues, in addition, that the “discussion of queer theories demands an inside/outside perspective, in which we recognise our own discursive constraints and the limitations of our perspectives, but, at the same time, work energetically with the language and concepts available to us” (6). Queering literary texts, as a consequence, requires the constant revision of what queer theory is. A case in point is Laura Erickson-Schroth and Jennifer Mitchell’s article of 2009, which claims that “[t]he continued erasure of bisexuality, by queer scholars in addition to mainstream critics, reveals that queer theory has not yet moved beyond its position as a homosexual opponent to heterosexuality, and therefore that bisexual theory has a role to play in queering queer theory” (297–298). This, I might add on a marginal note, is not to suggest that what the present dissertation does has no major overlaps with gender and/or queer theories. However, I am more inclined to take on a more “culturalist” approach principally, as the constant revision of what queer theory is or should be and “queering” literary texts, as seen in Sinfield, would hinder, limit, and digress from the study of the nineteenth-century historical (con)texts of same-sex desire.

What this thesis *will* do for its reader, therefore, is to present a “history of ideas” (xi)—a phrase that I loosely adapt, again, from Leck’s monograph. This history encompasses
endeavours of the European sexual science movement, as well as the literariness of sexuality, a micro-network of literary influences, and particular images of the Hungarian in English-speaking literature at the turn of the century. In a broader context, “homophilia” will render an account of the numerous conceptualisations of same-sex desire in various legal, medical, and literary discourses. “Hungarophilia,” on the other hand, will serve as a common denominator and diagnostic tool to see how literary men contested the convoluted approaches to homophilia simultaneously in a more particular context, the English literature of male-to-male love at the turn of the century. “Hungarophilia” in this dissertation, therefore, will not be examined in light of the British history of Hungary; instead, the dissertation focuses on the immediate cultural and literary context and the manifestation of the particular “Hungarian” in texts by Wilde, Stenbock, and Prime-Stevenson, which emerges through the musical ekphrasis of the style hongrois in the first place, an immensely popular musical expression in the nineteenth century due to Franz Liszt and Johannes Brahms most notably.

The analysis, however, shall not position itself against the backdrop of traditional music criticism but probe the textual style hongrois in terms of, what Stephen Benson calls, “literary music.” Benson argues that “[e]ach piece of writing has an angle of approach on musical sound . . . For this very reason, we might feel that writing is not in fact about the music at all, but rather about all those activities and persons attendant upon it, including its performers” (2). This premise entails a “culturalist” approach in which music is “put back into the world in which it is made, performed, received and evaluated; a world of conflicting ideologies, of manifest differences and, indeed, of increasing indifference to the self-justifying claims of music history . . . far beyond the scope of formal paradigms and idealised performances” (3). Moreover, emphasising that literary music helps us see how music is received, Benson argues that “[t]he music is covered in the listening subject, but it is in this narration that the means and ends of the musical moment are unpacked, even if only ever
partially. Literary music offers the promise of an open privacy” (6, emphasis added). The open privacy of hungarophilia in fin-de-siècle literary texts, as a result, offers an intriguing parallel with homophilia. I hypothesise that, in a period when sexological knowledge was scarce and could not be publicly disseminated, the very personal conceptualisation of a sexual self may be paralleled with the intimate description of Hungarian music. Moreover, as the conceptualisation of same-sex desire varies at the turn of the century, the uses of hungarophilia may as well vary for different authors.

The methodological adhesive that guides our reading of these two concepts is what Nat Hurley calls “reading anthologically.” This approach offers us a way of reading to establish how the homophile “traffic in literature (its circulation among subcultures as well as books’ interactions with each other) produced sexual types.” Reading anthologically scrutinises a historical model for the production of sexual types, which it takes as “an effect of literary circulation (across languages, national literatures, and cultures): . . . books themselves come together (and stay apart) as if they were the members of a subculture” (82). This anthology, fortunately, is not exclusive to belles-lettres but accumulates the various discursive conceptualisations of same-sex desire. Consequently, this doctoral dissertation intends to follow the textual routes of Wilde, Stenbock, and Prime-Stevenson to see how these authors abstracted sexual selves from various discourses on same-sex desire in a brief but crucial period when scripts of male-to-male love were ever in flux.

Before the analysis of texts by Wilde, Stenbock, and Prime-Stevenson for their legibility in terms of hungarophilia and the nature of their knowledge on same-sex desire, the first chapter serves as an in-depth introduction to the nineteenth-century cultural background of homosexuality, through three different discourses: legal, medical, and literary. Although the medico-legal discourse is usually treated as a single unit that mirrors societal distaste of same-sex desire, this introduction intends to ascertain to what extent the medical discourse
actually influenced European legislation in the nineteenth century. This is not meant to suggest that theorists in the period could decide or had an agreement on the question of nature versus nurture, or could comprehensively explain the roots of same-sex desire—a conundrum still under debate to the present day. The “medicalisation,” if the term applies here, of same-sex desire sought to shift the discourse from criminalised homosexual activities vaguely described by penal codes to more comprehensive scripts of same-sex performances—may they be pathologised or not—in the hope of decriminalisation and opening the discussion to the amatory aspect of male-to-male love as well. As for the medical discourse per se, the chapter introduces the sexual science movement of the nineteenth century in more depth, and shows how theories of vita sexualis came to be in light of legislation and how they established a new classificatory science that scientia sexualis adopted in the second half of the century. Last but not least, the chapter outlines censorial laws in the period to substantiate the difficulties of promulgating sexological knowledge on same-sex desire. As a consequence, I will argue for the relevance of the literary discourse at the turn of the century and introduce the dissertation’s approach to the primary sources in more detail than this introduction could.

After the nineteenth-century contexts of same-sex desire, three consecutive chapters trace the reading of hungarophile elements of the literary texts mentioned above—each chapter focusing on one author: Wilde, Stenbock, and Prime-Stevenson. The first chapter reads The Picture of Dorian Gray and Teleny together and focuses on perfumes and music in the context of Victorian commodity culture. The analysis of these elements scrutinises the legibility of same-sex desire in the texts in light of the circumstances of publication and contemporary knowledge about sexual science and neurology. Then I proceed to discuss “The True Story of a Vampire.” After the study of Stenbock’s sources and inspirations, the analysis focuses on the relevance of music in the short story and how the vampire embodies the classificatory problem of so-called sexual intermediaries in the 1890s. Then the dissertation
introduces Prime-Stevenson and his immersion in the history and science of same-sex desire. Having established the role of the author at the very beginning of the twentieth century, the chapter analyses *Imre* to substantiate how Prime-Stevenson’s various uses of the figure of “the Hungarian” differ from prior literature and his knowledge of sexology.² Lastly, the concluding chapter synchronises the parallel and simultaneous uses of homophilia and hungarophilia that the preceding chapters discuss diachronically, and ponders the limits of reading hungarophilia in terms of a happy ending still elusive and in demand in gay literature in the first half of the twentieth century.

Nineteenth-century Europe was divided on the subject of same-sex desire. While certain countries decriminalised sexual acts between two consenting men in the private sphere, the new penal codes in German-speaking Central Europe reinstated punitive laws. As a response, activists and theorists of the homosexual science movement established a new classificatory science in order to legitimise same-sex desire. These new typologies were taken up by psychopathology, which paved the way for a new discipline, *scientia sexualis*. Although the medico-legal discourse in the century is usually treated as a homogenous whole to highlight societal opprobrium against homosexuality, the two discourses (the medical and the legal) rarely agreed on criminalising same-sex desire and had little effect on each other. This is especially true in nineteenth-century Britain, where various new laws had been introduced to criminalise sex between men before English-speaking medical professionals started making significant contributions to sexology.

It also hindered the legitimisation of same-sex desire in Britain that sexology was not public knowledge. Nineteenth-century censorial laws treated medical works on the subject as if they had been pornography. In order that such texts would not pose a threat to public morals, their distribution was strictly limited. Literary discourse, as a result, had an increasingly prominent role in circulating knowledge on same-sex desire for three reasons: first, publishers and booksellers, in spite of the regulations, managed to sell clandestine fiction; second, the “literariness” of sexuality itself; and third, the literariness of *belles-lettres*, allowing authors to code problematic passages of their works, which the medical discourse, by definition, could not afford. As there is no direct evidence available to determine the circulation of sexological knowledge, reading these codes anthologically might help us understand how authors conceptualised and debated same-sex desire.
Same-Sex Desire and the Law

Allegedly a trained lawyer, American émigré Edward Prime-Stevenson in his sexological magnum opus, *The Intersexes* (ca. 1909) devoted an exhaustive chapter to the discussion of the legislative history of homosexuality: “Similisexual Love in the Brute World; in Primitive, Barbarous and Semi-Civilised Man; in Ancient Civilisations and Religions; and under Ancient and Modern Statutory Law.” He found that the criminalisation of same-sex desire in different legal codes had started due to the “immediate hostility of primitive Christianity”:

> With the sternly prohibitory attitude toward so much that was human, assumed by a Christianity . . . , similisexual love began to take-on swiftly, for the whole world a new aspect—that of a special and terrible sin. . . . But now that position was to be vastly strengthened in the new and yeasty social revolution, following the decline of Pagan Humanism. . . Profane loves were snares that drew the heart from God, and from the working-out of personal salvation, during a short and delusive earthly life. (57)

He, then, goes on to outline the development of statutory laws pertaining to sex between men through the centuries and acknowledges that, even if “the sentiment of the Christian code of morals and laws so characterised it, the homosexual passion persistently held firm place in humanity” (59).

In the section, “Summary of Criminal-Law Attitudes To-Day” (65ff.), Prime-Stevenson draws attention to the fact that sex between men was no longer criminalised in Europe as long as it takes place between consenting adults in the private, except in German-speaking countries and some Swiss cantons. Despite the criminalisation of homosexuality, he welcomes a change of paramount importance, namely, that psychiatric studies have begun to influence social and legal views in these states as well by the time of writing—the onset of the twentieth century. The case, however, was not the same in Great Britain, where sex between
men was still met with severe legal consequences. What worried Prime-Stevenson even more was that “[l]egal and popular ideas of more humanely cautious sort [were] not general” (66) as texts prepared to educate laymen on same-sex desire were virtually non-existent in English at the time, which was his very motivation to write The Intersexes.

Although Prime-Stevenson’s foray into the legislative history of homosexuality appears to be academically informed in its particulars, it should be read with caution as it is wildly inaccurate in parts. Nevertheless, it provides an insight into the problems that men attracted to their own sex faced in the nineteenth century and why they felt their need to change the law justified. A part of nineteenth-century Europe decriminalised same-sex desires, while another insisted on the punitive consequences of sex between men; and legislation in these latter countries had an ambivalent relationship with medical standpoints.

After the French Revolution, the new civic code (Code Napoleon) decriminalised non-commercial sex between two consenting adult men in the private sphere in France. Similarly, other states started to revise their laws concerning same-sex desire in the nineteenth century with the separation of church and state. Legislation, however, was not uniform in German-speaking Central Europe. Those territories, such as the west of Rhine, Baden, Wurttemberg and Hanover, where once the Napoleonic legal code was introduced, kept the spirit of the Code Napoleon even after the French had left (Tobin, Peripheral Desires 8). This is interesting because after the Austro-Prussian War (1866) and the Franco-Prussian War (1867), Prussians as well began devising their own penal code that they would introduce. The Royal Prussian Deputation for Public Health was delegated to investigate the criminalisation of same-sex desire. They recommended that sodomy, however “degenerate” it may be, should not be criminalised in the new penal code. This professional opinion was ignored in the name of protecting public morality: “Prussia’s Paragraph 143 became Paragraph 152 in the North German Confederation’s penal code, which a few years later became Paragraph 175 in the
German Empire’s penal code” (Tobin, *Peripheral Desires* 9). The course of action was somewhat similar in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Habsburg Empire prohibited sex between men in 1856. However, the government in the 1860s intended to decriminalise sodomy based on medical professional opinion. Minister of justice Anton Emanuel von Komers came up with the change in legislation in 1867, but the new minister replacing him, Eduard Herbst rejected this proposal (9).

The laws were revised multiple times in nineteenth-century Britain, however, without any trace of medical consideration. Initially, the subject of this revision was the Buggery Act of 1533, which stated that “buggery” would be punished by death. Buggery, or later known as sodomy, was not defined in 1533; a more precise definition saying that sodomy is *coitus in anum* was offered by *Institutes of the Laws of England* (1642) by Sir Edward Coke. However, it was still unclear when the act was considered complete. According to a 1781 ruling, emission in the body was required, but this requirement was reversed in 1828, meaning that penetration would suffice to charge the offender with sodomy (Cocks 32). The 1533 Buggery Act was confirmed by the 1823 Offences Against the Person Act. It was revised in 1861, after which the offender could be incarcerated from ten years to life or for two years with hard labour. It is also from 1823 that we find cases where men were tried for fellatio and mutual masturbation (Cocks 33). The legislative description of sodomy was broadened to the extent that any manifestation of sex between men would be treated as incitation, conspiration or promise for sodomy. As a matter of course, these cases were virtually impossible to prove as these men should have been caught in the act; therefore, the courts allowed photos, letters, and incriminating circumstances to serve as evidence in cases of incitation for sodomy (Cocks 33–34, Upchurch 92). As a result, the number of cases involving same-sex desire increased from the 1820s. According to Upchurch, “[b]etween 1811 and 1860, there were 864 trials for
attempted sodomy held in the London criminal courts, compared with only 116 cases of sodomy.” Approximately twice as many cases were tried in England and Wales (92–93).

Sodomy and attempted sodomy were still difficult to prove in court. This was remedied with a new charge, “gross indecency,” introduced in the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment’s Section 11, also known as the Labouchere Amendment. Liberal MP Henry Labouchere’s intentions with this section remain unclear. The journalist Frank Harris suggested at the time that Labouchere wished to overthrow the whole Act with this last-minute addition (Wilper, *Reconsidering* 19–20). Nevertheless, the Criminal Law Amendment of 1885 became law without debate. According to H. G. Cocks, it “did not enlarge the scope of the law any further. Neither did it affect sentencing practice in a noticeable fashion” (30–31). However, Matt Cook states that the definition of gross indecency includes two major provisions: “the Amendment tacitly moved the emphasis from unwanted advances to consensual sexual relations” and “the specification ['in public or private' in the Amendment] indicates the importance of the conceptual division between public and private at this time and the way the Labouchere Amendment sought to override it” (43). Simply put, sex between men was relatively safe in the private, domestic sphere; however, the Labouchere Amendment “reclaimed the private as a province for the law in respect of homosexual activity” (Cook 43).

At the time, the most infamous case of “gross indecency” in a private house was the Cleveland Street Scandal of 1889 where telegraph boys doubling as prostitutes for high-profile upper-class men, including aristocrats, were tried under the Amendment. In addition, Upchurch underlines that the same “phrase was meant to ensure that these acts could still be prosecuted even without an uninvolved witness” (93) or other evidence such as letters and so on.

The disbanding of the need to present direct evidence for prosecution led to the revision of the Vagrancy Law Amendment Act of 1898, which “broadened the possibilities
for arrest and allowed police to act upon their assumptions about places and forms of non-
sexual behaviour” (Cook 43). Among the many cases, possibly the most telling is Alan
Horton’s incident in 1912. Although, he was not in touch with men, either literally or
figuratively speaking, according to the police report, he was nevertheless arrested for
soliciting men. The reason for this was that he was wearing make-up when “he smiled in the
faces of gentlemen, pursed his lips and wiggled his body” in the street and a public lavatory
(qtd. in Cook 44). The case shows that “[t]he police did not arrest because sexual acts had
actually been committed but on the basis of a judgement they had made about the propensity
of an individual to commit them” (44). By and large, as the penalty for sex between men was
reduced to a maximum of two years in prison with or without hard labour, conviction became
easier as well with a wider range of admissible evidence and witnesses.

Unlike in German-speaking Central Europe, there was no medical opinion
commissioned to weigh into the legislation of same-sex desire in Britain. While Europe
started coining new and more neutral terms, as we will see in the next section, the traditional
delicacy of English law did not allow sex between men to be named. As Cocks compellingly
argues throughout his monograph, Nameless Offences (2003),

[p]roceedings in these trials were not recorded in the bound volumes produced
by the Central Criminal Court which covered all other criminal trials in
exhaustive detail. Verdicts and names were the only way in which those
convicted of unnatural crimes were recorded in official legal documentation.

The trial process was also affected by the necessity of silence. (79)

Interestingly, the courts’ delicacy, apparently, was not concerned with sexuality but with
same-sex desire per se. Antony E. Simpson asserts that defence lawyers frequently harassed
female victims of rape to extort information about the circumstances. Although it is evident
that the court needed to establish vital facts, it is clear that these women’s “natural modesty
conflicted with a desire to tell the full facts” and that was how, as a result, the defence could easily win (130–131).

The delicacy of English law was incompatible with the overt description of same-sex desire in the medical discourse. A case in point is Oscar Wilde, who received the maximum penalty, two years with hard labour for gross indecency in 1895. There is plenty of secondary literature describing the course of his trials. However, it is scarcely mentioned that Wilde unsuccessfully appealed in 1896, citing degeneration theories by Max Nordau and Cesare Lombroso (Cook 59–60), which were in line with the contemporary psychopathology of sexuality. Obviously, Wilde, a high-profile case, could not have been granted early release. But it is also clear that these theories were virtually illegible for the delicate English law. What was legible to legislators was notions of Victorian respectability, as revealed by George Osborn’s case around the same time:

Osborn [a “notorious sodomite’’] was sentenced to a life term of penal servitude . . . However, his sojourn in prison had had “a wonderful effect on him,” for on his application for his release from parole conditions in 1901, he was described as married with a child and “leading a thoroughly respectable life” in Paddington. Under these circumstances, the police concluded, “it is not at all likely that he has any intention of reverting to his former life.” (Cocks 92)

Cocks concludes from the police report that “Osborn’s appeals for remission provided the Home Office with an opportunity to consider his life as a ‘notorious sodomite’ as a case study, thereby giving us a narrative of same-sex desire very different from the sexological histories of ‘inversion’ being provided around this time for medical and homophile texts” (92). Legislation was not interested in sexology but in the naturalisation of convicted offenders in their respectable lives. To Wilde’s misfortune, his wife changed her surname and
that of their children to “Holland” in response to the scandal, indicating that Wilde’s nuclear family had nothing to do with him anymore. Wilde, as a result, could not have returned to a respectable life upon early release from prison. More importantly, his appeal did not work, as sexology was not public knowledge and texts of *vita sexualis* and *scientia sexualis* were virtually non-existent in English at the time.

**Vita Sexualis and Scientia Sexualis**

The European political climate sprang a “linguistic revolution” that was “painfully aware of the punitive power of stigmatising sexual discourses” (Leck 34), more precisely, of prior treatment of any manifestation of same-sex desire as either sodomy or pederasty. These new terms, however, differed in their respective underlying theories and strategies for legitimising same-sex desire. More importantly, they were not coined by medical scientists, which hindered their legitimacy. Nevertheless, these coinages of nineteenth-century German-speaking Central Europe shaped the language of what later became known as sexual science.

German lawyer and jurist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825–1895), the “first theorist of homosexuality” (26), as Hubert Kennedy calls him, did not actually theorise “homosexuality” *per se*, but conceptualised same-sex desire as Urningism (also known as Uranianism in English). In light of the apparent Prussianization of Central Europe, “Ulrichs’s goal was to free people like himself from the legal, religious, and social condemnation of homosexual acts as unnatural. For this, he invented a new terminology that would refer to the nature of the individual, and not to the acts performed” (Kennedy 30). Similar to forensic medical expert Johann Ludwig Casper’s (1796–1864) work of 1852, Ulrichs claimed that men attracted to

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3 Casper claimed that “pederasty” (“boy-love”) could be an inborn quality of a person. As unfortunate as it may sound, “pederasty” was confused with *paedicatio* (*coitus in anum*) and the two became synonymous (Kennedy 30–31).
their own sex were members of a “third sex” with a “female element.” According to Ulrichs, this element, as the sexual drive is not determined by the sexual organs, is a female psyche in a male body (Kennedy 28–29).

Between 1864 and 1879, Ulrichs published twelve major works, constantly revising himself and his theories in light of new findings, which resulted in an ever-expanding typology of “sexual intermediaries”: “His knowledge broadened from Urnings with a ‘feminine habitus’ to include ‘moral and social rights’ of lesbians [Urningsins], hermaphrodites, bisexuals [Uranodionings and Uranodioningins], and Urnings with a masculine demeanour [Mannlings]” (Leck 41). As his two major works Incubus and Argonauticus attest, by 1869 Ulrichs had developed a new and elaborate classificatory science that would be ready to comment on and debate current affairs of same-sex desire. His theories established the discourse of vita sexualis, i.e. the understanding that “(1) sexual rights are a social question and, therefore, the science of sexuality is an important field of social ethics and (2) broad knowledge of sexual variety should be presented the public as means of promoting a dialogue about legal codes and social mores” (Leck xiii). His new classificatory science of same-sex desire facilitated the birth of a new academic field that was later coined to be Sexualwissenschaft (sexual science or sexology) by German psychiatrist Iwan Bloch (1872–1922) at the turn of the century.

Ulrichs’s views, however, were met with adverse medico-legal reception at the time. He had been a member of the Freies Deutsches Hochstift für Wissenschaften, Künste und allgemeine Bildung since 1859; however, he was expelled in 1865 because of his publications on Urningism (Kennedy 38). As Ulrichs argued pro domo for the legitimisation of same-sex desire, the medical profession took him for a case study instead of a respected theorist who

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4 Ulrichs initially called such a man an Uranier and the heterosexual counterpart Dionäer; later he changed the terminology to Urning and Dioning in his publications (Kennedy 29).
can refute the pathologising views of psychiatrists on same-sex desire. His theories were disregarded on the basis that doctors (and not the subject) were supposed to study the matter (33–35). His colleagues did not approve of his views either. When he spoke against anti-sodomy laws at the Congress of German Jurists in Munich and confessed his true sexual nature to his fellow-lawyers, for which Ulrichs is credited with the first public coming-out in gay history, “he was simply shouted down and not allowed to speak” (38).

Ulrichs did not see eye to eye with his comrade and penfriend, Hungarian journalist and translator Károly Kertbeny (born Karl Maria Benkert, 1824–1882) either, who was the first to use the term, “homosexual” in public in his 1869 pamphlets to the Prussian government.⁵ Although Ulrichs and Kertbeny were both working for the legitimisation of male-to-male love and their major works were published in 1869 with the same publisher, Kertbeny’s arguments differed to the core and were often exclusive of Ulrichs’s uranian. Initially, Kertbeny also argued for the inherence of homosexuality; however, he later changed his mind and warned Ulrichs of the logical fallacy of such arguments, claiming that bloodthirst could be explained in the same vein but should not be legitimised (Tobin, *Peripheral Desires* 15). Another substantial difference between uranianism and homosexuality is that there is nothing effeminate in the latter. Kertbeny explains same-sex desire with a different kind of “manliness” and sexual drive (Féray, Herzer 32; Tobin, *Peripheral Desires* 15). Lastly, there is a major difference in the technique of argumentation. Ulrichs published his works under his own name and argued for the emancipation of men like himself; Kertbeny, on the other hand, published his pamphlets anonymously and pondered the “confusion of ideas”: there is an inconsistency in the law as it does not criminalise “normal” sexuality, while it punishes homosexual men (Féray, Herzer 32).

⁵ Kertbeny is credited with coining the word, “homosexual.” He also used the term in a private letter to Ulrichs in 1868.
This “confusion of ideas” and Kertbeny’s argument become clear when we have a look at his three-fold taxonomy of sexualities. The first category consists of monosexuals. According to Kertbeny, everybody practices onanism to a certain degree, especially in early and uncertain sexual development; one sixth of the population falls into this category. However, it results in physical and mental illnesses as excessive onanism leads to the strain on one’s fantasies and genitalia. The second category is homosexuality that can be found in both sexes. It is divided into three subcategories. Nine tenth of homosexuals are so-called “mutuals,” who practice mutual masturbation. One tenth of homosexuals are active pygists, super-virile men, and passive ones who practice coitus in anum. The third group of homosexuals is called “Platonists,” who are not in physical contact with one another’s genitals. This is a special category as it has no equivalent in “normal” sexuality due to the wantonness of the latter. The third major type is of “normal sexualism.” This is the inborn sexuality of the majority of the population; however, it differs from the two types above due to its inclination to excessive and degenerative sexual practices. According to Kertbeny, a normally sexed man is capable of engaging in excessive same-sex practices as both the active and passive party; he may resort to monosexuality, molesting minors of any sex, bestiality, necrophilia and wounding his sexual partners. What Kertbeny wanted to highlight with his typology was that the law did not act against “normal” sexual men but criminalised homosexuality, even though, in his view, homosexual men did not pose a threat to their fellow men and their sexual encounters took place between two consenting adults. A case in point in his theory is the erotomaniac Marquis de Sade, whom he categorised as “normal” sexual (Féray, Herzer 34–36).

It is unclear what led to Ulrichs and Kertbeny’s eventual falling out. Ralph M. Leck speculates, besides pondering their theoretical differences, that Ulrichs viewed Kertbeny’s endeavours with suspicion and distrust (77). Leck’s idea is rooted in his firm belief that
Kertbeny was heterosexual. This view originates from Manfred Herzer’s then-groundbreaking article. Having read the testimony in his pamphlet that he was “normally sexed,” Herzer concluded that Kertbeny was heterosexual (10–11). However, it begs the blatantly obvious question why Kertbeny was so immersed in the topic in the first place and how he could interview homosexual men, who trusted him with their secret, about the topic. Four years later, in an article co-authored by Jean-Claude Féray, Herzer is not so sure about Kertbeny’s heterosexuality. Based on private letters, Féray and Herzer conclude that Kertbeny either had both sexual drives or was Platonic (40–46). It appears that Kertbeny deliberately separated his public persona from the private, as it is clear from Judit Takács’s research:

The unfinished autobiographical notes I studied . . . were most probably written for public reasons: the author shows off by cramming the texts full of references to famous, important people. The diaries, on the other hand, were most probably written for private use: there are hardly any references here to famous personalities, nor Kertbeny’s connections to them. (32)

Consequently, his diaries are more revealing than his pamphlets in terms of his private life. Takács found compelling evidence for Kertbeny’s homosexual drive. His diaries mention “beautiful lads,” “glamorous boys,” gorgeous and seductive barbers, and male first names put down as their diminutive nicknames, suggesting intimacy in Hungarian. Even more telling are the signs of erasure and self-censorship around these occurrences (32–33).

The new terms employed by Ulrichs and Kertbeny, however, were not taken up immediately; instead, Karl Westphal’s (1833–1890) theory of *die konträre Sexualempfindung* (contrary sexual feeling) received attention and respect in the medical discourse, which appeared in print also in 1869. Westphal’s findings were not at all representative: he formulated his theory based on two cases only—a woman who felt like a man, and a man who dressed in women’s clothes compulsively. However, unlike Ulrichs and Kertbeny, Westphal
was a medical doctor; his “somatic explanations of mental illness gave him the prestige of the hard science” (Tobin, Peripheral Desires 18–19). Moreover, his research was more accessible; the English translation of his results was published in the Journal of Medical Science in 1871. His work paved the way for the psychopathological approach for decades to come; most importantly, for Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s Psychopathia Sexualis (1886), possibly the most influential medical study of the nineteenth century, the translator of which, Charles Chaddock introduced the term “homosexual” into the English language in 1892 (Halperin 15). The British conceptualisation of sexual inversion and the invert at the end of the century was also inspired by Westphal’s study. Interestingly, Westphal stated that not all cases were pathological; however, he had no political interests in the subject and offered no further explanation nor examples for the better understanding or decriminalisation of the “contrary sexual feeling” (Tobin, Peripheral Desires 18–19; Leck 120).

Kertbeny’s coinage was scarcely used: a legal journal mentioned it in 1870 and Daniel von Kaszony used it in private letters and publications translated into Dutch (Tobin, “Kertbeny’s ‘Homosexuality’” 5). It was not until Gustav Jäger’s 1880 edition of his work Die Entdeckung der Seele (The Discovery of the Soul) that the term “homosexual” gained medical recognition. Jäger received manuscripts from Kertbeny and was to publish the latter’s idea on the “practical medical and hygienic part of the sexual vices.” Although this was eventually excluded from Die Entdeckung der Seele, Jäger, nevertheless, used Kertbeny’s coinage to explain the connection between sexuality and olfaction. Jäger was especially

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6 The translation of Psychopathia Sexualis was not the first English text that used the term, “homosexuality.” John Addington Symonds’s A Problem in Greek Ethics (1873) also used the term. Presumably, David Halperin chose to date the term in English to 1892, because Symonds’s work could hardly be considered procurable at the time. Psychopathia Sexualis, on the other hand, was possibly the most important canonised medical text on same-sex desire in the century.
intrigued by Kertbeny’s concept of the super-virile man. According to Jäger, the super-virile man had a great influence on other men with the “scent of his soul” and was of the “highest level of spiritual and mental development, social position and of manly abilities” (Féray, Herzer, 37–38). Jäger also encouraged Kertbeny to write extensively on the history of super-virile men; however, this project did not come to be. It was also through Jäger that some of Kertbeny’s writings were published in 1900, signed as “Dr M,” in the *Jahrbuch für Sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (The Yearbook of Sexual Intermediaries), the most important yearly medical periodical on same-sex desire at the turn of the century (Herzer 6–7; Féray, Herzer, 37–38; Tobin, *Peripheral Desires* 122).

The term, “homosexual,” nevertheless, had advantages that Ulrichs’s “uranian” did not possess. The term and the respective theory behind it—at least in their public formulation—did not come from an “uranian” or “homosexual” himself. This ostensible objectivity made it more suitable for application in the medical discourse. Another advantage is that it calls same-sex desire a “sexuality,” which in the nineteenth century might have seemed counterintuitive in terms of (what we now understand as) heteronormativity. To contemplate what “sexuality” meant in this period, it is best to see how the term “asexual” was used. A case in point is Aubrey Beardsley, the illustrator of Wilde’s *Salome* (1891/1894):

By modern idiom it is a paradox that Beardsley’s work was called “asexual” (by *Public Opinion* in 1893) and (by *St Paul’s* in 1895) “sexless.” But in the nineties the word “sex” still denoted sexual class, male or female, with the implication that people should keep to their proper stations. “Sexless” was one of the adjectives brought against Ibsen, whose characters were said to be “effeminate men and male women.” It was in that sense that the art critic of *St Paul’s* described Beardsley as “sexless and unclean.” (Brophy 84)
In this sense, only those could be marked for sexuality in the nineteenth century, who could be understood in terms of the heteronormative dichotomy of the sexes. The “uranian,” the female soul in a male body, was automatically deemed “asexual,” and in this regard, it is no wonder that Westphal described inversion as a sexual feeling but not as a sexuality.

As a result, Kertbeny’s linguistic revolution paved the way for new taxonomies of sexuality. According to John Boswell, there are “three broad types of sexual taxonomy” (23), which, interestingly, I need to contemplate in a reverse order for the sake of my argument. In my view, Boswell’s type C is how the nineteenth century imagination conceptualised “sexuality”: “Type C theories consider one type of sexual response normal (or ‘natural’ or ‘moral’ or all three) and all other variants abnormal (‘unnatural,’ or ‘immoral’)” (23). As seen above, the nineteenth-century concept of “sexuality” was a Type C theory: only those were marked with “sexuality,” who adhered to heteronormative standards; the others (non-heteronormative, unrespectable) kinds were considered asexual. This is exactly what Kertbeny dissects and breaks away from with his coinage, as he saw Type C theories as “the historical development of Judaism and Christianity” (qtd. in Tobin, Peripheral Desires 17).

By creating the category “normal sexualism,” he strips the term “sexuality” of its inherent meaning “normative”; yet, by combining it with the prefix “homo-,” he implies that same-sex desire might be “abnormal” but is still natural.

Since in Kertbeny’s terms “sexuality” had nothing to do with normativity and respectability, his coinage was the foundation of a new taxonomy that had not existed before. The term “homosexuality,” as used nowadays, belongs to Type B theories, which, in Boswell’s description, “posit two or more sexual categories, usually but not always based on sexual object choice . . . The most common form of Type B taxonomy assumes that humans are heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual . . . ” (23). It needs to be pointed out again, however, that Kertbeny did not create the term to solely designate sexual object choice, which
would render his theory as Type A, according to which: “all humans are polymorphously sexual; i.e., capable of erotic and sexual interaction with either gender. External accidents, such as social pressure, legal sanctions, religious beliefs, historical or personal circumstances determine the actual expression of each person’s sexual feelings” (Boswell 23). Kertbeny distinguished “homosexuality” from “normal sexuality” to highlight that the latter is polymorphously sexual but not sanctioned by law, while the former is criminalised.

Comparing these three major theorists of 1869 on same-sex desire, however, does not result in an exact taxonomy. As Robert Tobin stresses, “[t]he language of sexuality in German at the end of the nineteenth century was far too fluid for such an endeavour. By the end of the century, the three terms were often used interchangeably” (*Peripheral Desires* 23). Kertbeny’s term survived and became the most widely used, most probably, due to its easy translatability to other languages (Breen 3–4).

To further complicate the issues of the conceptualisation of same-sex desire in the period, we need to see that there were more new labels, now out of use, by the end of the century. Wilde’s former friend, Marc-André Raffalovich theorised same-sex desire with his preferred term, “unisexuality” and published his six-fold “classification of sexualities” (with many convoluted subcategories in his typology) in his magnum opus, *Uranisme et Unisexualité* (1896) written in French. He was considered to be an expert on same-sex desire in France, especially due to his contributions to *Archives de l’Anthropologie Criminelle*. However, *Uranisme et Unisexualité* never became a highly-esteemed work in English sexology, despite the fact that “Raffalovich was in a sense writing a history of English unisexuality” (Roden 16). The first English translation of his magnum opus was published in 2016 and can be viewed as Raffalovich’s “autobiography every bit as much as an ethical disquisition” (Healy 64). The first book-length treatise on the history of same-sex desire by an American author, Edward Prime-Stevenson’s *The Intersexes* (ca. 1909), however, preferred
the term, “simisexuality,” but based its four-fold typology on Ulrichs’s terminology. At the turn of the century, there are quite a few terms and theories of same-sex desire, often used interchangeably: “uranian,” “homosexual,” “invert,” “unisexual,” “similisexual,” to enumerate the ones that were mentioned in this chapter. There was no consensus nor an absolutely crystal-clear homosexual identity at this point.

The greatest difficulty we face in the conceptualisation of same-sex desire, especially in the study of Anglophone literatures, is that the English joined the discourse of sexual science rather late at the very end of the nineteenth century. Critic and poet John Addington Symonds published his historical treatise of same-sex desire, *A Problem in Greek Ethics* in 1883. More than a decade later he criticised Continental theories of degeneration and inversion in *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891); however, this is merely a review of Continental sexology and does not pertain to the British directly. Poet, philosopher and activist Edward Carpenter also produced shorter publications on same-sex desire in the 1890s. His major work, *The Intermediate Sex* was published in 1908; however, it conflated sexual liberation with class issues, which further complicated the discussion. The first book-length study of same-sex desire by a British author, Havelock Ellis’s *Sexual Inversion* was first published in English in 1897. Before his monograph, only scarce translations and reviews of German works appeared. More importantly, the distribution of these works was strictly limited; therefore, advances in sexology were not public knowledge at the time.

Unlike in other countries, the medical discourse had little influence over Anglo-Saxon jurisdiction in the second half of the nineteenth century, as it is also blatantly obvious from two major cases. Prior to the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment, cross-dressers Boulton and Park could be charged with sodomy or incitement for sodomy. However, the prosecution was not able to prove the charges as they did not have a victim of the accused or a witness to the action. In a way similar to the procedure of German-speaking countries, the prosecution
called a doctor as an expert witness to examine Boulton and Park’s physique for evidence of criminalised sexual activities. The examination was pointless. As H. G. Cocks and Charles Upchurch both assert, forensic medical examinations of the sort were extremely rare in Anglo-Saxon jurisdiction. Even if the doctor had found anything to prove the charges, he would not have been able to assess the results due to the lack of experience and expertise. As a result, the examination—probably carried out in a poorly lit room in a couple of minutes—was ruled to be inconclusive (Cocks 113–114; Upchurch 189–190), and Boulton and Park could leave the courtroom as free men. The other case in point is Wilde’s last trial. The judge’s concluding remarks suggest that the new labels and conceptualisations of same-sex desire were disregarded by British jurisdiction:

Oscar Wilde . . . , the crime of which you have been convicted is so bad that one has to put stern restraint upon one’s self to prevent one’s self from describing, in language which I would rather not use, the sentiments which must rise to the breast of every man of honour who has heard the details of these two terrible trials . . .

