“Homosexual Panic” in Turn of the Century Gothic Literature

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Turn of the Century Anxieties: Gothic Paranoia and "Homosexual Panic"

This essay explores the intriguing historical parallel between the emergence of homosexual identity and the late 19th-century resurgence of gothic literature. Critics have already begun to reveal the extent to which iconic monsters such as Frankenstein and Dracula function as symbols of sexual deviance. Elaine Showalter contextualizes this trend in her reading of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) as "a fable of fin-de-siècle homosexual panic" caused by "the discovery and resistance of the homosexual self" (107). Shifting definitions of (and penalties for) homosexuality at the turn of the century instilled in many men "homosexual panic," Showalter argues, an exaggerated fear of monstrous homosexuality dwelling within themselves. My investigation seeks to broaden our understanding of "homosexual panic" in turn of the century gothic narratives by studying the convergence of homosexual characters and themes with supernatural forces aligned with the classical source of the word "panic." Historically, the word "panic" designated "a feeling of sudden terror […] attributed by the ancient Greeks to the influence of the god Pan" (*OED*). Pan, famed for his ambivalent sexuality and sensual abandon, reemerges in Victorian literature and indicates the era's fear of, but also, crucially, its fascination with, homosexual desire. In the context of turn of the century gothic literature, Pan serves to naturalize homosexual desire by aligning its simultaneous terror and tantalization with that of nature. Although Pan represents another variety of the gothic monster, an embodiment of unnatural subversion, the figure ultimately subverts this function of monstrous otherness by revealing the natural origin of homosexual impulses.

Over the past twenty years, queer theory has begun to offer exciting contemporary perspectives on gothic literature. In her book, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of*

Monsters (1995), Judith Halberstam critiques classic and contemporary works of gothic fiction with special attention to sexuality. According to her, sexual deviance, and homosexuality in particular, dominates the gothic genre. Halberstam proposes, in fact, that the gothic monster is a figure of "embodied deviance" (5). Beginning with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1816), Halberstam observes that "the monster's status as sexual outlaw and social pariah are mutually dependent" (42). She suggests that the monster is the unnatural birth of Frankenstein's "masturbatory and homosexual desire" – typically non-reproductive sexual desires (42). In obsessive, possessive pursuit of each other, Frankenstein and his monster violently thwart each other's heterosexual erotic interests as frustrated expressions of their own homosexual desires.

Halberstam is not the first critic to uncover homoerotic undertones in gothic works. In '"Kiss Me with Those Red Lips': Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" (1984), Christopher Craft shows how highly sexualized female vampires and victims serve as conduits between Dracula and the men he sexually desires. Craft carefully demonstrates that "this [homosexual] desire finds evasive fulfillment in an important series of heterosexual displacements" (110). Dracula's lustful lady vampires, his "female surrogates," as Craft puts it, penetrate and drain Jonathan Harker in his place (109). Lucy's endlessly punctured body relays the transfused blood of Dr. Seward, Quincy Morris and Arthur Holmwood to Count Dracula's hungry mouth in a cycle of needle and fang penetrations. With blood symbolically substituting for other bodily fluids, the feeding frenzy blurs the sexuality of all involved. Gothic conventions, these critics have begun to show us, are ideal for expressing unconventional sexuality.

While critics such as Halberstam and Craft have begun to reveal the extent to which iconic monsters such as Frankenstein and Dracula function as symbols of sexual deviance, the breadth and depth of this trend awaits closer analysis. Most critics in this field have sought to

stretch their arguments across centuries, whereas I focus my attention on the turn of the century, just at the point when the emergence of homosexuality as a recognized form of identity converged with an explosion of gothic supernaturalism.

Recent historians and literary critics alike express an avid interest in the turn of the nineteenth century as the advent of homosexual identity. Through the first half of the nineteenth century, the basis for same-sex sexual prosecution was a vague sexual act – "sodomy" or "buggery" – not a specific sexual identity. In the final decades of the nineteenth century, though, the legal system refined laws monitoring sexual decency to target homosexuals – newly definable from a medical perspective. From Karl Westphal's early work in the 1860s to Havelock Ellis's later studies in the 1890s, sexology (or, as Michel Foucault puts it, "the medicalization of the sexually peculiar") tied same-sex acts to a specific type of human – the homosexual (44). Historian Jeffrey Weeks investigates how radical social changes in the nineteenth century, from industrialization to new capitalist class divisions, incited "continuous battle[s] over the definition of acceptable sexual behavior within the context of changing class and power relations" (23). Weeks notes that increases in convictions of "buggery" seem to have coincided with war and other spikes in social unrest, leading him to conclude that "homosexual behavior was often a funnel for wider social anxieties" (100). The heavily publicized conviction of Oscar Wilde in 1895, largely an expression of said social anxieties, "created a public image for the 'homosexual'" and exposed homosexual subculture (103). Weeks suggests that the trials were essentially "labeling processes," designed to help the public distinguish "a clear border between acceptable and abhorrent behavior" (103). Amidst social turmoil, criminalizing and medicalizing homosexuality functioned to contain and discourage deviant behavior.

The "border" between suitable and sordid behavior, though, was not always so clear. Elaine Showalter argues that increasingly visible (or recognizable) homosexuality severely jeopardized Victorian "homosociality." Homosociality thrived in the bourgeois social scene that Elaine Showalter nicknames "Clubland." This community of men's clubs, an extension of public schools and universities into professional class adulthood, "reinforced the spatial as well as the social boundaries separating men and women" (11). Bachelors and absent husbands frequented the club to flee from the cult of domesticity. Though "[a]ggressively and urbanely heterosexual, even rakish, in their discourse," club men were borderline homosexual in their fierce preference for male company (12).

Showalter traces the homosexual undertones of this "heterosexual discourse" through a parallel literary movement – the revival of romance. The male quest romance, a genre embraced by authors such as H. Rider Haggard, Rudyard Kipling, and Robert Louis Stevenson, abandoned "courtship, manners, and marriage" for "adventure and quest" and provided a temporary escape from Victorian society and morality (79). Despite (or perhaps because of) the unrelenting masculinity of such romances, Showalter suspects that "the borderline between hypermasculinty and homoeroticism was as tricky to negotiate here as in London's Clubland" (94). The haunting, homosocial atmosphere of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Showalter proposes, suggests "the shadow of homosexuality that surrounded Clubland and the nearly hysterical terror of revealing forbidden emotions between men" (107). Indeed, in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* a suspicious colleague disapproves of Dr. Jekyll's "strange preference" for the scoundrel, Mr. Hyde. Despite Dr. Jekyll's best efforts to "conceal [his] pleasures," this "strange preference" reduces him to a monster and removes him from mainstream society to the margins

of "Queer Street."[1] While Dr. Jekyll condenses his sultry and sadistic desires in his monstrous counterpart, the upright professionals in Bram Stoker's novels project theirs onto monstrous sexual others (the Count in *Dracula*, Queer Tera in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*, Lady Arabella in *The Lair of the White Worm*). The righteous male alliances pitted against these monsters, though, are held together by homosocial bonds that threaten to diverge into homosexual desires if not properly directed. A self-conscious aside of Stoker's in *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911) affords a glimpse at how "the usual avoidance of Englishmen of emotional subjects personal to themselves" demands a gothic villain to distract from the true sexual "evil" facing the men (11).

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick ventures that "homosexual panic" underlies the entire genre of the paranoid gothic. Sedgwick interprets homophobia as "a mechanism for regulating the behavior of the many by the specific oppression of a few" (88). Bonds between men, social or sexual, are regulated to manipulate the transfer of power. In order for homophobia to be an effective regulatory tool, "no man must be able to ascertain that he is not (that his bonds are not) homosexual" (89). While only a few must be exposed, all must be suspect.[2] The fear of homosexual conviction and social ostracization is ultimately internalized, thus "'homosexual panic' is the most private, psychologized form in which many twentieth-century western men experience their vulnerability to the social pressure of homophobic blackmail" (89). Sedgwick

[1] In the 19th century, this phrase broadly indicated a state of financial, legal, and moral difficulty. Yet, intriguingly, the word "queer" acquired a more specific connotation of homosexuality just after the publication of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Given the homosocial overtones of the novel, it may well be that it registers an early use of the word "queer" in its modern significance.

[2] Sedgwick's concept of homophobia is indebted to Foucault's concept of Panopticonsim and disciplinary mechanisms. Foucault notes disciplinary mechanisms' "tendency to become 'de-institutionalized'" and "circulate in a 'free' state" – and homophobia is no exception (211). Certainly the church, the court, and the hospital were institutional authorities on homosexuality, and carried heavy penalties for it. But homophobia was internalized in the individual as self-consciousness and paranoia, "assur[ing] the automatic functioning of power" (201).

treats homosexual panic not as a literal fear of the consequences of homosexual conviction, but as a state of psychological sensitivity akin to Sigmund Freud's sexually saturated notion of paranoia. The paranoid gothic, Sedgwick suggests, tends towards the Freudian perception of paranoia as a "psychosis that makes graphic the mechanisms of homophobia" (91). In late-Victorian literature, the paranoid gothic "makes graphic" the fear and loathing of homosexuality with materialized nightmares and supernatural terrors. Showalter and Sedgwick, while making an astute connection between this social-psychological ill and late nineteenth century paranoid gothic literature, do not quite realize the highly literal significance of the term they have introduced in the context of the genre. Homosexual panic needs to be addressed in a more literal sense attuned to the classical myth of Pan and the emergent Victorian homosexual subculture.

