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Male prostitution and the homoerotic sex-market in Early Modern England

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Summary

This thesis explores male prostitution in early modern culture and calls for a reconsideration of linguistic representations of sodomy and homoeroticism in literary and historical criticism. It argues that as a variant expression of homoeroticism, its examination unfolds significant ideological and cultural implications for established perceptions of male relations. As instructed by classical textuality and misogynistic stigmatization of prostitution, the boy prostitute becomes a relational category that eludes easy classification, emerging syntactically alongside the female whore in English culture. Adopting a social constructionist approach, this dissertation traces male prostitution's ambivalent representational properties in various genres and discourses, namely poetry, plays, historical narratives, theatre historiography, defamation accounts, philosophical diatribes and lexicography. The diverse vocabulary employed to describe homoerotic relations and identities is closely scrutinised in order to expose the metaphoricity and ambiguity embedded in such terms as 'Ganymede', 'ingle', 'mignon' and 'catamite'. An analysis of the terminology demonstrates the ways in which discursive systems of language, within specific historical and cultural contexts, have facilitated the concomitant textual emergence of the sodomite with the male prostitute.

The Introduction establishes the theoretical framework through which male prostitution from the medieval period until the mid-twentieth century has been discussed in twentieth-century criticism. Chapter One assesses its textual appearance in early modern Italy, France and Spain, while it sets the parameters for its examination in seventeenth-century England. Chapter Two analyses the representation of the male prostitute in Donne's, Marston's and Middleton's satires and Chapter Three examines the theatrical institution and the ways in which theatre historiography misdirects discussions on sodomy and prostitution. The penultimate chapter focuses on textual constructions of the male prostitute in educational contexts and the final chapter addresses possible interrelations between prostitution, servitude, favouritism and friendship as represented within lexicography, slanderous discourse and historical narratives on King James and Francis Bacon.

Acknowledgements

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature: Dimitris Savvidis

Date: May 2011

Introduction

To initiate and attempt to establish a case for male same-sex prostitution in early modern English culture and literature is a strenuous task. Enthusiasts of the subject will have high expectations concerning the availability of evidence, which primarily means historical facts. Measuring literary sources constantly against historical determinants, especially when the latter are held in great esteem and appreciated for their credibility, can hinder in-depth examination of this specific textual experience. Thus, without well-defined historical evidence the researcher is destined to occupy the uncomfortable position of justifying the validity of his/her premises. For those for whom male prostitution is not worth exploring due to the absence of historical facts, ideological practices are well in place. Same-sex prostitute practice, for them, will be closely connected to homosexuality or, in the worse case scenario, tautological to homosexual or gay relations. During the conduct of this research project, the thesis has attracted hostility, doubt and derision; in other cases deep interest and enthusiasm. In fact, the reaction to this topic might well have been a separate case for research.

The concept of ideology is an important one for it will persistently jeopardise attempts to read male prostitution in association with sodomy and slanderous discourses of whoring. The danger lies in conceptualising all expressions of homoerotic desire and practice as prostitution, therefore enabling ideology to assimilate a highly stigmatised profession with a marginal and dissident sexual behaviour and/or act and/or identity. The caveat needs to be stressed right from the start because of the ambiguous and puzzling sources and language that has come down to us concerning same-sex relations and sodomitical assaults.

Largely informed by a social constructionist perspective, this project will not try to examine male prostitution as it was actually materialised and socially performed in early modern England. Since sex as a concept is 'unreal and unhistorical', an experience we cannot possibly recover, I am more interested in the ways in which male prostitution

was textually constructed, following, as far as I can, linguistic tactics and manoeuvres of its representation.¹ With the constructionist viewpoint in mind it will become apparent that the project's difficulty lies not so much in the (un)-availability or ambiguity of evidence, but in our understanding of what male prostitution actually is, its history, if it has one, and whether we consider it a job, a career choice or an immoral and deviant practice. Therefore, its textualization and establishment as a viable category within studies of early modern sexualities is one thing and its textual realisation and rendition is another.