. . . [T]hat you, Wilde, have been the centre of a circle of extensive corruption of the most hideous kind among young men, it is . . . impossible to doubt. (qtd. in Ellmann 477)

Although Wilde was convicted for “gross indecency,” we cannot help but wonder if the judge was implicitly applying the description of a “sodomite” and “pederast” to Wilde from the scripts available in Anglo-Saxon cultures at the time. That the judge has no words for Wilde’s crimes is in accordance with the main argument of Cocks’s monograph, Nameless Offences that “sodomy” could not be described in court due to the delicacy of the legal discourse. In addition, the judge emphasises that Wilde’s crime involves the corruption of young men, which would rehearse the script of pederasty.
At the turn of the century, British jurisdiction was still tied to old and pejorative conceptualisations of same-sex desire. The language barrier, the inaccessibility of the German texts, and the incompatibility of what the new terms imply with Victorian respectability did not allow sexology to have an influence on jurisdiction and public opinion.

**Literary Discourse and Sexology**

Even before the first theories of same-sex desire appeared in German-speaking Central Europe, literature had played an important role in the education of same-sex desire. One early example in the nineteenth century was fashionable Swiss hat-maker Heinrich Hössli’s (1784–1864) collaboration with Swiss author Heinrich Zschokke (1771–1848) on the subject of same-sex desire in fiction and non-fiction. It is unclear whether Hössli had private interest in the topic. It is possible that he wanted to legitimise same-sex desire because his son was attracted to his own sex (Leck 109). Hössli himself claimed that his endeavours started with the 1817 execution of Franz Desgouttes, who was broken on the wheel for the murder of his former lover, Daniel Hemmeler. Tobin claims that “[b]reaking on the wheel was a gruesome and popular form of execution resembling crucifixion” and “[t]his grotesquely medieval form of capital punishment surely added to the liberal Hössli’s horror at what he perceived to be the criminalisation of Desguettes’s love” (*Peripheral Desires* 29). In addition, Leck and Spector assert that this brutal public execution was meant to evoke repulsion for male-to-male love, deemed “unnatural,” according to Swiss and German penal codes (Leck 109), and marked violent in general by the public (Spector 101). Hössli intended to challenge the “naturalistic fallacy and moral conundrums generated by natural theology” (Leck 107) and wanted to argue that same-sex desire as “sexual diversity was a fact of nature” (Leck 106) and men-loving men had the right to love. As a hatter who came from a line of milliners, Hössli “[i]nitially . . . did not think of himself as the person to execute such an undertaking” (Leck
105); therefore, he commissioned Zschokke, known from liberal periodicals, to write a novella in order to educate the public and have them understand both the sexual and the amatory aspects of Desgouttes’s case. In 1821, Zschokke published *Eros*, in which a judge tries to convince people that one Lukasson’s breaking on the wheel was a cruel punishment for the murder of his former lover, Walter; and the sentence was carried out due to the ignorance of the public who would have proved far more understanding, had he murdered a woman he was in love with. The judge argues that same-sex love was not criminalised in ancient Greece, home of many great men.

Zschokke’s *Eros*, however, did not turn out to be what Hössli desired. According to the story, male love was not at all sensual in ancient Greece. The interlocutors do not accept the judge’s arguments and believe that male love was the result of neurological problems and the segregation of women in ancient Greece. Furthermore, as Robert Tobin puts it, “[t]o add insult to injury, [the judge] is an odd and eccentric fellow, the only man in the lot without a wife and fiancée who is present. In fact, the narrator implies that [he] might be one of the men who love other men, which the judge denies” (*Peripheral Desires* 30). Given that Hössli hit a dead-end with Zschokke, he wrote his own two-volume *Eros* (1836/1838), a historical, legal, and literary treatise of male love on the “individual and society, arts and sciences, sexuality and love” (Tobin, *Peripheral Desires* 30), built on Plato’s *The Symposium* to refute his textual predecessors on same-sex desire, such as Montesquieu’s *The Spirit of Laws* (1748), Friedrich Wilhelm Basilius von Ramdohr’s *Venus Urania* (1798) and Zschokke’s *Eros* (Leck 105–107).

Although Hössli’s collaboration with Zschokke was not a success, his “initial entrepreneurial plan . . . demonstrates both his faith in literary culture as a means to address the social problems of his day and his connections to the important figures in that culture” (Tobin, *Peripheral Desires* 30). Hössli’s endeavours were not ignored by later theorists. Although he was on different opinions with Hössli’s *Eros*, “Ulrichs paid Hössli the greatest
compliment” by “[c]alling him his true predecessor in struggle” in Memnon (Leck 113).

Ulrichs also believed in the educational power of belles-lettres, as attested by his proposal for “Statutes for an Urning League.” Leck calls “[t]his 1865 document, which Hubert Kennedy found among Kertbeny’s papers in the Hungarian National library . . . a gemstone of sexual liberalism in Europe” (55). The most important statutes in a slightly altered version of Kennedy’s translation are as follows:

- a. to bring Urnings out of their previous isolation and unite them into a compact binding together in solidarity;
- b. to champion the innate human rights of Urnings in opposition to public opinion and the agencies of the state, namely, to vindicate their equality with Dionings before the law and in human society in general;
- c. to found an Urning literature;
- d. to further the publication of appropriate Urning writings at the expense of the League;
- e. to work for the goals of Urnings in the daily press;
- f. to assist individual Urnings (who suffer because of their Urning nature) in every need and danger and, when possible, to also help them find suitable livelihood. (qtd. in Leck 56)

It is interesting to see that founding and furthering homophile literature appears to be the basis of uniting the community and educating the public, including Uranians as well.

Unfamiliar with Takács’s study, Leck finds it “ironic” that Ulrichs would send this draft to Kertbeny: firmly believing in Kertbeny’s heterosexuality, Leck states that “[t]he irony here is that the proposed composition of the Urning League would have excluded Kertbeny’s participation, because Ulrichs imagined that the agents of change would be homosexuals” (57). There are three major problems with this one sentence. First, as seen above, we cannot
be sure about Kertbeny’s heterosexuality. Second, it is highly problematic to use the term “homosexual” in this sentence, as Ulrichs’s “uranian” and Kertbeny’s “homosexual” were different concepts of same-sex desire. Third, Kertbeny most probably would have agreed with the core idea of the League. Leck states that, “[u]ndoubtedly, this draft reflected Ulrichs’s earlier participation in civic and cultural organisations, and, in this sense, this proposal was a cultural fractal of the 1848 Revolution” (57). However, the revolution had a great impact on Kertbeny too in conceptualising same-sex desire in terms of legal injustice. According to Tobin, “Kertbeny’s thinking shows how important liberal political notions of nationalism were in the development of the concept of the homosexual. Even more interestingly, Kertbeny’s understanding of nationalism relies heavily on language, which perhaps explains why he found it so important to coin the term ‘homosexual.’” Furthermore, “Kertbeny’s deep involvement in Hungarian nationalism informed his thinking about civil rights and group identity and set the tone for the emergence of modern homosexual identity” (Tobin, “Kertbeny’s ‘Homosexuality’” 3–4). As seen above, Kertbeny’s whole concept of “homosexuality” was based on legal injustice and advocacy of civil rights for an abnormal yet natural sexual desire. Just as he translated Hungarian literature to German to promote Hungarian nationalism and civil rights, Kertbeny coined a readily translatable term to theorise and emancipate homosexuals.

Literature as a readily available medium was fertile ground to educate the public about same-sex desire. The circulation of such sexual scripts, however, was met with adversities in Britain and the United States. Firstly, anglophone theorists joined the articulation of same-sex desire in the medical discourse at the very end of the century—rather late, compared to German-speaking Central Europe. Secondly, the distribution of such texts in general was restricted. The Obscene Publication Bill passed through the British parliament in 1857. It was based on the Customs Consolidation act of 1853, which prohibited the import of pornography
from the Continent (Bristow, “Homosexual Writing on Trial” 22). Although these laws were created against disrespectful publications, the 1857 bill was further refined during the *Regina v. Benjamin Hicklin* case. The Crown prosecuted Hicklin, an official for revoking the order of judge, which instructed the authorities to destroy one Henry Scott’s publicly circulated anti-Catholic pamphlet. Hicklin sustained Scott’s appeal “on the grounds that the single purpose had not been to corrupt public morals but to expose problems within the Catholic Church” (W. Bartee, A. Bartee 65). The authorities made a further appeal and the case was tried at the Court of Queen’s Bench. The legal definition of “obscenity” was rather vague and Chief Justice Alexander Cockburn saw the laws as a design to protect public morality. Peter D. McDonald claims that “it is clear that [Cockburn’s] ‘test’ was specifically designed to confront the question of whether or not it was possible to appeal to the literary merits of a work to defend it against the charge of obscenity” (295–296). The judge was not moved by the defence’s plea concerning intentionality and “English liberty”; he insisted on the dangers of publicly circulated texts in the hands of susceptible readers—children especially, however ludicrous the presumption may be that children could and would obtain any text circulated in public. Intentionality had no legal grounds; it was argued through a parallel with carrying an infectious child in the streets, that the person’s intentions carrying the child are irrelevant as he might be infecting other pedestrians. Instead of intentionality, the judge saw the key to the case in the tendency how these publications reach the public. Cockburn argued that “[t]he immunity . . . must depend upon the circumstances of publication” (McDonald 296–297), i.e. the distribution of the text.

Judge Cockburn’s design became known as the Hicklin Test or Hicklin Standard. This refinement of the Obscene Publication Bill was rather inauspicious concerning texts discussing sexuality:
... it opened a door for judges to apply the insidious verbs “deprave” and “corrupt” to any printed work that touched on sexual subject-matter, regardless of whether it had pornographic content. It was in this legal context that works on homosexual topics that could scarcely be labelled pornographic proved especially vulnerable to prosecution. ... it became increasingly difficult to circulate publicly several important volumes (both fiction and non-fiction) that represented emergent understandings of male and female homosexual identity.

(Bristow, “Homosexual Writing on Trial” 23)

In the United States, the distribution of obscene materials was prohibited by law from the beginning of the nineteenth century. The prohibition became federal law with the Comstock Act of 1873. The situation was similar to that of the British: the vague legal definition of “obscenity” needed interpreting; as a result, the British Hicklin Standard was adopted in American federal law in 1879. Based on the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, protestors of the Comstock Act argued that the new laws violate the freedom of free press and, more importantly, of free medical press. Legislators, however, insisted that the distribution of such texts should be limited as they might fall into the hands of children (Wood 44ff.).

It is interesting to see that literary and medical texts were held to the same standards in terms of obscenity in the nineteenth century. It is even more intriguing that the two discourses were co-dependent when the British started contributing to the medicalisation of same-sex desire. As Ivan Crozier puts it in his compelling introduction to Havelock Ellis’s Sexual Inversion co-authored by John Addington Symonds:

The difference between previous texts concerning homosexuality and Ellis and Symonds’s Sexual Inversion is that the latter combined the political motivations of homosexual rights activists (such as Carpenter, Karl Heinrich
Ulrichs and Symonds) with a detailed assessment of European and American sexology, creating a new strategy in sexological writing.

... These new cases, mostly of British subjects, were mobilised to argue that homosexual behaviour was normal and natural, and that it should not be illegal. This argument was in stark contrast to other (especially British) psychiatric treatments of homosexuality. (1–2)

Each one of the authors heavily relied on the other’s expertise to create this new strategy: Symonds contributed to the volume with his historical and literary treatise; Ellis was responsible for the legitimisation of homosexuality from a medical point of view. However, they met various adversities throughout their collaborative endeavours. First and foremost, as Crozier also highlights, there was not a single clear-cut homosexual identity in the 1890s; the new terminology of sexuality and their respective descriptions were in constant flux—theories were being formulated and reformulated while they were compiling the material for Sexual Inversion (3).

Symonds and Ellis never met. However, their postal correspondence reveals how the book came to be. Symonds proposed through poet and critic Arthur Symons that he would contribute to Ellis’s scientific series. His intention was to criticise leading medico-forensic and psychiatric theorists of the nineteenth century, namely, Tardieu, Tarnowksy, and Krafft-Ebing (Crozier 37). Referring to his publisher, Ellis did not find the idea viable. Symonds then came up with the idea of a collaboration: “If it were possible for us to collaborate in the production of an impartial and really scientific survey of the matter, I should be glad” (qtd. in Crozier 37). While they were negotiating their differences, Symonds kept emphasising that “two names, and two men of different sorts would be stronger at attracting public opinion than any one alone of any sort, and would also be more likely to get a wide and serious attention” (qtd. in Crozier 40).
They had settled their differences by 1892. Symonds started reading medical studies of sexology and Ellis changed his terminology from “abnormality” to “minority” due to Symonds’s influence. They agreed on the list of contents and negotiated whose name would come first in the book. In this detail lies an important observation concerning the relationship of the two discourses:

Symonds also expressed his wish that Ellis would allow his name to stand first. This wish was less a matter of decorum or of alphabeticisation than Symonds’s acknowledgement of his “own want of scientific equipment.” In an age of increasing importance attributed to scientific discussions, Ellis’s expertise would carry more weight than Symonds’s literary talents in a work of this nature. Furthermore, Symonds reservedly agreed with Ellis’s wish to send the work to a medical publisher, although he was not completely sure of this, “since one wants the subject to come under the notice of laymen.” Symonds had, however, already expressed his desire that Sexual Inversion would be suitable for publication in the Contemporary Science Series, although Ellis demurred. (Crozier 43–44, emphasis added)

Ellis knew that he needed Symonds’s insight into the topic so that this treatise of same-sex desire would stand out and hit the right note. However, he was hesitant to publish it in a medical series due to Symonds’s “literary” approach to the subject. On the other hand, Symonds wanted to break into the medical discourse in order that his voice be heard—he saw Ellis’s reputation as his ticket to achieve this. As Sexual Inversion was meant to be a medical study of same-sex desire due to scientific hegemony, Ellis “advised Symonds to put some of his literary material elsewhere” (Crozier 49–50). Seeing the importance of scientific objectivity, Symonds yielded to Ellis’s request and wrote that his material “shall be worked over to erase its bias and eliminate its literary quality” (qtd. in Crozier 50).
Symonds died in 1893 and Ellis had to continue on his own. He published the book in German in 1896, which was followed by the subsequent English edition in 1897. Ellis erased some of Symonds’s material:

After Symonds’s death, Ellis’s revisions turned Sexual Inversion more and more into his own book with each ensuing edition. Ellis’s professional interests in scientific facts and the way such facts could be used to challenge the law were emphasised at the expense of Symonds’s more literary and historical contributions. Sexual Inversion was an expression of the scientific naturalism to which Ellis and the majority of British scientists subscribed at the end of the nineteenth century, rather than the more literary text for which Symonds had sympathies. (Crozier 58).

Symonds’s effacement was further assisted by Horatio Brown, who, on behalf of the family, bought the unsold copies of the co-author’s English edition, destroyed them, and forbade Ellis to use Symonds’s name on further editions (Crozier 56–57).

Another complicated circumstance of publication was the distribution of Sexual Inversion. George Bedborough, the publisher of Ellis’s monograph sold a copy to an undercover policeman, which meant that the book would be tested for obscenity in court, in accordance with the Hicklin Standard. The book was banned in 1898, and Bedborough was fined for a hundred pounds (Cook 73). Interestingly, Ellis and the content of Sexual Inversion were not on trial. The book was well-received in Europe, and the British were only concerned with the distribution of the text, as the trial attests. G. B. Shaw wrote in The Adult that Sexual Inversion “was more urgently needed in England than any other recent treatise… Until it appeared there was no authoritative scientific book on its subject within the reach of Englishmen and Englishwomen who cannot read French or German” (qtd. in Cook 73).
It appears that the medical discourse triumphed over the literary in the first book-length treatise on same-sex desire in Britain. It paved the way for a more progressive medical study of homosexuality; however, it had little effect on legislation. It was not until 1954 that the Departmental Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution would first meet to review the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 and recommend in their report in 1957 that homosexual behaviour should be decriminalised. A decade later, same-sex desire between two consenting adults in the private sphere was decriminalised in England and Wales in 1967. Sexual Inversion and subsequent publications in English came rather late in the nineteenth century and their distribution was strictly limited. Hardly could we argue, then, that the medical discourse had an impact on the conceptualisation of same-sex desire or offer a sexual identity for laymen including homosexual men.

Literature, however, was comprehensible and, with the appropriate strategy available to belles-lettres only, more or less procurable to laymen as well to construct or forge themselves a sexual identity. Bristow concludes by referring to the Hicklin Standard that “works of homosexual pornography could escape the grasp of the law through clandestine publication with small presses that sold their titles to exclusive lists of private subscribers” (“Homosexual Writing on Trial” 23). One prime example is The Sins of the Cities of the Plain (1881), the memoir of a male prostitute named Jack Saul. Wolfram Setz states that it “is a pornographic text and also an important cultural and historical document” (xix) and argues throughout his introduction to the novel that “[p]ornographic literature [works] as a mirror of the time” (xiii). The novel comments on legal cases such as Fanny and Stella’s trial and the Cleveland Street Scandal; it cites “the erotic literature of the time” (xvii) and includes short essays on sodomy and tribadism as appendices to the novel, juxtaposing the historical treatise of same-sex desire with nineteenth century pathologisation. According to Carolyn Dever, Sins “offers a parody of the literary marketplace: each time the narrator provides his patron with a
few more pages of the novel’s manuscript, he is rewarded with sex. The novel suggests an equation of textuality and sexuality” (159). Dever, therefore, also suggests—implicitly, with a Foucauldian argument—that such texts offered both knowledge and power on same-sex desire for their contemporaneous readers. Charles Hirsch, a bookseller at the turn of the century reported that Wilde had bought a copy of the novel among “certain licentious works, of a special kind” (qtd. in Setz vii). Possibly due to the popularity of Sins, it also had a sequel, Letters from Laura and Eveline (1883), and the two had reprints as well (O’Hearn xiii–xiv).

The case was the same with the erotic novel attributed to Wilde and his circle, Teleny (1893), which was followed by its “prelude” Des Grieux in 1899. As for non-erotic texts, authors played with the paratexts of their novels to escape the troublesome consequences of the Hicklin Standard. Barbara Leckie argues that the preface to The Picture of Dorian Gray “does not invoke censorship explicitly but it can be read as a strategic response to protect the novelist by insisting on severing the connection, prominent in social purity discourse . . . , between reading and action” (172). In addition, literary creativity allowed authors to provide some visibility to same-sex desire, although, in a coded language.

It is debated to what extent literary men were familiar with or understood sexology, especially prior to the publication of Sexual Inversion. In connection with the English “Uranians,” Michael Matthew Kaylor’s view is especially dismissive:

Given that the prominent Uranians were trained Classicists, I consider ludicrous the view, widely held, that “Uranian” derives from the German apologias and legal appeals written by Karl-Heinrich Ulrichs (1825–95) in the 1860s, though his coinage Urning—employed to denote “a female psyche in a male body”—does indeed derive from the same Classical sources, particularly the Symposium. Further, the Uranians did not consider themselves the possessors of a “female psyche”; the Uranians are not known, as a group, to
have read works such as Forschungen über das Räthsel der mann männlichen Liebe (Research on the Riddle of Male-Male Love); the Uranians were opposed to Ulrichs’s claims for androphilic, homoerotic liberation at the expense of the paederastic; and, even when a connection was drawn to such Germanic ideas and terminology, it appeared long after the term “Uranian” had become commonplace within Uranian circles, hence was not a “borrowing from” but a “bridge to” the like-minded across the Channel by apologists such as Symonds. (xiii n29)

We might agree with Kaylor. After all, he claims that the term “Uranian” did not directly derive from Ulrichs per se, which might be true. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see that Kaylor remains silent about Ulrichs’s influence on the Uranians, especially on one of his most prominent “Uranian” poets, Symonds. Leck convincingly argues that “Ulrichs’s influence on Symonds was personal as well as academic” (127), based on their personal meeting, frequent correspondences, and Symonds’s treatises on male-to-male love. Leck further argues that “[p]erhaps the most important lingering memory of the intersection of German and British sexual science is latent in contemporary British nomenclature. Nowhere has the neology of Ulrichs’s idiom ‘Uranian’ better withstood competing terms than in Great Britain.” Therefore, he sees the discussion of Ulrichs’s influence on Symonds as something that “symbolises . . . the intersection of British and German sexual science” (128). Another of Kaylor’s “major Uranians,” Oscar Wilde was also somewhat familiar with sexology. Interestingly, as Bristow claims, “[b]efore the debacle of 1895, there is little evidence to suggest that Wilde had much or any interest in the ways in which sexual behaviour had become a focus of fascination for those thinkers—such as Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, and Havelock

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7 Critics tend to date the work of Uranian poets from William Johnson Cory’s Ionica (1858). In secondary literature, these Uranians form an elusive and clandestine group of poets that idealised “Greek love.”
Ellis—who were by that time compendiously classifying types of human sexuality” (“Wilde’s Sexual Identities” 198). This, however, does not mean that he was not familiar with their concepts. Having been released from prison, Wilde wrote to Leonard Smithers that he is “a pathological problem in the eyes of German scientists” (qtd. in Bristow, “Wilde’s Sexual Identities” 199).

Another source of knowledge and of sexology per se was, again, pornography. Pornographic and scientific texts were not only similar in their public treatment as obscenity but in their language as well. Sarah Bull claims that the same dealers sold both scientific and erotic texts; moreover, pornography shows the same “scholarly conventions” and the “new scientific language” of sexology (55). Rarely is this addressed by critics, although these endeavours to conflate the erotic with the scientific are plain in sight if one considers the subtitle of Teleny: “A Physiological Romance of To-Day.”

Kaylor’s silence on Ulrichs’s influence on the British seems to imply that German sexology had little to do with these British authors, who conceptualised their desires with the term “Uranian”; however, this implication is difficult to sustain in the light of the above. Nevertheless, he offers a valuable insight into a crucial problem of the century: the dissemination of a sexual script. The Uranians did not have “established customs,” “group meetings” nor “a range of canonical texts.” What seems to justify categorizing them together is a shared script of uranianism. Kaylor writes that “[t]he Uranians . . . can be vaguely labelled . . . a ‘fellowship’ that was, in most cases, entirely textual, traceable only through bookplates, inscriptions, dedications, and acceptance letters, evidence that they had some interaction” (viii). Although Kaylor’s Uranians represent a specific case, the same idea is applicable to the circulation of any sort of text discussing same-sex desire. There is virtually no hard evidence based on which we may reconstruct how scripts of same-sex desire, sold to private subscribers and most probably passed from hand to hand, were distributed.
Textual analysis, as a result, remains the only way to ponder how knowledge was disseminated. In the same vein, regarding the question “how to do the history of sexuality?”, Christopher Looby suggests that “sexuality is essentially a literary phenomenon”: “The basic idea here is that an act is not a sexual act unless it is performed under that description; and a person is not, say, a homosexual unless that description (or label or category or identity) is available to him and he lives, so to speak, within its terms” (841–842). Looby supports his argument by claiming that “sexuality is itself a fiction” at first. It is an imaginary script of different performances that later culminates into what Foucault calls the “artificial unity.” Looby also suggests a parallel between sexuality, an intrinsic “stylisation of the self” and literature, as “a stylisation of language.” This parallel leads to the conclusion that sexuality is essentially a script: a fictitious formalisation of the self. As a result, “[s]exual identities (or labels or categories or scripts) need to be articulated, promulgated, circulated, and encountered in order to be received and adopted and performed, and this requires a literary public sphere” (843).

Looby’s insight into the factors at work of a comprehensible sexual script is especially illuminating in terms of the turn of the century. In this crucial period of new sexual labels and scripts fighting against “traditional” pejorative approaches to same-sex desire, the literary discourse could provide a script not only literariness but literacy as well by the means of codes that make up a sexual subtext which would not hinder the promulgation of the description of same-sex desire. In other words, literariness (i.e. the codes of a sexual subtext in this case) did not inform the readers of the aesthetic qualities of belles-lettres only, but of how one’s sexual self was stylised and conceptualised. As the articulation of the sexual script was possible through literary codes only, the literariness of sexuality by itself cannot explain whether the subtext was legible in the first place and distributed consequently.
The analysis, therefore, requires a specific approach, which Nat Hurley calls “reading anthologically”: in order to achieve an in-depth description, one needs to “track the accumulated, interactive, side-by-side strains of other texts that make it possible to conceive of queer subjectivity itself as a simple abstraction” (83). A simple abstraction, i.e. analysing a literary text as a case study, would not suffice. One needs to see how texts were read together to understand the traffic and history of homophile literature that facilitated the construction of a sexual identity: “Reading anthologically is a way of understanding the conditions under which that pattern became legible as such”; it is both “the object of . . . analysis as well as . . . methodology” (Hurley 84).

Anthologies, such as Elisar von Kupffer’s Lieblingminne und Freundesliebe (1900) and Carpenter’s Iolaus: An Anthology of Male Friendship (1902) known at the time as the “bugger’s bible” (Hurley 85), were the first efforts of establishing a homophile canon in world literature. These offered a quasi-homogenous understanding of same-sex desire by a single editor. As stated in their prefaces, the editors argued that same-sex desire had been around for centuries across the world and it was inexplicable why male-to-male love was not accepted at the turn of the century. The anthology, as a result, was compiled to substantiate the “chronology” and “evolution” of same-sex desire to show that these homophile bonds had always been an integral part of the social fabric around the world.

The anthology this thesis scrutinises is unlike the ones above: my somewhat contrived compilation, ranging from Wilde to Stenbock to Prime-Stevenson, shows a modest “anthology” in the making in the 1890s and 1900s, governed by hungarophilia to different degrees. Reading anthologically, as methodology, allows me to study how a sexual identity was being constructed through literary texts without the thesis addressing how the scripts were promulgated and circulated, which otherwise would have been essential to establish, as seen in Looby’s theory.
In other words, this dissertation hypothesises a trace of reading via hungarophilia and intends to substantiate that this particular literary code in a limited literary network aided and accelerated the dissemination of homophile sexual knowledge. The indispensability of reading anthologically in this period might be explained, from a different angle, by the theory of quantitative intertextuality—“a new approach for the algorithmic study of information reuse in text” (Forstall and Scheirer vii). Quantitative intertextuality theorises that “[p]attern recognition in the data makes storage more efficient, by allowing the data to be compressed” (Forstall and Scheirer 37), which is preceded by a “training period”:

it is during this period that the cues are established which ultimately form the strands of the web. When two poetic features co-occur in verse—for example, a name and a metrical position, or an image and a sound—the ability of each to cue the other is strengthened. If, over many repetitions, the co-occurrence of these features begins to stand out from the background levels attributable to chance, a link is created. (38)

To translate all this to reading texts of same-sex desire at the turn of the century, this thesis regards the 1890s and 1900s as a training period, in which authors established cues so that the sexual subtext of their fiction reveals itself. This dissertation hypothesises that the occurrence of hungarophilia from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* to *Teley* to “The True Story of a Vampire” and *Imre* cannot be attributable to chance, but Wilde, Stenbock, and Prime-Stevenson repeated two features, homophilia and hungarophilia, to create an intentional link between the two.

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8 The *algorithmic* study of intertextuality, of course, has more use in practice (see *Part II: The Practice* 55ff.) and for digital humanities; however, I believe that the theory of quantitative intertextuality can further explain the benefits of reading anthology as an approach in the particular context of this dissertation.
Once the link is established through repetition, the subtext reveals itself to a certain “interpretive community”—a term which Forstall and Scheirer borrow from Stanley Fish—which shares a “general agreement among the participants” that “allows the system to function” (Forstall and Scheirer 43):

the meaning of a text is acknowledged as something created by, and in, the subjective experience of the reader . . . But that doesn’t mean that anything goes: . . . the members of a given community generally share a common set of experiences that inform their interpretation of a given text. Members’ various, personal interpretations will tend to be constrained in common ways by this shared background. (43)

The common set of experiences for the readers of homophilia and hungarophilia at the turn of the century, of course, is their sexuality and their need to access a script of same-sex desire through the anthological reading of the subtexts of the belles-lettres available to them.

Reading anthologically, in terms of quantitative intertextuality, helps us foreground a trace of reading, enables pattern recognition, and defines the interpretive community of the primary texts.

Reading anthologically has another favourable increment: problems of authorship become irrelevant. According to Leah Price, “[t]he modern use of ‘reader’ as a synonym for ‘anthology’ . . . defines anthologies not only as the product of writing, but as a trace of reading” (qtd. in Hurley 86). Therefore, writing is important to see how the author conceptualised same-sex desire; however, it is the sexual “identity” the emerges from the texts for the reader that matters instead of authorship. This is especially important when it comes to reading The Picture of Dorian Gray and Teleny together. Although hungarophilia might seem another suggestive common element of the texts to validate Wilde as (one of) the author(s) of Teleny, it can hardly be considered decisive proof. What the analysis can suggest
is that reading the two together reveals similarities that might have been neglected in critical literature. Hungarophilia, as the common denominator of my anthology, also shows how different authors conceptualised and debated the legitimisation of same-sex desire. Furthermore, it reveals a micro-network of literary influence by reflecting on how different uses of hungarophilia re-evaluate prior texts based on new and/or more extensive knowledge on same-sex desire in constant flux at the fin de siècle.
Despite the contributors’ best efforts and the preface to the novel, the homophilic overtone of Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* did not go over the head of its audiences. One of the most notable examples is the review in the *Scots Observer*, stating that “[t]he story . . . deals with matters only fitted for the Criminal Investigation Department or a hearing in camera.” Alluding to the Cleveland Street Scandal, it continues: “if [Wilde] can write for none but outlawed noblemen and perverted telegraph boys, the sooner he takes to tailoring . . . the better for his own reputation and the public morals” (qtd. in Frankel 6). Critics and reviewers, however, could only refer to the general atmosphere of the novel instead of textual evidence in their allegations. Joseph Marshall Stoddart, editor of *Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine*, where the thirteen-chapter *Dorian Gray* was published in 1890, struck out hundreds of words from Wilde’s typescript in fear of liability for distributing obscenity. In addition, Wilde further altered the text and wrote a preface to the 1891 version of the then twenty-chapter novel, claiming that “[t]he critic is he who can translate into another manner or a new material his impression of beautiful things” (*CW* 3).

Wilde was absolutely sure that he created something beautiful. Concerning the reception of *Dorian Gray*, he stated: “Basil Hallward is what I think I am: Lory Henry what the world thinks me: Dorian what I would like to be—in other ages, perhaps” (qtd. in Robbins 3). Basil obviously is that artist out of these characters; and since the Preface to *Dorian Gray* starts with the statement, “[t]he artist is the creator of beautiful things” (*CW* 3), we can be sure that Wilde was proud of his work despite all the criticism. He created something beautiful and the critic does something else: “The highest, as the lowest, form of criticism is a mode of autobiography” (*CW* 3). This argument is an eloquent phrasing of the juvenile retort
to offence: it takes one to know one. Since “[t]here is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book” and “[b]ooks are well written, or badly written” (CW 3), the blame is shifted and Wilde claims that whatever (im)moral things one reads into his text, it is the effluence of one’s own life and has nothing to do with the novel itself.

Nevertheless, it would be hard to claim that there is nothing homophilic in *Dorian Gray*. But it is certainly a well-written book. The genius lies in the ways the coded language of a homophilic text can be translated into the “new material,” i.e. the readers’ (semi-) autobiographical interpretation. According to Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, there are two lives presented in a life-narrative: an external, objective, historical/cultural life and an internal, subjective, personal life (6). The narrator is not bound by the “rules of evidence that link the world of the narrative with a historical world outside the narrative” (12); however, at the same time experience places the subject “in the social realm, identities [are] constituted through material, cultural, economic, and psychic relations” (31). An author, therefore, can take advantage of the social realm, which the readers experience and which primarily governs their interpretation of a well-designed literary code—an interpretation that is a mode of autobiography. For the general readership, the cultural/historical reading of a code coincides with their interpretation—the historical world around them determines what they understand of the text. The double coding of a text emerges and becomes decipherable for those who are immersed in a more particular, homophile social realm, no matter what the historical/cultural context might overshadow to make the codes of covert homophilia legible as something respectable.

Wilde uses popular consumer articles to foreground a historical/cultural reading and places these items in the contemporary realm of the Victorian readers, where consumer culture correlates with the morals of the masses based on the merchandise. Leading Victorian
art critic John Ruskin (1819–1900) attributes paramount importance to taste in the milieu of deep moral insecurity:

And I want you to think a little of the deep significance of this word “taste”; for no statement of mine has been more earnestly or oftener controverted than that good taste is essentially a moral quality . . .

Permit me, therefore, to fortify this old dogma of mine somewhat. Taste is not only a part and an index of morality;—it is the ONLY morality. The first, and last, and closest trial question to any living creature is, “What do you like?” Tell me what you like, and I’ll tell you what you are. Go out into the street, and as the first man or woman you meet, what their “taste” is; and if they answer candidly, you know them, body and soul . . . What more need we ask? (274–275)

In his understanding, taste is a diagnostic tool for morals. It is not only a part of, but the only morality. In case one goes down the street and asks a man or woman about their tastes and they answer “candidly,” Ruskin would declare that he knows them—body and soul. What one may or may not do is irrelevant to his mind, as it might be temporary and they might as well do something else the next day. It is essential that one grows to like what one fancies.

Wilde uses consumer articles (like a fashionable colour, perfumes, and music—legible as something in good taste), however, to trick what Gérard Genette, in his narrative theory, calls “the possible (or rather the variable) narrative competence of the reader, arising from practice, which enables him both to decipher more and more quickly the narrative code in general or the code appropriate to a particular genre or a particular work.” There are two types of readers with different narrative competences in terms of coded homophile literature. One type has access to the cultural/historical, i.e. mainstream reading of the popular consumer articles in Wilde’s text; therefore, these serve as cues “to fool [the reader] by . . . offering him false advance mentions, or snares” (Genette 77), thus disabling the common reader to find
elements that trigger a subversive reading. The other type, however, the initiated homophile readers of the texts can recognise and decipher the code signalled by consumer products; as a result, they have access to the internal/subjective/personal life narrated by the text. In terms of the preface to *Dorian Gray*, Wilde plays with the idea that one’s narrative competence stems from one’s life; and it is up to his contemporary readers’ autobiographical interpretation of the text whether they understand the snares as simple elements in good taste of their cultural reality or codes for homophilia.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the reader is given a concise list of snares in Henry Wotton’s curious confession to Dorian in the penultimate chapter. The passage, in this respect, reconceptualises certain prior elements of the novel:

> But a chance tone of colour in a room or a morning sky, a particular perfume that you had once loved and that brings subtle memories with it, a line from a forgotten poem that you had come across again, a cadence from a piece of music that you had ceased to play—I tell you, Dorian, that it is on things like these that our lives depend. Browning writes about that somewhere; but our own senses will imagine them for us. There are moments when the odour of *lilas blanc* passes suddenly across me, and I have to live the strangest month of my life over again. (*CW* 150, emphasis added)

At first, Henry’s short speech does not at all seem suspicious. However, *The Uncensored Picture of Dorian Gray* (Wilde’s then-unpublished typescript) and the original thirteen-chapter version in *Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine* reveal that Wilde tries to downplay the relevance of Henry’s confession in the canonised version of the text. Henry, originally, is speaking of “the strangest year of [his] life” (*UDG* 212, *L* 97, emphasis added), whereas he speaks of his “strangest month” in the twenty-chapter version (*CW* 150). In this scene of the final chapter in the original, Dorian protests that he is “going to be good” and accuses Henry
that he “poisoned [Dorian] with a book” (*UDG* 213, *L* 97). Henry’s original reply to the accusation is short: “My dear boy, you are really beginning to moralise. You will soon be going about warning people against all the sins of which you have grown tired. You are much too delightful to do that. Besides, it is no use. You and I are what we are, and will be what we will be” (*UDG* 213, *L* 97). Strangely enough, this answer did not suffice in the twenty-chapter version of the novel, where Wilde has Henry rehearse the defensive thesis of the preface as an addition to Henry’s reply to Dorian’s accusation: “As for being poisoned by a book, there is no such thing as that. Art has no influence upon action. It annihilates the desire to act. It is superbly sterile. The books that the world calls immoral are books that show the world its own shame. That is all. But we won’t discuss literature” (*CW* 151).