A thorough analysis of homosexual panic in late-Victorian gothic literature thus requires a more detailed knowledge of Pan. Native to the mountains of Arcadia, Pan is traditionally a pastoral figure who frolics through the forest and plays upon his reed pipes. Pan derives his name from the Latin root "pa(s)," meaning "guardian of the flocks" (Prince 402). Himself half man and half goat, Pan guards both the shepherd and the flock. He is also patron of the huntsman, ensuring an abundance of small game. When he falters, young Arcadian huntsmen flog his statue with squills to excite his powers of fertility over the forest animals.[3] Despite this apparent abuse, Robert Graves (1955) characterizes Pan's relationship with his cult as one of innocent playfulness: "He was, on the whole, easy-going and lazy, loving nothing better than his afternoon sleep, and revenged himself on those who disturbed him with a sudden loud shout from a grove, or grotto, which made the hair bristle on their heads" (101). Waking the god on

[3] See Simichidas's harvest festival song in Theocritus's *Idylls.*

friendly terms, though, may appeal to his benevolence and avert this fright.[4] Pan's knack for inflicting sudden frights was employed by the Athenians, who recruited Pan during the Persian Wars for a victory at Marathon (Prince 402). The skittish terror that Pan instilled in the enemy earned him his reputation for Panic.

More recent historicism, sensitive to gender and sexuality studies, heightens the homosexual implications already inherent in the classic myth. Philippe Borgeaud opens his discussion of Pan's sexuality in *The Cult of Pan in Ancient Greece* (1988) with a lively description of a Greek urn decorated with an image of Pan, phallus erect, eagerly pursuing a young goatherd. While Pan's most legendary erotic pursuits are those of nymphs, his hunting ground is more realistically populated by young men. As the god of shepherds and huntsmen, Pan's cult is overwhelmingly male and, as Borgeaud notes, "[his] landscape has been set aside for strictly masculine projects" (77). Significantly, pederasty was considered an appropriate sacrifice to Pan, and "popular belief thought it sufficiently real to use the expression τον Πανα τιμαν ("to honor Pan") for male homosexual practices" (75). The cult of Pan, though, does not necessarily celebrate his sexual conquests. Myths in which Pan succeeds in his erotic pursuits still seem to maintain that "panic love is something violent, a sudden and unforeseen attack" (76). Pan's rustic background, which typically colors him with a certain pastoral innocence, darkens his sexuality as crude and barbaric. "Just as Pan's landscape is detached from the city and its agricultural land," Borgeaud observes, "so his erotic behavior remains detached from the institution that gives passion its acculturated form" (83). Pan's promiscuity is opposed to marriage, that is, and if his desires, homosexual or otherwise, are natural and free they are also

[4] Getas of Menander's *Dyskolos* advises that "One should not, they say, approach this god in silence."

uncultivated and unfruitful. The futility and degeneracy of extra-marital sex was a chief Victorian fin de siècle anxiety, and Pan's sexual excess most certainly provoked these fears.[5]

In the Victorian period itself, Pan played a significant symbolic role in a fascinating literary debate over shifting values. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "The Dead Pan" (1844) celebrates Christianity's triumph over paganism. A lyrical retelling of Plutarch's *De Oraculorum Defectu*, it rejoices how Christ's passion culminated in a phantom cry that "Pan, Pan is dead" – and with him all the pagan oracles. Only decades later, though, fin de siècle fears of apocalypse and decadence revived this pagan figure (in literature, at least). Robert Louis Stevenson, in his essay "Pan's Pipes" (1878), proposes that "Pan is not dead, but of all the classic hierarchy alone survives in triumph" (5). This daunting "goat-footed" god haunts the literature of an uncertain era with "a gleeful and an angry look" (5). Indeed, the melody of his pipes was known to both soothe the shepherds of Arcadia and terrify the lonely traveler of the mountains. Algernon Swinburne elaborates on this eerie ambivalence in his tribute to Pan, "A Nympholept" (1891).[6] Sensing Pan's presence in the deep wilderness, Swinburne wonders, "Is it rapture or terror that circles me round, and invades / Each vein of my life with hope – if it be not fear?" (58-7). Pan's supernatural influence is either, or at once, elating and terrifying. Swinburne mingles arousal with these already ambivalent sensations, sexualizing the dilemma: "Is it love, is it dread, that enkindles this trembling noon, / That yearns, reluctant in rapture that fear has fed, / As man for

[5] Jeffrey Weeks argues that Victorian (middle class) society attempted to stabilize itself with "an increasing idealization of domesticity," which in turn entailed "a growing specification and rationalization in the censure of extra-marital sex" (24). The social shifts of industrialization and urbanization reassembled the population into units of core, nuclear families. Sex could preserve, extend, or destroy a family. Thus, "the more ideology stressed the role of sex within conjugality, the more it was necessary to describe and regulate those forms of sexuality which were outside it" (32).

[6] Nympholepsy: "Passion supposedly inspired in men by nymphs; an ecstasy or yearning, esp. that caused by desire for something unattainable" (*OED*).

woman, as woman for man?" (78-80). Pan, classically depicted with a prominent phallus, poses a specifically sexual threat in his Victorian reincarnation – perhaps even more specifically a threat of sexual corruption. Swinburne maintains, though, that "Thou art fearful only for evil souls of men / That feel with nightfall the serpent within them wake" (110-1). There are those of a certain sexual temperament already predisposed, it would seem, to moonlit bacchanals and debauchery. And these figures with "evil souls," we shall see, fall easy prey to Pan. What is so interesting about Swinburne's delightful panic is that it associates homosexual desire, through layers of implication, with nature's god. Christianity becomes, implicitly at least (via a biblical allusion to "the serpent"), a mere effort to control and deny what is essentially natural. In the context of the emergence of homosexual identity, and the standing assumption that homosexual acts are unnatural perversions, the association of Pan with nature and homosexuality implies a challenge to Victorian social mores.

Some literary critics have begun explore Pan's reemergence in British literature in the context of turn of the century anxieties. In her landmark investigation of Pan in modern literature, *Pan the Goat-God: His Myth in Modern Times* (1969), Patricia Merivale identifies only two "really good" additions to the Greek myth. One is Plutarch's celebratory Christian legend of the death of Pan, the other "the theme of the sinister or terrifying Pan" (154). Merivale concedes that "terror may have been latent or subsidiary in Pans from the time of Theocritus," notably in the ambivalent Pan poems of Swineburne, but credits the Victorian horror story with fully realizing Pan's potential for terror in prose (154). Though Merivale discusses Pan in this precise historical moment and literary genre, she does not quite appreciate the significance of the reemergence of Pan in the context of late Victorian sexual anxieties. Years later, with his essay "Meaning Everything: The Image of Pan at the Turn of the Century" (1992), Robert Dingley comes closer

to fully extracting Pan's sexual significance at this cultural moment. Dingley locates Pan's "generalized other-ness (sexual, social, spiritual)" in the specific historical context of turn of the century England. Dingley briefly grants Pan his homosexual significance in a reading of E.M. Forster's "The Story of a Panic," but ultimately concludes that his ambivalence escapes any definitive meaning. Dingley insists that "his mythic role is to de-historicize, and thus to universalize and naturalize, the very problems he has been employed to express" (57). That Pan "naturalizes" the "problem" of homosexuality in late-Victorian England is precisely the argument I intend to forward, but Dingley's corollary, that Pan also "universalizes" the issue, neglects details in the literature that very specifically allude to hallmarks of an emerging homosexual subculture. Homosexual panic in Victorian gothic literature must be attended to as a nervous flirtation with validating homosexuality as a natural human experience, even if it is one with dire consequences.

This essay seeks to explore the turn of the century obsession with Pan as a gothic monster specifically designed to express the late Victorian and early Modern version of homosexual panic. The Pan stories by Arthur Machen, E.F. Benson, and E.M. Forster are repeatedly cited by critics, Patricia Merivale being chief amongst them, as instances of Pan's more "sinister" reincarnation in British literature. Yet Pan's ties with the exotic and the antiquated have yet to be fully appreciated for qualifying him as a monster in a literary genre that artfully converts social anxieties into monstrosities. Pan functions very specifically to express contemporary sexual anxieties through a classical sensation of terror and exhilaration. Furthermore, the classical allusion behind homosexual panic implies a political argument; that homosexuality participates in a natural, historical legacy of homosexual desire . Arthur Machen premiers Pan in the Victorian horror story with "The Great God Pan" (1894), depicting an outbreak of homosexual

panic in the tight homosocial atmosphere of Victorian London. Pan hovers behind Machen's story of a murderous pagan temptress, Helen, as the embodiment of the "unspeakable vice of the Greeks"[7] which her paganism unleashes on bourgeois male society. E.F. Benson, with "The Man Who Went Too Far" (1904), and E.M. Forster, with "The Story of a Panic" (1904), each remove their Pan stories to the countryside, where community with nature easily parallels sensual abandon. Benson's Pan personifies the thrilling savagery of nature and homosexual desire, whereas Forster's champions the natural innocence of youthful sexual curiosity. Casualties of panic love persist, though, even in Forster's sentimental story. Sentimental homosexual love is darkened by hideous defacement in Gertrude Atherton's "The Striding Place" (1905), a subtle yet striking variation on the Pan horror story. Pan figures as an elusive spiritual presence in this story, steering the homosexual love plot towards a violently gothic conclusion. Pan, as a trope in a particular strand of paranoid gothic literature, indicates both an emergent homosexual identity and literature.