In order to highlight the cultural apostasies that distantiates our understanding of the subject, I would like to examine very briefly a twentieth-century example of prostitution, the Brazilian travesti prostitute. The research was conducted by the anthropologist Kulick. As he reports:

Travestis occupy a strikingly visible place in both Brazilian social space and in the Brazilian cultural imaginary. All Brazilian cities of any size contain travestis, and in the large cities of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paolo, travestis number in the thousands.²

The Brazilian travestis are highly stigmatised in Brazilian culture, apart from those rare cases where they become celebrities and 'achieve wealth' and 'admiration'. Kulick claims that:

[t]hose travestis, the ones that most Brazilians only glimpse occasionally standing along highways or on dimly lit street corners at night or read about in the crime pages of their local newspapers, comprise one of the most marginalized, feared, and despised groups in Brazilian society. In most Brazilian cities, travestis are so discriminated against that many of them avoid venturing out onto the street during the day.³

Making a living by working as prostitutes, which does not necessarily mean always taking the passive role, the travestis have organised themselves in ghettos in the most notorious areas in Brazilian cities. They usually occupy a large building, where they all

¹ Ruth Mazo Karras, 'Active/Passive, Acts/Passions: Greek and Roman Sexualities', *The American Historical Review*, 105.4 (October 2000), 1250-1265 <<http://www.jstor.org>> [accessed 13 May 2007] (p. 1264).

² Don Kulick, 'The Gender of Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes', *American Anthropologist*, 99.3 (September 1997), 574-585 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/681744>> [accessed 10 October 2009] (p. 575).

³ Kulick, p. 575.

live together, and their lives centre around their boyfriends, who they call ‘maridos’, meaning husbands.⁴ These husbands are the centre of their attention, for they are a basic constituent of their sexual, economic and social life and identity. Whereas with their clients they can take the passive and regularly the active role – possibly, an alleviation of guilt on the client’s part, so that his manhood and image of masculinity is not threatened – with their boyfriends they refuse to take the active role. That would indicate that their boyfriends are not men, since to be passive or simply gay for them would mean to be feminine, in essence a woman. Through rigid classification, as we learn from Kulick, the travesti believes that: a) to be or to claim that you are gay is frowned upon and it does not make you a man, since to be gay or a homosexual is a tautology of being passive; b) gay cannot be used to characterise their boyfriends’ identity. That would mean that they are not men; and c) the homosexual/gay ones do something unnatural. Despite of the ways in which the travestis conceptualise their own sexual identity, what is more interesting is their social behaviour and attitudes towards their boyfriends.

Solely relying on the prostitute’s wages, the boyfriends provide absolutely nothing to their travestis as partners apart from a confirmation of their gendered roles. These boyfriends are not pimps and they do not necessarily provide any protection to the travesti. They are there to receive presents, money and food. Some of them have girlfriends and the travesti’s wages end up being spent on them: ‘Travestis are fully aware that some of the money they give to their boyfriends gets spent by them entertaining their girlfriends.’⁵ In some cases that Kulick examines, even the boyfriends’ families are supported by the travesti’s earnings. Mainly used to show off to other travestis, the boyfriend draws immense attention from his travesti-girlfriend, occupying a social space where he is being ‘feminized’.⁶ The travesti has the money, therefore, the power.

Despite the power that the prostitutes exert over their boyfriends, both economic and social (I would argue even sexual, for the boyfriend has to fit the role the travesti has assigned to him, i.e. not to be passive) life is not easy for the travesti. The boyfriend has the power to define the travesti’s everyday lifestyle. For example the travesti might

⁴ Don Kulick, ‘A Man in the House: The Boyfriends of Brazilian Travesti Prostitutes’, *Social Text*, 52/53 (1997), 133-160 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/466737>> [accessed 10 October 2009] (p. 134).

⁵ Kulick, p. 153.

⁶ Kulick, p. 155.

not do or say certain things of which the boyfriend does not approve. Also, some of the boyfriends are difficult to dislodge once the relationship is over. There are cases where the travesti might be robbed of her possessions, she might suffer physical violence and in other cases she might even have to flee and find somewhere else to live in order to avoid any future harassment. Even worse, the boyfriend might choose another travesti to live with, sometimes in an apartment across the hall, which could mean total humiliation. Hence, the intrigues and fights the travestis have in their building, that Kulick documents. In spite of the obvious transgression of typical female and male roles that the couple actually has during their relationship, the traditional and sexist roles are still preserved and play a significant part in the travesti's life. When Kulick wonders about the immense influence that these boyfriends have over the travestis he notes:

Are travestis really so generous by nature that they happily give substantial amount of their hard-earned income to males who not only are not impassioned with them, but who don't even do anything to help them either at work or around the house? An outsider coming from a culture where intimate relationships are supposed to be based on love, mutually felt emotions, and reciprocal efforts at generating incomes might easily see travesti accounts and practices of giving as delusions – fantasies of agency that travestis spin in order to mask the harsh fact that they are, in actual fact, being exploited by greedy, manipulative gigolos.⁷