Stoddart’s (the editor) and Wilde’s later changes and additions to the text suggest that the author is trying to hide something. The book in question seems a crucial point in covering up his (literary) tracks. It has a title and an author in Wilde’s original typescript: “*Le Secret de Raoul*” by Catulle Sarrazin (*UDG* 156). Having compared the two thirteen-chapter versions of the text, Nicholas Frankel concludes that

> Stoddart was especially concerned with taming descriptions of the yellow novel that is given by Lord Henry Wotton to Dorian and comes to exert such a powerful influence over Dorian’s life. To begin with, he eliminated all references to the novel’s title and author . . . , rightly sensing that these fictional names allude to some of the most scandalous works and figures of the French Decadent movement. Similarly, Stoddart muted a number of passages concerning the novel’s hero, Raoul, who serves as “a kind of prefiguring type of [Dorian].” (47)

This fictional book by a fictional author is often thought by critics to be *À rebours* (1884) by Joris-Karl Huysmans, which, according to his former friend, Raffalovich, had a great effect
on Wilde (*Uranism and Unisexuality* 203). Isobel Murray denies that the fictional book is a reference to *À rebours* and compellingly argues for a mixture of other different works, based on the description of *Le Secret de Raoul* in Wilde’s typescript (190n102). But the influence Henry has on Dorian is, nevertheless, literary. The key is not in the corruptive book but in Henry’s sentiment which haunts Dorian throughout the novel (see especially chapter 16): “To cure the soul by means of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul!” As Stephen Calloway puts it, “Huysmans’s Des Esseintes became the Decadents’ role-model par excellence, both for his compelling insistence upon the cultivation of the senses, and for his unequivocal assertion of the absolute superiority of artifice over naturalness; of art over nature” (48). As a result, we might want to read Henry’s confession and defence as Wilde speaking through his characters. Wilde and Henry attest that a text cannot corrupt the reader. Nevertheless, stimuli to the senses might carry meaning to the individual. The textually present stimuli here are a particular colour, perfume, and music—snares that do not corrupt but have particular meaning to the initiated.

**The Colour Green**

The colour in question, I propose, is the colour green that appears in Oscar Wilde’s most notorious snare, the green carnation. The colour green had an eminent position in Victorian culture. A chapter in *Cassell’s Household Guide* (1869), “Principles of Colour, and Rules for Their Artistic Application in Dress, Furniture, etc.” elaborates on what effect different colours and their mixture have on a person’s mind. *Green* is the colour of peace: “Green.—The eye experiences a healthy and peculiarly grateful impression from this colour; if of equal proportions of blue and yellow, the eye and mind repose on it as on a simple colour” (207).

Ironically, the colour of tranquillity was all the rage and caused some commotion in the nineteenth century. James Whorton quotes a pharmacist from 1879, who was astonished
by the phenomenon. According to him, the zeal for this colour went so far that one could hardly find a shop display, which was not filled with shelves, walls, price tags, wrapping, boxes, and articles covered with arsenic green. The trend conquered the households as well; the Victorians would paint their walls, clothes, children’s toys, and even their bodies in green (Whorton 176–178). Consequently, green became the colour of good taste and successful merchandising on labels, tags, wrappings, tickets, posters, and decoration (Whorton 179). The Victorian home was often decorated with arsenic green wallpapers (Whorton 204). It was not until the end of the 1880s when medical science could establish the unwholesome effects of arsenic paint, which were basically unavoidable (Whorton 191). At the end of the century, the manufacturers eventually responded to the publicity of casualties, the series of professional statements, and the consumers’ demands that they should lose the arsenic while keeping the colour. They eventually brought forward a non-poisonous green.

It is in this cultural realm that Wilde used the colour green with a different shade of meaning. The most popular anecdote in secondary literature is what Neil McKenna repeats as well in The Secret Life of Oscar Wilde: Wilde and the allegedly homophile members of his audience arrived with a green carnation in their buttonhole at the premiere of Lady Windermere’s Fan. Although he claimed himself to be the inventor of the symbol, Wilde would later deny that it had any specific meaning whatsoever (McKenna 227). But Wilde did not use the artificially coloured flower for such purposes for the first time in 1892. For instance, Wilde’s one-act tragedy, Salome (1891) arrives at a minor turning point when Salome offers “a little green flower” (CW 723) to the young Syrian who is not willing to release Jokanaan to her. In my interpretation, Salome uses the flower to blackmail the young Syrian—an often-recurring subject in homophile literature—who seems to have a rather
curious, even homoromantic relationship with the Page of Herodias. Her success is apparent when the Syrian gives in right away and grants Salome her wish, so that his love-interest with the Page of Herodias can remain unknown to the rest. My interpretation of the green flower can be further substantiated if we consider that Wilde merely borrowed the idea from the Parisian Uranians who had in the summer of 1891 begun a craze for wearing carnations, artificially dyed green, as a badge, a secret symbol, of their sexual preferences. Just a few years earlier, in Paris, green cravats had been the rage among men who loved men. Now it was green carnations. (McKenna 227)

French culture had a great influence on Wilde; and Salome is exemplary of his admiration. He wrote the play in French and chose French actress Sarah Bernhardt to start the rehearsals with in the title role. He considered himself “French by sympathy” (qtd. in Meek 136) and when he

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9 Compare the jealous outcries of the Page of Herodias to the young Syrian (“You must not look at her. You look too much at her” [CW 720]) with the ones uttered by Herodias to Herod (“You must not look at her. You are always looking at her!” [CW 728]). This analogy suggests a sort of spousal relationship between the Page and the Syrian.

10 I intentionally called McKenna’s statement of “facts” an anecdote as his writing exemplifies how critical literature tries to exaggerate the homosexual implications when it comes to Wilde and his oeuvre. Karl Beckson convincingly argues that the French never had a strong association between homosexuality and the green carnation per se; he claims instead that “at one time in Paris, the colour and flower . . . separately symbolised forbidden experiences” (395). He finds evidence that green cravats were fashionable with gay men, and “in nineteenth-century French slang: the word for carnation—that is, oeillet—also means ‘little eye,’ the slang term that French pederasts used for the anus, as indicated in Alfred Delvau’s mid-nineteenth-century Dictionnaire érotique modern” (390). Something similar can be found in Verlaine and Rimbaud’s “Le Sonnet du Trou du Cul [Sonnet to the Asshole]” in which the orifice, although that of a woman’s, is compared to “un oeillet violet” (187; in Alan Stone’s translation: “a mauve carnation” [96]) in the first line of the sonnet. Nevertheless, it remains plausible that Wilde’s green carnation was inspired by the two separate symbols.
met with adversities due to the Biblical theme of his play, he was not afraid to seek
appreciation in France: “If the Censor refuses Salome, I shall leave England to settle in France
where I shall take out letters of naturalization. I will not consent to call myself a citizen of a
country that shows such narrowness in artistic judgement” (qtd. in Meek 136–137). Wilde’s
sympathy and affiliation with French culture lead me to believe that the symbolic meaning of
the “little green flower” comes from France, where the colour was worn as a fashion article
by homosexual men.

That there is an at least homoromantic relationship between the Syrian and the Page is
certainly supported by Aubrey Beardsley’s (1872–1898) black and white illustrations to
Salome, “The Woman in the Moon” and “A Platonic Lament” (1893). Chad Bennett finds
parallel evidence in the text and illustrations that the Syrian and the Page are lovers as “the
transfer of clothing from the Page... to the Young Syrian’s corpse... suggests the drama’s
transfer of literal (‘perfumes, and a ring of agate’) and poetic (‘The sound of his voice was
like the sound of the flute’) ornament from lover to beloved” (309, emphasis added).
Moreover, the flower promised to fall to the Syrian in the text is also present in the second
drawing. The flower, which may as well be the green carnation, is falling towards the dead
Syrian’s head where the Page’s hands are touching him. If it is true that it is the green
carnation that is featured in Salome, one might also speculate that Wilde wanted to wear one
at the premier of the play in 1891 if the Lord Chamberlain’s Office had not refused to give the
play the licence to be staged. Wilde had to wait for another premier to show off his symbolic
fashion choice.

Given the curious occurrence of a little green flower in Salome, we can hardly believe
Wilde’s protestations that alleged that the flower’s symbolic meaning was non-existent. It is
especially disputable if we consider that he was the one who equated the colour green with
sexual decadence in “Pen, Pencil and Poison: A Study in Green” (1885). We cannot believe
him either when he identifies himself as the inventor of the symbol, as it is most probably a
mixture of different trends. According to Whorton, as a part of the green fashion craze, young
girls from eight to twenty years of age had been manufacturing hand-made artificial green
flowers from the 1860s. The petals were made of muslins dipped in tinted wax that was also
powdered with green paint (184). McKenna, disregarding the London milieu, attributes the
idea to French gay men wearing green cravats in Paris around 1890 (226). And Dennis
Denisoff points out that the symbol must have existed before the premier of Lady
Windermere’s Fan, as George Gillet published his poem, “To Kalon” two months before said
premier, which included the green carnation with similar homophilic connotations (110).
Nevertheless, it is certain that Wilde made the symbol popular in 1892. Laurence Senelick
mentions that a couple of months after the premier, another group of men with green
carnations in their buttonhole appeared at the premier of Le Baiser by Théodore de Banville,
translated by Wilde’s former lover, John Gray (174).

Two years down the line, privy to the most private matters of Wilde and Alfred
Douglas’s life in the spring and summer, Robert Hichens published The Green Carnation
(1894). The thin plot of the novel revolves around Lord Reggie in search of a wealthy wife,
just like Douglas in real life. He has an intimate friend and influencer, Mr Amarinth, who, like
Wilde, talks of sexuality and sin. At first, it was suspected that the anonymously published
novel was written by Wilde. He refuted this rumour in a letter to the editor of the Pall Mall
Gazette: “I invented that magnificent flower. But with the middle-class and mediocre book
that usurps its strangely beautiful name I have, I need hardly say, nothing whatsoever to do.
The flower is a work of art. The book is not” (qtd. in Ellmann 424–425). Soon it was revealed
that the novel was written by Hichens, who imitated Douglas’s actual remarks (Ellmann 424)
and was privy to his telegraphs that he could copy word by word in the novel (McKenna 405–
406). Another, rather disturbing, parallel between fact and fiction is Lord Reggie’s offer of a
green carnation to Tommy, the nine-year-old son of a prospective wife, Lady Locke.

McKenna asserts that

[i]t is symbolic act of seduction and corruption and Lady Locke is horrified. It is possible that the planned seduction of Tommy Locke was based on Bosie’s hoped-for seduction of Cyril Wilde, Oscar’s oldest son, who was also nine years old. A few months later, in Algiers, Bosie was waxing lyrical about Cyril’s beauty to André Gide. “He will be for me,” he told a shocked Gide.

(409)

Ellmann claims that “[t]he book made its small but noticeable contribution to the growing disfavour Wilde was encountering” (425). McKenna goes further: “The novel’s barely disguised portrait of [Wilde and Douglas] as proselytising, politicised sodomites was damaging and dangerous enough, but the portrayal of Bosie as a predatory pederast . . . was an appalling indictment” (411). More importantly, “the real damage of The Green Carnation was its promulgation of the existence of a Uranian subculture infecting and corrupting the body social” (411). By the mid-1890s, not only were the green carnation as a symbol and Oscar Wilde “outed,” but the latter was also presented as public enemy number one.

However, in the realm of Victorian culture, the colour green did not raise suspicions at first. It was a fashionable colour on merchandise and the little green flower in Salome may have seemed nothing more than something that a teenage girl would fancy. But the connotations that Wilde and his circle attributed to the colour could at the same time refer to “illicit” sexual desires. This preference in taste is also present in The Picture of Dorian Gray. A young man with a telling name, Adrian Singleton gives a green book covered with exotic fruits to Dorian, which has a great effect on him (CW 113). The name “Adrian” is most probably an allusion to Hadrian, the lover of Antinous. The two were frequently listed historical uranians in late-Victorian homophile culture. Their story is evoked twice in Teleny
(Wilde et al.] 14, 28–31); and Wilde’s former friend, Marc-André Raffalovich lists Hadrian among famous homosexuals of history in his review of *Imre* by Edward Prime-Stevenson (629). The next time we meet Adrian in the novel, Dorian Gray has to pass through a green curtain at the opening of the opium den (*CW* 129). This green curtain at the entrance might suggest how beneficial it is that it covers a space of illegal abuse of opium, which has similar tranquilising effects as the colour green itself. We see a similar green in *Teleny* when Teleny and Camille meet for the first time, face to face in the green room. Traditionally, this space is supposed to be for the relaxation of the performer in theatres and concert-halls. However, in this scene, the room is crowded with people congratulating Teleny on his performance ([Wilde et al.] 17). I should suggest that Wilde put these two intentionally in the enclosure of green walls—most probably covered by typical Victorian green wallpaper—suggesting good taste, while it is also the place where their romantic and sexual relationship begins.

Although these occurrences of the colour green are rather adventitious, I hope to have shown that the motifs of Wilde’s work have different horizons of interpretation based on the readers’ competencies deriving from the different cultural realms of Victorian society. The meanings of the colour green are well-documented in secondary literature. There are two motifs, however, which are rarely discussed. One is perfume, which has been largely neglected in critical literature; the other is music—the *style hongrois* in particular. Not only do these two allow us to study *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Teleny* from an anthological and intertextual perspective, but they also throw light on the difficulties of the conceptualisation of same-sex desire in the early 1890s.

**Heliotrope Blanc and Hungary Water**

Rarely do critics give heed to perfume in nineteenth-century literature, despite its cultural and medical implications. Perfume is linked to many areas of life, for instance, health and
respectability. According to Eugénie Briot, the integration of water pipes and bathrooms in the domestic environment in the nineteenth century triggered a hygienic revolution (273). As Catherine Maxwell puts it: “Personal cleanliness now became associated with health, self-esteem, and respectability. Whereas previously bathing, especially immersion, had been viewed with suspicion and even fear, an enhanced medical understanding of hygiene and germ theory valued it as an essential sanitary measure with therapeutic benefits” (36). Part of this revolution was the consumption of scented goods. Perfumes were no longer a kind of aristocratic luxury used for special occasions only. From the 1860s, manufacturers found new ways to extract raw material, and from the 1880s, the discovery of new synthetic materials allowed them to produce scented items for a much cheaper price, so the market opened up for an extended range of customers (Briot 274).

However, flourishing nineteenth-century consumerism (especially the new department stores being highly feminine spheres) challenged the notions of respectable Victorian masculinity. Brent Shannon finds research in this field extremely challenging as “market research on men’s consumer habits was nonexistent, and few financial records from the period have survived” (55), but compellingly argues, nevertheless, by analysing exhaustive primary sources that men were just as much targeted by the market as women. There were separate cloakrooms for men in the department stores, different display arrangements appealing to men, highly masculine discourse in the advertisements of male products, logical and focused shopping strategies for men—all resulting in simultaneously expanding the range of male consumer options and respectable masculinity (53ff.).

As for scented goods,

[a]dvertising and department stores also made available and affordable an enormous variety of soaps, colognes, hair dyes, powders, and other articles marketed to men as a means of achieving and maintaining an attractive,
youthful gender and class performance. The ever-expanding size of gentlemen’s leather dressing cases—depicted in Harrods catalogues filled with a host of combs, brushes, scissors, files, and bottles—suggests that more and more toiletries and other accessories were required . . . (Shannon 85)

The key to masculine consumption was moderation, practicality, and a natural effect. For example, new products were introduced so that men could achieve a clean yet natural complexion with their aftershave (Shannon 55), and they were supposed to use lightly perfumed soaps on their skin and oils on their hair to avoid unpleasant smells as, afraid of catching a cold, the Victorians were advised to wash their hair in warm weather only (Maxwell 37, 41). Aesthetes, such as Oscar Wilde, posed a threat to this fine line drawn for masculine men and even “[d]andies such as [Max] Beerbohm and cartoonist-novelist [George] du Maurier feared that their own male hetero-sexual status was endangered by the Aesthete’s transgressive blurring of men’s and women’s spheres” (Shannon 155). Consequently, dandies were often attributed a degree of effeminacy due to aesthetes usually entertaining non-conformist ideas on fashion and sexuality.

A similar divide is apparent in literature concerning odours in terms of respectability and non-conformism. In her ground-breaking monograph Maxwell follows the scented trace of a literary network from Charles Baudelaire to Algernon Charles Swinburne to Walter Pater to Wilde and his coterie, in which softer natural smells refer to spirituality, while the strong odour of perfumes and exotic hot-house flowers evoke carnality. Maxwell calls Pater a flaireur, a coinage by Jim Drobnick denoting someone “for whom smell is a pre-eminent aspect of being in the world . . . For the flaireur, ‘smelling well’ connotes not only the acts of relishing fragrances and presenting oneself in a pleasingly scented manner, but, more significantly, serves as an olfactory model upon which one’s core identity is constructed” (qtd. in Maxwell 118–119). A key word in Pater’s olfactory notions is “atmosphere,” which
encompasses “the emotional, intellectual, or spiritual ambiences or influences created or
emanated by specific periods of culture, schools, individuals or works of art, and [is] usually
scented” (Maxwell 123). In his essay “Style” (1888), Pater finds a dichotomy in the structure
of human life: the mind secures form, which is finite, and the soul secures perfume, which is
vague and infinite. In her summary of the essay, Maxwell adds that

the influence of “soul” [i.e. “colour and mystic perfume” as opposed to
the mind, a “reasonable structure”] is infinite because it cannot be
contained by any specific form and moves beyond it, like perfume that
expands and diffuses in the air; “soul,” the mysterious spiritual essence
of a person, is experienced as a perfume aura diffuse though style with
an afterlife or presence outside the text. (128)

The dichotomy of different connotations to odours may be illustrated with a poem in
_Tuberose and Meadowsweet_ (1885) by Wilde’s former friend, Raffalovich. The title poem
juxtaposes exotic fragrances, urban sophistication, and physical love in the former, hot-house
flower with simple fragrances, pastoral innocence, and spiritual love in the latter, a less
odorous and more natural plant (Raffalovich 37–43, Maxwell 189–190). This dichotomy may
also refer to the distinction of “normal” and (in Raffalovich’s terms) “unisexual” love. In the
sonnet, “Flower of Love” of the same volume, Raffalovich writes about “love [that] is not of
common growth,” and instead of the more common rose, the poem suggests that the flower of
the speaker’s love is the orchid. But the speaker stops right away: “Enough! Enough! Too
much the world has heard” (64). The closing line of the sonnet resonates well with Alfred
Douglas’s poem “Two Loves” (1894), where the speaker refers to a “love that dare not speak
its name” (28). Therefore, Ed Maddens suggests, in his interpretation of “Flower of Love,”
that “to choose the soon-to-become hackneyed image of the hothouse flower (of decadent
verse and perversity) is to risk revelation;” in addition, the orchid, “etymologically tied to
testicles, associatively tied to fin-de-siècle decadence” (20) tips the reader off that the speaker talks about non-conformist sexual desire.

Although the minor poet Raffalovich never found himself in trouble because of the scented language of his work, the perfumed atmosphere of The Picture of Dorian Gray did not escape the novel’s contemporaneous reviewers. For instance, John Addington Symonds, a homophile author living in a sexless marriage and preferring natural odours, used the words “scented” and “perfumed” to indicate his aversion to the novel’s effeminacy (Maxwell 145). In addition, the anonymous reviewers of the novel in the Daily Chronicle and Theatre, the French poet Stéphane Mallarmé, and even Wilde’s lover himself, Alfred Douglas found the perfumes either strange, intoxicating or downright poisonous (Maxwell 243–244).

It appears that it is not only the picture that shows Dorian’s diversion from the righteous path but odours as well. Tracing the olfactory effects reveals a layer of interpretation that correlates with the very plot of the novel. The first chapter opens with the following line: “The studio was filled with the rich odour of roses, and when the light summer wind stirred amidst the trees of the garden, there came through the open door the heavy scent of the lilac, or the more delicate perfume of the pink-flowering thorn” (CW 5). Although the odours are described as “rich” and “heavy,” Basil’s studio appears to have a wholesome atmosphere lent by the natural scents of the garden. And it is in this wholesome atmosphere that Dorian’s portrait is being painted as a result of Basil’s spiritual adoration of the young lad’s natural and uncorrupted beauty, though he would not dare exhibit the painting, as he “ha[s] put too much of [him]self into it” (CW 6). The atmosphere of the studio, Basil, and the picture are corrupted by Wotton’s “thin blue wreaths of smoke that curled up in such fanciful whorls from his heavy opium-tainted cigarette” (CW 6). Wotton’s words bewilder Dorian and as if his sentiments started suffocating him, Dorian asks for a recess from standing for the portrait: “I must go out and sit in the garden. The air is stifling here” (CW 17). Trying to avoid
Wotton, Dorian retreats to the natural atmosphere of the garden. Wotton follows him and finds Dorian “burying his face in the great cool lilac-blossoms, feverishly drinking in their perfume as if it had been wine” (CW 17–18). The odour of lilac, formerly described as “heavy,” is now “cool” compared to the stifling atmosphere conjured up by Wotton. Dorian is trying to find remedy in the lilac-blossoms and Wotton agrees: “You are quite right to do that . . . Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul” (CW 18)—a sentiment that haunts Dorian throughout the novel. Wotton puts his hand on Dorian’s shoulder, and his atmosphere looming over Gray has a strange effect on the young man: in response, “[t]he lad started and drew back . . . His finely-chiselled nostrils quivered, and some hidden nerve shook the scarlet of his lips and left them trembling” (CW 18).

Wotton’s atmosphere starts working its way into Dorian’s. The young man cannot help but like Wotton’s “flower-like hands” (CW 18) and gradually absorbs the air of their influence. Soon Wotton introduces his ideas of a new Hedonism as he argues that “[t]he common hill-flowers wither, but they blossom again. The laburnum will be as yellow next June as it is now. In a month there will be purple stars on the clematis, and year after year the green night of its leaves will hold its purple stars. But we never get back our youth” (CW 19). In response, Dorian drops the sprig of lilac from his hand and, later, appears to share Wotton’s philosophy. He also uses Wotton’s perfume before the two go out on the town at the dawn of their friendship. Much later the reader learns about Dorian’s eccentricities in chapter 11:

And so he would now study perfumes, and the secrets of their manufacture, distilling heavily-scented oils, and burning odorous gums from the East. He saw that there was no mood of the mind that had not its counterpart in the sensuous life, and set himself to discover their true relations, wondering what there was in frankincense that made one mystical, and in ambergris that stirred
one’s passions, and in violets that woke the memory of dead romances, and in musk that troubled the brain, and in champak that stained the imagination; and seeking often to elaborate a real psychology of perfumes, and to estimate the several influences of sweet-smelling roots, and scented pollen-laden flowers, aromatic balms, and of dark and fragrant woods, of spikenard that sickens, of hovenia that makes men mad, and of aloes that are said to be able to expel melancholy from the soul. (CW 93)

No longer is Dorian interested in flowers found in the garden; instead, he turns to the East. The perfumes of different plants are not simple remedies anymore. Dorian seeks olfactory sensation of all sorts, and the shift from the flowers natural or naturalised in the English garden to the scents of the East suggests that these olfactory sensations are not deemed respectable in Victorian England: he looks for mysteries, psychotropic agents, passions, and old affairs. The remedy that he now finds is for the melancholy that follows his insatiable pursuit.

Although Wotton seems to be the perpetrator of Dorian’s fall, let us not forget that Wotton was once corruptible too. Previously, we have seen that his confession to Dorian in chapter 19 was downplayed with Wilde’s alterations to the text, for instance, by changing the “strangest year of [Wotton’s] life” to the “strangest month.” But the name of the perfume as well serves the same purpose. In the twenty-chapter version, Wotton confesses that it is “lilas blanc” (CW 150) that takes him back to this strange period of his life. This way, the motif of perfume connects with the beginning of the novel and would tie Wotton to a strange yet wholesome atmosphere.

However, the two thirteen-chapter versions do not have lilas blanc but “heliotrope” (UDG 212, L 97) that evokes the strangest year of Wotton’s life—a flower and highly popular perfume that was “the flower-become-trope for a random erotic memory” in the 1890s
(Maxwell 267–268). It is the titular perfume in the poem, “White Heliotrope” (1893, first published in 1895 in *London Nights*) by decadent poet Arthur Symons. According to Maxwell, the atmosphere of white heliotrope in this poem belongs to a woman (as it does in other texts she mentions), and this woman “and the uncomplicated pleasure of a casual sexual encounter will, he [the speaker] hopes, come to mind—evoked by a reapplication of the same fragrance—as an enjoyable fleeting memory only” in the poem (266).

But the white heliotrope is not associated with casual heterosexual encounters in *Teleny*. The night Camille and Teleny first meet, the latter wears a white heliotrope in his buttonhole (11; vol. 1). When they meet face-to-face after the concert they discover that they have the same favourite perfume: “*Heliotrope blanc*” (33; vol. 1). Teleny has it on his handkerchief that he shows to Camille while “looking at [him] with such a passionate and voluptuous longing, that the carnal hunger depicted in [Teleny’s] eyes made [Camille] feel faint” (33; vol. 1). More importantly, the pianist puts his white heliotrope into Camille’s buttonhole as an attempt to pervade his atmosphere. That the white heliotrope created a strong bond between the two is recalled when Camille tells the narratee that he watched Teleny make love to a woman: “Well, jealous as I was, I could not help feeling how different his manner was now from the rapturous way with which he had clung to me that evening, when he had taken the bunch of heliotrope from his button-hole and had put it in mine” (107; vol. 1). This bond in the atmosphere scented by heliotrope reaches its climax when Teleny ushers Camille into a room, “where no man has ever set his foot” (41; vol. 2), prepared just for the latter: “A strong, overpowering smell of white heliotrope first greeted my nostrils” (42; vol. 2). The two make love—Camille possibly for the first time with a man, as he describes Teleny’s actions “new and thrilling sensation[s]” (51; vol. 2). With their union completed, Camille and Teleny finally share the same atmosphere and bathe in “warm water, scented
with essence of heliotrope; and it was so pleasant to rest there locked in each other’s arms after [their] last excesses” (52; vol. 2).

It appears that the white heliotrope was not a trope for heterosexual encounters only. For readers of Teleny, depending on their narrative competencies, the interpretation of Wotton’s confession may vary. On the one hand, one might see Wotton’s strange period of life as a series of casual sexual encounters with women based on publicly available texts. On the other hand, the reader initiated into clandestine erotic fiction, such as Teleny, might wonder and interpret Wotton’s speech as his confession of having experienced same-sex desire himself. The latter case would make sense of Wilde’s alterations to the text. As we have seen, homophile literature hushed itself as soon as a cue for same-sex desire was revealed by the text. In addition, white heliotrope, regardless of narrative competencies, evoked effeminacy that, in men, was a cognate of same-sex desire in the period. No wonder Wilde erased and changed the perfume to lilas blanc, as heliotrope would have stripped Wotton and the novel of their respectability if Wotton’s fancy of heliotrope had been read anthologically with Teleny, which might have already been in the making when Wilde was working on the twenty-chapter version of Dorian Gray.

It is rather obvious that the author(s) of The Picture of Dorian Gray and Teleny did not shy away from detailing the scented atmosphere of the texts, mentioning flowers, perfumes and their components. But there is one perfume that Dorian Gray refuses to mention by name, which piques our interest. It is also an important one as it coheres with the complication of the novel. Before leaving Wotton’s house in chapter 4, Dorian puts “some perfume on his handkerchief out of a large gold-topped bottle that stood on the table” (CW 42). Once Dorian has left, Wotton congratulates himself on having such a great influence on the young man. This is a key moment at the beginning of the novel: it is here that the text confirms that Dorian has adopted Wotton’s atmosphere and philosophy. Strangely enough, this scene is not
given any particular scent. In what follows, I entertain the possibility of this perfume being Hungary water—an old perfume with legendary, almost magical effects, still immensely popular in the nineteenth century.

Joseph Taylor’s *Curious Antiquities: or, The Etymology of Many Remarkable Old Sayings* (1820) briefly defines what was most commonly known about this fragrance: “Hungary Water is a distilled water prepared from the tops of flowers of rosemary: so denominated from a Queen of Hungary, for whose use it was first made” (57). This origin story was challenged by John Beckmann in *The History of Inventions, Discoveries, and Origins* (1845) and concludes that the name of the perfume has nothing to do with Queen Elizabeth of Hungary; it was merely a marketing strategy by sellers of Hungary water much later (318). However, the benefits of the water enumerated by John Prevot in the seventeenth century, namely that it “renovates the strength, brightens the spirits, purifies the marrow and nerves, restores and preserves the sight, and prolongs life” (qtd. in Beckmann 318), lived long in the Victorian era as well.

There was virtually no book on perfumes without Hungary water. Charles Lillie’s *The British Perfumer* (1822) devotes a whole chapter to “Hungary Water of Various Sorts” giving two recipes for making it (142–145) and using it as a component in Almond Pastes (200) and Camphor Balls (262). One of the most prestigious British perfumers of the nineteenth century, Septimus Piesse included everything on Hungary water in the first edition of *The Art of Perfumery* (1855), which is worth quoting in full length:

> Eau de Cologne cannot be made without [otto of rosemary], and in the once famous “Hungary water” it is the leading ingredient. The following is the composition of [Hungary water: rectified alcohol, otto of English rosemary, lemon-peel, balm, mint, esprit de rose, extract of fleur d’orange]. It is put up for sale in a similar way to eau de Cologne, and is said to take its name from
one the of the queens of Hungary, who is reported to have derived great benefit from a bath containing it, at the age of seventy-five years. There is no doubt that clergy-men and orators, while speaking for any time, would derive great benefit from perfuming their handkerchief with Hungary water or eau de Cologne, as the rosemary they contain excites the mind to vigorous action, sufficient of the stimulant being inhaled by occasionally wiping the face with the handkerchief wetted with these “waters.” Shakspeare [sic] giving us the key, we can understand how it is that such perfumes containing rosemary are universally said to be “so refreshing!” (94)

Piesse’s book proved to be a great success. The second edition came out the next year with even more references to Hungary water (23–24, 61, 96). That the perfume was still all the rage is evident from the use of “The Perfume Lamp,” which was “filled with Hungary Water” for “perfuming apartments” (231). The third edition in 1862 proved that Hungary water was a key component to improve the quality of certain scents (332) and clarified that “[t]he term ‘water,’ in perfumery, has a technical sense, and means literally ‘spirit’; hence we have Eau de Cologne, Hungary water, &c., which contain none of the aqua pura!” (349). The fourth edition in 1879 and the fifth in 1891 contained no new information on the perfume.

Another (if not more) significant British perfumer was Eugene Rimmel, whose book, *The Book of Perfumes* (1865) had its fifth edition by 1867. His historic account of Hungary water focuses more on the legendary aspect of the water:

Alcoholic perfumes do not appear to have been known until the fourteenth century, and the first we find mentioned is Hungary water, so called because it was first prepared in the year 1370 by Queen Elizabeth of Hungary, who had the recipe from a hermit, and became so beautiful through the use of it, that her hand was asked in marriage at the age of seventy-two by the king of Poland.
This story, which is taken from an old book published at Frankfort in 1639, is related by Beckmann, who devotes a whole chapter to the subject, but ends by doubting its accuracy—a most ungallant conclusion, for he ought not to question the captivating powers possessed by ladies of any age, with or without the aid of Hungary water. (197–198)

The legend was still important in R. S. Cristiani’s Perfumery and Kindred Arts (1877). He states that “Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary . . . [was] said to have by its use retained her beauty until she [had been] past seventy years of age” (29). Later, he writes that “Hungary water owes its peculiarity to rosemary, and was invented several hundred years since, when it was supposed to have the power of causing those who used it as a cosmetic to remain young forever” (124, emphasis added).

Physicians had been prescribing Hungary water for nearly everything. Robert Dossie gives a recipe for Hungary water for external purposes (315) in The Elaboratory Laid Open (1758) among “Many Particulars Extremely Necessary to be Known to All Practitioners in Medicine” as the subtitle of his books suggests. For “good wives, tender mothers, and careful nurses” of 1759, Mary Kettilby offers the perfume “to cure deafness” (163) and “for a violent cholick [sic] pain in the side” (164). John Theobald suggests using it for “chapt nipples” (28) in Every Man His Own Physician (1767). Buc’hoz in The Toilet of Flora (1772) gives two receipts for making the perfume (35–37) with recommendation for whitening the skin (74–75) and improving complexion (83). George Alexander Gordon prescribes the perfume as a family medicine for “swoonings” (48–49) in The Complete English Physician (1785). A physician in The Art of Preserving Beauty (1789) suggests Hungary water to improve the eyesight of senior readers (52); and in the section, “On the preservation of Health and Beauty in general,” he states that “[n]othing . . . is more common than to recommend Hungary-
water” (172). William Brodum also writes that it “should be applied as a collyrium [i.e. eyewash]” (61) in *A Guide to Old Age* (1797).

According to Joseph Taylor in *Domestic Herbal* (1818), rosemary in Hungary water “is excellent in all nervous disorders, against vertigo, dizziness of the head, and trembling of the limbs” (24). Job Hallett states in *De Venereo Morbo* (1822) that it cures “any part affected with pains or debility” by a venereal disease as “[t]his remedy recruits the strength, dispels gloominess, and strengthens the sight. It must always be used cold, whether taken inwardly or applied externally” (42). William Beastall writes in 1832 that it “is good in all disorders of the nerves; in hysterical and hypochondriac cases, in palsy, apoplexy and vertigo” (412). John Wesley prescribes Hungary water in *Primitive Physic* (1846) to cure the cramp (47), violent headaches (67), ringworms (86–87), and a sore throat, which method he labels as “tried” (93). *The Mother’s Medical Instructor* (1848) by Alexander Stookes suggests the perfume for fainting (38) and headaches (40). James Clark, who is claimed to have been the private physician to Queen Victoria on the title page, recommends Hungary water “for improving the complexion . . . the hands—the feet—the eyes—and the teeth” (80–81) in *The Ladies’ Guide to Beauty* (1860). Martha Careful gives *Domestic Hints to Young Mothers* (1862) and Hungary water as a medical receipt for children’s whooping cough (45). Hungary water can help with bruises as well (23), according to A. W. Chase’s *The Book to Cure You* (1880). Henry Hartshorne in *The Household Cyclopedia of General Information* (1881) distinguishes three different types of Hungary water: an alleged “original,” “French,” and the “best” (469). Furthermore, he makes references to it as a “useful domestic medicine” (265) and distillation (454). W. T. Fernie also makes a reference to the perfume in *Herbal Simples: Approved for Modern Uses of Cure* (1897).

Miss Ildrewe under the heading, “Remembrance, Rosemary” in *The Language of Flowers* (1874) summarises all the above and why Hungary water found its way into literature
as well: “This aromatic plant has had a merited reputation, from the most ancient times, as a remedy in headaches and nervous disorders. It forms the principal ingredient in the celebrated Eau de la Reine de Hongrie, or Hungary Water” (142). One of the most famous examples is “Sleeping Beauty” (1697) by Charles Perrault, in which they try to wake the beauty by “rubb[ing] her temples with Hungary water” (7). On this note, it is no wonder then that “good Mistress Anne” was driven to use Hungary water to get rid of “horrid villainous smells” (13–14) in Only an Old Chair (1884) by Robert Anstruther Goodsir; the lady said good-bye to her guests and rushed upstairs “with a graceful languour of excessive debility” to “bathe [her] temples with the Hungary water” (91–92) in Forbidden to Marry (1883) by G. Linnaeus Banks; the ladies use the emphatically genuine Hungary water for “hysteries” and “swoons” (64–65) in Walter Colyton: A Tale of 1688 (1830) by Horace Smith; and Hungary water is cure for “hysteries” (206) and “fainting fits” (224) in The White Cockade (1867) by James Grant. There is also poetry on the origin story of Hungary water by the American poet, Charles Godfrey Leland. Though, as the title suggests, he confuses Eau de Cologne with Hungary water, the first poem of “Poems of Perfumes” in The Music Lesson of Confucius, and Other Poems (1872) recounts that “the sainted Queen Elsa of Hungary” received the perfume from angels to cure her headache (23–25).

What these sources tell us is that Hungary water was attributed the conflation of legendary and more modern neurological healing powers, which were, in many cases, heavily gendered; as a result, the overt mention of the perfume would have worked both for and against the themes of Dorian Gray. As we have seen, the idea that Hungary water was an elixir vitae was often recalled: it promised eternal youth and beauty. This legend coheres well with the complication of the novel. When Dorian leaves the house, wearing Wotton’s perfume, “Lord Henry’s heavy eyelids droop . . . , and he [begins] to think” (CW 42) half-asleep, giving the impression of a tired old man. He ponders ideas about “[s]oul and body,
body—how mysterious they were! . . . Who could say where the fleshly impulse ceased, or the psychical impulse began? How shallow were the arbitrary definitions of ordinary psychologists! . . . He began to wonder whether we could ever make psychology so absolute a science that each little spring of life would be revealed to us” (CW 43). Dorian craves eternal beauty and youth, and has to have alert senses to live life for pleasure. Hungary water serves both purposes. By adopting Wotton’s atmosphere and philosophy, Dorian is both the subject of Wotton’s experiment and the one who does the experiment for the old man for whose drooping eyelids Hungary water is a vain attempt at reviving himself for the night out.