A Victorian Urban Legend: Machen's "The Great God Pan" (1894)

In Patricia Merivale's estimation, Arthur Machen's "The Great God Pan" (1894) is a seminal text that effectively "counteract[s] the pretty sterilities of the minor poets and provide[s] the first major example of Pan in modern prose fiction" (166). Though she grants Swinburne "some originality" in his treatment of Pan ("at any rate of tone and emphasis"), Merivale credits

[7] E.M. Forster uses this euphemism for homosexuality in *Maurice* (1914) to illustrate the frustrating ethical contradictions in Oxbridge's instruction of Classics. Says the Dean to his Greek translation students, "Omit: a reference to the unspeakable vice of the Greeks" (51). Durham, a student, afterward observes, "I regard it as a point of pure scholarship. The Greeks, or most of them, were that way inclined and to omit it is to omit the mainstay of Athenian society" (51). The intimate relationship that develops between himself and his classmate Maurice after privately discussing Plato's *Symposium*, though, blurs the distinction between scholarship and sexual practice.

Machen with fully realizing his potential for terror in the Victorian and Edwardian horror story (154). Merivale's chief criticism of Machen is that his "terrors are too intangible" – "too absurd to be frightening" (164). Though Machen's well-researched story derives its themes of deathly panic and "unholy rape" from such classical historians as Herodotus and Eusebius[8], Merivale is critical of Machen's stylistic "mistake" of "leaving out the hoofs and the murky odour" (167). Merivale appreciates the occasional "touches" of Pan in the text, "like the satyr head or the Aegipans of Solinus' narration," but is dissatisfied with his female incarnation, Helen, who "has to take the brunt of the theme" and is not qualified to do so (165).

Because Merivale does not include homoeroticism amongst her Pan themes, she severely underestimates Pan's presence in Machen's story. Furthermore, her criticism that his treatment of Pan is "too intangible" is unfair for this very reason. The "benevolent Pan" of pastoral poetry could be lavished with imagery and detail and other "pretty sterilities" precisely because he was a largely "sterile" figure. Though Wilde's plea for Pan to "leave the hills of Arcay! / This modern world hath need of Thee!" sounds ominous in light of the homosexual panic Wilde would soon unleash on Victorian England, even his Pan is still pastoral and unassuming. Machen's sexually deviant and dangerous Pan more closely anticipates the consequences of unveiling a modern yet deeply historically rooted homosexual identity. Machen, whose thorough research of Pan undoubtedly addressed the goat god's sexual ambivalence, must nonetheless treat his already excessively sexual themes with caution. The reduction of Pan's satyr qualities

[8] Merivale deduces that Machen's primary source materials were Eusebius's *De Praeparatio Evangelica* and Herodotus's 'Mysteries of the Egyptian Religion,' the latter of which Machen actually mentions having read in his autobiography, *Far Off Things*.

and the emphasis on Helen, a female conduit between Pan and the men of London he desires, appear measures to disguise otherwise overtly homosexual themes.

Another major adjustment Machen makes to the Pan myth is removing the great god from the natural wilderness of the mountains of Arcadia to the urban wilderness of Victorian London. Machen's heroes and victims, male members of the professional class, experience their panic not in the isolation of the woods, but in the close company of a homosocial society. Certainly, as Merivale (and even Machen himself) acknowledges, the novella suffers from the "excessive influence" of Robert Louis Stevenson (159). Though Stevenson's urban gothic thriller has already been read as "a fable of fin-de-siècle homosexual panic" by Showalter and others, Machen's, which makes the crucial connection between the homosocial societies of Victorian London and ancient Greece, remains largely unnoticed by this line of criticism. Whereas Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll is convinced of the novelty of his psyche-splicing potion, Machen's Dr. Raymond, who unleashes Pan on the modern world by brain surgery, is well aware that "the ancients knew what lifting the veil means. They called it seeing the god Pan" (2). "Lifting the veil" and "seeing the god Pan" are telling phrases of the time. From a Victorian Hellenist perspective, beneath the veil of Victorian homosociality lies classical homosexuality, which the Greeks identified with Pan. Machen's tale of "lifting the veil" and confronting forbidden homosexual desire, though hiply urban and contemporary, is informed by a classical, mythological understanding of panic terror. Despite the demonization of Pan, Machen's allegory of a clash of epochs, Pagan and Christian, criticizes Victorian social norms through the violent yet tantalizing re-emergence of homosexual desire.

Machen's story illustrates the extent to which Christian ethics were at the time under attack by neoclassical intellectual curiosity. In *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford*

(1994), Linda Dowling traces the influence of classicism on Victorian homosexual subculture through the Oxford university reform movement. Early in the nineteenth century, liberal social theorists John Stewart Mill and Matthew Arnold identified a crisis of cultural "stagnation" and "regression" in England that all the technological advances of the Industrial Revolution could not counter (58). Mill and Arnold envisioned, as a remedy, "a modern-day Hellenism encompassing such elements as 'pagan self-assertion,' 'nonconformity,' 'freedom,' and 'variety of situations'" (61). In this language of individuality and diversity, Dowling suggests, "there may already be glimpsed the outlines of late-Victorian counterdiscourse of sensuous diversity and homosexual dissent" (61). These counterdiscourses were first developed in a coded fashion within Greek studies at Oxford. In the 1850s and 1860s, a shifting curricular emphasis from Latin to Greek was accompanied by a growing body of German scholarship on Greece which practiced an "ethically detached" historicist view that permitted discussion of Greek paiderastia without moralizing condemnation. These liberal reforms excited murmurs that "wholly secular, even pagan standards were coming to substitute at Oxford for Christian religious assumptions" (77). Towards the turn of the century, John Symonds and Walter Pater began to extract from these Greek texts apologies of male love and distinctly homoerotic aesthetics. Hellenism soon became a visible, performative indication of homosexuality as "the conventions of Greek life – *paiderastia, symposia, dialektike* – would assume the status of lived categories for Wilde" and the young aesthetes who followed (124). Yet even within the elite intellectual milieu of Oxford, Victorian Hellenism troubled its homosexual enthusiasts with a painful contradiction – "its willful denial of the paiderastia so crucial to the Greek culture it otherwise held up to emulation and praise" (88). The homosexual implications behind Victorian Hellenism, however "willfully denied," proved to be beyond even the classicist's control.

Machen transforms this intellectual trend into a gothic nightmare in which Helen is literally revived, and with her the Pan-sexual exploits of the ancients. In his story, Helen, a disturbingly alluring woman from the distant countryside, leads London's professionals and intellectuals down a path of dissipation and destruction. Helen's pagan orgies, sinister celebrations of classical mythos, culminate in guests "seeing the god Pan" and committing suicide in self-disgust. This outbreak of "suicidal mania" amongst those men who have peered into their classical heritage and "seen Pan" in themselves offers a detailed illustration of homosexual panic (33). While Helen spreads homosexual panic through London like a fatal disease, the symptoms, collected by a team of dandy social investigators, are those "touches" of Pan that connect homosexuality to the god of nature. Machen's sexually predatory Pan is a far cry from the pastoral spiritual guardian the Romantics envisioned, and more closely recalls the Pan of Greek mythology (albeit without hoofs).[9] Though recast as a vicious and lascivious gothic monster, Machen's Pan remains the god of nature. The perverse monster/natural god contradiction develops Pan's classical ambivalence – of person (half-man and half-goat) and temperament (guardian and aggressor) – in keeping with the scholarly debate over homosexuality. In light of Victorian Hellenism, Helen and her private knowledge of Pan represent classicism's discovery of a great homosexual heritage. The "suicidal mania" that results from Helen's sharing of this knowledge, though, suggests that the recognition of such a cultural heritage threatens to paralyze English society with fear and disgust.

It is the gentlemen of London's professional class who experience homosexual panic most acutely. An exclusively male subdivision of the emergent middle class, the professional

[9] Granted, the sensational serial-murder plot is a hallmark of the emerging urban gothic genre and is more closely influenced by "Jack the Ripper" lore.

class is teeming with homosexual tension which Machen depicts as being funneled into bourgeois professions and hobbies. Dr. Raymond himself has rather passionate, private motives for performing his experimental surgery on his test subject, Mary. He confesses to his witness, Clarke, that he has developed his surgical procedure for "seeing the god Pan" only after "years of toiling and groping in the dark, after days and nights of disappointment and sometimes of despair, in which I used now and then to tremble and grow cold with the thought that perhaps there were others seeking for what I sought for" (2). Dr. Raymond relates the story of his experimental research process with the fervor of a lonely lover. His competitive professional anxiety that "perhaps there were others seeking for what I sought for" easily translates as a nervous yearning for a homosexual companion or even community. His sexually frustrated "toiling," "groping," and "trembling" is not in vain for his experiment succeeds and his subject indeed sees Pan. The sight, read by Dr. Raymond on Mary's face, proves to be characteristically conflicting and "in an instant the wonder faded, and gave place to the most awful terror" (7). The panic love that Dr. Raymond has finally unlocked (for nine months later Mary gives birth to the wicked Helen) is volatile with polar sensations of "wonder" and "terror." Dr. Raymond, the repressed homosexual, has experimented on Christian culture through its emblem, Mary, and forced her to reverse history by giving birth to the daughter of Paganism.

Certainly, Machen's gothic narrative tends toward the excruciating terror of panic love. Mary is cruelly rendered a "hopeless idiot" by her transcendental sexual encounter with Pan (7). This may, though, be easily interpreted as a testament to the logical superiority of Hellenist rationality (which condones homosexuality) over Christian morality (which condemns it). Even with its gothic emphasis, the story suggests that the tension between the wonder and the terror of homosexuality is itself sexually tantalizing. Like Dr. Raymond's zeal for science, Clarke's guilty

fascination with "occult investigation" is sexually charged (8). Clarke's secondhand experience of panic terror should have cured him of his occult desire; however, "Clarke knew that he still pined for the unseen, and little by little, the old passion began to reassert itself" (8). Clarke's own repressed homosexuality is suggested by his "lust" for the occult, especially when he satisfies it with a chapter in his "Memoirs to Prove the Existence of the Devil" on Pan (8).