Hungary water, as seen above, also had neurological benefits and Dorian is very much in need of such remedy. Exhausted and perplexed by Wotton’s atmosphere, Dorian leaves Basil’s studio to cure his senses. But he finds that natural odours in the garden do not help soothe his nerves when approached by Wotton, as seen in Dorian’s nervous quiver. To cure his faintness caused by Wotton, Dorian needs to find olfactory remedy, which, again Hungary water might offer. This treatment is very much in line with nineteenth-century findings of neurology on the pathologies of the olfactory sense.

Anna Harrington and Vernon Rosario summarise the most important findings as follows. It was Pierre Cabanis (1757–1808), who first wrote about the “sympathy” between the nose and the digestive tract in animals. In 1812, William Prout substantiated the olfactory sense as the basis for distinguishing flavours and that one sense depended on the other. “The discovery,” as a result, “reinforced the sense of a peculiar sympathy of the olfactory organs with other internal organs” (4). Cabanis’s student, Hippolyte Cloquet in 1821 complied “history’s first reference work on the problem of olfaction,” which was later used by Havelock Ellis as well (Harrington and Rosario 4). One of the major findings of this book was that “genital neurosis” like hysteria can be cured or induced by certain odours (Harrington and Rosario 5). By the end of the century, this “sympathy” was seen as both afferent and efferent,
“i.e., it was felt that olfactory disease or irritation could produce a range of psychological and physiological sympathetic reactions (‘nose to body’ type disorders), and that pathologies having their source in other body organs could lead to sympathetic olfactory dysfunctioning (‘body to nose’ type disorders)” (Harrington and Rosario 6). John Noland MacKenzie (1853–1925) was the first to study the connection between the genitals and the nose and found parallels between nasal fluids and menstruation, the tumescence of the inside of the nasal cavity and the penis, which result in nasal or genital “orgasm” (Harrington and Rosario 8).

At this point, it seems plausible that the ideas on Hungary water could have served *Dorian Gray* well: it could be this perfume that keeps the protagonist young and beautiful, while treating his nerves at the same time. But these two aspects also explain why the perfume is not named. If the text revealed that Dorian used Wotton’s Hungary water, it would explain the uncanny mystery around Dorian’s aura and his eternal youth. Another reason is that using Hungary water for the nerves renders Dorian extremely effeminate, which would give away the novel’s homophile reading. Nineteenth-century neurology saw women and homosexuals weak in the nerves and, therefore, susceptible to fainting and swoons. As the examples have demonstrated above, even literature recorded that Hungary water was the resort of women on the verge of fainting. In addition, sexology also took interest in olfaction. Cloquet reported that Cardinal Richelieu abused perfumes and “could no longer sense their action” (qtd. in Harrington, Rosario 21). Richard von Krafft-Ebing picked up the thread in *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) and claimed that Richelieu was a pervert fetishist, who needed strong olfactory stimuli to top his sexual passions (Harrington and Rosario 21). Albert Moll in *Libido Sexualis* (1897) wrote on the same note that anosmia leads to abnormal partner choice and sexual perversion (Harrington, Rosario 21). Moreover, Hungary water, in certain circles, was associated with fetishism. *Les Attentats aux Moeurs* (1857) by famous forensic medical scientist Ambroise Tardieu writes about fetishism and anal passivity in “medical” terms and
mentions records regarding what foreign bodies introduced to the rectum have been removed by surgeons: one example of which is a bottle of Hungary water (208–209). This chance occurrence may not explain Wilde’s familiarity with Hungary water in this context and his aversion to overtly mentioning the perfume. However, the very same case is mentioned, for some inexplicable reason, in an essay included in The Sins of the Cities of the Plain (1881), an erotic novel allegedly read by Wilde (Setz vii). In the light of the above, Dorian’s quivering nostrils (and, for that matter, Camille’s faintness in the atmosphere of white heliotrope) might be the first symptom of osmo-motor disorders or neurasthenia as a result of the weakness of effeminate nerves. In addition, his interest in the psychology of perfumes and stronger olfactory stimuli (or the bottle of Hungary water) might hint at his non-conformist sexual interests.

The third reason why Wilde might not have thought wise to overtly mention the perfume is that journalists mocked the believers of Hungary water’s magical (or medical) powers. The Saturday Magazine devoted two and a half columns, a rather long article to Hungary water, claiming that it was “regarded as nothing more than an agreeable perfume, possessing nearly the same qualities as the simple herb from which it [was] produced” and its legendary effects were “the operation of the human mind” only (“Hungary Water” 3–4). Another magazine Punch called its subscribers “to draw the attention of any stupid acquaintance” to Hungary water as they might still believe in the benefits of using the perfume (“Heady Stuff” 174). A few years later the magazine published another sceptical article about it:

A bottle of Hungary Water may be a suitable offering for presentation to an oblivious lover, and would convey an intimation more delicate than the broad

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11 “Ambrose [sic] Tardieu . . . especially speaks of bottles of Hungary waters” (85, emphasis added).
hint expressed by a bunch of forget-me-nots. Gentlemen who are apt to forget small commissions or necessary purchases might do better to scent their pocket handkerchiefs with Hungary Water than to tie knots in them. ("Forgetfulness Cured by Smelling" 28)

How much of these articles in the second half of the century was sarcasm or belief in the perfume is difficult to tell. There is a reason why its recipes included terms like "genuine," "original," "best," and so on, as there were copies, in most cases with cheap brandy, which disappointed the users and did no good for the reputation of Hungary water. It is also difficult to distinguish whether this disappointment originates from the denial of such magical powers that the water allegedly had on the Queen of Hungary, or common sense dictated to the average readers that any benefit they attributed to this old perfume was mere superstition in light of the medical advances of the nineteenth century.

As convincing as it may seem, my argument for Hungary water in The Picture of Dorian Gray remains the sheer conjuncture of coincidences as there is no direct evidence that Wilde was familiar with the perfume. For instance, he requested French soaps such as Peau d'Espagne and Sac de Laitue and scents like Canterbury Wood Violet and Eau de Lubin once he was released from prison (Selected Letters 250). Of course, it may be argued that Hungary water was not for everyday use any more and had strong rivals by the end of the century. In a similar vein, we may argue that heliotrope and lilas blanc did not appear anywhere else; therefore, his personal taste of the latest fashion fads may be irrelevant. Nevertheless, there is simply no evidence in fiction or non-fiction that Wilde was in any depth familiar with the legendary perfume; as a result, perfumes reveal homophilia and may, in hypothesis, hint at hungarophilia in Wilde’s texts.

What offers a more convincing argument for Wilde’s hungarophilia is another fad of Dorian. Music is discussed consecutively with Dorian’s study of perfumes. The change in his
The taste of music brings him to seek out the *style hongrois* among other types. The ekphrasis of Hungarian-style music, however, also reveals a curative discourse in both *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Teleny*.

**The Style Hongrois**

The term *style hongrois* in the nineteenth century referred to a highly popular kind of music that, in short, referred to Hungarian musical content and Gypsy performance characteristics (Bellman, *The Style Hongrois* 6). According to Jonathan Bellman, “[w]hat fuelled its popularity and further defined its significance in contemporary culture was what it was *imagined* to be, not necessarily what it was, and what the Gypsies were *presumed* to be, not what they were” (*The Style Hongrois* 22). A contemporaneous account of Hungary, *Magyarland* (1881) attributed to Nina E. Mazuchelli summarises the turn-of-the-century Western imagination about the *style hongrois*:

> The Magyars have a perfect passion for . . . gipsy music, and there is nothing that appeals so powerfully to their emotions, whether of joy or sorrow. These singular musicians are as a rule well-taught, and can play almost any music, greatly preferring, however, their own compositions. Their music consequently is highly characteristic. It is the language of their lives and strange surrounding; a wild, weird, banshee music; now all joy and sparkle, like sunshine on the plains; now sullen, sad and pathetic by turns, like the wail of a crushed and oppressed people—an echo, it is said, of the minstrelsy of the *hegedűsök* [violinists; sic] Hungarian bards, but sounding to our ears like the more distant echo of that exceeding bitter cry uttered long centuries ago by their forefathers under Egyptian bondage, and borne over the time-waves of thousands of years, breaking forth in their music of to-day. (52–53)
This passage shows that the *style hongrois* was viewed primarily as a language, a new musical expression that, to Western audiences, sounded as a cry against oppression and repression.

In addition, the reaction of Hungarian men to Gypsy music was conceived as something extremely sexual and primordial, as described in the following two passages of *Unknown Hungary* (1880) by Victor Tissot:

> Next their partners, gently, with movements full of languor and softness, assumed the most coquettish and seductive *poses*, whereupon the ardour of the men was again lighted up, their enthusiasm burst forth once more in wildly earnest transport; in the paroxysm of their excitement, they struck themselves on the back of the neck, uttering guttural and wild cries of joy. (311, vol. 1)

> He sat as if bewitched, he shut his eyes, hung his head in melancholy or raised it with a start, as the music varied; then jumped up, and struck the back of his head with his hands . . . And in this lies the triumph of the gipsy music,—it is like that of Orpheus, which moved the rocks and the trees. The soul of the Hungarian plunges with a refinement of sensation that we can understand, but cannot follow, into this music, which, like the unrestrained indulgence of the imagination in fantasy and caprice, gives to the initiated all the intoxicating sensations experienced by opium-smokers. (280–281; vol. 2)

By the nineteenth century, the *style hongrois* did not simply refer to the performances of Gypsies but to a range of Western associations to them: “Part savage, part universal Other, part reminiscence of an idealised, strife-free past, [Gypsy performers] represented a whole range of ideas and emotion considered inappropriate, if not dangerous, to European society” (Bellman, *The Style Hongrois* 69). It is easy to see why homophile writing at the turn of the century found a connection with this musical expression as “[t]he *style hongrois* . . . gave expression to emotions so immediate, so deep and personal, that conventional music was
simply unequal to the task” (Bellman, “The Hungarian Gypsies” 103). But, although the *style hongrois* was very popular, it was also often suspect. With the constant development of medical sciences, neurology formulated a particular reason for British society to be suspicious of it.

For centuries, special healing powers had been attributed to music generally. This view was discredited by the mid-nineteenth century. Doctors argued that music was a stimulant of *electric* nerves, and that women were particularly prone to illness due to under- and overstimulation of these nerves: “irritability and sensibility was marked as gendered, with irritability (of muscles) being seen as manly, and sensibility (of nerves) seen as female” (Kennaway, “From Sensibility to Pathology” 418). Given the nineteenth-century core idea of “sexual inversion” as the key to understanding same-sex desire, doctors believed that men attracted to their own sex were, like women, highly susceptible to nervous music. By the end of the century, modern music was seen as a stimulant of modern nervousness (Kennaway, *Bad Vibrations* 63–97), and “the idea of music as overstimulating the nerves became a weapon in controversies in music criticism, especially with regard to Richard Wagner, and was often mixed up with new developments in medicine” (Kennaway, “From Sensibility to Pathology” 425), such as sexology.¹² Historians have already pointed out that, in terms of form and affect, Wagner’s music in particular was considered highly neurotic. Following the same thread, I establish in what follows that the *style hongrois* was seen in the same light, although it has evaded academic interest so far.

The *style hongrois*, especially its most famous genre in the popular mind, the *czardas*, seemed a prime candidate for pathologisation:

It has two primary sections: *lass[ú]* or *lassan* (slow) and *friss* and *friska* ([…] fresh or fast). The slow section is in a heavy, deliberate 4/4 meter and is more a

¹² About British sexologists on music in detail, see Law (182–183).
presentation step than a dance. The fast section can be either one or several different dancing songs, which in their abandon hint at a total loss of emotional control. (Bellman, *The Style Hongrois* 21)

The rhapsodic changes of the sections, the meter, and the content all point to the idea that the *czardas*, in terms of contemporaneous medical views, must have overstimulated and exhausted the nerves of susceptible audiences. In addition, the *czardas* promoted the unmanly loss of control over emotions, which idea again rendered the Hungarian musical style as a potential threat to women and “effeminate” homosexuals.

The idea of nervous music was present in popular culture, too.¹³ Probably the most famous virtuoso of Hungarian nervous music was Franz Liszt, who, according to Derek B. Scott, largely contributed to the fact that the *style hongrois* became a distinct and popular musical style in the nineteenth-century, although “musical orientalism has never been overly concerned with establishing distinctions between Eastern cultures” (158–159). Liszt’s three concerts took Britain by storm in April 1886. Michael Diamond states that Liszt “received one of the greatest ovations of his career” at St James’s Hall and recalls a popular anecdote saying that after the Hungarian marches, Liszt’s door at The Lyceum had to be nailed shut to protect the composer from his enthusiastic (possibly overstimulated) audience (277–278). A caricature of Liszt by János Jankó (originally published in the Hungarian magazine *Borsszem* Jankó in April 1873) also commemorates the strange effect of Hungarian nervous music.

After the description of his rhapsodic music from a “whisper becom[ing] a sigh” to “[f]everish excitement,” the last frame reads: “He has played; not only for us but with us. Retiring, he bows with lofty humility. Deafening applause” (qtd. in Langhaus 827). Liszt’s

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¹³ For instance, a department store’s advertisement in *Kunkel’s Musical Review* reads as follows: “Many a woman is so exquisitely organised that the strains of music cause her to forget to eat or drink until reminded of the necessity by physical exhaustion . . . ” (100).
music had an enormous effect on his audience; what is more, it was often described as “electric.” Alan Walker recounts a story in which a mental patient listens to Liszt’s performance: “The passage he played produced a visible effect on her similar to that of an electrical discharge” (qtd. in Kennaway, “Singing the Body Electric” 146). On another occasion, Kennaway reminds us, “Heinrich Heine’s comments on Liszt’s use the language of erotic electricity. The virtuoso is described as demonstrating ‘magnetism, galvanism, electricity . . . histrionic epilepsy . . . the phenomenon of titillation. . . .’” (“Singing the Body Electric” 146–147). By this point, it is evident that Liszt’s work carried the word about this intense and affective music around the world.

It appears that the style hongrois is on the fine line that Lei Zhang points out in nineteenth-century music. The English distinguished two categories in music: “authorised” and “low” with corresponding moral values attached to each. In the private sphere, both boys and girls could learn about authorised musical genres. The presence of a piano in their home showed that the household had acquired the proper domestic Victorian values. Therefore, musical education shaping good taste instilled the proper morals in the youth at home. However, the emerging music hall culture hosted concerts for all sorts of music. Moreover, although for different prices, tickets were available for both the lower and the higher classes. The rising middle-class could show off with their wealth and cultural dominance (50–53). Hardly could we argue that Liszt’s music and the style hongrois was not “authorised.” Nevertheless, the style carried disrespectful physiological implications. And certainly, Wilde’s circle itself was curious about musical taste. For instance, Marc-André Raffalovich in Uranisme et Unisexualité finds that the number of musicians correlates with the number of homosexuals: “It should be not surprising then to find that in Germany and Austria [i.e. Austro-Hungarian Empire] the majority of inverts, psychopaths, and sexual non-conformists have a taste for, a talent in, or an ability for music” (165). No wonder, then, that homosexuals
took interest in the lifestyle of the notoriously bachelor Johannes Brahms, the composer of Hungarian Dances (1869), according to Gifford (xxi). But a nation does not necessarily have to be extremely musical to make such observations: “In countries where musical education is more haphazard and less widespread or is usually prompted by a natural inclination, as in England, for example, we find absolutely the same connection between music and sexuality: there is only a difference in degree” (Raffalovich, Uranisme et Unisexualité 166).

Kennaway argues that “[f]rom the 1880s a potent mixture of a bourgeois scientific fear of the medical and moral consequences of certain music and a Decadent appreciation of that music created a rich and contradictory literature about music and nerves” (“Singing the Body Electric” 141). In his analysis of Trilby (1894) by George du Maurier and The Whirlpool (1897) by George Gissing, he substantiates the late-Victorian anxiety about music overstimulating the nerves of female or effeminate literary figures. Kennaway focuses mainly on Wagner’s music in his analyses; yet, I might add that in these novels the style hongrois makes an appearance as well, even if it does not play a prominent role. It does, however, in The Picture of Dorian Gray and Teleny.

It has become a cliché to look for cues of same-sex desire in Oscar Wilde’s works. Nevertheless, Joe Law rightfully complains that “[l]ittle has been written . . . concerning the role of music in articulating [a] new [homosexual] identity” (175). As Ruth Solie also suggests, music is a “moral monitor or diagnostic tool” in nineteenth-century literature (115); therefore, Law is right to attribute a pivotal role to several instances of musical ekphrasis in late-Victorian fiction. But there is an inexplicable fallacy in his argument. What Law sees in the appearance of music is the expression of a homosexual identity *per se* in “Wilde’s only

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14 See the description of and the Laird, Taffy, and Little Billee’s reaction to the “czardas, gypsy dances, Hungarian love-plaints” (12) in Trilby and Hauser’s “Rhapsodie Hongroise” (204) and Liszt’s “clanging rhythm and dithyrambic fury” (267) in The Whirlpool.
novel *[The Picture of Dorian Gray, 1890/91]* at the head of a self-conscious tradition of the ‘homosexual novel’” (174). Wilde, however, could hardly conceptualise same-sex desire as “homosexuality” as Károly Kertbeny’s coinage *Homosexual* had not entered the language until 1892 when possibly the most important canonised sexological study of the era, Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis* was translated into English (Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* 15). In addition, there were many competing theories and respective coinages for same-sex desire; for instance, uranianism, sexual inversion, unisexuality, similisexuality. As a result, we cannot read Wilde’s works written at the very beginning of the 1890s in terms of a crystal-clear homosexual identity and a specifically homosexual literary tradition as there was not a homogeneous persona nor discourse of same-sex desire.

Nevertheless, Law is absolutely on point about the connection of musical ekphrasis and literary language: “As a nonverbal medium, music may evoke emotions but it cannot speak. As such, it is readily cognate with a condition that was not to be named” (180). This statement resonates well with the famous line, “the love that dare not speak its name” (from “Two Loves” [1894] by Alfred Douglas) that Wilde had to explain and defend during his trials.\(^{15}\) Same-sex desire did not dare speak its name for two reasons. As we have seen, the language of British law was extremely delicate when it came to this matter. But same-sex desire could not name itself in literature either for the lack of a term encompassing the phenomenon variously conceptualised in the nineteenth century by texts whose distribution was limited due to the Hicklin Standard.

It is also puzzling which name of same-sex desire Wilde and his coterie might have referred to. His friend and rival, Marc-André Raffalovich gave his sexological magnum opus, written in French, the title *Uranisme et Unisexualité* (1896). Partly following Raffalovich’s

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\(^{15}\) See this part of the trial famously described by Ellmann (463).
terminology, in two of his 1898 letters to devoted friend Robert Ross, Wilde mentions “Uranian love” (Letters 1019). Again, the distinction between two loves, one being “Uranian,” has its origins in Plato’s The Symposium: “But since there are two Aphrodites there must be two Loves also . . . It follows then that the Love who works with the latter Aphrodite should correctly be called ‘Common Love’ [Dionian, i.e. heterosexual] and the other ‘Heavenly Love’ [Uranian, i.e. homosexual]” (11–12). Here lies a paradoxical entanglement that was characteristic of the nineteenth-century conceptualisation of same-sex desire: although homosexuality seemed like a minority pursuit from a universal medical point of view, it appeared to be the materialisation on earth of a more perfect, divine, universal love for the particular individuals in question. In addition, Plato also connects the two loves to music:

    . . . Rhythm is created when elements which were originally in disagreement, namely the fast and the slow, are subsequently brought into agreement. Here it is music that creates agreement in all these things by implanting mutual love and unanimity between the different elements, just as in the previous case it was medicine. Music too, therefore, is knowledge of the influence of love, in this case in respect of harmony and rhythm.

    . . . So, in music, in medicine and in every thing else, human as well as divine, one must, so far as possible, watch out for both kinds of Love; for they are both present. (20)

This passage by Plato might explain why Wilde, “the musician of words” (3), as Merlin Holland puts it, was interested in music, although, according to E. F. Benson, Wilde “had no ‘aptitude’ for music: ‘Oddly enough, though he had so keen and just a sense of the music in spoken and written words, he had absolutely no sense of music itself, being practically unable to distinguish one tune from another’” (qtd. in Law 178). Wilde’s concept of same-sex desire,
deriving from *The Symposium*, informs the reader that it is musical ekphrasis in the novel that refers to sexuality *per se*. While the description of Dorian Gray’s portrait is a more obvious Leitmotif to hint at the protagonist’s untold (if not nameless) offences, Wilde used the musical ekphrasis of the *style hongrois* to debate different ideas of masculinity, sexuality, and respectability. Following Lydia Goehr’s article “How to Do More with Words: Two Views of (Musical) Ekphrasis,” I propose that musical ekphrasis as a descriptive and mimetic device fits *fin-de-siècle* Aestheticism as a universal. But at the same time, as a “re-presentative” and evocative mode, it provided a new language for a particular (homosexual) point of view.

The change in Dorian’s taste in music closely follows his moral decay. At the beginning of the novel, he is eyeing Basil’s copy of *Forest Scenes* by Schumann. The choice of title here might not be accidental if we take the forest as a literary trope of liminality and transformation. Later, in the consecutive paragraph after the one on perfumes, Dorian’s interest digresses to “curious concerts, in which mad gypsies tore wild music from little zithers” as “[t]he harsh intervals and shrill discords of barbaric music stirred him at times when Schubert’s grace and Chopin’s beautiful sorrows, and the mighty harmonies of Beethoven himself, fell unheeded on his ear” (*CW* 94). There is virtually no trace of Wilde having any connection with Hungarian or gypsy music—only two, rather scarce anecdotes can be found with questionable credibility. One is by William Rothenstein, who published many stories and fabrications about Wilde in the first volume of *Men and Memories* (1931):

He and his wife took Wilde to an open-air restaurant where a mauve Hungarian band was playing what Wilde once described as “mauve Hungarian music” [in his play, *An Ideal Husband*]. Oscar chose a table close to the musicians, saying he liked being near the music; but during dinner, says Rothenstein, it became plain that he was less interested in the music than in one of the musicians. (Pearson 364)
Another anecdote comes from Vincent O’Sullivan’s *Aspects of Wilde* (1936) about how Wilde finished writing *Salome*: Wilde asked “the leader of the orchestra of Tziganes in the Grand Café . . . to play something in harmony with [his] thoughts. And Rigo played such wild and terrible music that those who were there ceased their talk and looked at each other with blanched faces. Then [he] went back and finished *Salome*” (25). Nevertheless, it appears that Dorian, when under-stimulated, was looking for new stimuli, for instance, in the form of gypsy music, which evokes “the Other” in both music and love in this passage.\(^{16}\) This short quotation in itself, however, does not prove that music directly refers to sexuality in the novel. It is only in our retrospective reading looking for codes of same-sex desire that we see music as something to do with a non-conformist sexual drive.

That the allusion to the *style hongrois* in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is the means of referring to same-sex desire becomes evident when we read *Teleny; or, The Reverse of the Medal* (1893), an erotic novel attributed to Wilde and his circle. Camille, the narrator starts his recollections of his affair with the title character, a Hungarian pianist with a concert where Teleny played a Hungarian *czardas* which is highly sexualised in the narrative:

> That is just the difficult point, for you cannot disconnect him from the music of his country; nay, to understand him you must begin by feeling the latent spell which pervades every song of Tsigane [gypsy]. A nervous organisation—having once been impressed by the charm of a tsardas [sic]—ever thrills in response to those magic numbers. Those strains usually begin with a soft and low andante, something like the plaintive wail of forlorn hope, then the ever changing rhythm—increasing in swiftness—becomes “wild as the accents of lovers’ farewell,” and without losing any of its sweetness, but always acquiring new vigour and solemnity, the prestissimo—syncopated by sighs—reaches a.

\(^{16}\) About Gypsy music as the music of “the Other,” see Piotrowska (395–408).
paroxysm of mysterious passion, now melting into a mournful dirge, then bursting out into the brazen blast of a fiery and warlike anthem. (12–13; vol. 1)

It is interesting to see that in the Victorian cultural realm, the style hongrois can be printed in the programme and performed publicly. In a historical/cultural sense, there is no reason to look for illicit meaning. However, listening to Teleny’s Hungarian czardas, Camille sees different visions—tropes of homophile fiction at the turn of the century, based on his own competence to interpret what he is listening to. First, he sees “Moorish masonry,” then he sees “the sun-lit sand of Egypt, . . . where Adrian stood wailing, forlorn, disconcolate for he had lost for ever the lad he loved so well.” It is also the music that helps Camille understand “the love the mighty monarch felt for his fair Grecian slave, Antinöus . . . ”; then, Sodom and Gomorrah appear to Camille, and “the pianist’s notes just then seemed murmuring in [his] ear with the panting of an eager lust, the sound of thrilling kisses” (13–14; vol. 1). Immediately, Camille starts abusing himself to the rhythm of the czardas involuntarily: “The hand was moved up and down, slowly at first, then fast and faster it went in rhythm with the song. My brain began to reel as throughout every vein a burning lava coursed, and then, some drops even gushed out—I panted—” (15; vol. 1). Once he is spent, he realises from the applause that the concert has finished, too.

During the meet-and-greet in the green room, it turns out that only homophile men are susceptible to Hungarian music the way Camille is. Teleny defines the “sympathetic listener,” which he seldom has at his concerts, as “[a] person with whom a current seems to establish itself; some one who feels, while listening, exactly as [he] do[es] whilst [he is] playing, who sees perhaps the same visions as [he] do[es]—” (24; vol. 1). The idea of the “sympathetic listener” draws a parallel with the homophile reader: based on their competencies, there are two types of audience listening to the style hongrois; one type is the initiated who share the pianist’s visions of homophile tropes, the other is just “normal” audience who does not have
access to this subjective reading of this music and is only capable of interpreting it in terms of
their broader cultural realm. Two collocutors admit that they did not have any visions, but if
they had to guess they would either imagine women’s breasts or “booted and laced soldiers
dancing with black eyed girls” (24; vol. 1). Teleny corrects both of them: “Gentlemen . . .
Odillot’s vision was provoked not by my playing, but by some good-looking young girl he
had been ogling; as for yours they are simply reminiscences of some pictures or ballets” (27;
vol. 1). He is implying, just like Wilde in the preface to Dorian Gray, that their interpretation
is largely autobiographical and has nothing to do with the performance itself. It is revealed
that only Camille had a vision and it was the same as Teleny’s.

My analysis, however, cannot stop at the celebration of same-sex desire appearing in
fiction via the ekphrasis of the style hongrois as this music also emasculates the protagonists
in terms of Victorian respectability and neurology. Wilde was not the first to connect nervous
responses and sexuality to music: according to Kennaway, “[a]n eminently significant literary
character who links homosexuality and the power of music on the nerves is Joris-Karl
Huysmans’ Duc Jean Floressas des Esseintes” (“Singing the Body Electric” 151) of À rebours
(1884), a novel often thought by critics to be the corruptive book Henry gave to Dorian. But
as recent scholarship has revealed, Oscar Wilde was much intrigued by the science of
nerves.17 This interest of his is revealed by “explicit references to ‘brain cells’ in chapters 11
and 16 of . . . Dorian Gray” (Stiles 224n19) and Dorian’s particularly nervous relationship
with music as an impressionable boy. He even compares it to Wotton’s words: “Music had
stirred him like that. Music had troubled him many times. But music was not a new world, but
rather another chaos, that it created in us” (CW 17). The influence of Wotton’s words is also
explained in musical (and olfactory) terms:

17 See Elisha Cohn’s “Oscar Wilde and the Brain Cell” and “Oscar Wilde and the Brain.”
Talking to [Dorian] was like playing upon an exquisite violin. He answered to every touch and thrill of the bow . . . There was something terribly enthralling in the exercise of influence. No other activity was like it. To project one’s soul into some gracious form, and let it tarry there for a moment; to hear one’s own intellectual views echoed back to one with all the added music of passion and youth; to convey one’s temperament into another as though it were a subtle fluid or a strange perfume . . . (CW 28)

We can imagine this influence as pouring some liquid from one container into another; however, this coexistence of vibrating music and fluids in Wotton’s influence opens new horizons for interpretation in terms of neurology. From the eighteenth century, Kennaway asserts, several models existed simultaneously that explained music as stimulation until the middle of the nineteenth century when the electric model took over: “nervous fluid, electrical, vibrating, and oscillating nerves all competing and often being combined” (“From Sensibility to Pathology” 407). Dorian, therefore, reacts to Wotton with what Kennaway calls “the sympathetic vibration of nerve-strings” (“From Sensibility to Pathology 409); or Wotton’s influence, the “thrill of the bow” made the “subtle fluid” in Dorian’s nerves vibrate.

In Teleny, there is a current that the pianist refers to, which signals the paradigm of electric nerves and the “transmission of thought, of feelings, of sensations . . .” (30–31 vol. 1): “a current between [Camille and Teleny], like a spark of electricity running along a wire” (36; vol. 1). Diane Mason points out that the often-neglected subtitle of the novel, “A Physiological Romance of To-Day” also “give[s] the work a somewhat clinical or scientific emphasis” (73). Mason’s reading suggests that Camille’s physical reaction to the concert, his unhealthy pallor, and exhaustion afterwards are “the primary symptoms of spermatorrhoea, a male physiological disorder characterised by involuntary emissions and a result seminal weakness” due to excessive practice of onanism—a form of “neurasthenia sexualis” or
“irritable weakness” (79). Camille was “powerless to applaud, [he] sat there dumb, motionless, nerveless, exhausted” (Teleny 16; vol. 1) after the concert, but his accident repeats itself when Teleny embraces him, then “[h]e stepped back, and shuddered as if he had received a strong electric shock” (35; vol. 1). What this phenomenon, described in neurological terms, means is explicitly described by Teleny: he explains that he has never loved women and had never felt such a strong connection with other men until he met Camille. Later Teleny introduces Camille to the physical aspects of male love.

What the comparison of The Picture of Dorian Gray and Teleny tells us is that the style hongrois was a successful snare in homophile texts of the 1890s—it evaded late-Victorian critics and has not drawn attention to itself in secondary literature either. The appearance of gypsy music in Dorian Gray looks like a chance occurrence and, given the nineteenth-century popularity of the style hongrois, did not at all seem like a cue of same-sex desire for the readers in general. However, Teleny, a privately printed novel distributed from hand to hand could overtly and explicitly elaborate on the connection between homophilia and hungarophilia via Hungarian music. Although this intertextual phenomenon seems like a victory over censorship, we must see that, in light of nineteenth-century sexology and neurology, these texts rehearsed the rather unfortunate idea of psychopathology that men

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18 Mason believes that the physiological aspect of the novel also explains the narrative situation of Teleny. Readers and critics alike find the beginning of the novel rather puzzling as it appears to start with the middle of a conversation between Camille and an unnamed narrate. According to Mason, this “anonymous interviewer . . . may be . . . indeed, a doctor” (73). As intriguing as Mason’s carefully worded suggestion (that Camille is being interviewed by a doctor for a case study) may sound, it is highly unlikely. At one point in the novel, Camille speaks about the medical views on the physiology of the sodomite’s genitals. The narrate responds by referring to his own and Camille’s with “its bulky head,” adding that Camille “blush[es] at the compliment, so [they] will drop this subject” (101). Though it was common to include the description of the genitalia in case studies, it is highly unlikely that the physician would refer to his own or compliment the patient’s.
attracted to their own sex were weak, effeminate, and unwholesome, which did not at all help the respectful conceptualisation of same-sex desire in uninformed English-speaking cultures at the turn of the century.
GOTHIC PERFORMANCE:
HOMOPHILE CONCEPTUAL MUDDLE IN ERIC STENBOCK’S “THE TRUE STORY OF A VAMPIRE”

Two literary modes, the Gothic and the pornographic are fertile ground to represent same-sex desire in literature. Their reception and understanding in terms of the legislative definition of “obscenity,” render them as two closely related genres in the nineteenth-century. On the one hand, Hughes and William draw a compelling parallel between “queerness” and the Gothic:

Gothic is . . . a compromise, a balance between the conflicting tastes and aspirations of orthodoxy and heterodoxy . . . To be queer in Gothic terms is, in a sense, to know both [“taste” and “bad taste”], seemingly adhere to one and yet to desire (even in the form of vicarious enjoyment) the other . . . Queer, like Gothic . . . is both performance and style, and the very nature of this process means that it will exist in a tense space between referential association with the normative and absolute separation from its morals and aesthetics. (1–3)

This parallel is especially true with regards to turn-of-the century conceptualisation of same-sex desire, even without theorising it in terms of “queerness.” The new psychopathological classification distinguished sexual intermediaries from “normal sexuality,” but at the same time conceptualised same-sex desire in terms of a heteronormative dichotomy. On the other hand, it goes without saying that pornographic texts could explicitly write about (even homosexual) sex. The two modes are very much related. According to Michael Gamer, “pornography . . . is not so much a kind of writing as a category of reader response—a legal interpretation of the social effects of a certain kind of reading.” It is the twin genre of the Gothic in this period as the Gothic, just like pornography, was often targeted as obscene and created a similar reader response (1046). The parallels between the Gothic and nonconformist
sexual desires, the Gothic and the pornographic come full circle if we consider the medico-legal and public responses to same-sex desire in the nineteenth century: male-to-male desire was something abnormal but defined in relation to normativity, and it was not respectable in legal terms—just like the two modes of genres in question. However, while Gothic texts could be publicly circulated at the turn of the century, pornographic works could not.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the distribution of a work largely determined what the author could write about same-sex desire. In the case of The Picture of Dorian Gray, a publicly distributed text, Wilde had to resort to the coded language of same-sex desire, whereas Teleny, sold under the counter to private subscribers and most probably distributed from hand to hand, could present the physical aspects of man-to-man love explicitly in every sense of the word. In this view, Teleny records in unambiguous terms what The Picture of Dorian Gray had to refrain from writing down in a way that was comprehensible to contemporaneous readers in general.

The two novels may be distinguished in a similar fashion in terms of their genre. Teleny, as a “physiological romance,” writes in detail about the physical aspect of both sexual intercourse and the characters. It discusses Camille’s unwholesome pallor and symptoms of spermarorrhoea, confides in the reader that the narrator and narratee have compared the physiology of their genitals, and rehearses forensic medical views of the period. For instance, Camille claims to have “read all [he] could find about the love of one man for another . . . [he] also read in a modern medical book, how the penis of a sodomite becomes thin and pointed like a dog’s, and how the human mouth gets distorted when used for vile purposes, and he shuddered with horror and disgust. Even the sight of that book blanched [his] cheek!” (99–101; vol. 1) This is an obvious reference to pre-eminent doctor Ambroise Tardieu’s forensic medical views on the subject matter (Mason 85).
While *Teleny* focuses on the physiology of the characters, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* often deals with the psychology of its protagonist. And it is the Gothic style that best expresses the controversies of one’s psychology, as theorised in chapter 11 of the novel:

> There are few of us who have not sometimes wakened before dawn, either after one of those dreamless nights that make us almost enamoured of death, or one of those nights of horror and misshapen joy, when through the chambers of the brain sweep phantoms more terrible than reality itself, and instinct with that vivid life that lurks in all grotesques, and that lends to Gothic art its enduring vitality, this art being, one might fancy, especially the art of those whose minds have been troubled with the malady of reverie. Gradually white fingers creep through the curtains, and they appear to tremble. In black fantastic shapes, dumb shadows crawl into the corners of the room and crouch there. Outside, there is the stirring of birds among the leaves, or the sound of men going forth to their work, or the sigh and sob of the wind coming down from the hills and wandering round the silent house, as though it feared to wake the sleepers and yet must needs call forth sleep from her purple cave. Veil after veil of thin dusky gauze is lifted, and by degrees the forms and colours of things are restored to them, and we watch the dawn remaking the world in its antique pattern. The wan mirrors get back their mimic life. (*CW* 97)

The uncanniness—possibly the most prominent cue—of the Gothic style is prosilient in this passage. However, it is not as conspicuous which way it should be interpreted in terms of the various literary definitions of the uncanny, collected by Chris Baldick:

> In Tzvetan Todorov’s theory of the fantastic, the uncanny is an effect produced by stories in which the incredible events can be explained as the products of
the narrator’s or protagonist’s dream, hallucination, or delusion . . . In tales of the marvellous, on the other hand, no such psychological explanation is offered, and strange events are taken to be truly supernatural. In psychoanalytic criticism, the term carries further significance from the influence of Sigmund Freud’s article *Das Unheimliche* (“The ‘Uncanny,’” 1919), in which he proposes that the apparently strange is a disguised representation of what is in fact familiar. (345–346)

Wilde’s description, on the one hand, suggests that these visions, the “phantoms” sweeping “the chambers of the brain” should not be interpreted in line with the theory of the fantastic but with the uncanny: these hallucinations are obviously the products of the narrator’s or the protagonist’s delusions. On the other hand, *Dorian Gray*’s complication of the plot—that Dorian’s wish comes true and he remains young while the picture ages—renders the novel as a tale of the marvellous. There is no psychological explanation for Dorian’s apparent immortality, and there is virtually no-one in the novel who would see Dorian otherwise.

Most importantly, however, this passage suggests that one should read the Gothic in terms of psychoanalysis. The strange, unfamiliar shadows and figures of the mind are, in fact, familiar as “[t]here are few of us who have not” experienced something alike. Gothic art is the best at expressing the workings of the mind similar to the progress made in psychotherapy. One may be “troubled with the malady of reverie,” but in the process, one lifts “veil after veil” to reach an “antique pattern,” a past condition and not mundane normality. This therapeutic process, lifting one veil after the other intends to reach the unconscious to reveal the core of psychosis. This way, one is enabled to reframe how one sees these figures, which are no longer phantoms at this stage as “forms and colours of things are restored to them” and “the wan mirrors get back their mimic life,” as phantoms do not have a reflection—one can see things as they are and not in an unwholesome way due to the “malady of reverie.” Wilde’s
passage suggests that the Gothic style, therefore, is the best to represent a psychopathological state in literature.

This psychopathological aspect of the Gothic appealed to the half-Estonian British resident, Count Stanislaus Eric Stenbock (1860–1895), who was a remote member of Wilde’s circle. There is only one account, by Ernest Rhys, with disputable credibility of the short meeting “of these two famous incompatible esthetes [sic]” (39). One day Wilde paid a visit to Stenbock at Sloane Terrace. Having reached the upstairs sanctum, Wilde lit his cigarette with the eternal flame Stenbock had between a bust of Shelley and an image of Buddha. As a response to the debauchery, Stenbock fainted and fell on the floor. Shortly, their meeting ended: “Startled, not a little disgusted, Oscar returned to the doorway, stood a couple of moments over the prostrate figure, spurned it with his foot, took two or three more puffs of the accursed thing, and made his exit” (Rhys 39). They never talked. Nevertheless, Stenbock, too, was a man of the nineties—friends with Robert Ross, Wilde’s literary executor; Aubrey Beardsley, the illustrator of Wilde’s Salome; and, as a contributor to The Spirit Lamp, with Alfred Douglas, the editor of the decadent Oxford magazine.

Stenbock published his first collection of poems in the same year as Wilde; Love, Sleep, & Dreams (1881)—exceptionally rare to find—is “a short collection of haunting, melancholic, and tortured poems, including an untitled piece about a ‘passionate male heart’ that loved the subject of the poem when he ‘was a boy’” (Tibet, “A Catch of a Ghost” xiv). In 1883, he published Myrtle, Rue, and Cypress, dedicated to Simeon Solomon ten years after the painter’s arrest for unnatural offences against a person, his inappropriately close cousin, and his former love-interest, Charles Bertram Fowler: “The contents of the poems are desolate, suicidal, spectral, and supernatural and Eric’s love of young men is increasingly evident, as is the darkness that surrounded him” (Tibet xv). One of his relatives noted that Stenbock “belonged to that Oscar Wilde circle… He was an aesthete through and through,”
and, as the title of his 1883 collection also suggests, “Eric loved perfumes above all and used to create his own mixtures. When he had walked in the hall one could tell for a long time due to the scent” (qtd. in Tibet, “A Catch of a Ghost” xv, xviii–xix). Words, such as “death,” “sleep,” “dream,” “veil,” are recurring in his poetry. The psychopathological Gothic nature is even more accentuated in *Shadows of Death* (1893), a collection of his poems, and *Studies of Death* (1894), a collection of his short stories. His works had never been reviewed before this decade-long hiatus. The former was received by critics with disapproval, while his fiction received “a respectable review” in *The Glasgow Herald* (Tibet xxxi–xxxi).

In what follows, I am going to follow two different approaches to analyse homophilia and hungarophilia in Stenbock’s autobiographical short story “The True Story of a Vampire,” published as the penultimate piece of *Studies of Death*. One studies his literary and musical inspirations for the text—namely, Goethe’s “Erlkönig,” Schubert and Liszt’s arrangement of the text, and the translations by Matthew Lewis. The anthological reading of Goethe’s “Erlkönig,” Stenbock’s translation of the ballad, and his poem “Vampyre,” intends to substantiate how the vampiric protagonist of “The True Story of a Vampire,” Vardalek came to be. The other approach reads the short story anthologically along with the texts of the previous chapter and interprets the vampire as a literary device to capture the conceptual muddle of same-sex desire when authors tried to comprehend their sexual drives and preferences in light of sexology’s obscurity.

**Performing the Ballad**

“The True Story of a Vampire” was inspired by Goethe’s “Erlkönig” (1782) that Francien Markx claims to be “his most famous ballad” (4), a reworking of one of the most famous Scandinavian ballads, *Elveskud*. In Goethe’s text, a father is taking his delirious young boy at night on horseback to an unspecified location. The child sees and hears the Erlkönig (the Elf
Bojti

King) who tries to bait the boy with beautiful games, colourful flowers, golden robes, and the dance of his daughters. It is not clear whether the father sees the Erkönig as he continually tries to comfort the boy by explaining his visions with the winds and the shimmering of willows. The Erkönig in the end claims to seize the boy by force. As he makes his move, the boy cries out, but by the time they reach their destination the father finds his son dead in his arms.

Goethe took interest in ballads as he saw “a universal quality to the genre of folk ballads, which contain the core of all poetic forms”; in addition, he “ascribed ‘something mysterious’ to this genre,” which lies not in the content but its performance through the effectiveness of “different literary and oral techniques and devices” (Markx 3–4). Possibly it is the ballad’s performativity that inspired numerous musical adaptations of Goethe’s “Erlkönig”—most notably by Franz Schubert for solo voice and piano in 1815. Interestingly, it was Liszt and his transcriptions of Schubert’s work that “promoted the name of Schubert, still little known outside Vienna.” Liszt moved Schubert’s work from private performances to the concert-hall, and from Vienna to wider recognition. His transcriptions of Schubert’s songs “became overnight successes”—“[t]he great favourite with the general public was ‘Erlkönig’ . . . Liszt played it not only in Vienna but in Leipzig, Prague, London, Berlin, and St. Petersburg” (Walker 257), which he continued into old age (258n14). The key to the success of Liszt’s arrangement possibly lies in the reiterated octaves and occasional octave doubling that “serves to enhance the drama” (257), rushing both the riders and the climax of the ballad itself as Liszt was adamant to follow the text both in performance and print (258).

Goethe’s version of the legend was inspired by “Erlkönigs Tochter” (1778, The Erlking’s Daughter) by Johann Gottfried von Herder, which is more authentic to the original Scandinavian ballad: it is not the Erlkönig but his daughter who seizes humans to satisfy her desires. Goethe’s Erlkönig may be taken as a predecessor of the Fatal Man often tainted with
vampirism. Mario Praz notes that “[i]n April 1819 Polidori’s macabre tale, The Vampire, appeared in the New Monthly Magazine under Byron’s name, through a misunderstanding on the part of the editor of the review, and Goethe, swallowing it whole, declared it to be the best thing the poet had written.” On a marginal note, Praz adds: “Goethe himself, in the Braut von Korinth, 1797, had been the first to give a literary form to the fearsome vampire legends which had arisen in Illyria in the eighteenth century” (76). Praz further argues that, due to Polidori’s Vampire, “[a] love crime becomes an integral part of vampirism, though often in forms so far removed as to obscure the inner sense of the gruesome legend” (76).

Goethe’s alteration that it is not his daughters but the Erlikönig who ensnares the boy conveyed an effect that inspired a homophile reading at the end of the century, given that many sexological texts put Goethe down as a homosexual. Interestingly, out of many a suggestive text, only his “Erlikönig” is included, without explanation, in “Bibliographie der Homosexualität” published in the first issue of Jahrbuch für Sexualle Zwischenstufen (223). In the next yearbook, Max Katte wished to demonstrate to “normal”-sexuals that poets, such as Shakespeare, Grillparzer, and Platen, had proved that the “abnormal sex” had the same depth, violence, and delicacy of feeling—and that among these poets, Goethe had the greatest understanding and empathy. To explain, Katte quotes two lines from “Erlikönig”: “Willst, feiner Knabe, du mit mir gehn [Do you, fine boy, want to go with me?]” and “Ich lieb’ dich, mich reizt deine schöne Gestalt [I love you, your beautiful form excites me]” (295–296).

“Erlikönig” was also included in Lieblingminne und Freundesliebe (1900), an anthology by Elisar von Kupffer, who “specifically refers to the love of man to man, man to youth, and youth to youth in his introduction” (Tobin 77). According to Kupffer, Goethe dramatised his own sensation in the ballad, as the words uttered by the Erlikönig in the penultimate stanza could never possibly come from the fantasy of an immature child (206).
It must be noted that we are more likely to find references to “Erlkönig” as homophile literature in German texts. The authors of Jahrbuch, like Katte above, usually echoed Kertbeny’s argument that homosexuals had been treated unfavourably despite the similarities between “abnormal” sexuality (same-sex desire) and “normal” sexuality (heterosexuality). According to an antiliberal, antimodern movement—Kupffer being a representative—that criticised both emancipation movements and psychopathology (Tobin 61ff.), “Erlkönig” represented men-to-youth love of the Greek type, which had aided the building of a nation with masculine, though intergenerational, bonds between men. Non-German authors, like Raffalovich in Uranisme et Unisexualité (1896) and Prime-Stevenson in The Intersexes (ca. 1909), usually argued for the existence of the homosexual’s noble impulses, contrary to pederasts, sodomites, and effeminates. In this paradigm, Goethe is noted among the former type without a shadow of a doubt. Even if Raffalovich and Prime-Stevenson had read “Erlkönig,” they would have kept silent about it, as the ballad of a boy’s ensnaring would have questioned Goethe’s integrity.

The way Goethe’s “Erlkönig” entered the English literary scene might also reveal why Stenbock took interest in the ballad. One of its first translations was made by Matthew Lewis (1775–1818) and published in The Monthly Mirror in October 1796. The translations of Herder’s “The Erl-King’s Daughter” and Goethe’s “The Erl-King” were published together. The readers could see the shift from the daughters to the Erlkönig himself. Besides that, the short introduction to the translations is intriguing as well: “For the following beautiful translations, by the Author of the Monk, we are indebted to a Gentleman of the first eminence and respectability in the literary world” (371). An inscription like this is by no means unusual; authors were often identified by their prior work. The second edition of The Monk was published in October 1796 as well, now with Lewis’s full name, encouraged by the commercial success of the first edition. Despite the novel’s popularity, The Monk received
harsh criticism as well. As a consequence, Lewis made substantial changes in the fourth 
edition of 1798 to suppress whatever critics found immoral in his book (Peck 34–35).

Based on the principle that a genre and a way of reading derive from the relationship
between the author and the reader, Gamer argues that the reception of *The Monk* had a
significant effect on how the Gothic was perceived in the nineteenth century:

I am not arguing wholesale that gothic texts were “obscene” at the turn of the
nineteenth century. Yet what is clear is that the legal category of obscene libel
was brought to bear on gothic texts to the extent that they could be associated
with *The Monk*’s perceived textual practices and readerly effects. This
prevailing association, I contend, not only shaped the later output of Lewis and
writers associated with him; it also affected the gothic’s cultural status and
trajectory for most of the nineteenth century by stigmatizing the genre legally
and morally. (1051)

The reception of *The Monk* left a mark on Lewis’s translations of German ballads. Douglass
H. Thomson claims that “Lewis first became known for introducing ‘German’ themes through
*The Monk* (the ‘Advertisement’ page of which announces his debt to a German source and
invites his readers to track down other ‘plagiarisms’)” (18). Lewis’s interest in German,
consequently, reconceptualised the English Gothic: “A genre previously associated with
English authors . . . was now retrospectively recast by critics as an invasion from abroad and
a corruption of English morals by German tastes” (Uden 121). Not minding the reception of
German influence on the Gothic, Lewis nevertheless intended to introduce English audiences
to German ballads and included his translation of “Erlkönig” in *Tales of Wonder* (1801),
which cut “across many accepted literary and critical boundaries of its day” (Thomson 14).
The possible homophilic reading of “Erlkönig” and its cultural implications upon entering the English literary scene must have intrigued Stenbock. He reworked the ballad in verse first as “The Vampyre” in *Rue, Myrtle, and Cypress* (1883):

“Ich lieb’ dich, mich reizt deine schöne Gestalt
Und bist du nicht willig, so brauch’ ich Gewalt.”
[I love you, your beautiful form excites me;
And if you're not willing, then I will use force.]

I WOULD seek thee in secret places
   In the darkest hour of night,
Embrace thee with serpent embraces,
   Delight thee with strange delight.

In a serpent’s coils entwine
   Thy supple and exquisite form,
And drink from thy veins like wine
   Thy blood delicious and warm.

With slow soft sensual sips
   Draw the life from the tender spray,
And brush from thy soft lithe lips
   The bloom of thy boyhood away.

I would breathe with the breath of thy mouth
And pang thee with perfect pain;
And the vital flame of thy youth
Should live in my limbs again.

Till thy vital elastical [sic] form
Should gradually fade and fail,
And thy blood in my veins flow warm,
And glow in my face, that was pale. (27)

Stenbock chose the very same line from Goethe’s ballad, as Katte was to do more than a decade later, as the motto of the poem to foreshadow a homophilic reading of the text. What is more, he quotes the ballad’s climax, the moment the Erlkönig gets hold of the boy. The setting remains the same: a mythical creature haunts his pray in an unspecified place in the dead of the night.

“The Vampyre,” however, has a single speaker, the Erlkönig reconceptualised as a vampire. This way, the poem can break away from the ballad’s narrative structure and focus solely on the climax: the touch of the creature. Instead of narrative devices, Stenbock relies on syntax, choice of words, and acoustics to convey the ballad’s effect and the vampire’s seductive power. The repeated use of “would” is by no means hedging or conditional but is used for conveying the regularity of the hunt and evoking emotions and nostalgia of willing sensuality. Words, such as “entwine,” and “embrace” accompanied by sibilance with the word “serpent,” are all meant to describe the proximity of the vampire. This proximity later is further emphasised by sibilance accentuated by alliteration in “slow soft sensual sips.” As if to summarise the act in short, the penultimate stanza starts with “I would” again; however, there is no build-up anymore. The close proximity and intimacy are expressed with the
synecdoche of a kiss in the line, “breathe with the breath of thy mouth,” utilising auditory, tactile, gustatory, olfactory, vestibular, and proprioceptive senses. Now that, in this summary, the proximity is already established in the first line, sibilance is redundant, and the second line, “pang thee with perfect pain,” alliterates the voiceless bilabial explosive to illustrate how the vampire’s fangs penetrate the flesh of the boy. It is followed by relache, the alliteration of the voiceless fricative, accentuated with assonance in the words “fade,” “fail,” “face,” as the acoustic ekphrasis of flowing blood in the last stanza; however, it is interrupted by the disturbing and effective return of the voiceless explosive in “pale” as the horrific cadence of the poem. Reconceptualising the Erlkönig as a vampire, therefore, was essential for Stenbock to accentuate the physicality of the touch.

Ten years later, Stenbock was still infatuated with Goethe’s “Erlkönig”; he published his own translation of the ballad in The Shadow of Death (1893):

WHO rides so late through the wind so wild?
It is the father holding his child;
He holds the fair boy with sheltering arm,
He holds him closely, he holds in warm.

“My child, ah tell me what frighteth thee!”
“Alas, my father, and dost thou not see
The Erl-King crowned clothed in white?”
“Nay child, ‘tis the mist in the white moonlight.”

“Sweet child, and wilt thou not come with me?
I have beautiful gifts I would give to thee;
Fair are the flowers that bloom on the wold
Where my mother weaves garments of Woven gold.”

“My father, my father, and did’st thou not hear
What the Erl-King softly said in mine ear?”
“Tremble not, be not afraid, my child,
Shall the willows not weep when the wind is so wild?”

“Sweet boy, and wilt thou not come with me?
My beautiful daughters shall play with thee;
They shall sing to thee songs, their voices are sweet,
They shall dance with thee dances, their feet are fleet.”

“Nay, but my father, I saw the pale face
Of the Erl-King’s daughter in a dark, strange place.”
“Nay, fear not, my child, for I only see
The mute moon that shines through the willow-tree.”

“I love thee, I long for thy lithe, living form,
Thy flower-like face, thy blood that is warm.”
“Alas, my father, for verily
The Erl-King has done some strange thing to me.”

The father shuddered, and yet more fast
He spurred on his steed through the wavering blast;
Onward and onward, nor turned his head,
For he feared, nay, he knew, that the child was dead. (69–70)

Compared to Edgar Alfred Bowring’s more authentic translation published in The Poems of Goethe (1853), Stenbock’s “The Erl-King” seems to conflate the Erlkönig with the vampire. His Erl-King is clothed in white and the daughter’s face is pale like a vampire’s. Moreover, the promise of his daughters is different in nature. In Bowring’s translation, following Goethe’s ballad, the daughters cater for a child’s needs: “They’ll dance thee, and rock thee, and sing thee to sleep” (115). In Stenbock’s version, however, “They shall sing to thee songs, their voices are sweet, / They shall dance with thee dances, their feet are fleet.” The dance becomes seductive in Stenbock’s description, echoing the sibilance of the serpents of “The Vampyre,” which is nowhere to be found in Goethe’s original or Bowring’s translation.

Stenbock’s creative stretch is even more remarkable in the climax. While Bowring’s translation works with Goethe’s key words, “I love thee, I’m charm’d by thy beauty [schöne Gestalt], dear boy! / And if thou’rt unwilling [nicht willig], then force [Gewalt] I’ll employ” (115); Stenbock’s arrangement focuses on what, in Goethe’s original, is the boy’s “Gestalt [form],” which “mich reizt [excites me, i.e. the Erlkönig],” as seen in the motto of “The Vampyre” as well. The object of the longing of Stenbock’s Erl-King is the boy’s “lithe, living form,” which phrase polarises the extremes the two represent. The second line of the penultimate stanza takes it even further: the Erl-King’s longing is pronouncedly vampiric for a kiss and the boy’s blood, just like in his original poem. By employing vampirism to the translation of the ballad, Stenbock can mark the carnality of the Erl-King’s craving.

A year later, Stenbock published Studies of Death: Romantic Tales (1894), in which he reworked some of his poetical works into fiction. An absolutely straight-forward example of this idea is the short story “Viol D’Amor,” which is the rearrangement of his poem of the
same title from *The Shadow of Death*. Stenbock’s new endeavour may be explained by the transformation of the major genre in the period. Bernard Muddiman in *The Men of the Nineties* (1920) is worth quoting in length:

> the long novel [was] *démodé* for the period. The age demanded . . . the climacteric moments only when the passions of the *personae* . . . were at white heat, so to speak, and life was lived intensely . . . Could not the long-winded novel of three tomes be whittled down to the actual short-story motive? . . . This reduction of everything to its climax can be seen in all the art of the period . . . It becomes the same in music. The age was short-winded and its art, to borrow a phrase from the palaestra, could only stay over short distances.

So, whereas there is a strange dearth of novels, the men of the nineties were very fruitful in short stories. In fact, it would not be perhaps too much to say that it was then, for the first time in English literature, the short story came into its own. At any rate, it would be more judicious to put the period as one in which the short story flourished vigorously (if not for the first time), in England, as a “theme of art” . . . The earlier tale has none of the facets and subtleties that art has contrived to express by the latter narration. This artistic treatment of the short story by Englishmen, then was a new thing and a good thing for English literature . . . The successful short stories of the period are of all sorts and conditions. To exemplify as briefly as possible this variety is perhaps closer to my purpose than to waste time in proving such obvious facts as the anxious endeavours of all these writers to raise their work to the artistic elevation demanded of the short story, or their strenuous struggle to attain a suitable style and treatment for their themes. (60–63)
Among many decadent authors, such as Ernest Dowson, Max Beerbohm, and Arthur Symons, Muddiman includes and quotes, unlike the other works, *Studies of Death* as a prime example of this phenomenon in the period. The point of the short story—and other arts such as music—in the 1890s was to condense fiction to its climacteric effect. By doing so, authors could “elevate” their themes and their possibly personal “anxious endeavours,” curiously phrased by Muddiman whatever they may be, to artistic levels.

“The True Story of a Vampire,” the penultimate story of *Studies in Death* is considered to be largely autobiographical. According John Adlard, the short story “is clearly rooted in reality, painful reality” (Adlard 11). Adlard connects various elements of the setting to Stenbock’s life. The count might have had a clear picture of Styria since his aunt had an estate there, and two years later Baedeker’s *Austria* (1896) has a similar description to Stenbock’s (5). Furthermore, the background of the characters has possible autobiographical sources:

“Vardalek,” writes Francis King, “is Stenbock himself.” This is fairly obvious. Both men are counts. Vardalek is “rather fair, and though decidedly attractive in appearance, not what one would call singularly handsome… rather tall.” Similarly, a relative in Estonia described Stenbock’s hair as “reddish gold,” and Simeon Solomon found him “tall… not exactly good looking.” He also found Stenbock’s face girlish, as Carmela found Vardalek’s effeminate. The vampire was an inspired pianist… Likewise, Solomon was impressed by Stenbock’s playing, and so was Ernest Rhys… (9)

Rhys’s account of Stenbock’s play on the piano should be directly quoted to see the parallel:

“While he played, the first callers went and others arrived—but he held the room. We sat

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19 For having this rare introduction, I am grateful to Tom Sargant of Brighton, UK.
entranced, and amused at his flying hand and swaying curls. He made the instrument his own. The keys grew liquid under his supple fingers; the piano was bewitched” (15). Stenbock, just like Vardalek, was an enchanter when playing the piano.

Vardalek’s musically talented boy-victim, Gabriel might also be autobiographical: possibly he was inspired by Norman O’Neill, “a young musician for whose studies in Frankfurt [Stenbock] was paying,” and whom the author wrote letters to in 1894 about his fast-approaching death (Croft-Cooke 256). Another autobiographical inspiration might be Charles Fowler, “the consumptive son of an Oxford clergyman”—“Gabriel, the boy-victim of Vardalek’s symbolic sexual corruption, is a younger version of [him], the schoolboy with whom Stenbock had been in love; and his death in a last embrace from Vardalek would appear to reflect [his] final consumptive haemorrhage” (King 12–14). Adlard sees Stenbock in Gabriel too: “In one respect Gabriel is also Stenbock” (10). While Gabriel has an “extraordinary power over animals,” Stenbock had an extraordinary collection of animals in Estonia (10). According to Rhys, the count had a clairvoyant pet toad, Fatima, whom Stenbock described as his “familiar” and who resided on his shoulders during dinner (15–16). And if it was not a pet toad, then Stenbock “wore a live snake round his neck” (Croft-Cooke 3). Another eccentricity might shed light on why Stenbock doubles as both Vardalek and Gabriel in his story: he had “The Little Count,” a life-sized doll, the whereabouts of which Count Stenbock was constantly concerned about, as if the doll had been his son (Adams n.p.). As worrying as it may seem, Stenbock had a soft spot for children: during his one-year stay in Kolga, Estonia in 1886–1887, “[h]e was . . . remembered for the quantity of opium he smoked during that year and for the games of charades that he arranged for local children” (N. Taylor 124).

He died in 1895, just before the British started writing about same-sex desire with their own case studies based on the terminology coming from German-speaking Central
Europe. In Stenbock’s lifetime, same-sex desire was considered unnatural and a crime against mankind. This British rhetoric might explain his struggle with his conceptualisation of his desires and the toll on his mental health in the form of alcohol and drug abuse. He confided in Rhys under the influence on the occasion of *Studies of Death* that “Death . . . is a dirty doorway to a wonderful region where there will be no London fogs and none of the evils that trouble the poets and artists here” (117). Stenbock, by this time, was struggling with his poor physical and mental health. He might have seen death as absolution from his combats with his desires in the British milieu. In this respect, we might see *Studies of Death* as the literary outlet of this battle. As Francis King puts it: “In spite of poor physical health made even worse by an excess of drink and drugs Stenbock made a genuine attempt to understand his own homosexuality in term of traditional occultism, eventually coming to view his condition as an aspect of vampirism and lycanthropy.” The climactic literary study of his conclusions was “The True Story of a Vampire” (13).

**The Vampire and the Conceptual Muddle of the Nineties**

To “understand” homophilia in literature, instead of using sexological categories inaccessible in English at the time, Stenbock’s short story accumulates symbolic codes for illicit sexual desires. Stenbock’s knowledge and conceptualisation of same-sex desire, therefore, can be understood in term of, what Davide Sparti calls, the “internalisation model,” i.e the internalisation of symbolic codes, as opposed to the “attribution model,” which means the recognition/application of “the power of naming,” i.e. sexological labels and scripts in this case (332). The workings of the internalisation model are clearly discernible in Stenbock’s short story. Trevor Holmes claims that “there [is not] much agreement at present about which nineteenth-century vampire narrative signals the beginning of representational depth in gay male vampire fiction” (176). Having considered *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker, he suggests
that, in “The True Story of a Vampire” (1894) by Eric Stenbock, “certain of the generic codes become settled, codes through which we might say with certainty in our glance back that a text embodies gay male vampire subjectivity” (176). Although he admits it is not possible to enumerate an absolute list of such codes, he still tries to identify a few: “the displacement of male-male desire through an aged and desexualized ‘female’ narrative gaze; reiterations of a Classics-inflected cult of male youth; perhaps the absent mother and ineffectual father; references to unfettered sexuality” (176), the most important of these being Gabriel’s gipsy origins through his mother, “which is the first suggestion of a sexuality coded as unconventional, unstable, and non-normative” (177).

Holmes seems to have missed probably the most important key element of the narrative. Gabriel’s gipsy blood is revealed through the narration of Carmela; therefore, the reader cannot know for sure what Vardalek knows about the boy’s background. The sole hint at Vardalek’s interest in the boy’s “blood”—literally or metaphorically—can be seen, on a marginal note, when Carmela recounts the first encounter of the vampire with the boy: “Vardalek, taking [Gabriel’s] hand—I don’t know why I noticed this trivial thing, —pressed the pulse with his forefinger” (133). This marginal and “trivial” moment in Carmela’s narrative, as we learn by the end of the short story, only makes sense in terms of the vampire’s interest in the boy’s vitality. Moreover, it would be difficult to prove that a character’s gipsy origins would suggest inclination to same-sex desires. Holmes’s argument simply does not hold in terms of the narrative; however, it can be corrected in a way that would prove that Gabriel’s “blood”—figuratively—has something to do with his sexuality. The crucial point when Vardalek identifies Gabriel’s unconventional nature happens when he plays music:
After dinner my father asked him if he played the piano. He said, “Yes, I can a little,” and he sat down at the piano. Then he played a Hungarian csardas—wild, rhapsodic, wonderful.

That is the music which makes men mad. He went on in the same strain. Gabriel stood stock-still by the piano, his eyes dilated and fixed, his form quivering. At last he said very slowly, at one particular motive—for want of a better word you may call it the relâche of a csardas, by which I mean that point where the original quasi-slow movement begins again—"Yes, I think I could play that.”

Then he quickly fetched his fiddle and self-made xylophone, and did, actually alternating the instruments, render the same very well indeed.

Vardalek looked at him, and said in a very sad voice, “Poor child! you have the soul of music within you.” (136–138)

It is Gabriel’s response to Vardalek’s musical test that proves to the vampire and the initiated reader that the young boy is capable of deciphering and coding desire for a man. Music connects Gabriel’s gipsy origins to secreted desires that need another “language” to express themselves. This language, however, is not decipherable to everyone. Carmela, the narrator wonders: “I could not understand why he should seem to commiserate instead of congratulate Gabriel on what certainly showed an extraordinary talent” (138). The musical language of same-sex desire mediated by the style hongrois apparently is available to Vardalek and Gabriel only.

By employing the style hongrois to signal same-sex desire, Stenbock’s short story follows the coded language of Wildean fiction. This can be further substantiated by the description of Vardalek’s eyes: a moment of suspense in Carmela’s narrative when he has a glimpse at Gabriel—a code which is missing from Holmes’s list:
When he arrived his eyes were half close—indeed they were habitually so—so that I could not decide their colour. He looked worn and wearied. I could not possibly guess his age.

Suddenly Gabriel burst into the room: a yellow butterfly was clinging to his hair. He was carrying in his arms a squirrel. Of course, he was bare-legged as usual. The stranger looked up at his approach; then I noticed his eyes. They were green: they seemed to dilate and grow larger. Gabriel stood stock-still, with a startled look, like that of a bird fascinated by a serpent. (132–133)

Wilde’s symbolism through the colour green, which found its climax in green carnations, was famous at the time and is well-known by contemporary readers as well. As David Schulz sums it up cleverly, Wilde “functioned as a cultural lightning rod for an anxious fin de siècle England” (38). For Stenbock, Wilde’s literature was the evident first base to understand his own sexuality.

That Stenbock was attracted to vampire stories and he was well-acquainted with them is fairly obvious. Referring to Marigny, Adlard writes that “[Stenbock] is in the mainstream of vampire art, yet . . . of all the vampires who preceded Dracula Stenbock’s is the most remote from orthodox legend” (6). One may certainly find resemblance between “The True Story of a Vampire” and The Vampyre (1819) by John William Polidori, Varny the Vampire; or The Feast of Blood (1847) by James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest, and Carmilla (1872) by Sheridan Le Fanu. However, Stenbock breaks with the idea of bloodsucking in the romanticised foggy moonlight. The exposition of the short story appears to parody its predecessors of gothic vampirism:

VAMPIRE stories are generally located in Styria; mine is also. Styria is by no means the romantic kind of place described by those who have certainly never been there. It is a flat, uninteresting country, only celebrated for its turkeys, its
capon, and the stupidity of its inhabitants. Vampires generally arrive at night, in carriages drawn by two black horses.

Our Vampire arrived by the commonplace means of the railway train, and in the afternoon. You must think I am joking, or perhaps that by the word “Vampire” I mean a financial vampire. No, I am quite serious. The Vampire of whom I am speaking, who laid waste our hearth and home, was a real vampire.

Stenbock comments on the similarity of the location with earlier stories like Carmilla (set in Styria), but surprises the reader with an eerie twist. The location may trigger a schema in the reader, with all the reliable or even predictable accessories of such a story. However, the narrator mentions the gothic elements (the night, the carriage, the black horses) only to terminate the schema. The result is an uncanny confusion: it is the realistic contemporary context that seems odd as the exposition does not align with expected schemata. But what does a “real vampire [emphasis in the original]” mean in this realistic context then?

Analysing Dracula, Robert Mighall concludes his chapter “Making a Case: Vampirism, Sexuality, and Interpretation” with the thought, “a vampire was sometimes only a vampire and not a sexual menace” (247). The issue he takes with critical interpretation of vampire stories is that “[v]ampirism is used to demonstrate what the critic already knows about Victorian ‘sexuality’” (211). However, these presumptions may lead the critic on a false track. Mighall refers to a case in Psychopathia Sexualis to establish that the word “vampire” was used to express “a classificatory problem” (214). His example is the case of Sergeant Francious Bertrand, made well-known by the press from 1847 until his arrest in 1849. Bertrand was a grave-violator with a potential (sexual) drive, which was not explainable at the time: “Neither necrophile, sadist, nor even sexual ‘pervert’ were available” (219). Outrage followed Bertrand’s acts, and since he escaped the authorities for two years despite their best
efforts, journalists named him “Le Vampire” (213). The term “vampire,” Mighall asserts, did not address the erotic motivation, but the lack of knowledge for a better word encompassing such pathological behaviour (214).

Referring to Penzoldt, Adlard sorts literary vampires into two categories: the blood-sucking and the psychic vampire (8). The first has a craving for bodily interaction, potentially with an erotic interest in the victim; the latter embodies a kind of vampirism whose effect is not physical but psychological. Interestingly, reworking “Erlkönig,” Stenbock operated with a blood-sucking entity in “The Vampyre” and “The Erl-King.” Vardalek, however, is not interested in Gabriel’s blood literally; therefore, he can be classified in the latter category as if to vaguely signal the shift of the unsteady rhetoric on same-sex desire in the 1890s from carnal crimes to psychopathology.

Taking on Mighall’s theory, I suggest that “psychic vampire” Vardalek also embodies a classificatory problem, an identity crisis Stenbock was going through concerning his own sexuality. To see this more fully, it is worth juxtaposing another case to that of Bertrand: the Zastrow case of 1869 in Berlin. Though there was no direct proof against him, lieutenant Karl Ernst von Zastrow was sentenced to fifteen years in prison for “sex-murder of a 16-year-old boy and the attempted sex-murder of a 6-year old boy” (Herzer 12). The evidence against Zastrow was circumstantial at best:

Zastrow was known to the police to have been homosexually inclined. He had been arrested and questioned before and had a record in Dresden, his previous city of residence. Like prostitutes and other habitual criminals, homosexual offenders were indexed at police headquarters and hence were the first suspects of resort in this case. The police file reveal that investigators’ main criteria for identifying suspects were a known history of homosexual acts coupled with the vaguest circumstantial evidence. Early suspects included a
twenty-year-old who had been arrested for such acts three months before and who was known in the neighbourhood where the crime took place and a forty-five-year-old mason who lived on the same street as one of the victims and sold books—the victim had reported that the attacker had lured him with the promise of gift of books. Within weeks of the crime, Zastrow was prime suspect, and contacts between himself and these other persons of interest were explored, yielding none known. (Spector 102–103)

Zastrow became a prime suspect due to the criminal record of his homosexuality and proximity to the attacks. The police file included several witness statements dating back to seventeen years. Interestingly, the police found it immaterial that, although they reported on Zastrow’s willingness of acting on his sexual desires, these testimonies proved that Zastrow was not violent and approached adult men only (Spector 103).

The public and the press “that was just beginning to develop strategies for ‘sensationalising’ such opportunities” (Spector 103) were outraged by Zastrow’s criminal history and demanded his conviction. Zastrow’s principal defence was that he claimed himself to be an urning, a term Ulrichs invented a few years before the case. The idea behind this defence is that he might be effeminate and attracted to his own sex, but, as an urning, he is not a pederast whose sexual drive is fuelled by children: he is attracted to adult men. However, Ulrichs tried to elaborate on the distinction between the pederast and the urning in vain. His theory was not public knowledge; therefore, the term was incomprehensible to society and they did not or could not understand Zastrow’s defence in light of his “coming out.” Instead, as Tobin writes, “[t]he crime was so notorious that the verb zastrieren briefly came to mean ‘to rape homosexually’ (rhyming with the German word for ‘castrate,’ it could be rendered as something like ‘to zastrate’). An outraged public demanded vengeance against this Zastrow, as well as all other ‘Zastrows’” (11). People simply could not apprehend what
“urning” meant, and in the heat of the need for action against Zastrow, for lack of a better word they invented their own, furthering the conceptual muddle addressing the classification of same-sex desires.

It is this very classificatory problem coming from German-speaking Central Europe that, in my reading, Stenbock is concerned with. His realistic Styria in this sense represents the vague area from which new sexological terms, inapprehensible to laymen, are coming from and in which both the Wronski family of Polish origins and the Hungarian vampire are “others.” Moreover, these sexological terms entering the English language became synonyms of each other by the end of the century. Stenbock’s choice of a name for the vampire, a highly unlikely name for a Hungarian, demonstrates the same issue. Adlard suggests that Stenbock borrowed the name from Polidori’s introduction to The Vampyre in which he asserts, “[t]hough the term Vampyre is the one in most general acceptation, there are several others synonymous [sic] with it, made use of various parts of the world: as… Vardonlacha” (qtd. in Adlard 7). If we make up a title similar to Varney, the Vampire for Stenbock’s story, “Vardalek, the Vampire,” it becomes evident that classifying Vardalek as a vampire is redundant. Therefore, I suggest the name itself hints at the synonym problem and the lack of established terminology for the classification of same-sex desires.