Sexual "evil," from the perspective of Christian homophobia, is clearly aligned with Pan in Clarke's memoirs. Clarke's occult manuscript chronicles Helen and Pan's earliest sex crimes, committed in a rural village fittingly littered with Roman remains. Helen, the symbol of classicism and opposition to the sexual purity of Christianity, repeatedly conjures Pan, the "strange naked man" who thrives in her presence and preys on the repressed homosexuals she seduces for him. At the tender age of twelve, Helen is spotted frolicking in the woods beyond the "old Roman Road" with a "strange naked man" (11). The sight alone causes a young boy, an ideal object of Pan's pederastic desire, to "pass into a condition described by the medical man as one of violent hysteria" (12). Whatever the transgression between Helen and the "strange naked man," the sight of it causes "hysteria" in the boy – a nervous condition as well as a sexual disorder in Victorian medicine. At seventeen, Helen is seen last escaping to the woods with a younger girl, Rachel, who is soon afterwards found in her bedroom "lying, half undressed, upon the bed, evidently in great distress" (13). The disheveled girl relates a "wild story" which is too racy for Clarke's records, as it belongs to the category of the unspeakable (13).

Helen next resurfaces in London, where she wreaks considerably more sexual havoc, and of a considerably more homosexual character. Homosexual subculture was, in the late nineteenth century, distinctly urban. It was dictated, Jeffrey Weeks notes, by "the sexual ideology of the male upper class" which effected a "sexual barter" system which primarily served the "upper-

middle-class fascination with crossing the class divide" (112). The first to suspect Pan's presence in London is Villiers, "a man about town, trim, glossy, and eminently well-to-do" (14). Villiers himself suffers from an "almost chronic" fascination with "those mysterious incidents and persons with which the streets of London teem in every quarter and at every hour" (14). Certainly, there are enough quarters (and hours) in London in which only the most sordid incidents occur and persons stir, and Villiers's morbid fascination with them suggests a desire for sexual intrigue. Whether Villiers is indeed seeking a prostitute or some other vagrant of choice remains a mystery, for he is interrupted from his musing ("London has been called the City of Encounters; it is more than that, it is the City of Resurrections" [14]) by a beggar who reveals himself to be Villiers's former college acquaintance, Mr. Herbert. Herbert appears to have fallen victim to a woman, Helen, who "corrupted him body and soul" (22). Villiers is all too eager to hear of Herbert's ruin, and swiftly inquires about for details elsewhere. Villiers's inquiries and Clarke's memoirs overlap on the topic of Helen, and the two friends set off together to investigate the ill-reputed woman. Villiers proves particularly useful in the investigation, for, as he explains, "I have always been fond of diving into Queer Street for my amusement, and I found my knowledge of that locality and its inhabitants very useful" (40). Though his present stroll down the shady block of Queer Street is in search of a dangerous villain, his previous romps have been strictly for his "amusement." Villiers even brags, "The people there know me; I have been able to do some of them a service now and again" (40). "Services" which occasion crossing the class divide are rather suspicious, and Villiers's obsession with Helen highly suspect.

Helen, as the human embodiment of pagan culture and classical homosexuality, presides over unseen encounters between Pan and the repressed homosexuals of London. While she is

loosely connected with the "figures of Fauns and Satyrs and AEgipans," this is chiefly to solidify her association with the classical figure of Pan (himself never glimpsed) and is hardly her most terrifying quality (30). The startling contradiction of Pan's grotesque body is captured, though, in Helen's unsettling allure. When a respectable gentleman is found dead (from fright, no less) outside of 20 Paul Street, investigators find that neighbors merely "raised their eyebrows and thought the Herberts rather 'queer,'" but offered "nothing tangible" (19). The Herbert's spotty reputation is based largely on Mrs. Herbert, Helen Herbert, who is reportedly "at once the most beautiful woman and the most repulsive" (20). Helen's ambivalent beauty is rather that of her classical homosexual culture. Helen and her Greek associations seem to arouse in men a certain sexual ambivalence – simultaneous attraction and revulsion. She employs this ambivalence in her murder method; luring men into her house (which symbolically stands for her culture) and then driving them to their suicide (many in their beds). It is, of course, this luring of men that garners her most attention. When Villiers's inquires about Helen down Queer Street, he gathers a sense of "the nameless infamies which were laid to her charge" (41). Her infamies are not those common crimes that plague the streets of London. These "nameless infamies" are chronicled, though, in "Meyrick's legacy," the last sketches of a young artist connected before his untimely death with Helen. Leafing through the sketches, Villiers finds himself "absorbed, in spite of himself, in the frightful Walpurgis Night[10] of evil" as "figures of Fauns and Satyrs and AEgipans danced before his eyes" (30). Villiers, finding Meyrick's pagan images grotesque, finds them even more so when the details he uncovers about Helen prove that "[t]hose designs were not drawn from his imagination" (41). One last piece of evidence, a manuscript narrating "the

[10] "The origins of the holiday date back to pagan celebrations of fertility rights and the coming of spring. After the Norse were Christianized, the pagan celebration became combined with the legend of St. Walburga" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*).

entertainment [Helen] provided for her choicer guests," confirms Clarke's earliest suspicions; that the Great God Pan who killed Mary is living through Helen. Indeed, the final revelation is that Mary herself died giving birth to Helen precisely nine months after her vision of Pan. Thus, Pagan and Christian mythology are twisted as the virgin mother Mary gives birth to, and is destroyed by, the pagan temptress Helen. This is quite explicitly a misogynistic commentary on the evils of female sexuality, as well as a cruel representation of neoclassicism.

Yet the sexual evil that the Great God Pan represents is more (or less) specifically a *pan*sexual evil. Villiers muses on Pan as "an exquisite symbol beneath which men long ago veiled their knowledge of the most awful, most secret forces which lie at the heart of all things" (43). These universal forces, which "lie at the heart of *all* things," must be, if indeed sexual, pansexual. Why then, do so few ever acknowledged those other sexualities dwelling within themselves? "Such forces cannot be named, cannot be spoken, cannot be imagined except under a veil and a symbol" (43). Villiers bravely owns that the symbolic (sexual) other is created to expel or exorcise one's own evil. Perhaps an attempt at poetic justice, Villiers and Clarke insist that Helen execute herself, as she insisted her victims do, by strangulation. When she complies, Clarke recalls that he "saw the form waver from sex to sex, dividing itself from itself, and then again reunited" (46). There is a brief moment in which the sexual ambivalence, for which the men most fear Helen, threatens to finally split. Yet the men are spared the pain of unabashedly facing their homosexual desire.

The viciousness of Machen's Pan, or the viciousness of his targets' reaction to their repressed homosexuality, seems more a response to the threat that newly specified homosexuality posed to homosociality. Only a year later, with a non-fictional outbreak of homosexual panic, journalist W. T. Stead would complain that "[a] few more cases like Oscar

Wilde's and we should find the freedom of comradeship now possible to men seriously impaired" (quoted in Weeks 109). Regardless of how classically informed Wilde's homosexual image was, it was met, like Machen's Pan, with violent resistance. Machen anxiously anticipates this danger, and uses Pan to demonstrate the detrimental effect of homophobic hysteria on homosexual identity and sub-culture

Back to Rural Roots: E. F. Benson's "The Man Who Went Too Far" (1904)

A decade after Machen released Pan on Victorian London, E. F. Benson imagines the return of the "monstrous goat" to the modern English countryside (130). Removed from the morally polluted city, homosexual love nearly blossoms under the tutorship of Pan. Though his transcendental wisdom is more accessible, deep in the woods Pan's terrifying potential is likewise more penetrating. In "The Man Who Went Too Far" (1904), Pan lures a young artist, Frank, into the wilderness of carnal, pagan pleasures, corrupting him in the process and savagely killing him in the end. While Pan lurks in the distance, the alluring young artist tempts his own best friend, Darcy, with his beauty and charm. Pan's grotesque ravaging of Frank, which mars his sinfully beautiful face with "terror incarnate and revulsion," ultimately jolts Darcy into awareness before he succumbs to homosexuality (148). While Darcy's sexual frustration already verges on panic, Pan's sickening slaughter gives the story its climactic gothic thrust and the terror of homosexual desire surpasses the temptation. Benson's use of a more pastoral Pan, though, implies that homosexual desire grows organically in the wilderness under the guidance of the god of nature, rather than in the city under the influence of poisonous habits and readings. This difference adds clarity to Machen's strategy of using Pan to validate homosexuality as a fundamentally natural (if inevitably terrifying) impulse.

Patricia Merivale, as the first literary critic to hone in on Pan's popularity in late nineteenth century literature, includes Benson's "The Man Who Went Too Far" in her collection of turn of the century texts that present a more "sinister Pan" than the "benevolent Pan" of Romantic poetry. Though attentive to the original gothic contributions of Benson's Pan story, Merivale seems either oblivious to or skeptical of the sexual innuendos that speckle the text, arguing that "Benson paints a very mild picture of [Pan's] animal vitality and sexuality" (170). In her eager anticipation of the heavily sexualized Pan that D.H. Lawrence would soon render, Merivale seems to gloss over the subtle homosexuality that Benson associates with the goat-god. Merivale briefly acknowledges the potential sexual implications of Pan-struck Frank championing fertile "Nature" over frigid "Puritanism," but maintains that "to comply with Benson's taste and that of his audience, [Frank] denies any possibility of sensuality in his mystical ecstasy" (170). "Do not think I became a sensualist," Frank begs, and Merivale, like Darcy, too easily complies with his request (136). The praises of Pan which Frank sings, though, are distinctly, almost obscenely sensual. Merivale does not entertain the possibility that Frank's nature-worship is displaced body-worship – which is quite an oversight considering his obsession with Pan, a male embodiment of nature.