The classificatory problem is also present in the idea that Vardalek was a polyglot:

He was announced under the name of Count Vardalek—the name being Hungarian. But he spoke German well enough: not with the monotonous accentuation of Hungarians, but rather, if anything, with a slight Slavonic intonation. His voice was peculiarly soft an insinuating. We soon afterwards found out he could talk Polish, and Mlle. Vonnaert vouched for his good French. Indeed he seemed to know all languages. (131–132)
Katy Brundan notes that polyglossia shows that a vampire is “resisting the forces of monolingualism as he resists mortality” (2). While, in Vardalek’s case, the homosexual seems to resist mortality (as homophile emancipators throughout the nineteenth century tried to prove with intercultural and transhistorical examples that male-love always existed, exists, and will exist no matter what the medico-legal discourse finds); Vardalek’s polyglossia may represent that there is no single “language” of male-love but the “language” of the invert, the urning, the homosexual and so on. This lack of a univocal “language” is further established by a later scene describing the vampire on the piano. On this occasion, Vardalek virtually mesmerises Gabriel with a nocturne by Chopin as the boy is sleepwalking into his room. But it is not the piece itself but Vardalek’s rendition of the nocturne that attracts the boy to him: “Vardalek still continued playing, but talked as he played . . . Here he struck one agonised and strange chord, then continued playing softly . . . Vardalek struck the piano, and although he did not play loudly, it seemed as though the string would break. You never heard music so strange and so heart-rending!” (143–144). The vampire needs to resort to the performance characteristics of the style hongrois as the piece itself by a Polish composer and words are of no use when he tries to establish a connection again between the Polish boy and himself; Vardalek explains in Gabriel’s native language: “Nie umiem wyrazić jak cię kocham” (143).

Instead, the vampire speaks with Gabriel through the language of music, which

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20 Croft-Cooke notes that Stenbock’s works “have pretentious Latin or Greek texts” (256). Apparently, Stenbock wanted to pose as a polyglot himself—another biographical parallel with Vardalek. As for this Polish passage, David Tibet notes that “it should read ‘Nie umiem wyrazić, jak cię kocham’ (‘I can’t express how I love you’). It may well be that the typesetters did not possess the ‘ć’ with an acute accent; it is even less likely they owned the letter ‘ę.’ We also think that the typesetter may have mistaken the ‘b’ in Stenbock’s handwritten ‘ciebe’ for an ‘h,’ inventing the word “ciehe’; ‘ciebe’ would almost work—it does mean ‘you,’ but is in the wrong grammatical form for the sentence” (“Editorial Note” 303).
establishes common ground for them. It is worth noting that, similarly to Polidori’s observation regarding the term “vampire,” the term “homosexual” has also become generally accepted by the end of the century. Its entrance to the English language may be connected to the fact that, as Margaret Breen also suggests, it was the most easily translatable term for male-love (4), while it had numerous synonyms in use at the same time. In this sense, too, the “homosexual” is analogous with the vampire, having access to several languages while being part of a classificatory problem.

Stenbock’s story, in the end, does not reach a conclusion regarding the sexual identity of the lover and the nature of the “love” Carmela witnessed. Having listened to Stenbock’s rendition of Chopin, Gabriel returns to his own room but does not regain consciousness: “Gabriel, who had never known a moment’s sickness in his life, grew ill: . . . no explanation of Gabriel’s strange illness. Gradual wasting away, . . . : absolutely no organic complaint” (145). He only reacts to Vardalek. Not long before his death, “Gabriel stretched out his arms spasmodically, and put them round Vardalek’s neck. This was the only movement he had made for some time. Vardalek bent down and kissed him on the lips” (146). It appears that this kiss good-bye was the final nail in Gabriel’s coffin—as if he could not take any more stimulation: a few moments later the boy dies of neurasthenia. Concluding her story, Carmela laments that she and her story are laughed at as “people do not, as a rule, believe in Vampires!” (147). The aged, desexualised female narrator is as far from a reliable narrator of male-to-male love as it can be. Though it must have seemed reasonable to her that the person she saw, the psychic man was a real vampire, her narrative simply reflects on her inability to find a better word for his homophilia.

Carmela’s incapability of naming Vardalek anything other than a vampire reflects on the issue at hand in the nineteenth-century: people did not understand male-to-male love and the labels of the new classificatory science on same-sex desire were inaccessible and/or
incomprehensible to laymen. The analysis of “The True Story of a Vampire,” in this respect, shows a parallel with the arguments of Hössli and Ulrichs regarding the emancipation of men-loving men. According to Tobin, they argued that the end of witch-hunts at the end of the eighteenth century signals that there is a chance to eliminate similar Judeo-Christian superstitions concerning male-love. This argument, however, has a significant flaw. The Enlightenment breaks with the idea that supernatural creatures exist: there are no witches, werewolves, or vampires, for that matter. In the meantime, the point of the emancipators’ struggle was that they found it difficult to convince laymen that male-love and such sexual categories like the urning did, in fact, exist (Tobin 49–51), as opposed to mere sodomites and pederasts. Carmela’s conclusion to her narrative, therefore, shows the disbelief in the vampire in both his literal and figurative sense: after the Enlightenment, people did not believe in the existence of vampires; but were reluctant to accept what the vampire stood for in the second half of the nineteenth century—the collection of sexual “deviances” that they had not had a name for just yet, that is the labels of the new classificatory science of sexuality coming from German-speaking Central Europe.
At the beginning of the twentieth century, endeavours in English-speaking cultures to legitimise same-sex desire have stalled. As a result of his trials in 1895, Oscar Wilde served as a deterrent from expressing male love either in life or literature, as he came to embody the script of old pejorative terms: the sodomite and the pederast. The eulogies, following his death in 1900, commemorated all around Europe Wilde’s exile after his release from prison as unfortunate but only intelligible consequences and punishment for his “unnatural” behaviour. This image of male-to-male love or desire of the Wilde-kind could not be challenged; a different conceptualisation of homosexuality, may it be scientific or literary, met adversaries. There was virtually no legitimate and open script for same-sex desire in anglophone belles-lettres. More importantly, the new sexological terms could not be called to help, as scientific texts could not be legally distributed in public, which hindered the discussion of homosexuality in English-speaking cultures.

As for hungarophilia, the style hongrois as literary music had become a site for challenging the heteronormative sexual dichotomy by the beginning of the twentieth century. Other than the instances studied in previous chapters, a case in point is Gertrude Hudson’s Ivory Apes and Peacocks (1899), written under the pseudonym, Israfel. Hudson’s writings appear to be very self-consciously literary, “she was embedded in a series of literary and publishing networks,” where she was likely to meet Wilde and his coterie (Purkis 6). Charlotte Purkis reminds us that the “beginning of Hudson’s literary career coincided with the vitriolic debates that followed the translation of Nordau’s Degeneration, and with Wilde’s

21 I am grateful to Fraser Riddell (Durham University) for drawing my attention to “A Hungarian Rhapsody” (185–189) by Israfel.
trial and its repercussions” (9) and her “‘ideal criticism’ extended notions from Wilde and A. C. Swinburne in promoting literary approaches to all art forms and built on Pater’s vision of music as a pre-condition of creativity” (17). Israfel’s report of her visit to Hungary in 1898 asserts that the style hongrois “was so deliciously feminine, feminine as a man alone can be” (185). This encounter of Western culture with exotic, Hungarian music, however flattering her description may be, outlines the potential threat Hungarian music posed to Victorian respectability: “Barbarism and Decadence meet in this Hungarian music” (185) and “[t]his Magyar music acts almost exclusively on the nerves” (186, emphasis added), while “[t]he whole thing is irresistible!” (189).

It is in this crucial period that American music critic and émigré, Edward Prime-Stevenson—who, Kristin M. Franseen argues, had “intertextual relationships in his musical and sexological writings” (21)—started working on two major works under the pseudonym, Xavier Mayne. One is his sexological magnum opus, The Intersexes (ca. 1909)—the first historical monograph on homosexuality by an American author, known to date. The other is its literary addendum, Imre: A Memorandum (1906), which is considered to be the first openly homosexual novel in English that allowed its protagonists a happy ending. Prime-Stevenson was the first to call a number of his works uranian or homosexual fiction per se. As Tom Sargant puts it, he was “[a] peculiarly multi-talented and industrious author . . . an encyclopedically knowledgeable music critic . . . [a]n omnivorous reader and a gifted linguist” (Introduction to Those Restless Pilgrimages n.p.). Reading belles-lettres and sexology in English, German, French, Italian, and Russian, he had an unprecedented literary and scientific capital to challenge the unfortunate medico-legal views on and literary representation of homosexuality, and naturalise a legitimate script of male-to-male love in English. The result of such an endeavour is Imre, in which an Englishman, Oswald meets a
Hungarian soldier, Imre. Through the narrative, the two put their guard down, the figurative masks worn against societal opprobrium, and in the end, they settle down together.

About the Author and His Oeuvre

Prime-Stevenson’s life and oeuvre are not generally known. Scholars usually work with limited sources and information of his life, and often make mistakes in their speculations and descriptions of facts. The sources are scarce and there are still numerous titles that remain untraced or simply unprocurable. Prime-Stevenson himself is responsible for his elusiveness due to his, what James Gifford calls, “distinct pleasure in hoodwinking an audience” (Introduction 23). Therefore, it is indispensable to outline his life and works to see where Prime-Stevenson-studies are at now, what his role is in literary history, and how his major work, Imre: A Memorandum came to be.

Edward Irenaeus Prime-Stevenson was born on 29 January 1858 in Madison, New Jersey. His mother, Cornelia Prime taught at Mount Pleasant Female Seminary. She married Paul Eugene Stevenson, priest of the Presbyterian Church in 1841. They moved in the States several times: in 1849, Stevenson became head of Luzerne Presbyterian Institute, later he was the director of different schools in Bridgeton and Madison. The two settled down in New Jersey when they founded the Passaic Falls Institute for Young Ladies in 1866, where Stevenson taught until his death in 1870; then, Prime took over the school. She also published numerous articles in the New York Observer (E. D. G. Prime 97–98). They had seven children: Julia Johnson, James Prime, Archibald Alexander, Preston, Eugene, Mary Margaretta (R. E. Prime 17). The youngest, Edward Irenaeus received formal education in the Freehold Institute (Who’s Who... 985) and started studying law in 1875 (Herringshaw’s 339). There are no official records of his legal studies, but Prime-Stevenson claimed that he had passed the bar exam (Gifford, Introduction 22). He did not pursue this carrier; instead, he
became a renowned New York music critic, chiefly for *Harper’s Weekly* and *The Independent*. He took his job extremely seriously. Unlike Wilde who claimed that criticism is a mode of autobiography, Prime-Stevenson calls for strict objectivity:

Let us reason together a bit. For what is a newspaper or other professional critic set to reviewing a book, sent to the concert, the opera, the play, the picture exhibition? To judge of their merits, of their merits—and to say what he thinks just as independently, sharply, and discriminately as he can: independently, be it observed, of everybody and of everything impertinent of his immediate function. For that purpose is his space given him in his newspaper or other periodical. Characterise that matter before him he must. Stick to the text of that book, that play, that opera, that picture he must, and to the way in which A and B or C have done their work in it. Was it a good book of its kind—a good play—a good symphony or a poor one? And, as far as is practicable, why was the business good, bad, or indifferent? Characterisation above all things is his métier. (“Criticism Criticised” 759)

After the death of his parents, according to *The History of American Music* (1904) in 1899, he moved from the States to Europe (Elson 335), presumably with the financial aid of his inheritance. Referring to poor health, he scarcely returned to the States (“Prime-Stevenson in New York” 9). American journalism perceived this as a great loss, losing its esteemed music critic. It is in this period that he takes up his mother’s surname “Prime.” He travelled to England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, and Italy. In Europe, he took interest in linguistics, Egyptology, literature, and, as he put it, “several important studies in a special branch of sexual psychiatrics” (qtd. in Gifford, Introduction 28). In the meantime, he also published articles as a travelling correspondent on politics, fashion, music, and literature. He prided himself on speaking nine languages, which statement he later changed to a modest
seven (Gifford, Introduction 25). He gave lectures on French, Italian, German and Eastern literatures (Wier 595) and music, accompanied by his first-class gramophone.

Not much is known about his private life, however. In the 1890s, he lived with his sister and senior mother, commuting between Hackensack and New York. It is in this period that he met Harry Flagler, the love of his life. Flagler, however, stopped seeing Prime-Stevenson in 1893 and got married a year later (Gifford, Introduction 23). There are only two more romances that we know of. Prime-Stevenson and Leonard Bacon met in Switzerland in 1907 and they kept in touch via letters. Prime-Stevenson’s letters were about a free and different kind of life in Italy where he resided, and about the importance of being true to oneself. According to Gifford, Bacon was absolutely devoted to Prime-Stevenson, and, although the two drifted apart and the former got married under pressure, he could never forget the latter, as witnessed by Bacon’s 1939 memoirs and the letters he kept until his death in 1954 (Gifford, Introduction 24, 131). And the last romance that we know of, Swiss sculptor Gérard-Henri Vuerchoz is just briefly mentioned in Tom Sargant’s introduction to Mystically My Heart (2004), an edition of twenty-four copies for private circulation of two poems by Prime-Stevenson (4).

It is challenging to find traces of Prime-Stevenson in the archives. Even before taking up his mother’s surname, Prime-Stevenson had used many different versions of his name when he signed his articles and published several works (especially the ones about homosexuality) under his pseudonym. As he writes in his magnum opus, referring to the Hicklin Standard:

In the United States and adjacent British possessions, the prejudices and restrictions as to literature philarrhenic [sic] in accent, are quite as positive as in Great Britain. The author [sic] or publisher of a homosexual book, even if scientific, not to speak of a belles-lettres work, will not readily escape
troublesome consequences. Even psychiatric works from medical publishers are hedged about with conditions as to their publication and sale. (*The Intersexes* 376)

It is partly Prime-Stevenson himself who is responsible for the obscurity of his biography. As Tom Sargant puts it, “[h]is reputation has been wrapped in mystery. Some of the wrapping, it has to be said, is of his own making. With an admirable and charming playfulness he was forever twiddling the focus of the stories he told about himself” (Introduction to *Those Restless Pilgrimages* n.p.). For instance, in Europe, he claimed himself to be ten years younger than he actually was—a lie that many archival articles are witness to. Another difficulty scholars studying Prime-Stevenson have to face up to is that “his sole heir . . . apparently never rescued Stevenson’s remaining manuscripts and papers from the warehouses in Switzerland where they were stored, and all traces of them eventually disappeared” (Gifford, Introduction 26). Nevertheless, it is known that a few private collectors own a great load of invaluable documents, papers, and photographs yet unpublished. For the lack of hard evidence, researchers tend to read Prime-Stevenson’s works for presumable autobiographical elements to learn about his private life.

Throughout his active years, Prime-Stevenson authored innumerable articles and, in two volumes, contributed to the second edition of *Grove’s Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1908–1910); in the sixth volume, he had his own entry in 1920. His first published piece of literature was “The Show,” according to Gifford, who claims that the poem was published in *Harper’s Weekly* on 9 July 1878 (Introduction 26). Gifford, however, is mistaken: “The Show” was published on 9 July 1898; as a result, it is not Prime-Stevenson’s very first published work that we know of. Nevertheless, it was a remarkable poem back in the day, as it was published again in *War-Time Echoes* in the same year.
There were two successful novels of Prime-Stevenson’s early career in belles-lettres. *White Cockades: An Incident of the “Forty-Five”* (1887) tells the story “simply and without waste of words” of the Scottish Prince Charlie and the Master of Windelstrae’s son, as “one instance out of hundreds of a loyalty and devotion unparalleled in history” (“Recent Novels” 486), according to the reviewer in *The Nation*. Later Prime-Stevenson admitted that he intended this story as an instance of homophile friendship (Gifford, Introduction 22). The other novel is *Left to Themselves: Being the Ordeal of Philip and Gerald* (1891), which—Prime-Stevenson had to admit in hindsight, as the story was not overtly homophile—was about love between two uranian youths (*The Intersexes* 368). Scholars agree that this novel is the precursor of *Imre*: Gerald and Philip lead a lonely life until they meet, and their growing love and need for each other tie them together for life (Gifford, Introduction 22–23; Tribunella, “Between Boys” 378). Eric Tribunella attributes paramount importance to *Left to Themselves*, stating that the novel “could be described as quite possibly the first avowedly ‘gay’ American children’s book” (Introduction vii), as

[n]one of the authors of . . . works [before *Left to Themselves*] would have claimed them as “homosexual” or “uranian,” and none would have publicly declared having intentionally written homosexual literature for children, as Stevenson does . . . *Left to Themselves* might not be an explicitly gay children’s novel like its twenty-first century counterparts, but neither is it merely a standard homosocial or homoerotic work. (“Between Boys” 375–376)

The novel, in this sense, is the first attempt at conceptualising same-sex desire in children’s literature.

In this period, Prime-Stevenson also published short fiction, plays, and poems in magazines. Many of these were written for women, just like his novel *Janus* (1889), which its reviewer in *The Atlantic Monthly* praises for “the reserve which the author shows in dealing
with the more specifically musical parts of the book”: according to him, readers “are so accustomed to a moony treatment of music and musicians in fiction that it is a relief to find the subject used as an art, and not as a sentiment” (“Recent American Fiction” 129). The terse style of the novel is not accidental, especially if we consider that, according to Prime-Stevenson,

> [f]rom the very nature of her life, interests, social up-bringing, and social atmosphere, woman is the sex that everlastingly shows the least moral and intellectual responsibility about the use of language. It sometimes seems as if any conscience or understanding of the value of words, and of what a phrase means or does not mean, is not to be found in the sex. (“To Women Not Dumb” 117–118)

Whereas this statement would be absolutely preposterous nowadays, it shows Prime-Stevenson’s belief—most probably commonly held in the period—that women were too sentimental to be able to phrase their thoughts precisely and to the point. In this sense, Janus might have served an educational purpose to teach women how to put their ideas into words “properly.” The novel was published again in 1896 with a new title, *A Matter of Temperament*, which, according to the review in *Los Angeles Herald*, “suggests the relation of the musical temperament to morals . . . In a forceful manner the author illustrates the instability of the artistic temperament. By induction the book emphasises music’s moral force and spiritual excellence” (“A Matter of Temperament” 15). Another notable work on women and music is the short story, “Madame Clerc,” which Prime-Stevenson wrote for *Vignettes: Real and Ideal—Stories by American Authors* (1890), according to the editor of the collection.
It is about the title character, a former ballerina, now old and bed-ridden, showing symptoms of neurasthenia. However, the polka coming from the streets revives her; she becomes delirious and, in the end, sets herself and the house on fire. The story, therefore, shows Prime-Stevenson’s strong interest in neurology as “Madame Clerc” rehearses the idea that women’s nerves are susceptible to music and prone to neurasthenia.

At the end of the century, Prime-Stevenson also worked as a translator. He contributed to the *Library of the World’s Best Literature* series with his translations of Jacob Cats (1577–1660), Pierre Corneille (1606–1684), Willem Bilderdijk (1756–1831), Alexandre Dumas (1824–1895), Édouard Pailleron (1834–1899) and François Coppée (1842–1908). He is often put down as co-editor of the series in secondary literature; however, his name is not included in the list of editors and literary committee. In the same year, he published *The Square of Sevens* (1897) under the pseudonym Robert Antrobus—a book on esoterism to which he wrote a humorous preface signed with his real name.

Presumably, he started working on *Imre: A Memorandum* and *The Intersexes*—the primary texts of this chapter—once he had moved to Europe, at the beginning of the century. *Imre* (1906) was printed privately in Italy; however, we can only estimate the number of copies. Unlike all his other privately printed works, the novel does not include the number. Following Noel I. Garde, secondary literature usually assumes five-hundred copies. Garde, however, does not have any hard evidence, the estimate is based on the fact that he met number 405 in The Library of Congress, which copy had—conveniently, I might add—disappeared by the time Garde was writing his article (“The Mysterious Father of American Homophile Literature” 96). Though the article was ground-breaking in the 1950s, Garde is

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22 The short story exists, at least, in four versions: in *Vignettes* (1890), *Her Enemy, Some Friends* (1913), and *Dramatic Stories to Read Aloud* (1924) in English; in addition, Prime-Stevenson claims to have written “Madame Clerc” originally in French (Preface ix).
not at all reliable when it comes to facts. Later, he phrases his assertion with more care: “It would appear that only a few hundred copies were printed” (“The First Native American ‘Gay Novel’” 185). What we do know is that the 1975 facsimile was the reprint of number 10, and The British Library holds copies, numbered 331 and 406. Therefore, it seems that Garde’s estimate may be more or less correct but it still lacks academic accuracy.

Both *Imre* and *The Intersexes* met mixed reception. According to Havelock Ellis in the third edition of *Psychology of Sex* (1915), *The Intersexes* was “popularly written and compiled from many sources”; nevertheless, he finds the assertions of the book written “from a subjective and scarcely scientific standpoint” (71–72). As for *Imre*, he claims that “it embodies a notable narrative of homosexual development which is probably more or less real” (340). Edward Carpenter, however, quotes the novel in length in the appendix of *The Intermediate Sex* (1908) among the most well-known sexological texts in the era as a sign of his admiration (167–169). Leading German-speaking sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld was also familiar with the novel: in *Die Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes* (1914), he adds *Imre* to the list of recent homosexual literature and mentions the scarcely used term “similisexual,” which Prime-Stevenson preferred (11, 1020). Marc-André Raffalovich, a year after the publication of the novel, wrote a review of *Imre* for *Archives de l’anthropologie criminelle* but was not entirely convinced of the merits of Prime-Stevenson’s writing (“Chronique de l’unisexualité” 628–630). It appears that *Imre* and *The Intersexes*, despite their limited distribution, reached the most prominent figures of the period. And the novel was in demand, too: we can find many instances in the “Books Wanted” section of *The Publishers’ Weekly* from 1911 to 1920 for bookshops looking for copies for their
subscribers.\textsuperscript{23} This, of course, is just one of the periodicals; however, we can be sure that readers were looking for the novel both in Europe and the States. All this time, Prime-Stevenson remained more or less anonymous, claiming to be the literary agent of the non-existent author of the books, Xavier Mayne. In the inscription to a copy of \textit{The Intersexes} numbered 33, he writes to Norman Douglas that Mayne was born in the States in 1868 and died in Calcutta in 1918. However, in a 1906 letter to Paul Elmer More, Prime-Stevenson admits that he would use the pseudonym, Xavier Mayne.\textsuperscript{24} According to my research, the first instance that Prime-Stevenson was identified as the author of \textit{Imre} known to date is in a 1920 catalogue of an auction by The Anderson Galleries (107).

The first work which included homosexual themes, published under his own name, was a collection of twenty-eight short stories, \textit{Her Enemy, Some Friends—and Other Personages} (1913). It includes “Madonesca,” in which the title character of \textit{Imre} returns in a minor role. Moreover, in “Out of the Sun” he writes about a library in which, among many other homosexual books, there is Mayne’s \textit{Imre, The Intersexes}, and \textit{Sebastian au Plus Bel Age}. Interestingly, on the title page of his collection of the reworked ten short stories, \textit{Dramatic Stories to Read Aloud} (1924), Prime-Stevenson claims himself to be the author of \textit{Sebastian}. Either by carelessness or intention, he subtly reveals himself as an author of homophile literature.

His last major work, \textit{Long-Haired Iopas: Old Chapters from Twenty-Five Years of Music-Criticism} was published in 1927. Although it was printed privately, European music
criticism picked up on the book which was a collection of Prime-Stevenson’s articles and essays representing twenty-five years of work. In 1940, he informed Philip Lieson Miller that he had four novels and more than twenty shorter works ready for publication; these, however, were most probably lost or destroyed in a storage facility after his death (Gifford, Introduction 29).

Prime-Stevenson was a devoted admirer of Hungarian culture. He writes in an 1896 issue of *The Outlook* about the Hungarian Millennial Exposition as follows:

> But more than with the emotion due to such a retrospect is the Magyar heart beating with a sense of symbolism of all his Fair as to the future of his land. His show means the resurrection of an ancient nation, the triumph of a singular, potent, and amazingly vital race. The Exposition at Budapest foreshadows—let us say foreblazons—what soon should be Hungarian dominancy recognised in Hungary’s limits, and beyond them almost whithersoever it will. (“The Cuckoo and the Sparrow” 504)

According to the *Musical Courier*, he resided in Hungary from August to September 1901 (“Irenaeus Stevenson…” 12). In 1902, he wrote to *The Independent* from Budapest, stating that “Hungary [is] to-day one of the most prosperous, free and progressive States of Europe” (“Kossuth” 2472). He visited Hungary again in 1903 and, at the beginning of the century, reported to American newspapers about the Hungarian political climate.25 As Imre attests, Prime-Stevenson was familiar with homosexual life in the capital of Hungary. He also attributed paramount importance to Hungarian music when it came to neurology and same-sex desire:

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Not superficially is music among finer aesthetics; it is the most neurotic, the most “essential,” the most subtly nerve-disturbing of arts. Music, as a mystery in aesthetics, unites logically with uranianism as a deep problem in psychology. Precisely what music “says,” when we think it “says” something, and has such or such a “message” to us, we really do not in the least know . . . The neurotic character of music reaches its contemporary height in Wagner and Richard Strauss. Nerve-exciting as are the scores of many other operatic giants, none have quite so concrete an action on the nervous system, affecting both musical and unmusical auditors. Here clearly cultivated tastes or quite the contrary are in question. Hence the popularity of Wagner, himself a homosexual nature, and of Richard Strauss. If we turn from the formalised neurotism of such great composers we may say that no music seems as directly sexual as the Magyar; wonderfully beautiful in its rhythms, melodies and harmonies. And the Magyar is a distinctively “sexual” racial type. (The Intersexes 395–396)

In addition, he shared Ulrichs’s view that “[t]he fierce regiments of the Turanian hordes that invaded the Danubian basin were homosexual; as notably the Magyar is to-day, especially as a passivist” (The Intersexes 190). The affiliation of the Hungarian with homophilia was a wide-spread view: French physician Thoinot in Medicolegal Aspects of Moral Offences (1895) refers to Ulrichs, stating that “there was on average one adult invert for 200 adult heterosexual men, and that the proportion was even greater among the Magyars” (334); Marc-André Raffalovich, in Uranisme et Unisexualité (1896), also claims that “[w]hen we speak of Greek love (in the sodomitical sense), we really should say Turkish love” (58), and “[a] fin-de-siècle dictionary definition of ‘Magyar’ is ‘A Hungarian, allied in race to the Turks’” (Mason 76).
He was also familiar with Hungarian literature in depth: in his lecture series on world literature, he spoke of representative Hungarian novelists and had a separate lecture on Mór Jókai’s historical and other fiction (“Representative Fiction” n.p.). In “A Book List for a Small Library” written for The Independent, he included “Jokai, ‘Golden Days in Transylvania,’ ‘An Hungarian Nabob,’ ‘Szoltan [sic] Kárpáthy,’ ‘Eyes Like the Sea,’ . . . Eötvös [sic], ‘The Village Notary’” (1331). His Hungarian connections were lost in the First World War (Gifford, Introduction 18).

Prime-Stevenson and Prior Homophile Literature

Prime-Stevenson was aware that the theories of sexual science were not public knowledge. He also knew that one’s knowledge and sexual identity were constructed by texts available to the individual, as it is accentuated in his short story, “Out of the Sun” (1913):

Ah, his books! The library of almost every man of like making-up, whose life has been largely solitary, so concentratedly from the inside, is companioned from youth up by innermost literary sympathies of his type. Dayneford stood now before his bookcase, reading over mechanically the title of a special group of volumes—mostly small ones. They were crowded into a few lower shelves, as if they sought to avoid other literary society, to keep themselves to themselves, to shun all unsympathetic observation. (356)

The passage reflects on the clandestine nature of homophile literature; Dayneford stores his books on a separate shelf and out of sight. It also emphasises that there was no homogenous homosexual identity: the individual is on his own to construct his own sexual identity based on books. The vast majority of these books, however, is fiction. The short story enumerates them by title and author; only three authors of non-fiction are mentioned without the title of
their works: Krafft-Ebing (*Psychopathia Sexualis*), Ellis (*Studies in the Psychology of Sex*), and Moll (contributor to *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen*).

It must be seen, however, that Dayneford’s library holds only those texts that include the script of the noble uranian. What Prime-Stevenson intended to foreground with Dayneford’s library—as it is seen in the absence of, for instance, Wilde—is not the carnal aspect of homosexuality (Eros) that prior subversive texts were preoccupied with: it is male-to-male love, the amatory aspect of homosexuality (Agape) that matters. Agapeic love and theory were the foundation of the European sexual science movement:

The Greek theory of Agape gave rise to a sexual science whose focus was the romantic, egalitarian, and intellectual preconditions for sexual attraction . . . [T]heorists of Agape prescribed a vision of double love, a blend of Agape and Eros. Simultaneously, they made a civic argument: love as Agape—not monogamous heterosexuality—should be the touchstone for judging the morality, legality, and social acceptability of various types of sexual relations.

(Leck 103)

Agapeic belles-lettres, however, did not discuss homosexuality openly. One often cited example is *Joseph and His Friend* (1870) by American author Bayard Taylor. However, Taylor’s novel does not end with the two men living together happily ever after but with heterosexual marriage. Imre protested against this being viewed as the only way for two men loving each other. Medical doctors at the turn of the century often offered marriage with a woman as a cure for homosexuality, and Prime-Stevenson dedicated a chapter to the topic “Marriage as a ‘Cure’” in *The Intersexes* to disprove the idea (530ff.). Another issue Prime-Stevenson might have seen in closeted Agapeic homophile literature is that it did not use the new coinages that were designed to emancipate homosexual men. Taylor, of course, could not have used the term “homosexual” in *Joseph and His Friend*, as the word had not entered the
English language. This, however, is not true when *For the Pleasure of His Company* (1903) by American author Charles Warren Stoddard is considered. According to Roger Austen, “[t]his novel is almost as gay as Edward Stevenson’s *Imre*, which was to be published three years later in Italy; the key difference is that while Stevenson discusses homosexuality per se, Stoddard persists in the use of such euphemisms as ‘chum’ and ‘pal’” (15).

On the other hand, there were texts that focused on the sensual and sexual aspect (Eros) of same-sex desire either explicitly or with the help of narrative snares. However, as we have seen in previous chapters, these only rehearsed why same-sex desire was criminalised and pathologised in the era. What is more, they are not up-to-date with new sexological terms: in *Teleny*, labels such as “sodomite” (99, 137, vol. 1; 24, 74, 77, 130, vol. 2) and “bougre [bugger, i.e. sodomite]” (92, 158, vol. 1) are used; and “The True Story of a Vampire” rehearses the script of the “pederast”—two old pejorative terms to describe homophile men, focusing on sexual acts only and not on the amatory aspect of same-sex desire.

Prime-Stevenson especially disapproved of Oscar Wilde and his coterie. As for Wilde, he writes in *The Inter sexes*:

> For a good while, Wilde’s eccentric intimacies with young men of far inferior station and even of notoriously venal pederasty, had been whispered around London . . . Put into the position of a felon under the English laws relating to homosexuality, Wilde was convicted . . . The evidence in the case was anything but a credit to the poet’s aestheticism, or idealism of male-love . . . An exaggerated personal cult for Wilde (considerably due to imperfect knowledge of his individuality) and a correspondingly exaggerated estimate of his intellectualism have become noticeable in circles of English homosexuals. In France, the same curious error of perspective is common. The brilliance of
Wilde, at its brightest, did not reach the level of genius. His originality of thought, and even of expression in his writings, his suggestiveness as an aesthetic theorist, his epigrammatic independence in conversation and print, all are highly discutable [sic] traits . . . That Wilde was a victim of British social intolerance and hypocrisy, and of the need of new and intelligent English legislation as to similisexual instincts is perfectly true; but Wilde himself was not a little a shrewd and superficial *poseur*, to the very last. (362–363)

According to this passage, Wilde was put down in history as a pederast—somebody who would corrupt young men. Prime-Stevenson questions the merits of Wilde’s aesthetic theories and intellect, and laments the evidence brought against Wilde.26 By accusing the Irish author of being a “superficial *poseur*”—possibly alluding to Queensberry’s calling card, accusing Wilde of “posing as a somdomite [sic]”—Prime-Stevenson suggests that Wilde’s idealism of same-sex desire was shallow and, in the end, represented male-to-male love in a disagreeable light.

Given the views of *The Intersexes* and what we have seen in the previous chapters, we have strong reasons to believe that Prime-Stevenson had Wilde and his coterie in mind when he wrote in *Imre*:

> Those, *those*, terrified me, Imre! To think of them shamed me; those types of man-loving-men who, by thousands, live incapable of any noble ideals or lives. Ah, those patently depraved, noxious, flaccid, gross, womanish beings!

> . . . The effeminate artists, the sugary and fibreless musicians! The Lady

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26 “One of the worst pieces of evidence against Wilde was the presence of fecal stains on sheets in which Wilde had slept, adduced as evidence of anal sex. Wilde’s ‘dirty bed’ led to a rhetorical efflorescence of Wilde as a creature of the sewer, living in stinking filth. For instance, Henry James warned Wilde supporters that he smelled ‘a stench’ . . . ” (Shaffer 406–407).
Nancyish, rich young men of higher or lower society; twaddling aesthetic sophistries; stinking with perfume like cocottes! The second-rate poets and the neurasthenic, précieux poetasters who rhyme forth their forged literary passports out of their mere human decadence; out of their marrowless shams of all that is a man’s fancy, a man’s heart, a man’s love-life! The cynical debauchers of little boys; the pederastic perverters of clean-minded lads in their teens; the white-haired satyrs of clubs and latrines! (116–117)

One cannot help but see parallels between this passage and the fin-de-siècle image of men of the infamous Wilde kind. The incapability of noble ideals echoes Wilde’s description in The Intersexes. As for literary merits, these men are labelled “second-hand” and unoriginal, just as Wilde’s Poems (1881) were. According to The Saturday Review, Wilde’s poetry had a “sensual ignoble tone” and “is marred everywhere by imitation, insincerity, and bad taste” (qtd. in Robbins 23). And, of course, there are the poets who became famous for their relationship with Wilde and not their work, such as Alfred Douglas, Marc-André Raffalovich, John Gray, and Robert Ross. The sentence, “rich young men of higher or lower society; twaddling aesthetic sophistries” might refer to the Wildean ignoble kind of homosexuals. Effeminacy and “the neurasthenic” reflect on the controversial representation of homophilia in fiction like Wilde’s. And the line, “the pederastic perverters of clean-minded lads in their teens” parallels both the Wilde of The Intersexes and his trials. As the judge of the final Wilde-trial put it: “And that you, Wilde, have been the centre of a circle of extensive corruption of the most hideous kind among young men, it is . . . impossible to doubt” (qtd. in Ellmann 477).

Prime-Stevenson, in summary, found himself in a curious position at the very beginning of the twentieth century. He found that there had not been a single legitimate script of same-sex desire available to the average reader. Sexual science was not public knowledge,
and the individual was on his own. As for a sexual identity largely constructed by belles-lettres, there were, on the one hand, texts that discussed the amatory aspect of male love, however, these were unwilling to be open about it. On the other hand, more open texts of the Wilde kind simply repeated why same-sex desire was criminalised and pathologized. Therefore, Prime-Stevenson must have felt that it was high time somebody had done something against the unfortunate literary representation of men-loving men, so he started writing _Imre: A Memorandum_ for a better description and representation of homosexuality _per se_. However, he did not think of those readers only that were yet to be initiated. He also thought of those experienced readers who were more inclined to look for a subversive reading of homophile literature. Though literary history usually takes interest in _Imre_ for its happy ending, in what follows, I focus on the exposition and argue that it was composed to guide the reader from a subversive reading of the text to a more appropriate script of homosexuality.

**False Snares in the Exposition of _Imre_**

The exposition of the novel might have seemed completely innocent to the average reader, but it also offered rich material for one to expect the novelette to be yet another example of erotic fiction. It is worth quoting in length:

"It was about four o’clock that summer afternoon, that I sauntered across a street in the cheerful Hungarian city of Szent-Istvánhely [St. Stephen Place], and turned aimlessly into the café-garden of the Erzsébet-tér [Elisabeth Square], where the usual vehement military-band concert was in progress. I looked about for a free table, at which to drink an iced-coffee, and to mind my own business for an hour or so . . ."

"The kiosque-garden was somewhat crowded. At a table, a few steps away, sat only one person; a young Hungarian officer in the pale blue and-"
fawn of a lieutenant of the well-known A–Infantry Regiment . . . What was Hecuba to me?—or Priam, or Helen, or Helenus, or anybody else, when for the moment I was so out of tune with life!

Presently, however, the band began playing (with amazing calmness from any Hungarian wind-orchestra) Roth’s graceful « Frau Réclame » Waltz, then a novelty, of which trifle I happen to be fond. Becoming interested in the leader, I wanted to know his name. I looked across the table at my vis-à-vis . . . A few commonplaces followed between us, as to the band, the programme, the weather—each interlocutor, for no reason that he could afterward explain, any more than can one explain thousands of such attitudes of mind during casual first meetings—taking a sort of involuntary account of the other. The commonplaces became more real exchanges of individual ideas . . . There was soon a regular dialogue in course, between this stranger and me. From music (that open road to all sorts of mutualities on short acquaintanceships) and an art of which my neighbour showed that he knew much and felt even more than he expressed—from music, we passed to one or another aesthetic questions; to literature, to social life, to human relationships, to human emotions. And thus, more and more, by unobserved advances, we came onward to our own two lives and beings. (9–13)

Again, first we need to consider the narrative competence of the reader and how so-called snares disable the common reader to find elements that trigger a subversive reading. That Oswald and Imre should happen to meet at Erzsébet Square in the capital of Hungary is absolutely positive in terms of a cultural/historical reading. As we have seen by Prime-Stevenson’s report, Hungary was a wholesome and prosperous country at the time. The location of Imre and Oswald’s first rendezvous was not suspicious either. The Kiosk Café was
a recommended venue for visitors, according to Baedeker, who lists Erzsébet Square as the first promenade to visit and the café, where a military band plays three times a week in summer (324–326). We might go as far as saying that Oswald sauntering aimlessly evokes the figure of the flâneur, the street-philosopher, who comes to moral conclusions based on his study of the urban landscape. Given that Budapest renamed as St. Stephen Place is a “cheerful Hungarian city,” the average reader could not find anything suspicious at first sight in the text and would not have thought that the novelette is about the particularly urban vice, homosexuality, and the physical aspect of male-to-male love primarily.

Those readers, however, who were susceptible to subversive readings may have expected something completely different. From the second half of the nineteenth century, more and more articles were published in English reporting that the police arrested men sauntering in the city, who were either looking for male prostitutes or were ones themselves. This is what the contemporaneous popular pornographic novel passed from hand to hand, The Sins of the Cities of the Plain (1881) also commemorates, according to which it was not the flâneur that sauntered around the neighbourhood of Regent Street and Haymarket in the afternoon and in the evening, but male prostitutes (3). Interestingly, Oswald also saunters the streets in a particular place in a particular time and finds a lonesome Hungarian soldier, which again raises suspicion. In The Intersexes, Prime-Stevenson writes as follows about the location:

In Austria-Hungary, soldier-harlotry is universal. Such parks as . . . the Erzsébet-tér in Budapest . . . are notable markets of an evening for any type of military youth that may be preferred. The Uranian has only to stroll, or to seat

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27 Prime-Stevenson was a great fan of Baedeker, according to “A Book List for a Small Library” (1330).
himself in a tranquil corner, to have unmistakeable opportunities. Usually the soldier-prostitute detaches himself from any companions... (218)²⁸

Imre apparently fits the description of the soldier-harlot, who is found by an older gentleman sauntering into Erzsébet Square. The chance encounter of the two seems even more suspicious if we consider that their first conversation topic is music about which, Oswald seems to suggestively presume, Imre knows and feels more than he tells. In Uranisme et Unisexualité (1896), which Prime-Stevenson must have been familiar with, Wilde’s former friend, Marc-André Raffalovich writes, alluding most probably to the description of music in prior homophile literature, that “Oscar Wilde has contributed to [the] unfortunate use of the word ‘artistic.’ As for ‘musical,’... we are constantly reading in the best newspapers that a well-bred young man,... attractive and musical, would like to be adopted by a mature gentleman” (166) or the other way around. Raffalovich suggests the men in English-speaking countries were looking for a sexual partner of the same sex in their want-ads with the code-word “musical.” At this point of the narrative, we cannot be sure that Oswald has different plans with Imre.

By reading contemporaneous texts along the lines of Imre’s exposition, the erotext becomes blatantly obvious:²⁹ the beginning of the novelette draws a parallel between a man

²⁸ We can trust Prime-Stevenson’s account of the Erzsébet Square. In his autobiographical novel about his adolescent years, Natália (ca. 1945–), Ernő Szép (1884–1953) recounts that he was approached by an elderly gentleman at the Erzsébet Square, who invited him for a snack at Kiosk Café. The narrator was later informed by his friends that they should think, based on the location, that the elderly gentleman was a pederast (303–304).

²⁹ The term “erotext” was coined by Zsuzsa Hetényi: “We have seen the birth of a syncretic text based on polygenetic motifs in the analysis of The Luzhin Defence. The novelty of the text of Lolita is that a parallel appears between the thematization of erotica as hunting and the hunting for motifs, and so does the initiatory nature of comprehension via the discovery of motifs providing coherence. The text that radiates the thrill and joy of Eros and is created by mixing the two is what I call erotext. Nabokov builds his motifs with peculiar care by
sauntering the streets looking for unmistakeable opportunities and the reader seeking illicit meaning in suggestive textual elements. Prime-Stevenson, however, would not have been content with a purely erotic reading. Firstly, focusing merely on Eros would have only rehearsed why same-sex desire was pathologized and criminalised at the turn of the century for its physical aspect. Secondly, Prime-Stevenson’s aim was to offer an agapeic reading favourable towards homosexuality and available to every reader. To satisfy both criteria, the text educates and guides the reader to the amatory aspect of male-to-male love via the arts. This adheres to what *The Intersexes* says about “Artistic and Aesthetic Sensitiveness of the Young Uranian”: “The youthful ‘aesthetic temperament’ is generally one that must be peculiarly watched and guided. The possession of much musical susceptibility should be a danger-signal . . . Also should be observed . . . the passionate interest in handsome actors, singers and *soldiers*, etc.” (180–181, emphasis added). In spite of what the erotext of *Imre* might suggest, it turns out that whatever snares the average reader doubles after all as a “false snare,” i.e. a “genuine advance mention” for the “perverted” readers, who thought they “ha[d] acquired th[e] second-degree competence of being able to detect and thus to outmaneuver the snare” (Genette 77). On the contrary to prior literature, music is not an aphrodisiac in this novel but the subject of an intellectual conversation between two consenting adults. We learn that the suggestive “more” which Imre knows and feels about music is not sexual but purely

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playing rhetorically with etymology, phonetics, and associations; the weaving of which motifs uses nouns capable of syncretising added meaning and particularly suitable for evoking visual and intertextual associations” (620, translated from the Hungarian). In Prime-Stevenson’s case, it is obvious that the meaning of sexuality is built on intertextuality: “he took for granted the ways in which sexuality as a social type was marked ‘by the innermost *literary* sympathies.’ By his account, the genesis of this sense of an inner sympathy, which today goes by the name ‘homosexuality,’ was not (primarily) sexological or psychoanalytic but the effect of books” (Hurley 82).
emotional. The complex mechanism of snares and false snares, thus, finds a middle ground to safely address homosexuality but not that of the “perverted” kind.

The narrative mechanism is the same when the text uses allusions to the visual arts to prove that male-to-male love is primarily of spiritual nature. In the same opening scene, during the first dialogue of the two men, Imre confides in Oswald that he has just lost his friend, Miklós Karvaly, who got married and moved to China. This friend is nicknamed “Hermes Karvaly” in the regiment after the sculpture by Praxiteles. The reference is not by accident. According to Raffalovich’s typology concerning “[t]he love of beauty, obscene curiosity, and their relationship to unisexuality,” there are three types of men: “Let us put . . . a living Praxiteles’ Hermes . . . in front of three uranists: one is an artist, painter, sculptor, and writer; the other is sensitive and sensual but recognises beauty as art has defined it; and the third one is a lover of soldiers, . . . and good-looking types” (Uranisme et Unisexualité 161–162). Among these types, the first two “will feel an obligation and duty toward beauty” and “will not lose himself in sexual relations with it on the spur of the moment,” unlike the third type, who “will immediately go for that which he seeks in handsome men” and “he loses his passion and becomes almost indifferent to it” (162). Imre’s account of the Hermes-like Karvaly is as follows: “I never knew a finer character, not anyone quite his equal . . . A man of iron resolution… strong will… energies. Nothing stops him, once he sees what is worth doing, what must be done. Not at all a dreamer… not morbid… and so on” (Imre 21–22) and “Oh, yes, indeed… my friend is of exceptional physique” (23). This passage suggests that Imre is not the third but most probably the second type. He admits to Karvaly’s attractive disposition, but his focus is on his friend’s inner qualities of a super-virile man. Their

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30 Interestingly, Prime-Stevenson seems to have forgotten that Karvaly’s first name is Miklós; later he is called Mihály: cp. Prime-Stevenson (55, 68).
friendship is not based on sexuality on the spur of the moment but on ever-lasting devotion to the other’s personal traits.

Literary allusions work in a similar fashion, such as Oswald’s exclamation “What was Hecuba to me?” from Hamlet in the passage quoted above in length. This hint at Shakespeare at the very beginning of the novelette was probably meant to evoke the English bard as a figure often enumerated at the turn of the century amongst great figures of homophile history; for the average reader, the reference is to superb national literary achievement though. Audiences well-read in homophile literature could also understand this exclamation as an allusion to another text, Die Enterbten des Liebesglücks (1893) by Otto de Joux about which Prime-Stevenson learnt from the 1904 number of the Jahrbuch the latest. There are many similarities between Imre and de Joux’s work: both narrators are well-to-do men, who meet their soldier lover in a café. In Die Enterbten des Liebesglücks, the narrator also exclaims “What was Hecuba to me?” when the two men leave a dance hand in hand. The story concludes: “We are happy without misgivings or remorse. There is a happiness that knows no end” (qtd. in Prime-Stevenson, The Intersexes 111). The happy ending not yet seen in English-speaking homophile literature must have appealed to Prime-Stevenson. This might be the reason why he quotes the book in length in The Intersexes and claims that it “contains useful material for lay-reading” (110); with his own work Imre, he probably wanted to follow in de Joux’s footsteps.

There are three other German-speaking authors worth mentioning in connection with Imre, when it comes to literary allusions. These are not in the exposition of the novel but part of the paratext and later chapters. The first is Austrian novelist, poet and playwright Franz Grillparzer (1791–1872), “one of the most human writers” (The Intersexes 302), “an Uranian, if now and then superficially ‘normal’” (303), whose play, Die Argonauten (1819) is quoted
by Oswald in the first chapter both in the motto and his narration. This play is of interest for lay-reading as it includes Plato’s

\[ \ldots \text{beautiful theory} \ldots \]; the creation of a protosex, a bisexual type which has been divided. Each of the moieties is ever seeking thro [sic] the world his missing fellow; each when met is immediately drawn to the other, not matter what the outward, organic sex \ldots\ Plato speaks also with definiteness enough of the theory of a composite sex, a third sex, an intersex, as having existed, but no longer in the scheme of creation and reproduction.\(^{31}\) (The Intersexes 256–257)

The second is German poet and dramatist August von Platen (1796–1835), whose poetry is quoted in the prefatory and the second chapter, as he “chronicled [a long series of homosexual loves] in his verse, with a feverish courage such as has not parallel in European poetry” (The Intersexes 301–302). At the end of the first edition of Imre, we find that Prime-Stevenson was working on a project, “August von Platen \ldots His Real Heart-History,” a “study [that would] review for the first time in English the real and complete course of the strange passional life of the brilliant and high-minded German poet and dramatist \ldots The narrative is of extraordinary psychiatric and literary interest” (n.p.). The book was never published separately but as the last chapter of The Intersexes, which opens with the introduction of Platen as “certainly one of the most gifted of poets in the portrayal of what is distinctively psychologic in similisexual love” (563).

\(^{31}\) Cp. Jason’s lament in Die Argonauten, quoted in Imre: “In my far home, a fair belief is found, / That double, by the Gods, each human soul / Created is… and, once so shaped, divided. / So shall the other half its fellow seek / O’er land, o’er sea, till when it once be found, / The parted halves, long-sundered, blend and mix / In one, at last! Feel’st thou this half-heart? / Beats it with pain, divided, in thy breast? / O… come!” (34).
In chapter 3, observing Imre, Oswald mentions “[a] great and profoundly human poet,” who “in one famous scene, speaks of those emotions that come to us when we are watching, in his sleep, a human being that we love” (168). Most probably, he is referring to *Jena und Leipzig* (1844) by Baltic German poet and novelist Alexander von Ungern-Sternberg (1806–1869), “another Continental author [sic]” who “rises par excellence among portraitists of some of the most sympathetic aspects of soldierly uranianism” (*The Intersexes* 202). Three parallels can be drawn between *Jena und Leipzig* and *Imre*. First, both are stories of “soldierly uranianism.” Second, when Franz von Selbitz in Ungern-Stern’s novel confesses his love to Andreas Walt, he also admits that he has been watching Andreas in his sleep. Third, Franz asks Andreas to “call [him] ‘thou,’ not ‘you’!” (qtd. in *The Intersexes* 205), which request is respected by the latter. This sign of intimacy is also accentuated by Oswald in their narrative: “I have neglected to mention that the second person of intimate Magyar address the ‘thou’ and ‘thee’ was used in [the] epistles of Imre, in my answers, with the same instinctiveness that had brought it to our lips on that evening in the Z… park” (160), when Oswald confessed his love to Imre.

Despite that he quotes (in his theory homophile) English poets as well, such as Shakespeare, Byron, and Tennyson, Prime-Stevenson finds the legitimate script of male-to-male love in German-speaking literature—representations that were unprecedented in anglophone *belles-lettres*. Many features of *Imre*, which give the novel its importance in homophile literary history, come from these texts. Prime-Stevenson read about the hopeful prospects of homosexual protagonists in *Die Enterbten des Liebesglücks*, which, apparently, inspired the happy ending of *Imre*. Grillparzer’s humane drama conveys Plato’s theory of two halves searching for each other, which serves as a Leitmotif in Oswald’s memoir. The openness of Platen’s poetry encouraged Prime-Stevenson to write about men-loving men overtly but not explicitly. And Ungern-Sternberg’s novel was the model for representing
intimacy between two men in a way that is only possible in languages such as German and Hungarian. These references and allusions work as if they intended to naturalise these German scripts of same-sex desire in English-speaking cultures.

Sexology and the Homosexual Novel

Instead of relying on snares to provide visibility to male-to-male love, Imre openly discusses both the relationship of Oswald and Imre, and the science of same-sex desire. Scholars disagree on the merits of Prime-Stevenson’s endeavours. One the one hand, “[t]he reliance upon Ulrichs, Hirschfeld, and Krafft-Ebing is unfortunate, as it dates the book and creates a conceptual muddle” (Lauritsen 38). On the other hand, James Wilper welcomes “two distinct strands of sexological thought clash”:

On the one hand, medicine consigns same-sex desire to the realms of decadence, effeminacy, and pathology . . . This thread of biomedical discourse, like the interconnected religious and legal notions of sin and crime, represents a layer of societal condemnation of love between men. In sexology’s second manifestation in the novel though, science is a liberator which enables the protagonists to take the first steps towards overcoming internalised societal opprobrium. (“Sexology” 54)

Lauritsen seems to forget that the point of both Imre and The Intersexes was to educate the reader, to make the turn-of-the-century conceptual muddle available and more comprehensible in English as “[t]he distinctively medical, the psychiatric, observations, however numerous, are not predominantly in English; are not readily procurable by laymen; and largely are in languages not sufficiently familiar to Anglo-Saxons in their own countries” (ix). The Intersexes “therefore essentially is [a book] not written for active professional
psychiaters, of any nationality . . . It is addressed particularly to the individual layman . . . ; whether he has has [sic] any immediate reason to study similisexuality, or none” (ix).

*Imre* is written in a similar vein. The narrator, Oswald offers his memoirs, in the preface to the novel, to Xavier Mayne, the author of *The Intersexes* to make his memorandum public, and help lonesome and puzzled individuals:

And as you have more than once urged me to write something concerning just that topic which is the mainspring of my pages I have asked myself whether, instead of some impersonal essay, I would not do best to give over to your editorial hand all that is here?—as something for other men than for you and me only? Do with it, therefore, as you please. As speaking out out [sic] to any other human heart that is throbbing on in rebellion against the ignorances, the narrow psychologic conventions, the false social ethics of our epoch—too many men’s hearts must do so!—as offered in a hope that some perplexed and solitary soul may grow a little calmer, may feel itself a little less alone in our world of mysteries—so do I give this record to you, to use it as you will. (3–4)

The narrative frame forges a case study and an expert in the novel, and, after all, uses *belles-lettres* to circulate knowledge on sexual science and male-to-male love of the noble kind. In this respect, the literary merits of the novel are overshadowed by the factuality and topicality of Oswald’s case study. Edited by an expert, the memoir debunks popular and scientific misperceptions of the era on same-sex desire that Xavier Mayne later elaborates on in his monograph as “Five Popular Errors”: the physique of the homosexual man is abnormal, his morals are degenerate, he is a sodomist, never marries, but his sexual inclinations can be cured by heterosexual marriage (530). The scientific discourse is mixed with the subject’s point of view, “[h]is gayety tends to irony, or is of that artificial good-humour often
characteristic of him,” as Prime-Stevenson describes homophile “literature of high quality” *(The Intersexes* 297).

As a result, the novel reconciles scripts of psychopathology forced on same-sex desire and the self-definition of homophile men through their case studies. This concept is possibly what Prime-Stevenson tried to capture when he labelled *Imre* a “homosexual romance,” “a little psychiatric romance,” a “psychological romance” *(The Intersexes* 210, 537, 557), as opposed to *Teleny*, a “Physiological Romance of To-Day.” The first part of these compounds evokes scientific discourse. It is especially intriguing with the term “homosexual,” which was a scientific term at the turn of the century, and it was possibly Prime-Stevenson who was the first author to label his work as such. The second part of these compounds, “romance,” however, is a curious choice of words to capture the literary essence of the memorandum, instead of “novel.” Romance is a complex term, given its various often contradicting definitions and conventions of literary history and theory. Taking on Barbara Fuchs, I see Prime-Stevenson’s conceptualisation of *Imre* as a romance “as a literary and textual strategy” (5).

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, romance is “a fictitious narrative in prose of which the scene and incidents are very remote from those of ordinary life” (qtd. in Fuchs 3). Compared to the novel, Fuchs claims, “an important aspect of romance as critical idiom in [the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries] is its increasing marginalisation as the less-favoured category, associated with fantasy and the past instead of the realism increasingly valued by critical taste” (105). This notion of distancing romance as “a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other” (31)—in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s words in the preface to *The Scarlet Letter* (1850)—was especially imperative in the American history of fiction. Building on Richard Chase and Nina Baym, Ulrika Maude asserts that,
“[w]hile the American tradition of fiction sprang from England . . . , it parted company with that tradition by incorporating a far more noticeable degree of romance than the English novel.” In the American context, it means that the protagonist was put into the wilderness to recognise and express his own individuality and nature, free of the restrictions of the old world (425). The spatial, temporal, and social distancing that the romance offers is fertile ground for Prime-Stevenson’s narrative so that Oswald and Imre can fight against societal opprobrium—a topic I discuss in detail later with regards to uses of homosexuality and Hungary.

Another OED definition of romance is a “[r]omantic or imaginative character or quality; redolence or suggestion of, association with, the adventurous and chivalrous. spec. a love affair; idealistic character or quality in a love affair” (qtd. in Fuchs 3). This description should be complemented with Fuchs’s idea that she builds on Aristotle and Northrop Frye: “Romance is one of the modes that features a superior hero” (5, emphasis added). Prime-Stevenson was preoccupied with the question, “Is the Uranian a Higher or a Lower Sex and Type in the Scale of Humanity” in The Intersexes (555ff.). Given the idea of sexual inversion as the key to same-sex desire, the homosexual men, not adhering to either extremes of the biological sex-dichotomy, was often seen as asexual or unsexed—an inferior being in heteronormative society. The point of Imre, however, similar to Kertbeny’s theory on homosexuality, is to emphasise that Oswald and Imre are both super-virile men. To answer this controversial question, as “[a] summary of just this confusion and contrast,” The Intersexes quotes Imre, “the psychological romance” (557) in length, as if to substantiate that the tale of superior heroes, the super-virile Oswald and Imre, homosexual men are not, to say the least, inferior after all. Keeping his pondering otherwise grounded, Prime-Stevenson concludes that the homosexual’s position on the scale of the intersexes is not as relevant as mankind’s endeavours in humanity: “let us make it our practical business, as individuals and
fellow-mortals, whether Uranians ourselves or not, to climb higher with all our best wills and works—and everywhere and eternally to help human nature to climb” (562).

Although the parts of the compounds (psychiatric/psychological/homosexual romance) denominate science and fiction, *Imre* could hardly be aligned with what we now understand as science fiction. Prime-Stevenson’s “scientific fiction”—if you like—nevertheless has a common denominator with sci-fi in the quest romance genre:

... most readers associate [science fiction] with the quest romance. Early in the history of the genre such romances were mainly adventure stories, but now they tend to explore either technological or scientific problems, or they investigate social patterns (human or alien). In any event, they adhere to the hero monomyth pattern. Initial equilibrium is shattered by the call to adventure; the hero crosses the threshold into a special world; he or she struggles with various adversaries and problems, and returns to the normal world, more mature and more firmly integrated into his or her society, usually as some kind of leader. (Hume 488)

*Imre* tells the story of the super-virile hero, Oswald’s restless pilgrimages in Europe and his quest to a special world, Hungary. Oswald, by nationality, is an alien in the country.

Interestingly, Imre as well seems alien in his ménage—as Oswald observes:

And in such meetings, came... demonstrativeness, never unmanly, which is almost as racial to many Magyarak [sic] as to the Italians and Austrians. But... Imre did not seem to be at all a friend of such demeanour. For example, if the interlocutor laid a hand on Lieutenant Imre’s shoulder, the Lieutenant quietly drew himself back a little. If a hand were put out, he did not see it at once, nor did he hold it long in the fraternal clasp. It was like a nervous habit
of personal reserve; the subtest sort of mannerism. Yet he was absolutely courteous, even cordial. (Imre 18)

Imre is reluctant to take part in Hungarian demonstrativeness, which renders him alien to his own culture. More importantly, he appears to be an outsider to the social intercourse of fraternity. Oswald states in his memoir that this “trait [was] not so much noticed at the time” (18) as if to suggest that Imre’s alienation from physical proximity and/or intimacy with men was one of the first signs of the soldier’s homosexuality, or at the time internalised homophobia.

As Imre openly explores homosexuality as a problem of the sexual sciences, it swarms with ideas of sexology when the narrator tries to diagnose the title character. When Oswald meets Imre, the first thing he notices about the soldier is his eyes: “I met the glance, by [n]o means welcoming, of a pair of peculiarly brilliant but not shadowless hazel eyes” (10). When they start having a conversation, Oswald narrates: “I met again the look, this time full, and no longer unfriendly, of as winning and sincere a countenance, a face that was withal strikingly a temperamental face, as ever is bent toward friend or stranger” (11). Firstly, it might not be accidental that it is emphasised that Imre’s eyes were brown and not green, as seen in “The True Story of a Vampire.” Moreover, though it is not striking at first glance, they seem to recognise something unnamed in each other at the second glance. According to The Intersexes,

[a] particular trait in the Uranian anatomy, though not distinctive to it, is the eye; likely to be remarkably brilliant, full, expressive of softer emotion and aesthetic sensitiveness, rather than sharp and commanding. In the military Uranian this trait is not so striking. The especially penetrating glance of the Uranian is a mysterious "faculty" about which German psychiatry has written a good deal. Undeniable is the fact that one Uranian can often guess at the nature
of another Uranian, in any part of the world, by the exchange of a passing look.

(80)

Though Imre’s countenance might fit this description, the ambivalence of it due to his profession does not tip Oswald off that he might be homosexual. Another tell-tale sign might be that Imre is very much interested in music; in fact, it is the first topic the two men talk about, “that open road to all sorts of mutualities on short acquaintanceships” (Imre 13). Although this mutuality is described in terms of a “current,” it is not electrical nor sensual. Imre is not a neurasthenic: “that irresistible undercurrent of human intercourse that is indeed, the Italian simpatia, by the quick confidence that one’s instinct assures him is neither lightly-bestowed, after all, nor lightly-taken” (14). The bond that they form over their conversation on music is purely psychological and spiritual, unlike in previous homophile literature.

Imre’s physique is described as “faultless in proportions, a wonder of muscular development, of strength, lightness and elegance” (42)—the epitome of a super-virile man. Nevertheless, “[h]is head, a small, admirably shaped one, with its close-cut golden hair, carried out his Hellenic exterior” (43), which might hint at a homosexual attribute, according to The Intersexes: “Theuranian head is often small, and the features fine and regular, rather than coarse and square, and it frequently has the quality common to Greek beauty of being transferable to a female figure, with some slight reduction in the size of the features” (80). At the same time, Imre’s face is “delicate enough, but without womanishness” (Imre 43).

As for the Hungarian soldier’s mental make-up, Oswald reports that “he was a bad, a perversely bad mathematician; an indifferent linguist . . . ; an excellent scholar in history” (46). We find the very same idea in The Intersexes: “The Uranian is less likely to be successful in philosophy, in mathematics . . . than in letter, arts, and lighter applications of science” (81)—an idea Prime-Stevenson borrowed most probably from Hirschfeld’s study, “Das urnische Kind” (1903, The Uranian Child). At the same time, “physical science
appealed to [Imre], curiously . . . He loved to read popular philosophy . . . For novels, as for
poetry, he cared almost nothing” (Imre 46–47), which implies that his interests included that
of the domain of the heterosexual men, and not the typical homosexual.

On a marginal note, I might add here, that even minute movements in the novel hint at
the indeterminate categorisation of Imre’s ambiguous sexuality, for instance, when the two
cross the Chain Bridge in silence: “Imre walked on beside me, whistling softly. Just two or
three notes, over and over, no tune” (72). According to Ulrichs’s theory in *Formatrix* (1865),
Uranians were incapable of whistling (152)—an idea that was later repeated, for example, in a
1902 review for *Alienists and Neurologist*, of Ellis’s *Sexual Inversion* (qtd. in Gifford,
*Dayneford’s Library* 131). Another such triviality is when Oswald “gave [Imre] an amused
look because he had happened to plant his chair exactly in front of the biggest pier-glass in
the K… Café” (Imre 45). Although Imre “never posed” (45), this moment gains importance in
light of Iwan Bloch’s *Contributions to the Etiology of Psychopathia Sexualis* (1902), in which
a “partial list of the etiological influences that . . . could lead to the development of male
homosexuality included . . . looking in the mirror” (Kahan 1). Innumerable similar attributes
are discussed in detail in *The Intersexes*. These features are emphatically targeted in the first
appendix to Prime-Stenvenson’s monograph, “A Categoric Personal Analysis for the
Reader—‘Am I at all an Uranian?’—‘Am I at all an Uraniad?’” (621ff.), which is a
questionnaire for self-diagnosis, a revised and extended version of the questions by Hirschfeld
published in the 1899 issue of *Jahrbuch*. Imre’s soft whistle of no tune and his chance seating
at a mirror might, again, be signs, which would help Oswald put him down as a homosexual.

What we learn from the first half of the novel is that Oswald, as a “practical
psychiater” (Imre 68), tries to diagnose Imre based on sexual science. But the signals or
symptoms are inconclusive: on the one hand, Imre has a compelling countenance and
feminine/Hellenic features, is interested in music, and has no aptitude for mathematics, which
are homosexual traits. On the other hand, attributes, such as his aversion to literature, his apparently strong nerves and body, etc., seem to refute the idea that he might be homosexual.

Oswald tries to apply the labels of sexual science to Imre:

Was Imre von N… what is called among psychiaters of our day, an homosexual? an Urning?—in his instincts and feelings and life?—in his psychic and physical attitude toward women and men? Was he an Uranian? Or was he sexually entirely normal and Dionian? Or, a blend of the two types, a Dionion-Uranian? Or what, … or what not? . . .

Uranian? Similisexual? Homosexual? Dionian?

Profound and often all too oppressive, even terrible, can be the significance of those cold psychic-sexual terms to the man who…. “knows.”

To the man who “knows!” Even more terrible to those who understand them not, may be the human natures of which they are but new and clumsy technical symbols, the mere labels of psychiatric study, within a few decades of medical explorers.

What, then, was my new friend?

I could not determine! (66–67)

Scientific discourse fails Oswald to describe his new acquaintance, even though he is familiar with sexological texts in depth. On this note, his narration echoes the prefatory to the novel and laments that these terms might be horrifying to those individuals who do not have the same level of knowledge on sexual science he does. In chapter 2, instead of sexual science, Oswald tries to legitimise same-sex desire and male-to-male love to Imre by enumerating scores of historical and literary homosexual men of the noble kind to give new meaning to the rigid scientific terms. In the end, they come up with their own script for the nature of their
relationship, and they find that what they have is “the friendship which is love, the love which is friendship”; and that, “[f]or [them] two it surely is… Rest!” (205).

Uses of Homosexuality and Hungary

Stuart Kellogg in “The Uses of Homosexuality in Literature” argues from the premise that “Western cultures have usually regarded homosexual behaviour as a sin, a crime, or a disease”; as a result, people, even homosexual men, were reluctant to read about it (3). This certainly is true in the midst of turn-of-the-century psychopathology and societal opprobrium. Nevertheless, there always have been bold authors, who found the topic worth writing about despite “the risks of . . . being misunderstood or censored” (3) for reasons that Kellogg conceptualises in four categories: political, psychological, sociological, and Arcadian. *Imre* in this respect is a textbook example of homophile literature: all the four reasons are present and intertwined in the novel. Coincidentally, these reasons explain not only his homophilic endeavours but the uses of Hungary and Oswald’s hungarophilia in the novel.

The works that intend to influence social behaviour can be called political. Kellogg, however, reminds us that there are “antihomosexual authors” who “add the stain of homosexuality to a character already shown to be execrable” (5). Not surprisingly, his prime example is *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Wilde, which hints at Dorian’s curious business, most probably sodomitical practices, with men who, in the end, committed suicide. Kellogg calls this “a literary sin . . . [t]o the extent that it depends on homosexuality being regarded as weak or criminal” (5): the only apparatus of the novel to lend visibility to same-sex desire is to rehearse antihomosexual assumptions of the period.

As seen before, Prime-Stevenson disapproved of Wilde and the literary representation of men-loving men of his coterie. In this respect, *Imre* is what Kellogg calls a “‘political’ prohomosexual” work that was written “in order to free homosexual men” by “appeal[ing] to
the reader’s sympathy by describing the trials that face an honourable character for no other reason than because he . . . is homosexual.” In order to achieve this effect, authors often enumerate historical figures “to exonerate homosexuality by calling on its saints” (6). This is exactly what Oswald does when he confesses his love to Imre, trying to legitimise his feelings for the Hungarian soldier who has reservations when the discussion comes to man-to-man love. Oswald, in an exhaustive monologue, talks about his lonesome path to self-acceptance, “those mysterious, restless pilgrimages” (Imre 143): his attempts at understanding his desires, finding love, and seeking professional help. Following medical advice, he even tries to marry. However, all his endeavours are in vain. To reconcile psychopathology, societal opprobrium, and the image of the Wilde kind with his own feelings, he took to reading. He came to justify his desires by “tens of thousands of men, in all epochs, of noblest natures, of most brilliant minds and gifts, of intensest energies… scores of pure spirits, deep philosophers, bravest soldiers, highest poets and artists . . . such as [him]self in this mystic sex-disorganisation” (Imre 115). He mentions them by name (117), so that Imre understands the concept better, compared to same-sex desire of the ignoble kind.

Here lies Prime-Stevenson’s boldness, as a prohomosexual author, that takes us to the psychological reason why he wrote Imre. In general, “[a]n author of a psychological bent . . . has a perfect subject in the man or woman who . . . dares to scrutinise his or her own homosexual feelings” (Kellogg 7). This is exactly what we see in the novel. As seen above, psychology as science fails Oswald. However, psychology as one’s individuality does not. As the titles of the chapters suggest ( Masks, Masks and—a Face, Faces—Hearts—Souls), the point of Oswald’s narrative is to show how the two revealed their innermost feelings to the other step by step. More importantly, as opposed to prior fiction, Oswald and Imre map the other’s psychology instead of sensual pleasure or their partner’s body. This is what is emphasised by Oswald in reply to Imre’s “Hungarianness” at the very beginning of the novel:
“And it was a Magyar voice, that characteristically seductive thing in the seductive race, which answered my query; a voice slow and low, yet so distinct, and with just that vibrant thrill lurking in it which instantly says something to a listener’s heart, merely as a sound, if he be susceptible to speaking-voices” (11–12). This passage seems as if it was intended to reply to the message of the Hungarian voice for Camille in Teleny:

Thereupon he clasped me again to his breast and muttered in my ear some words of an unknown tongue, so low and musical, that they almost seemed like a spell.

“Do you know what that means?” quoth he.

“No.”

“Oh, friend! my heart doth yearn for thee.” (37; vol. 1)

Hardly can we believe that Teleny is referring to his emotions here. Given Camille’s narrative of multiple erections leading to this scene, Teleny most probably refers, in Hungarian, to the throbbing sensation he feels. Although Oswald also admits the seductive power of Imre’s Hungarian voice, he, on the other hand, equates the current of their first encounter with psychological sympathy, as seen above.

The third reason why an author addresses the subject of homosexuality in literature, in general, is the sociological: “If you hold your eye smack up against a pear, you cannot see the pear, because light must intercede between the eye and an object for the object to be seen, and that requires distance. This law of distance can serve a sociological purpose in literature” (Kellogg 6). This reason alone might explain why the English narrator of American author Prime-Stevenson travels to and finds love in Hungary in Imre. When Oswald confesses his love and addresses Imre as “thee” instead of “you” for the first time, he puts considerable emphasis on the imperativeness of Imre’s nationality:
Met you! Yes, and a strange matter in my immediately passionate interest in you… another one of the coincidences in our interest for each other… is the racial blood that runs in your veins. You are a Magyar. You have not now to be told of the unexplainable, the mysterious affinity between myself and your race and nation; of my sensitiveness, ever since I was a child, to the chord which Magyarország and the Magyar sound in my heart. Years have only added to it, till thy land, thy people, Imre, are they not almost my land, my people! Thou wert to be; somewhat, at least, to be for me! That thou wast ordained to come into the world that I should love thee, no matter what thy race… that I believe! But, see! Fate also has willed that thou shouldst be Magyar, one of the Children of Emesa, one of the Folk of Arpád!

(149–159)

Oswald’s assimilation, as an Englishman, in Hungarian culture parallels with the shock English-speaking cultures received by the appearance of new sexological terms coming from German-speaking Central Europe. The original purpose of his visit and stay in Hungary also supports this parallel. He came to study Hungarian, just like English-speaking cultures were learning the new Continental language of male-to-male love, the labels and scripts of European sexologists for same-sex desire. In addition, Oswald is pleased that he found love with a Hungarian man in Hungary as if to say that finding a Hungarian soul-mate, and not simple sexual pleasures, debunks “Wildean” ideas of homosexual men, male-to-male love, and the Hungarian, seen in prior literature.

More often than not, the sociological reason entails that the characters are placed out of sight of general society, an Arcadian place where they can find their peace: “The universal desire to be free but safe, to be far from all critics and creditors and yet not utterly lonely, has given birth to a literature of Arcadia, that almost mythical land of sweet airs and
contentment.” The homosexual Arcadia “is based not only on familiar yearnings for an easy life and many young lovers, but also on a desire to be pardoned for being homosexual, to be kissed on the eyelids and included among the innocent” (Kellogg 4). Taking on Kellogg, Byrne Fone emphasises that it is an Arcadian park in which Oswald finds it appropriate to confess his love to Imre for the first time (21–23). Like many homosexual literary Arcadias, this imaginary space serves as a place for mutual happiness to same-sex lovers. Prime-Stevenson further establishes that this space has history: “Like most old estates near Szent-Istvánhely, it has its legends, plentifully.” He evokes the legend of Lorand and Egon, two “deeply attached” cousins. According to the story, the Count when hearing that the Turks killed his beloved cousin, “held up his sword, and swore by it, and Saint Stephen of Hungary” to avenge “his cousin’s fate.” He managed to drive the Turks out of the estate but was attacked and killed by another troop. He was buried with his cousin. Oswald and Imre sit down by their monument which reads “To the Unforgettable Memory of Z… Lorand, and Z… Egon” (Imre 80).

It might be argued that, similar to other urban homophile fiction, the characters leave the decadent city to free themselves from corruption. However, like many other elements in Imre, the relevance of the park has a psychological explanation: “[The Uranian] is often intensely fond of Nature… as if… he harks back to some great and elementary sympathy between Nature and his instincts” (The Intersexes 84). Evoking an Arcadian park, it seems, is not merely a literary device for Prime-Stevenson. His psychological explanation of the homosexual’s relationship with Nature shifts fiction to the realm of science again and offers a plausible explanation why one can connect with his instincts in nature.