Nicholas Freeman, treating late nineteenth century "paganism" as "a loosely defined cultural movement," is more willing to grant Pan – or at least treatments of him by specific homosexual authors – his homosexual significance (23). Oscar Wilde's paganism in particular, Freeman observes, was informed by his "love for the classics and idealization of Greek sexual ethics" (23). Freeman ventures that Benson, "sexually discreet to the point of mystery," may have subscribed to Wilde's specific sect of "modern 'pagan' ethics" which privileged classicism and homosexuality (27). Freeman appreciates that Benson's Pan story is "spiced with plentiful

homoeroticism" and recognizes the parallel between nature-worship and "sexual revolt," but he stops short of concluding that Pan and nature actually endorse homosexuality (25). He maintains that "Benson's focus is primarily religious" and devotes his reading of the temptation of pagan ethics to a turn of the century crisis in Christian faith (31). Benson's story awaits a reading that more carefully aligns Frank's homoerotic pantheism with Pan's classical heritage and makes explicit the relationship between the two.

Benson paves the way for Pan's twentieth century reappearance by removing his story from the urbanity of Victorian London and tucking it away in a wood near a Hampshire village, where classical mythology (and sexual liberty) may thrive hand in hand with nature. This idyllic landscape, while outside the range of London's moral and sexual depravity, harbors more ancient and threatening evils. There is in the New Forest, the wilderness beyond the quaint village of St. Faith's, nearly "nothing human" (129). In fact, the village is "huddled close round its grey Norman church as if for spiritual protection against the fays and fairies, the trolls and 'little people,' who might be supposed still to linger in the vast empty spaces of the New Forest, and to come after dusk and do their doubtful business" (129). Here is a modern Christian society still plagued by pagan demons who do their "doubtful business" under the cover of night. While Christianity has not yet eradicated such beasts, it has at least condemned them to the countryside. If Celtic folklore still abounds in rural Great Britain, than what of classical mythology? For while it is "difficult to get from these villagers any very clear story of occult appearances," there is a general fear, and one firsthand account, of "a monstrous goat that has been seen to skip with hellish glee about the woods and shady places" (130). Pan, a "hellish" gothic monstrosity belonging to Greek mythology, has found refuge in this marginal space. The firsthand account of his horrors, necessarily diluted by the voice of a dispassionate narrator, is that of Mr. Darcy, a

dear friend of the "young artist" with whom the story is chiefly concerned (130). Frank, an aesthete "of great personal beauty, with something about him that made men's faces to smile and brighten when they looked on him" is both cause and casualty of the panic that ensues (130). Under the banner of Pan-theism, Frank revives a strain of Greek sexual ethics that proves infectious and, when fully realized, fatal.

Frank's worship of Pan reveals his impossible idealization of Greek pederasty. Frank Halton, the fellow living on the fringe of the New Forest, is a singularly (and classically) alluring young man:

> He was of medium height and rather slender in build, but the supple ease and grace of his movements gave the impression of great physical strength […] His head was small, his face of an exquisite beauty of modeling, while the smoothness of its contour would have led you to believe that he was a beardless lad still in his teens. (131)

Frank's union of "great physical strength" and "exquisite beauty" recalls the idealized male youth of ancient Greece. Pan's transcendental tutorship of Frank is very much in the spirit of pederasty – a sexually charged transfer of knowledge from mentor to minor – and Frank's "medium height," "slender build," and particularly his "smoothness" recommend him as a young eromenos[11] (ideally "a beardless lad still in his teens"). Yet Frank's youthful allure (and so much of his allure *is* youth) is somewhat deceptive:

> But something, some look which living and experience alone can give, seemed to contradict that, and finding yourself completely puzzled as to his age, you would next moment probably cease to think about that, and only look at this glorious specimen of young manhood with wondering satisfaction. (131)

[11] K. J. Dover, in *Greek Homosexuality* (1978), uses the Greek terms *erastes* ("lover") and *eromenos* ("beloved") to designate the "active" and "passive" roles in Greek pederastic relationships (16).

The slippery ambivalence about the boy, the allure and the alarm, seems to concern his age in particular. Frank is both young and old, much like an emergent homosexual identity that is already age old. This contradiction in Frank's appearance mirrors the difficulty of grounding homosexuality, a Victorian construct, in Greek sexual ethics.[12] Frank, though, seems to embody homosexuality in an inchoate, classical stage. When Darcy, a fellow artist with whom Frank once shared a studio in the city, greets him for the first time in six years, he grasps Frank's hand and gasps, "You are a boy again" (132). Darcy recalls that Frank is two years younger than himself, and must therefore be thirty five, but looks "just twenty" (134). Darcy recognizes the sexual allure of Frank's renewed youth, comparing his rejuvenation to the wiles of a "woman of fashion" – an urban "bird of prey" (134). Frank playfully resents Darcy's analogy, but quite seriously insists that his youth encompasses more than his body of desire. "Quite true my body has become young," Frank concedes, "But that is very little; I have become young" (135). Frank values his restored youth, almost paradoxically, primarily for its "capacity for growth" (135). Frank's appreciation of youth as a suspended moment of maturation, though, makes perfect sense in the context of Greek pederasty. Greek sexual customs, K. J. Dover (1978) insists, condoned homosexual practices almost exclusively as the means of educating and mentoring male youths.[13] Frank, subscribing to these idealized sexual ethics, must experience his

[12] Gregory Woods (1998) insists that homosexual practices and identities are historically and culturally specific, and is skeptical of attempts to unify a "gay tradition": "In the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth, homosexual people have been involved in the retrospective creation of a culture of our own – which is to say, the appropriation of disparate cultural products and producers, and the elaboration of a fiction: that of a continuous 'male love' tradition descending to Victorian London (or Paris, Berlin, Vienna or New York) from Periclean Athens and beyond" (6).

[13] Quoting from Plato's *Symposium*, Dover voices the historical perspective that a youth is expected "to perform any service for one who improves him in mind and character" (91). Plato's corollary to this permission of homosexual sex, though, is that "in these circumstances alone, and in no others, it is credible for an eromenos to grant favours to an erastes" (91). Dover grants that the rigidity of these sexual roles may not have been, in practice, so severe. That

homosexual desire as a desire for growth and maturity. In the crudest sense, though, Frank is expecting Pan to fill his "capacity for growth."

Though Frank imagines himself as physically detached from his love of nature, his depiction of himself as a callow eromenos and Pan as his sophisticated erastes anticipates a sexual encounter between the two. "Do not think I became a sensualist," Frank assures Darcy after crediting his miraculous rejuvenation to his renunciation of "Puritanism" for "Nature" (136). With Pan serving as his emblem of "Nature," however, classicism, nature, and homosexuality all converge in Frank's pantheism. Frank traces his conversion to an early morning spent in a meadow. Beneath the rustle of the reeds, Frank discerns "the sound quite distinctly of some flute-like instrument playing a strange unending melody" (138). Building with Frank's own curiosity, "it worked gradually and inevitably up to a climax, and having attained it, it went on; another climax was reached and another and another" (138). This orgasmic melody Frank recognizes, "with a sudden gasp," as "Pan playing on his pipes" (139). Pan's melody, with its endless climaxes, boasts his sexual virility and insatiability. Frank, contrarily, is "terrified with the impotent horror of nightmare" (139). Frank's terrified "impotence," which denies him the sound of the Pan-pipes for the next six months, is the consequence of his denial and resistance of his homosexual desire. Frank sincerely regrets that he had ever "revolted, rebelled, and worst of all been frightened" by the melody, and has since resolved to be "open, resting, [and] receptive" to Pan's pipes (139). Through these musical euphemisms, Frank essentially submits to, if not invites, Pan's penetration. It is, in Frank's estimation, resistance that incites panic.

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the sexual relationship should culminate in the enlightenment and maturation of the eromenos, though, sets parameters on the dynamic and duration of the relationship just the same.

Darcy, a London man about town, is less inclined to romanticize Pan and pederasty – his urban notion of homosexuality likely still informed by the mortifying conviction of Oscar Wilde. "To see Pan meant death, did it not," he cautions Frank (142). Disassociated from urban decadence, though, homosexual desire is far more disarming than Darcy expects, and he slowly succumbs to it. "You have bewitched me, you extraordinary boy," Darcy confesses to Frank after learning of Pan's gentle guidance, "You have been telling me a fairy-story, and I find myself saying, 'Promise me it is true'" (140). Darcy is intrigued by Pan's promise of a classical, pastoral homosexuality, as opposed to London's polluted modern derivative. Still talking late into the night, Frank offers to help put Darcy to sleep. Darcy accepts, and finds himself further seduced by the "extraordinary boy": "[Darcy] was already in bed, but very wide-eyed and wakeful, and Frank with an amused smile of indulgence, as for a fretful child, sat on the edge of the bed" (141). In this interesting inversion of pederasty, the boy "indulges" in the man (himself more the "fretful child"). After narrating a hypnotic tale of the natural world asleep in harmony, Frank "gently blew out Darcy's candle, and left him sleeping" (141). This reversal troubles Darcy in the morning. Sexual imagery, coded to reflect Greek pederasty's intellectual emphasis, depicts Darcy's own exploration of homosexual roles and identities. Darcy decides, with some embarrassment, that he had been "under the spell of suggestion from the extraordinary vivid boy who had once been a man; all his own excitement, his acceptance of the incredible had been merely the effect of a stronger, more potent will imposed on his own" (141). Darcy is alarmed by his own submissive "acceptance" of Pan, and perhaps even more so by Frank's dominant "potent will." Reasserting his masculinity, Darcy breakfasts with Frank "armed with impenetrable common sense" and "prickly with reason" (141). This sexual imagery temporarily restores Darcy to his dominant role, but "[i]n the morning light Frank looked even fresher, younger, more vital

than he had done the night before, and the sight of him somehow dinted Darcy's armour of common sense" (141-2). Darcy's "impenetrable common sense," if not fully penetrated, is "dinted" by Frank's "vital," potent beauty. Darcy can only submit and sigh, "You are the most extraordinary fellow I ever saw" (142). Experiencing classical pederastic roles (blurred by modern sexual fluidity) at once disquiets and delights Darcy.