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32 Matt Cook in London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885–1914 offers compelling analyses that show how The Sins of the Cities of the Plain (1881), The Picture of Dorian Gray (1890/91), and Teleny (1893) draw a homosexual map of the city by the movement of the characters in the urban scenery (18ff., 104ff).
In addition, as the name suggests, Szent-Istvánhely, where Imre lives, is not a depraved urban space. Both Hungarian names are extremely suggestive. Gifford wonders whether Imre is “an incomplete anagram for ‘Prime’” (Introduction 20), the surname of the author’s mother that he had just taken when writing *Imre*. There is another idea, similar to Gifford’s, that might explain both the name of the title character and why Prime-Stevenson renamed the capital of Hungary to “Szent-Istvánhely.” Prime-Stevenson might have toyed with his new surname: the compound, Prime, meaning “first,” with Stevenson, “the son of Stephen,” might have given the idea to call the novel’s protagonist Emeric, i.e. Imre in Hungarian, after the son of Stephen I of Hungary, after whom the city is renamed. Given that Prime-Stevenson was apparently familiar with Hungarian history in depth, the choice of “Imre” might be an allusion to the long-lived, though most probably untrue, legend that Emeric lived in chastity with his wife (Kristó n.p.). This legend would foreshadow, again, that *Imre* is a story about the spiritual and amatory aspect of love, and not the physical.

The topography of the city also helps Prime-Stevenson to juxtapose and reconcile contradicting notions of same-sex desire and associations with the Hungarian in one space: the amatory and the sexual aspect of male love, Anglo-Saxon ignorance and the peripheral science coming from German-Speaking Central Europe, the Hungarian man as an oversexualised being and epitome of respectable masculinity. Budapest, at the turn of the century, was seen as the border between the West and the East, as pronounced in the opening of *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker: “Buda-Pesth seems a wonderful place . . . The impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East; the most Western splendid bridges over the Danube, which is here of noble width and depth, took us among the traditions of Turkish rule” (5). Roger Luckhurst, in his notes to the novel, explains that it is “the famous Chain Bridge” over the Danube that connects “the border between Europe and the Turkish East” (363). The Chain Bridge is an emphatically liminal space in *Imre* as well, where
definitions and words fail both Oswald and Imre when, temporarily, they do not take sides in either the West or the East: “Are there perverse demons, demons delighting to make mortal men blunderers in simplest word and action… that haunt the breezy Lánczhíd in Szent-Istvánhely? If so, some of us would better cross that long bridge in haste and solitary silence after nightfall” (Imre 74–75).

This space, the unison of Buda (West) and Pest (East) can be understood as a Foucauldian heterotopia—a mirror that Prime-Stevenson uses in Imre to reconcile contradictory notions to laymen. This mirror, Foucault suggests is a utopia with two obvious consequences: first, it is a site “that [has] a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with a real space of Society,” however, it is “fundamentally [an] unreal space.” It is “outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality.” Hence, “[b]ecause [it is] absolutely different from all the sites that it reflect[s] and speak[s] about,” Foucault calls it a “heterotopia.” There is a joint experience in the mirror: one sees oneself in the mirror where he is absent (in a utopia), but the mirror exists in reality and makes one recognize one’s real position by observing a place where he is not (Foucault 24). As the prefaces to Imre and The Intersexes show, the contemporary reader of the novelette as a sociological observer could see himself in an unreal space, Szent-Istvánhely and examine himself from a safe distance. At the same time, he can evaluate contradictory ideas regarding his own unconventional sexuality by observing the subject in a Hungarian space: sexual and criminal activities associated with the East, and the argument for a super-virile homosexual type evoked by Imre and acceptable in terms of Western masculinity. Ultimately, recognising the same contradictory associations concerning the Hungarian and the homosexual, the reader can re-evaluate his own position in his real space.

The first principle of heterotopias is that “there is probably not a single culture in the world that fails to constitute heterotopias. That is a constant of every human group” (Foucault
The heterotopia that Prime-Stevenson created based on the tradition by the subculture of Wilde and his circle, who included references to the Hungarian in their fiction, works well along the same principles. Szent-Istvánhely fits two main categories of heterotopias. First, it is a heterotopia of crisis, which is “privileged or sacred . . . reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis” (Foucault 24). The new name of the capital “Szent-Istvánhely” clearly indicates that it is a sacred space. Given the protagonists’ sexuality gradually unfolding to the reader and the characters themselves, it is a homosexual subculture that needs shelter in this space. Second, it is also a heterotopia of deviation “in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed” (Foucault 25). The placement of the characters might be relevant for two reasons in terms of deviation. On the one hand, the homosexual as a non-conventional sexual type might need to be placed in a space with a half-oriental overtone just out of Western culture. On the other hand, Imre and Oswald deviate from the homosexual of the Wilde kind who tends to appear in novels set in London. Therefore, they need to be placed in another city that deviates from the decadent city, which leads us back to Szent-Istvánhely as a crisis heterotopia, where our expectations regarding a cruising place (Erzsébet Promenade) and a possible military prostitute (Imre) are not met.

The second principle is that “a society, as its history unfolds, can make an existing heterotopia function in a very different fashion” (Foucault 25). As we have seen, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Teleny*, Hungary is evoked through music in the first place to speak for sensuality and secreted desires. Wilde and his circle achieved this by emphasising the rhapsodic and oriental characteristics of Hungarian music that has an overbearing effect on the body. In *Imre*, music has no particular effect on the sexual organs; it is merely a topic for an intellectual conversation. Instead of using music evoking an eastern country to describe the homosexual body, Prime-Stevenson uses the masculine virtues associated with Hungary.
for his case of a super-virile couple, which cannot be defined by pathologising and criminalising mainstream sexological ideas on the invert, a female soul in a man’s body.

According to the third and fourth principles, a “heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible” (Foucault 25) and, when not just space but time is considered as well, “time never stops building up and topping its own summit” in a heterotopia (26). The topography of Szent-Istvánhely consisting of Buda representing the West and Pest representing the East shows that the story juxtaposes ideas coming from different directions regarding same-sex desire. On the one hand, there is the criminal and overly sensual aspect of homosexuality associated with the East and foreign vice. As the analysis of the exposition has shown, Prime-Stevenson worked with these notions to shift the nature of discourse from the criminal to the legitimised. On the other hand, the figure of the Hungarian evokes the heroic, super-virile masculine type associated with the West. Moreover, German-speaking Central Europe having produced a number of new sexological terms and theories, such as the homosexual, invert, and so on, also belongs to the West in this respect. Oswald’s attempt to define Imre’s sexuality with the help of Western science also connects Szent-Istvánhely to the West. However, it is impossible to associate Imre with either side. Oswald mentions the Turkish invasion of Hungary, for example, as a characteristic influence still visible in the Hungarian race. This echoes Ármin Vámbéry’s views on the Hungarian at the turn of the century: the Hungarian is simply an accumulation of various Western and Eastern races from different historical times and places. Vámbéry concluded based on this concept of Hungarian identity that anyone could fit into this heterogeneous nation, which was “tolerant and appreciative of those who wanted to become Magyars” (Mandler 52).

The fifth principle states that “[h]eterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates and makes them penetrable” (Foucault 26). This system is
relevant from the reader’s aspect. While Budapest was visible to everyone, Szent-Istvánhely was not. One very simple reason for this is that Imre had a limited number of copies. However, having a copy did not necessarily mean that the novel was “open” to the reader. Similar to initiation ceremonies in an actual space, the reader himself had to be initiated to be able to actually read Szent-Istvánhely. First, the reader had to be familiar with prior homophile fiction like *Dorian Gray* or *Teleny* to recognise that it is not by chance that the title-character is a Hungarian soldier. To understand the relevance of Hungarian music in *Dorian Gray*, for instance, which most probably was lost on many contemporary readers, one had to be familiar with a subculture’s ideas on the connection between their sexuality and Hungarian music, which is overtly elaborated on in *Teleny*. Moreover, the reader himself had to be familiar with the cultural context and information on the “homosexual life” of a particular city to understand the dangers and relevance of Imre and Oswald’s encounter in an Erzsébet-tér café, which has a straightforward explanation in *The Intersexes*. It is also clear from the novelette that the happy ending and permanent stay in Szent-Istvánhely are not accessible for everyone. Prime-Stevenson makes a case for a particular kind of homosexuality. In *The Intersexes*, he makes the following distinction:

> This brief study will have been written to no sufficient purport, and many far more extensive studies can be read with indifferent results, if the observer does not realise that the ranks of indisputably similisexual mankind (over and above all clearly detractive or doubtful examples) present a great list of what we call superior types, including geniuses; in their moral mental and other dignity. The world owes a vast debt to men who have been homosexual. But in contrast to these, we have an equally indisputable and disconcerting array of similisexual human beings so marked out by weakness, by depravity, by vice and crime, that the aggregate in such a review chills even a discriminating tolerance. (557)
Prime-Stevenson continues with “a summary of just this confusion and contrast” by citing his own work *Imre*, where Oswald gives voice “to his bewildered reflections on contrasts in uranian types” (*The Intersexes* 557). It is clear from several incidents in the novelette that Imre resents the weak and depraved similisexuals; the two protagonists of *Imre* belong to the superior type of homosexuals. As the novel attests, the happy end is only available to the likes of Imre and Oswald in Szent-Istvánhely.

The fact, however, that the city—although quite identifiable as Budapest—is fictionalised in the novelette as Szent-Istvánhely does not suggest that a happy ending is inaccessible or improbable for homosexual men. The new name of the fictitious Budapest has to do with what Lynne Pearce calls “Romantic Locations,” based on Ernst Bloch’s “Beautiful Foreign Lands” (1986), “in which he links the subject’s desire for travel ‘into the unknown’ (real or imaginary) to [their] anticipatory consciousness” (531). Pearce asserts that “Bloch’s theory returns us to deep structure by suggesting that these ‘foreign lands’ are one of the strategic means by which the subject thinks or wills [them]sel[ves] into an alternative future” in a romance (531). Pearce continues:

> Yet, for all their “surreality,” these [romantic] places are named, recognizable locations that may be stitched into something resembling “history” and “story.” Indeed, the real challenge for the romantic novelist, it seems, is to create a sense of place that is both “nowhere” and “somewhere”; a place which is both generic and specific; a place which is, therefore, both “uncanny” and safe. (533)

In the case of *Imre*, Szent-Istvánhely is a mirage of wishful thinking and promising prospects for the likes of Prime-Stevenson who believed in the emancipatory endeavours of the sexual science movement. Oddly enough, the renaming of Hungary’s capital parallels with the
“rebranding” of same-sex desire: whereas Budapest is the city of sodomites and soldier-harlots, Szent-Istvánhely is the city of the superior, noble type of homosexuals.

This brings us to the last principle of heterotopias: “they have a function in relation to all the space that remains” (Foucault 27). Prime-Stevenson created Szent-Istvánhely so that the homosexual protagonists of his novel would find hopeful prospects for the future. As *Imre* was written for fellow Anglo-Saxon homosexuals as guidance, Prime-Stevenson follows his own advice which he later put down in *The Intersexes*: “let us make it our practical business, as individuals and fellow-mortals, whether Uranians ourselves or not, to climb higher with all our best wills and works—and everywhere and eternally to help human nature to climb” (562). Walking on the Chain Bridge between the West and the East, Oswald and Imre, as a result, test different notions of homosexuality in the Hungarian city, which demonstrates that the choice is theirs which path they choose and that there is a way for homosexuals to better themselves, to represent homosexuals in terms of the emancipatory endeavours of the sexual science movement. This is exactly what Imre follows when he, having been exhausted by Oswald’s arguments on homosexuality, takes Oswald’s arm on the bridge, “a rare attention from him” and “said not more till the Bridge was past” (*Imre* 76).
CONCLUSIONS AND AFTERWORD: WHATEVER HAPPENED TO READING HUNGAROPHILIA

ANTHOLOGICALLY

Homophilia has an extremely convoluted history in the nineteenth century, especially in literature in English at the fin de siècle. German-speaking Central Europe produced a number of new coinages conceptualising same-sex desire to fight against old pejorative terms, such as “sodomy” and “pederasty,” and legitimise male-to-male love. It is unclear how much English-speaking authors understood of the results of the European sexual science movement. The use of terminology is especially puzzling with authors, such as Oscar Wilde and his coterie, in the first half of the 1890s, as the term “homosexual” entered the English language in 1892 and British medical professionals had not made any significant contribution to the sexological discourse until 1897. Censorial laws of the nineteenth century further complicated the matter, which made it impossible for sexology to become public knowledge.

The literary discourse was of paramount importance in the period. Both theorists of the European sexual science movements and anglophone literary men believed that belles-lettres are ideal to promulgate scripts of sexual categories. Reading these texts anthologically presents us with a way of reading that might help us understand how men conceptualised same-sex desire in this period when labels and scripts of male-to-male love were ever in flux. Coincidentally, a few but intriguing homophile literary texts had curious references to the Hungarian that informed the anthology of this doctoral dissertation.

Hungarophilia in my analyses served as a diagnostic tool to substantiate how homophile authors tackled censorial laws and conceptualised same-sex desire. The musical ekphrasis of the style hongrois helped Wilde provide some visibility to the homophilic aspect of The Picture of Dorian Gray for the initiated reader. Choosing Hungarian music was a clever choice by Wilde: when reading the novel in terms of Victorian commodity culture, the
historical/cultural reading of the code does not raise suspicion. However, reading *Dorian Gray* anthologically with *Teleny* reveals that the *style hongrois* readily cognates with what Wilde and his coterie famously conceptualised as “the love the dare not speak its name” in the 1890s. As it was not a text in public distribution, *Teleny* could directly address homophilia that *Dorian Gray* had to suppress. Our reading, however, did not stop there. Instead of simply “queering” these novels, the analysis focused on their curative reading. This approach revealed the extent and limits of the authors’ medical knowledge on same-sex desire. More importantly, their curative discourse inadvertently rehearsed why male-to-male love was criminalised and pathologised in the period.

The references to the Hungarian reveal a micronetwork of literary influence as well. A remote member of Wilde’s circle, Eric Stenbock also uses the motif of *style hongrois* to establish a somewhat homoerotic relationship between Vardalek and Gabriel in the narrative of “The True Story of a Vampire.” Other than the music, Vardalek is also Hungarian, whose vampirism embodies a conceptual muddle of same-sex desire at the turn of the century.

The anthological reading of hungarophilia in homophile literature culminates in *Imre: A Memorandum* by Edward Prime-Stevenson. Its author was well-versed in sexology and lamented the inaccessibility of knowledge to laymen, including homosexual men. He also found it problematic that his literary predecessors rehearsed the ideas based on which same-sex desire was criminalised and pathologised, which, as a result, denigrat ed male-to-male love. The erotext of *Imre*, therefore, reconceptualised the subversive reading of hungarophilia so that his homosexual protagonists can have a happy ending in an openly homophile novel for the first time in English literature.

As it is apparent from the summary above, this dissertation cannot offer a single, straight-forward answer as to the reasons why the Hungarian *per se* appear in these homophile texts in the sort of diachronic scrutiny of the course of homophile texts in the 1890s and early
1900s. Surely enough, the Hungarian seemed the strange yet accessible and comfortable exotic, which proves to be fertile ground to problematise the conceptualisation of same-sex desire in the period. The ambiguity how Western cultures saw the Hungarian found a parallel with the different new theories and labels of male-to-male love: at the same time, the Hungarian were the epitome of masculinity and the directly sexual, barbarous race of the turn of the century. Probing the texts and the Hungarian with this inherently postcolonial approach, however, would have oversimplified, in my view, the initial issue found in the cultural history of homophilia that this dissertation scrutinises—the two-fold problem of the language of same-sex desire at the fin de siècle that governed the study of homophilia and hungarophilia.

On the one hand, censorship did not allow English-speaking authors to overtly address the topic of same-sex desire. The ekphrasis of the directly sexual style hongrois, however, offered a language for Wilde and his circle to cope with censorship and provide some visibility to male-to-male love in their texts. On the other hand, the medical discourse, to further complicate the matter, did not offer a unanimous language of same-sex desire with its innumerable theories and labels for the phenomenon. The curative reading of the style hongrois in homophile texts reveal to what extend the medical discourse was familiar and comprehensible to these authors when medical texts as well were inaccessible on the topic to laymen. This problem of language is polarised in the story of the polyglot vampire, Vardalek, embodying the conceptual muddle of sexology, who cannot express his emotions and desire to Gabriel in the mother-tongue of the boy; therefore, he needs to resort to the style hongrois as the common language with the subject of his desires.

That the literary expression of same-sex desire in English cannot be separated from the musical style of this particular nation is further accentuated by the description of the Hungarian characters’ voice and language. In Teleny, the pianist exclaims to Camille that they
shall be “bosom friends, as the English say” (37; vol. 1). As if this collocation were not adequate to conceptualise their future relationship, Teleny then “muttered in [Camille’s] ear some words of an unknown tongue, so low and musical, that they almost seemed like a spell” (37; vol. 1). Camille, however, does not understand this language and Teleny explains: “Oh, friend! my heart doth yearn for thee” (37; vol. 1). Whatever Teleny said to Camille, most probably in Hungarian, is something that the latter does not understand—the Hungarian language here parallels with the incomprehensibility of the medical discourse on same sex-desire. Teleny seems to express both his desire for the man and his commiseration with Camille that this language is not available nor comprehensible to him. In “The True Story of a Vampire,” Carmela explains that the Hungarian vampire “spoke German well enough; not with the monotonous accentuation of Hungarians, but rather if anything, with a slight Slavonic intonation” (131). Vardalek’s utterances do not give away that he is Hungarian; actually, the narrator compliments the polyglot vampire on his linguistic capabilities: his voice is more musical than the monolingual Hungarians’, therefore, is “peculiarly soft and insinuating” (131). On the level of the short story curative reading, we might interpret this description as a hint at the vampire’s access to the different “languages” of same-sex desire at the time.

In Prime-Stevenson’s novelette, the narrator’s description of the soldier’s voice is indispensable to convey Oswald’s first impression of Imre: “And it was a Magyar voice, that characteristically seductive thing in the seductive race, which answered my query; a voice slow and low, yet so distinct, and with just that vibrant thrill lurking in it which instantly says something to a listener’s heart, merely as a sound, if he be susceptible to speaking-voices” (11–12). Prime-Stevenson here reconciles all the different notions of Western cultures on the Hungarian in the language and voice of Imre: the direct sexuality, the seductive nature, the
susceptibility of certain audiences, the barbarity with cultivation, as the following passage suggests as well, worth quoting in length:

Yet, with reference to what might be called Imre’s aesthetic self-expression, I wish to record one thing . . . I was often surprised at the simple, direct beauty, sometimes downright poetic grace, in his language . . . It must in most part be taken for granted; read between the lines now and then. But . . . one must be mindful of its natural explanation. For, after all, there was no miracle in it.

Imre was a Magyar; one of a race in which sentimental eloquence is always lurking in the blood, even to a poetic passion in verbal utterance that is often out of all measure with the mere formal education of a man or a woman. He was a Hungarian: which means among other things that a cowherd who cannot write his name, and who does not know where London is, can be overheard making love to his sweetheart, or lamenting the loss of his mother, in language that is almost of Homeric beauty. It is the Oriental quality, ever in the Magyar; now to be admired by us, now disliked, according to the application of the traits. (48–49)

Although they appear to be directly sexual, Imre’s native language and voice seduce the listener for the amatory and not the physical aspect of what they can express so eloquently. Oswald admits that this trait of the Hungarian is either deemed barbaric or praised by Western culture, depending on what the utterance pertains to—as if to say that the Hungarian has the language that is the best at expressing love verbally; however, it is seen eloquent when it is about “normal sexuality” and is frowned upon when it expresses same-sex love.

More importantly, the narrator’s competencies in Hungarian are directly proportional to the two men’s capabilities to express their love to one another. Oswald explains in the first chapter that “[f]or a long time, [they] spoke only French or German when together” (31), and
it is also just before this passage that he explains the aim of his visit to Hungary: just like the author, who came to Europe to study sexology, Oswald came to study Hungarian. In the last chapter, Oswald emphasises that, although it is not apparent in his memorandum written in English, “the second person of intimate Magyar address the ‘thou’ and ‘thee’ was used” in Imre’s letters to him and in Oswald’s responses “with the same instinctiveness that had brought it to our lips on that evening in the Z… park” (160), when Oswald first confessed his love to Imre. This remark in Oswald’s narration indicates the coincidence of having started communicating in Hungarian and the confession.

It should not come as a surprise that Imre's nationality and Oswald’s affinity to the Hungarian were extremely emphatic in Oswald’s confession, when this linguistic shift of intimacy took place:

You are Magyar. You have not now to be told of the unexplainable, the mysterious affinity between [sic] myself and your race and nation; of my sensitiveness, ever since I was a child, to the chord which Magyarország [Hungary] and the Magyar sound in my heart. Years have only added to it, till thy land, thy people, Imre, are they not almost my land, my people? Now I have met thee. Thou were to be; somewhat, at least, to be for me! That thou wast ordained to come into the world that I should love thee, no matter what thy race… that I believe! But, see! Fate also has willed that thou shouldst be Magyar…! (149–150)

Having explained his struggles with unreciprocated love throughout life, the problem with effeminate aesthetes, and the effect of incomprehensible new sexological jargon on homosexual laymen, Oswald’s confession, at the end, emphasises again that “unexplainable” connections of homophilia and hungarophilia that this dissertation, in fact, tried to explain. Other than the author and the narrator’s affinities to Hungary, the homoromantic and
potentially homosexual relationship of the English Oswald and the Hungarian Imre is set as a legitimate script of same-sex desire. For Oswald, Imre is not merely a member of a sexual race, whose “literary” music provided visibility to homosexuality but at the same time rehearsed why male-to-male love was pathologised and criminalised in anglophone cultures—music is merely a conversational topic of two men of age. Instead of music, it is Imre’s native tongue that can express the amatory aspect of their relationship, when the terminology of sexology, otherwise incomprehensible to anglophone laymen, failed to conceptualise the nature of the love and desire they have for each other. As a result, Imre is the one who is inherently capable of reciprocating Oswald’s love. Moreover, Imre as a super-virile man refutes all the negative stereotypes about homosexuality that Wildean aesthetes rehearsed in the relatively short prior literary history of homophilia and hungarophilia. Therefore, both the person and physique of Imre could reverse the unfortunate course of homosexual men’s literary representation in a period when literary anthologies served better sources to construct one’s sexual identity than inaccessible and incomprehensible medico-legal texts.

The hungarophile anthology of homophile literature, however, comes to an end with Imre. The answers to the question of this abrupt surcease can be found in Prime-Stevenson’s initial role in the anthology and the accessibility of his novelette. It appears that Prime-Stevenson himself did not see the relevance of textual hungarophilia anymore in the 1910s and 1920s when he wrote the two of versions of a short story in which Imre returns. “Madonesca” (1913) and “The Lady with the Madonna-Face” (1924) deserve an analysis as a coda of this thesis. They tell the story of Contessa Johanna, whose vanity and self-importance, not by accident, led to the death of her own child in a tragic incident. However, it is not the story but the setting that might interest us. We first encounter Johanna at a musical event in the Palazzo Stellone:
The artists were always eminently select; the audiences invariably the contrary. In fact, the people that came to Lady Overcrowe’s larger gatherings resembled their hostess’s rooms in the Palazzo Stellone—they were on oddly different levels. From the entrance-hall you went down two steps, to a reception-room. Thence you descended four steps, to one of the handsome saloni. Three more steps brought you into the furthest and and [sic] lowest room, ended by the platform for the musicians. (“Madonnesca” 143)

The Palazzo Stellone was meant to resemble Dante’s Inferno as, according to Prime-Stevenson, “[i]n Dante, we find references enough to his renascent Italy as a land filled with uranianism. The ‘Divina Commedia’ consigns certain personages to infernal fires on account of sodomy, sometimes with plain language from the virulent Alighieri” (The Intersexes 294). The connection between “Madonnesca” and Dante’s work can be further substantiated by the name of the Hungarian photographer who catalysed the tragedy of the short story: “Monsieur Csillag” might serve as an allusion to the last word in each part of Divine Comedy, “stars.”

Given that Imre was “‘up and back’ in the reception-room, looking down into the crowd” and Johanna was “between the two drawing-rooms” (143–144), talking to a scamster, their positions seem to suggest that Johanna’s sin, though not treated as a crime by the police, had been graver than Imre’s “sin” of being homosexual.

The role of Imre’s return, actually, does not go further than that. He barely utters a few words—one in Hungarian. Other than that, he is merely a silent bystander; he is insignificant in the course of events. Imre is even less emphatic in the second version of the short story: he speaks less and his one Hungarian word, “Előre,” which was explained to the reader that it was “Magyar” (“Madonnesca” 146), was struck out by Prime-Stevenson to erase the accentuation of his nationality. Instead, the second version has a curious insertion pertaining to Imre: “my very particular friend” (“The Lady with the Madonna-Face” 193). The
suppression of Imre’s nationality indicates that Prime-Stevenson was no longer as interested in hungarophilia in his literary production as he used to be: he lost his personal connections during the war; and Imre was meant to address a literary issue at the turn of the century that was no longer relevant in the 1920s.

In general, the reason for the alterations is that Prime-Stevenson intended this new version to be read and discussed in public, as the title of the collection of 1924, *Dramatic Stories to Read Aloud* suggests. Prime-Stevenson reworked the text for dramatic effect; for instance, the son of Johanna is younger in the latter version; and he made sure that his audience perfectly understands the story. The new version is repetitive, expanded with the explanation of historical references, and focuses on dialogue instead of detailing the setting of the narrative. Who Imre is and why he is there are irrelevant to Johanna’s story *per se*. Nevertheless, Prime-Stevenson did not leave his audience in the dark regarding Imre’s curious return. In the preface to *Dramatic Stories to Read Aloud*, he refers his readers to his previous fiction, “if [they are] interested in items sometimes of longer and more distinctively literary development” (xi)—he calls his audience to read the short story anthologically.

Although some of the major authoritative figures at the turn of the century, like Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter, were familiar with *Imre*, the novelette did not gain public recognition or accessibility in the twentieth century. A case in point is E. M. Forster’s *Maurice* (1913–14/1971), which for a long time was considered to be, as David Leavitt puts it, “a novel without antecedents” (xi), possibly one of the very first openly homophile novels with a happy ending by a British author. *Maurice* has a number of things in common with *Imre* and addresses similar issues through its conceptualisation of same-sex desire.

Maurice, for the lack of a better word, conceptualises himself as one of the “unspeakable[s] of the Oscar Wilde sort” (135, 138). Seeking help from doctors, Maurice learns that Dr Jowitt has not met homosexual men in his practice as “that’s in the asylum
work” (135). Discouraged by Dr Jowitt’s reply, Maurice consults specialist Dr Barry who dismisses his concerns as “rubbish” and offers the advice, “never let that evil hallucination, that temptation from the devil, occur to you again” (138). The narrator concludes: “Dr Barry had given the best advice he could. He had read no scientific works on Maurice’s subject. None had existed when he walked the hospitals, and any published since were in German, and therefore suspect” (140).

The last specialist Maurice consults is hypnotist Lasker Jones, who offers the following advice when the therapy fails: “I’m afraid I can only advise you to live in some country that has adopted the Code Napoleon . . . There homosexuality is no longer criminal . . . And you must remember that your type was once put to death in England” (188). The narrator comments: “The doctor wanted to get on to his next patient, and he did not care for Maurice’s type. He was not shocked like Dr Barry, but he was bored, and never thought of the young invert again” (190). What Maurice’s encounters with the medical profession tells us is that Forster also lamented the scarce sexological knowledge coming from German sources. What is more, it appears that even though the terms “homosexual” and “invert” were known, they were not taken seriously or were misunderstood: “invert,” for instance, should not have been applicable to the masculine Maurice by definition.

Similar to Prime-Stevenson, Forster was also concerned with the circumstances of publication and their relationship with his novel’s happy ending. He explains his concerns in the “Terminal Note” added to the novel in 1959–1960:

A happy ending was imperative. I shouldn’t have bothered to write otherwise . . . Happiness is [the novel’s] keynote—which by the way has had an expected result: it has made the book more difficult to publish . . . If it ended unhappily . . . all would be well, for there is no pornography or seduction of
minors. But the lovers get away unpunished and consequently recommend crime. (220)

With an implicit reference to the Hicklin Standard, Forster suggests that the novelty of *Maurice*, the happy ending made it impossible for him to publish the novel until the laws on (writing) homosexuality change. *Maurice* was published eventually in 1971, a year after its author’s death. Forster highlighted the relevance of the happy ending in a 1920 letter to Siegfried Sassoon as well: “I know nobody else who has done it, though possibly the real right thing, shaming our clumsy efforts, lies buried in a hundred drawers” (qtd. in Leavitt xi). Forster apparently was not familiar with *Imre*. It is somewhat ironic, given the fact that *Maurice* was inspired by his visit to Edward Carpenter in 1913, whom he greatly admired. Forster, then, must have been familiar with Carpenter’s *The Intermediate Sex* (1908), which quotes *Imre* in length, which Forster apparently failed to recognise or track down.

Nevertheless, hungarophilia would have served no purpose in *Maurice* anyway, as, according to Leavitt, Forster’s “plan was . . . to dramatise the conflict that arises not only among the [homosexual] protagonists but between them and a very unyielding England” (xii). In addition, the language the author uses to dramatise this conflict is rooted in the more immediate context of writing: warfare and the “language of battle” (Leavitt xix-xx).

Hungarophilia was not picked up by another twentieth-century novel either, despite the fact that it was written by a Hungarian émigré. *The Heart in Exile* (1953), written by Adam de Hegedűs (1906–1955) as Rodney Garland,33 is considered to be the first openly

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33 To my knowledge, there is not an academic article that has Ádám Hegedus’s place of birth and date of death accurately in a single publication. Due to a series of misinformation and unfounded speculation, scholars usually write that he was born in Budapest and died in 1958, as seen in Neil Bartlett’s introduction to the 2014 edition of the novel (i). However, Hungarian academic sources, presumably based on Hegedűs’s journalistic work in Hungarian, reveal that he was born in Kolozsvár (now in Romania) in 1906 (Cushing 100, Gulyás 46). As for his...
homophile detective novel and one of the very first openly homophile novels published by a British publisher. It was a huge commercial success with several reprints and editions in Britain and in the United States in just a couple of years, and was “the most famous gay novel prior to the 1967 Sexual Offences Act” (qtd. in Houlbrook, Waters 142). The story is narrated by psychiatrist Anthony Page who is commissioned to investigate the suicide of his former lover, Julian. Tony pays a visit to his acquaintances, including a politician and a police detective, whom he knows from his former life in the homosexual underworld, to see if Julian’s suicide had anything to do with his sexuality.

The novel is also preoccupied with a possible happy ending and is extremely self-reflexive about its role in the history of homophile literature. Tony’s assistant, Terry laments that “all plays and novels dealing with queers have an inevitably tragic end . . . there’s always murder, suicide, insanity or imprisonment” (185). Tony replies “that the only way normal [i.e. heteronormative] society at present accepts the homosexual in literature is with a compulsory tragic end. To be a homo is a crime, and crime mustn’t go unpunished; not in books at least” (185). Discontented with Tony’s answer and prior homophile literature, Terry states that “[i]f ever [he] could write a book on the subject, [he]’d try to tell the truth. [He]’d write about the majority for whom it isn’t really tragic . . . [He] mean[s] love. That’s the message” (185–186). From Terry’s lament, it becomes evident that Hegedűs was not at all familiar with Prime-Stevenson’s novelette, which concluded that what Oswald and Imre had

dead, more informed studies, like Ian Young’s “The Two Garlands: A Literary Mystery,” know that the dustjacket of Hegedűs’s The Struggle with Angels (1956) revealed two things: Hegedűs authored The Heart in Exile under the pseudonym, Rodney Garland in 1953, and he had died recently. Although some might jump to the semi-informed conclusion that he died in 1956, his certified copy of an entry of death, for which I am grateful to Tom Sargant, reveals that he died on 9th October 1955.
was “the friendship which [was] love, the love which [was] friendship” and “for [them] two it surely [was]… Rest!” (205).

And, again, it is also true of The Heart in Exile that hungarophilia would have served no purpose in its composition. The novel is composed to reflect on the social advances of homophilialogy in the 1950s, and it is quite self-reflexive about this as well. Tony repeatedly celebrates that he “was living a novel. All [his] life [he] had been attracted by the romantic figure of the private detective . . . But how much more absorbing it was to be the private detective than just to read about his doings—actively to live not just some of his doings, but every small detail of his investigation . . . Now [Tony] was living a real-life detective story” (167). Tony himself is a psychiatrist, well-versed in sexology. His investigation leads him to fellow-homosexual men: a politician to discuss the alleged forthcoming changes in legislation, and a detective to address how the Scotland Yard polices London’s homosexual underground. What The Heart in Exile offers is a domestic image of homosexual men, who are exiles when they act on their desires. This narrative situation, therefore, allows Hegedűs to let both sides be heard, which follows the template set by Michael Schofield’s formative and pioneering sociological study, Society and the Homosexual (1952) on “how reformers throughout the 1950s would seek to integrate queer male desire into the normative social frameworks of postwar reconstruction” (Hornsey 118). For homophile literature of the 1950s, Wilde and the turn of the century, as The Heart in Exile suggests, are mere history:

“All somebody told me once that on the site there had formerly been a hotel known to the

34 See other occasions on pp. 134, 187–188. In the last chapter, Tony concludes that “[l]ove makes some people young and irresponsible, but [he] knew that [he] would mature under its influence . . . [he] should no longer have that mad craving for excitement the desire to ‘live’ a novel” (288–289); and so, he settles for and/or down with Terry to have their happy ending.
notorious Vere Street Coterie of Regency fame and mentioned in *The Phoenix of Sodom* [1813]; and later it had often been frequented by Wilde and his friends” (237).

It is not only our trace of reading hungarophilia anthologically that is lost, but the method itself seems irrelevant by the 1950s. Tony observes the following when investigating Julian’s flat:

Nor did the books give the slightest indication of Julian’s real personality. The top row consisted almost entirely of law books, the *Oxford Dictionary* and a volume called *With Silent Friends*. On the second row there were practically all the books of G. M. Trevelyan, the second volume of the Greville Diary, a few books by Maurois and Arthur Bryant, *Cassell’s French Dictionary*, the history of the Coldstream Guards. The fact that he had the one-volume Havelock Ellis and Walker’s *Physiology of Sex* in the Penguin Edition, was completely meaningless; practically everybody above a certain level has read them. (47)

Dayneford’s library in the short story, “Out of the Sun” (1913) by Prime-Stevenson included a series of titles that suggested how one constructed his sexual identity based on literary scripts of same-sex desire. Since sexological knowledge was no longer inaccessible, as *The Heart in Exile* attests, the literary discourse and reading anthologically are no longer crucial in the conceptualisation of same-sex desire and the stylisation of a sexual self.

It appears that twentieth-century homophile literature was inherently sensitive about (the non-existence of) literary antecedents. At the same time, these texts tried to legitimise same-sex desire in terms of their immediate context. Prime-Stevenson’s immediate context was the hungarophile but subversive homophile literature of the 1890s. His carefully composed exposition to *Imre* drew attention away from the subversive reading of hungarophilia to a more socially acceptable one. As time passed, Prime-Stevenson himself
started to part from hungarophilia in his fiction as the concept was becoming redundant. In
this respect, even if hungarophilia had been as legible for a twentieth-century author as it is in
this doctoral dissertation, it would have been treated as mere history that would not have
served their endeavours to legitimise same-sex desire. Another issue is that this dissertation
has scrutinised an anthology in the making at the turn of the century, based on texts now
available to us. Given their constant preoccupation with a happy ending, it is clear that *Imre*
was not available to the general public; as a result, our anthological reading of hungarophilia
must come to an end.

The culmination of the convoluted literary history of homophilia and hungarophilia,
Edward Prime-Stevenson’s *Imre: A Memorandum* is a rather dated text. Nevertheless, it has
received the renewed attention of scholarly and general readerships as a historical document
in the past decades. It had an obscene, so-called “Badboy” adaptation appearing in 1992. The
original novel was published in German (1997), Dutch (2000), English (2003), Spanish
(2016), and in French (2016). Despite its Hungarian relations, it is unfortunately not a widely
known novel in Hungary. Hopefully, the recent Hungarian translation and original
introduction to *Imre* with explanatory notes will do justice to Prime-Stevenson and his
admiration for the Hungarian.
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