Over the next few days, Darcy finds himself increasingly enthralled by Frank and the prospect of Pan's natural homosexual desire. Preaching pantheism or "what others would call paganism" to Darcy, Frank actually encourages homosexual impulses (142). Frank takes Darcy to the meadow in which he first heard the Pan-pipes three years ago, and suddenly flings himself into the grass and lies in "wide-armed ecstasy" (144). Darcy undoubtedly envies the "ecstatic" pleasure Frank experiences from hearing Pan's erotic melody, observing how "his caressing fingers, his half-buried face pressed close to the grass, even the clothed lines of his figure were instinct with a vitality that somehow was different from that of other men" (144). As Darcy deeply admires Frank's "vital figure," "some faint glow from it reached Darcy, some thrill, some vibration from that charged recumbent body passed to him" (144). What passes from one body to the other is not pantheism or transcendentalism, but base sexual attraction. Frank, though, credits this clearly erotic sensation shared between friends to his esoteric, almost innocent ideal of Pan, his erastes.[14] "The Pan-pipes, the Pan-pipes," he whispers to Darcy, "Did you really hear

[14] Dowling describes this strategy in Victorian "Uranian" poetry – a celebration of "Uranian or 'heavenly' love between males described in Plato's *Symposium*" (114). Though grounded in male beauty and aesthetics, Uranian poetry supposedly "sang the praises of a mode of spiritual and emotional attachment that was, at some ultimate level, innocent or asexual" (115). Uranian love's spiritual (rather than bodily) procreancy could, when handled by a wordsmith like Wilde, overshadow the act of intercourse – though post-Freudian cynicism quickly dismisses it as merely "the higher sodomy" (116).

nothing?" (144). Darcy, having located Frank's "charged recumbent body" as the source of his share of the thrilling sensation, is less idealistic than Frank and has reservations about embracing Pan and his sexual ethics.

Accepting Pan as the god of nature, though, is the only way for Darcy to validate his homosexual attraction to Frank. Darcy, despite his strong aversion to paganism, finds himself entertaining the possibility of Pan's existence: "Twenty times a day he found himself saying to himself suddenly at the end of ten minutes' silent resistance to the absurdity of Frank's idea: 'But it isn't possible; it can't be possible'" (144). Darcy's obsessive, strenuous "resistance" of Pan is curiously disproportionate to the scanty evidence of his existence. Yet this key evidence – "the miracle of Frank's youth" – utterly fascinates Darcy (144). Darcy takes great pleasure in pondering how "this youth, this boy, trembling on the verge of manhood, was thirty-five" (144-5). Frank's advancing age yet still "trembling" sexual vulnerability excites and challenges Darcy's erotic imagination, and tempts him to worship Frank as a "visible living miracle" of Pan (144). Certainly, Darcy's anxious resistance of Pan reveals his repressed desire for Frank.

Pan's pederastic mentorship of Frank culminates in a gruesome consummation of homosexual desire. In the days leading up to Frank's violent death, he talks incessantly of a "final revelation" (140). Pan's "final revelation" of "full knowledge" to his pupil should occasion their highly anticipated sexual encounter (140). "I am near, so splendidly near the final revelation," Frank muses, "To-day the pipes have sounded almost without pause" (146). Pan's voluptuous melody anticipates the arrival of his mythical body, and Frank suspects he shall soon "see Pan" in the flesh: "I have seen, yes, I saw to-day, the bushes pushed aside as if by a hand, and [a] piece of a face, not human, peered through" (146). Frank has hitherto omitted the pleasures (and pains) of the flesh from his idealization of Greek pederasty, and Darcy severely

faults him for his oversight now that Pan lurks so near. Darcy funnels his own homosexual anxieties into the sight of Pan, and assures Frank that "it will be the revelation of horror, suffering, death, pain in all its hideous forms" (146). The revelation, heard but not seen by Darcy late one night, proves to be more ambiguous than he originally supposed. The "scream of supreme and despairing terror" that Darcy hears outside his window certainly suggests Frank suffers (147). But his "quivering[,] sobbing" interjection, "My God, oh, my God; oh, Christ!," is oddly spiritual and almost sentimental – if not sexual (147). The screams and sobs of a consummation are, after all, in part of pain and pleasure. Indeed, Darcy stumbles into the garden and finds Frank's hammock "tenanted" by the boy and the "obscure dark shadow" of Pan (148). Though Darcy is spared the sight of the goat-god, he smells the "acrid odour" and hears the "tappings of hard hoofs" as he escapes back into the woods (148).

Pan's savage sexuality shatters, for Darcy anyway, Frank's classical homosexual ideal. When Darcy finally reaches Frank, he is again physically transformed by Pan:

> His upper lip was drawn back so that the gums of his teeth appeared, and his eyes were focused not on the two who approached him, but on something quite close to him; his nostrils were widely expanded, as if he panted for breath, and terror incarnate and revulsion and deathly anguish ruled dreadful lines on his smooth cheeks and forehead. (148)

Frank's placid classical beauty is distorted by his tightly "drawn back" lips, "widely expanded" nostrils, and "dreadful lines" of "anguish." Frank's facial expression of "terror incarnate" displaces his body of desire – which itself is bruised with "pointed prints" (149). Frank, before a temptation, becomes an object lesson of the consequences of homosexual abandon. Pan's ravishment of Frank disillusions Darcy of the Greek sexual ethics he came so near to embracing. As death settles in Frank, though, he begins to resemble less of a corpse and more of "a boy tired with play but still smiling in his sleep" (148). Frank's ambiguous sexually suggestive death

captures the confusion of turn of the century shifting definitions and experiences of homosexuality.

Towards Sympathetic Understanding: E.M. Forster's "The Story of a Panic" (1904)

In E.M. Forster's "The Story of a Panic" (1904), Pan once again tempts a young, impressionable Englishman into the wild woods. Whereas Benson's Pan fiendishly preys on his protégé, Forster's elusive pagan figure enlightens and liberates. With his sentimental story, in which Pan's pupil actually achieves a partial liberation, Forster steers the trend of terrifying homoerotic Pan stories towards a more sympathetic, yet equally exhilarating, treatment of homosexuality. Eustace, a "conceited and odious" boy of fourteen, is vacationing in Italy with his two aunts when he is quite transformed by a mysterious incident occurring deep in the "chestnut woods" (4, 5). A surprise encounter (presumably with Pan) which inspires "blank, expressionless fear" in most of the people present excites in the boy a self-proclaimed affinity for "[t]he trees, hills, stars, water" and, most provocatively, the young Italian hotel waiter, Gennaro (11, 33). Invigorated by his brush with Pan, Eustace recruits Gennaro to break from society and commune with nature. While Eustace achieves his union with nature, his union with Gennaro (and Gennaro's very life) must be sacrificed in the struggle.

Critics have long since noticed the presence of Pan in Forster's writing, but not until recently have they begun to unpack the sexual significance of this ambivalent symbol. Patricia Merivale, again reading the trope against a mythological prototype stripped of its homosexual significance, recalls critiques of Forster's works that employ the great god as a "convenient shorthand symbol" for the "ruling spirit" of his imaginative, nature-infused writing (184).[15]

[15] R. A. Scott-James (1951), for example, speaks figuratively of Forster's mythic faith in nature when he writes "Every hillside in his mythology has its Pan, every wood its dryad, and every natural man has his proper abode" (quoted in Merivale 185).

Merivale's investigation is more specific, less concerned with the diffuse "'spirit of Pan'" pervading Forster's work than with textual references to the Greek god. References to Pan are either absent or "parenthetical" in Forster's novels, Merivale argues, and even in *The Longest Journey*, in which they are most prevalent, "Forster ironically uses the symbol most often to exploit its artificial and literary quality" (185).[16] In "The Story of a Panic," Merivale observes, Pan still functions as a perfectly viable symbol for primitive vigor and truth, regardless of how he is misused and abused by those who are too far removed from his intuitive reach. (Mr. Sandbach, a curate, predictably equates him with "The Evil One"). Merivale's close reading of "The Story of a Panic," while attentive to the turn of the century literary debate over Pan as a viable symbol, still neglects the sexual component of Forster's Pan.

More recent critics, however, have begun to use Pan as a key to the sexual commentary in Forster's short fiction. They have done so on a fairly superficial level, though, relying on biographical assumptions about Forster's own sexuality rather than textual evidence. Glen Cavaliero (1995), like Merivale, finds that Forster uses Pan to explore the "tension between the will to believe and the frustration of that belief by a reluctant rationality" (139). Forster's reverence for nature and mythology, that is, often finds itself at odds with his rational humanism. While Forster's mythopoeic short fiction may conjure up "disturbing incursions of the great god Pan," Cavaliero observes, it is combined with a "playful and at times sarcastic humor" (139). Cavaliero calls Forster's ambivalent treatment of Pan "whimsy," and likens it to his ambivalent

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[16] Merivale notes the resemblance of the pedantic, mythopoeic anthology Rickie aspires to publish in *The Longest Journey* (1907), *Pan Pipes*, to Forster's own early collection of short stories, *The Celestial Omnibus* (published in 1911 but comprised of stories – "The Story of a Panic" in particular – penned as early as 1902). "*Pan Pipes* would be an appropriate title for either volume," she speculates (189). Merivale expects the autobiographical parallel is Forster's own self-conscious criticism of his amateur, idealist short fiction.

treatment of sexuality: "Forster is well aware of the emotional and imaginative demands of human sexuality, evasion of which produces the whimsy" (139). The suggestion seems to be that Forster's Pan stories stem from suppression (or evasion) of his own homosexuality. Cavaliero then quickly compares Forster's Pan fiction to ("the sophisticated") Saki's, implying some sort of homosexual commonality between the two but failing to produce any evidence of it (139). Cavaliero's ground for comparison of "whimsical" Forster and "sophisticated" Saki seems to be their shared gay sensibility, which says very little about either's literary treatment of Pan.

Robert Dingley succinctly articulates the reading of "The Story of a Panic" that both Merivale and Cavaliero anticipate when he says that "Pan serves to catalyze an implicitly homosexual relationship between Eustace and Gennaro" (57). Dingley gives a much needed erotic charge to Merivale's suggestion that Pan "makes [Eustace] a brother of the Italians," but he still neglects to lend it the textual support needed to make it any more than a suggestion. Dingley, like Freeman, identifies authors who use Pan to explore homosexuality, but he does not appreciate the aspects of (and alterations to) the myth that make Pan particularly fitting for the job. My reading will make explicit that Forster employs Pan, specifically his classical associations with nature and homosexuality, to naturalize sexuality between men.

There is at first nothing particularly remarkable in Forster's application of Pan. The artist Leyland's (empty) Romantic lamentation that "All the poetry is gone from Nature […] the woods no longer give shelter to Pan" and Mr. Sandbach's proud Plutarchian recitation that "That great God Pan is dead" ironically foreshadow the arrival of the familiar pagan god on the Italian hillside (8, 9). Eustace's oddly inspired carving and playing of a wooden whistle develops suspense, and an inexplicable "blank, expressionless fear" that carries the entire picnic party of English tourists right out of the woods finally breaks it. Though the reader never catches a

glimpse of Pan, the narrator, Tytler (a "plain, simple man, with no pretentions to literary style"), observes goat hoof prints in the earth (3). Forster's Pan is especially sympathetic to youth and its budding sexuality. While all but Eustace flee in terror from Pan, Rose, Tytler's young daughter, soon after regrets her decision. She is sure Eustace is safe where they left him, and even ventures, "I should have stopped, I do believe, […] if I had not seen mamma go" (14). Here is a vague parallel between Forster's and Saki's treatment of the Pan myth. Merivale deems Saki's Pan, "a beautiful, cruel boy," quite the exception amongst Pan figures, who are "most often middle-aged or ageless" (173). In "The Music on the Hill" (1911), Sylvia, new to the rural town of Yessney, makes the fatal mistake of "disbeliev[ing] in him too boastfully" (181). When Saki's "youthful Pan" (as he is depicted in the crude bronze statue from which Sylvia steals an offering) revenges himself on the skeptical Sylvia, her last sensation is not of the pain of the stag's antler piercing her heart, but of the "echo of a boy's laughter, golden and equivocal" (185). The pleasing sound of Pan's youthful voice eroticizes the piercing of Sylvia's heart, and pain mingles with pleasure. Forster's Pan, while not a youthful, erotic figure himself, has at least an affinity for such figures, and inflicts a similarly painful pleasure.

While Pan's infectious spirit proves not to discriminate by gender (Gennaro later reveals that the last youth visited by Pan was a young girl, Caterina), the story calls attention to its effect on Eustace's youthful masculinity. The narrator, praising the sallow boy's newfound athleticism, admires how "[h]e stepped out manfully, for the first in his life, holding his head up and taking deep draughts of air into his chest" (18). He finds Eustace "improved" since the stunning encounter, and is relieved to see him boisterously carrying on "like a real boy" (19). Given that the narrator generally represents stuffy conventionality, his eager approval of Eustace's sexual awakening itself suggests a repressed homoeroticism. Eustace's awakening masculinity, though,

arouses a pronounced uneasiness in the narrator, who notes the "peculiar," "disquieting" smile on Eustace's face and a feminine grace underlying his athleticism as he "dance[s] away into the darkening wood to the rhythm of his words" (14, 15, 20). There is a shadow of effeminacy behind Eustace's youthful masculinity, which, while enhanced by Pan, is discouraged by the narrator. Forster's presentation of an "alternative model" of masculinity, equally virile as the traditional model, may be interpreted as a challenge to claims that homosexuality is a degenerate form of sexuality.[17]

Most evocative of an emergent homosexual subculture is the "promiscuous intimacy" and "intercourse with social inferiors" that Pan inspires in the boy (22). Jeffrey Weeks proposes that the "desire for relationship across class lines" that was so characteristic of Victorian homosexual subculture betrays a concern that "sex could not be spontaneous or natural within the framework of one's own moralistic and respectable class" (113).[18] Eustace's spontaneous intimacy with the "clumsy, impertinent fisher-lad," Gennaro, resembles such a fantasy. Pan does not merely "catalyze" an implicitly homosexual relationship between Eustace and Gennaro; he naturalizes homosexuality by championing intuitive sexual attraction over social decorum. Upon returning to the hotel, "Eustace sprang to meet [Gennaro], and leapt right up into his arms, and put his own arms round his neck" (21-2). Much to Tytler's displeasure, "Gennaro, instead of attending to the wants of the two [newly arrived] ladies, carried Eustace into the house, as if it was the most natural thing in the world" (22). While the stiff English narrator is offended by the breach of

[17] William Greenslade (2000), while inattentive to the homosexual implications, reads "The Story of a Panic" as a commentary on "contemporary anxieties about definitions of masculinity" (150). Greenslade observes that, in the wake of the Boer Wars and Britain's waning imperial power, the adolescent boy and his coming into manhood became the focus of "the regeneration of the imperial body" (150).

[18] Forester himself articulated this desire in his wish "to love a strong young man of the lower classes and be loved by him" (quoted in Weeks 113).

decorum, for Gennaro to love a middle-class English boy as an equal is, of course, by the standard of Forster's humanism simply natural. Later, when Gennaro speaks to Eustace in Italian in the second person singular, "a form only used when addressing those who are both intimates and equals," Tytler interprets the "impertinence" as an "affront to us all" (23). The narrator is less alarmed by the intimacy between the two young men than he is by their perceived equality. Forster illuminates how turn of the century middle-class stability rested in domesticity, and was threatened by sexuality unbridled by marriage (a social contract). Tytler's "fond[ness] of boys as a rule" and obsession with Eustace's sexual maturation betrays an extramarital curiosity that suggests the social contract binding him to his wife and two daughters hides deeply repressed homosexual impulses (4).

Despite the fact that Forster's Pan functions to liberate natural impulses, he remains dangerously volatile. That very night, Tytler wakes to the faint sound of Eustace pacing the terrace garden and is again "seized" by "cold terrible fear" (25). Tytler's anxious sensation is characteristic of the effect of the ambivalent Pan, for he describes it as "not fear of something that was happening, like the fear in the wood, but fear of something that might happen" (25). This uncertainty prompts him to approach Eustace, who is "singing and chattering to himself in a most alarming way," with caution (27). While Eustace rambles on about the "great forces and manifestations of Nature," Gennaro, who has himself responded to the call of Pan before, relates his experience in terms that more closely convey sexual release: "when the first night came, I could run through the woods, and climb the rocks, and plunge into the water, until I accomplished my desire" (28, 36). The desire which Pan excites may only be satisfied through a complete, uninhibited release – the alternative is death. A natural sexual awakening, Forster implies, explores the endless potential of human sexual experiences, not just those that society

permits. Sexuality must, in the story, literally be realized in nature, away from social restrictions located in town. Eustace clearly longs to explore his newfound sexuality with Gennaro, and Tytler deliberately recruits Gennaro, for ten lire, to retrieve Eustace from the terrace and return him to his room. Gennaro easily does so, calling "Eustazio" and exciting "absurd cries of pleasure from the poor boy" (32). Gennaro, "his arm round Eustace's neck," abuses his knowledge of Pan ("I who have been in the woods and understood things too" [35]) and seductively leads the boy back to captivity (33).

Forster's major revision to the panic love story is that the lover who resists his homosexual desire must die, not he who embraces it. Though Gennaro regrets deceiving Eustace and swiftly returns to aid his escape, his hesitancy betrays a morality poisoned by society (and currency). Collapsing before he can make the leap over the terrace wall with Eustace, "[Gennaro] clasped his hand over his breast to protect his ill-gotten gains, and, as he did so, he swayed forward and fell upon his face on the path" (38). Gennaro's romantic death of a failed heart is tainted by the ten-lire pressed against his breast.

Forster refuses to define homosexual identity by the metropolitan homosexual subculture of late-Victorian London (hitherto English society's primary reference point). In "The Story of a Panic," he uses Pan and the Italian countryside to release homosexual desire from London and its popular aristocratic image of the homosexual. Even in the absence of Pan, Forster consistently naturalizes homosexual desire in his fiction by demonstrating its ability to cross ethnic and national as well as class lines. Pan's shifty ambivalence, which assisted Victorian authors to subvert narrow sexual ethics, becomes a burden for modern authors who wish to unswervingly validate homosexuality. Forster eventually phases Pan out of his novels completely, maintaining his spirit of organic homosexuality but abandoning his violent erraticism.

Diffusing the Spirit: Gertrude Atherton's "The Striding Place" (1905)

Atherton's tale of nearly realized homosexual romance suddenly thwarted by deathly panic and disgust is very much in line with Machen, Benson, and Forster's despite the omission of Pan incarnate. Forster himself, after all, would in his later works adopt this strategy of treating Pan as a diffuse spirit rather than a terrifying personification of homosexual desire. Atherton's specific attention to the woodland setting as the site of sexual release betrays an inclination, but certain reluctance, to depict Pan as the emblem of homosexual desire. The advantage of withholding the monstrous goat-god, though, is that it aligns Pan's invisible natural presence with the equally unsettling trope of the "unspeakable." Anxious silence is perhaps even more evocative of repressed homosexual desire than visible hooves and horns. An unseeable omniscient Pan easily stands in for unspeakable homosexual desire. Pan's slowly fading visibility seems to invite a less symbol-heavy treatment of homosexual desire and a less genre-specific homosexual literature. Atherton's grotesque gothic conclusion, though, positions homosexual love very firmly in the realm of the gothic.

Weigall, the protagonist of "The Striding Place" (1905), wrestles with repressed homosexual desire for his dearest friend, Gifford. Deep in a "state of doubt" concerning the whereabouts of Gifford, who has mysteriously disappeared, Weigall wanders into a Yorkshire wood late at night (311). In the "black quiet of the woods," his mind wanders into even darker depths as he confronts the desire that underlies his affection for his friend (312). This English wood, though far removed from the mountains of Arcadia, is ripe with Pan's sensual abandon. Weigall, spying Gifford's hand "shaking savagely" just above the surface of the River Warfe, rushes to rescue his friend (313). Pulling the hand "with passionate will and muscle," Weigall makes contact with Gifford's corpse with carnal unrestraint (313). Yet when Weigall succumbs

to Pan's lascivious influence, he exposes himself to Pan's vicious cruelty. When Weigall lays Gifford down by the riverbank, "something strange and disagreeable sm[i]te[s] his senses," and he realizes his dear friend is long dead and rapidly decaying. Weigall's confrontation of his own homosexual desire, coupled with this gruesome revelation, reflects the most graphic and intense form of homosexual panic in turn of the century Pan fiction. Pan may not make a literal appearance in this story as he does in others, but it deserves to be discussed in relation to the central trend in Pan fiction because it progresses the emphasis on homosexual desire as a natural, be it dark and dangerous, impulse.

The startling, abrupt ending – Weigall realizing that he has not, in fact, rescued his drowning friend but has merely recovered his decaying corpse – hastily (and gruesomely) terminates an uncomfortably sentimental narrative. Just when male sentimentalism verges too closely on homosexual desire, sheer panic strikes Weigall and the "unspeakable" is left unspoken. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's analysis of the gothic trope holds that "[t]he unspeakable is willed – it has not, that is to say, a pre-existent content that is itself already unspeakable – but its gratuitousness is grounded in, is rendered visible in the colors of, the individual obsession and the obsession of the age" (152). Michel Foucault certainly emphasizes sexuality as the obsession of the Victorian age, rejecting the "repressive hypothesis" that paints Victorian society as sexually repressive and presenting it as rather sexually inventive (and vocal) in its "sexual discourse." Yet while medicine negotiated terminology, Jeffrey Weeks maintains, society still tended toward euphemism when discussing sexuality, and sexuality between men in particular remained "the crime not to be named amongst Christians" (99). Sedgwick aptly draws a parallel between this Judaeo-Christian euphemism and the gothic trope of the "unspeakable." Throughout the nineteenth century, the literary device functioned doubly as a homophobic disciplinary

mechanism; "it's very namelessness, it's secrecy, was a form of social control" (94). The uncertainty surrounding the "unspeakable" crime effectively made all men (and the bonds between them) suspect and susceptible to homophobic blackmail. Thus, the intense (if imagined) persecution of the paranoid gothic echoes the anxiety of "homosexual panic."

Weigall, a "continental and detached" Englishman visiting in West Riding of Yorkshire, appears to prefer certain things left unsaid (310). At dinner, for instance, his penchant for subtlety is insulted by a "new-minded" debutante's "demanding the verbal restoration of the vague paintings on the vaulted roof above them" (310). Finding the inquiring girl a "bother" and the other women "an unusually dull lot," Weigall is rather preoccupied with the mysterious disappearance of his friend, Gifford (310). Gifford, apparently holidaying in the Northern countryside as well, had been a guest at a neighboring estate until he vanished two nights ago. Weigall certainly is "continental and detached," for Gifford is Weigall's only society – "[h]is intimate friend, the companion of his boyhood, the chum of his college days, his fellow-traveler in many lands, the man for whom he possessed stronger affection than for all men" (310). Such a strong, male alliance is permissible (even admirable) in English society – so long as it avoids the contamination of sexual desire. What distinguishes a homosocial alliance from a homosexual love, at least from a public standpoint, is little more than discretion. This narrow distinction, though, is shifty when the sexual and the social exist in tandem on a sliding scale and allusive when a transgression is "unspeakable." Living in paranoid fear of his "unspeakable" desire, Weigall himself has internalized the technique.

Atherton draws a parallel between the wilderness and the "unspeakable" as hidden, silent spaces of sexual opportunity and danger. Gifford seems to have tutored Weigall in the art of discretion, as, restlessly roaming the grounds at night, Weigall recalls Gifford's coded remark:

"An English wood is like a good many other things in life – very promising at a distance, but a hollow mockery when you get within. You see daylight on both sides, and the sun freckles the very bracken. Our woods need the night to make them seem what they ought to be" (311). This metaphor for discretion as a strategic withholding of daylight subtly suggests the "unspeakable" – what ought *not* to be – and locates it in the woods. The mystique of the night is invaluable to the wild woods, much like discretion is to a homosocial relationship. Weigall, in his "state of doubt," retreats to the "very dark […] depths" of the woods where he may privately ponder the disappearance of his friend (311).

Weigall's homosexual impulses are more pronounced in the depths of the woods, where Pan's diffuse spirit is most concentrated. Walking along the River Wharfe and approaching the Strid, the site of the river's notoriously fatal ledge and undercurrent, Weigall senses that "[t]here was no lonelier spot in England, nor one which had the right to claim so many ghosts, if ghosts there were" (312). Indeed, Weigall's loneliness stems from his longing for a ghost of the Strid's. Weigall recalls morbid tales of failed leaps across the Strid, and visualizes the molding skeletons littering the river bottom. The Strid, which (little to his knowledge) claimed the life of Weigall's intimate friend, represents the treacherous disjuncture between homosociality and homosexuality. Men like Gifford who attempt to draw their social relationships into the realm of the erotic are violently derailed by a jagged break in the continuum between homosocial and homosexual. Weigall's gothic imagination excited by these tales, he fancies he spots Gifford's hand "shaking savagely" above the surface, "crying for help as audibly as the human voice" (313). While the hand is most certainly Gifford's, it's unrestrained, "savage" motions suggest Pan's wicked possession. Weigall, too, seems possessed by some strange unrestraint. Weigall rushes to assist the drowning man, dashing into the woods and, "with his strong arms," ripping a

branch from a tree (313). He returns to find the hand "still gesticulating as wildly" and "thrust[s] the branch into the hand" (313). Weigall and Gifford's contact, mediated by a branch, resembles mutual masturbation. "The fingers clutch it convulsively" and "Weigall tug[s] powerfully" (313). The encounter reaches a climax as "[t]he blood spr[i]ng[s] to Weigall's head" and he nearly loses Gifford, "concealed by the foam" (313). This sexually suggestive rescue is followed by an eruption of feelings for his drowning friend that very nearly betrays homosexual desire:

> Most of the pleasures in his life, good and bad, were identified in some way with this friend […] Weigall had loved several women; but he would have flouted in these moments the thought that he had ever loved any woman as he loved Wyatt Gifford. There were so many charming women in the world, and in the thirty-two years of his life he had never known another man to whom he had cared to give intimate friendship. (313-4)

This moment of revelation occurs at an interesting juncture between rescue and potential ruin. The spell of this suspended sexual/sentimental moment is suddenly broken as Weigall is dragged down to riverbank and nearly swallowed by the Strid. The corpse of Gifford, though, releases him, and tumbles through the Strid alone. Weigall promptly dives into the shallow pool on the other side, "lift[s] Gifford in his arms," and carries him to safety. When Weigall lays Gifford down by the riverbank, though, "something strange and disagreeable sm[i]te[s] his senses" (314). Before he even processes the sensation, panic seizes and twists his body: "his teeth clacked, his feet, his outstretched arms pointed towards the woods" (314). Shaking the impulse and springing back to Gifford, he observes that, on his beloved friend, "there was no face" (314). With this gruesome, violent effacement, Atherton restores Pan's viciousness which Forster so gently tempers. While Weigall's confrontation of his own homosexual desire may have been enough to induce homosexual panic, this salacious, supernatural trick of Pan's is necessary to more graphically convey the terror. Though Atherton offers the most allusive sketch of Pan, her

effacement of the homosexual lover constitutes the most brutal and violent inducement of homosexual panic.

Reimagining Pan, the Greek goat-god of nature, as a grotesque yet fantastic monster, turn of the century writers consider homosexual identity through the Greek myth and the devices of gothic literature. Pan's shifty humanity/monstrosity indicates an unstable social identity, yet his command of nature validates and naturalizes homosexual experiences. Arthur Machen, debuting Pan in urban gothic horror prose, sashays between representing him as unlocking an ancient truth and spreading a sexual ill. A few years later E. F. Benson restores Pan to the wilderness, where his seduction of a young man is purer and prettier, yet equally fatal. Rather than taunt the sexually repressed, E. M. Forster's Pan enlightens the sexually naïve and guides them through the perilous path to homosexual fulfillment. Atherton's Pan, a dark shadow of Forster's, helps briefly realize a homosexual love, but only to reveal its horrific consequences. These representations of Pan vary in monstrosity and severity, and the literary trend they participate in offers a complex commentary on the emergent homosexual identity at the turn of the century.

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