This, according to Kulick, would be 'too simplistic'. Leaving aside Kulick's assumptions on Western culture where love relationships are supposed to be based on 'reciprocal efforts at generating incomes', the issue of the boyfriend being the actual prostitute (gigolo) seems to be of high significance. The boyfriend in Kulick's articles has no share in the linguistic strategies that define the highly stigmatised travesti. It all depends on the point of view someone has concerning what prostitution is or what the gift and money exchanges could actually mean between the travesti and the boyfriend. Laura Gowing's examination of accusations of whoredom towards women in Renaissance England finds that money exchanges for sex do not necessarily point to prostitute practice. As she notes, 'more regularly, the word 'whore' conveyed not so much the exact meaning of prostitution as a range of connections between money and sex'.⁸ These connections remain unexplained. Yet, when it comes to Theodosia Merrill's

⁷ Kulick, p. 142.

⁸ Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 90.

case in 1627, who gave Norton money 'to be his whore', she asserts that 'when it is the man who receives the money, it is still the woman who is the whore'.⁹

I agree with Gowing in this instance, for she clearly shows the highly discriminatory language apropos womanhood and the stigmatised identity a woman carried during the Renaissance. However, to disqualify the 'range of connections' between money and sex in some cases as varying instances that do not involve prostitution and to employ them in others, depends largely on the position someone wants to take towards the nature of these exchanges and what prostitution means for her/him. As a descriptive term, prostitution slips easily from notions of profession to stigma, from description to accusation and from victimisation to inherent immorality and active agency. The Brazilian travesti's boyfriend for some readers might be a gigolo, escort, hustler, or, to use the more feminised term, a male prostitute. Yet, for others, his relation and dependence on the travesti from whom he makes a living might indicate relations that eventually evolve around money and gift exchanges, possibly like a wife, with the only difference that they are called husbands. Alternatively we might follow theories of prostitution, as examined in economic studies, which compare and assimilate wives with prostitutes, as if these are the only social roles women can have concerning sexual exchanges with men.¹⁰ The point here is not what we actually think of the maridos. It is that the Brazilian travesti will not allow the nomenclature of prostitution to be used for the boyfriend.

Consider the differences of gender classification that occur in the travesti's conceptual schemata concerning sexual and social roles and identities, as well as the travesti's insistence, and possibly her boyfriend's, on traditional categorizations of sexuality and social behaviour. The boyfriend is not gay or homosexual or a prostitute unless he takes the passive role. That would mean that he is a 'viado', a 'homosexual',¹¹ which is a term they apply to themselves but not their boyfriends. The maridos are

⁹ Gowing, p. 66.

¹⁰ See for example: Lena Edlund and Evelyn Korn, 'A Theory of Prostitution', *The Journal of Political Economy*, 110.1 (February 2002), 181-214 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3078488>> [accessed 1 March 2009]; Marina Della Giusta, Maria Laura Di Tommaso and Steinar Strom, 'Another theory of prostitution', *Economics and Management Discussion Papers*, (May 2004), 1-25 <<http://www.reading.ac.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=10393&sID=34517>> [accessed 1 March 2009].

¹¹ Kulick, p. 149.

heterosexual.¹² Notice how passivity is again associated with homosexuality and prostitution.

However, by describing the boyfriend as a prostitute, I am imposing my own idea of how these relations and identities could be perceived, no matter how temporal they may be, and contrary to what the sources – Kulick and the Brazilian travestis – will allow me to believe. In either case, it is impossible to unburden the image of the homosexual and/or gay and the prostitute from the stigmatisation the terminology carries in the Brazilian travesti's subculture. Similarly, the travesti could not be thought of simply as a sex-worker. She is doubly demonised by society, due to her cross-dressing, her distinct lifestyle, her social network and the receptive role she adheres to with both boyfriends and clients, although in the latter's case with many exceptions. Because of these, the sources cannot facilitate easy analysis. This is a distinct Brazilian homoerotic expression. It is important constantly to bear in mind the cultural apostasies between Latin and American and European worlds, the subculture's historic specificity in an urban environment and the function of language and the ways in which these experiences and identities are presented. The source material of early modern English texts similarly will not allow a distinction between sodomy, male prostitution and its practice as an occupation.

Such a distinction was difficult for the female prostitute as well but in her case her role was recognised as significant even by some theologians, like Aquinas. Dollimore quotes Aquinas: 'Prostitution in the towns is like the cesspool in the place; take away the cesspool and the palace will become an unclean and evil-smelling palace.'¹³

Fiction and history: the quest for evidence

Demand for solid historical evidence has significantly impeded research into sexuality, sexual behaviour, orientation and notions of identity. Although literary critics and some

¹² Kulick, p. 151.

¹³ Jonathan Dollimore, 'Shakespeare understudies: the sodomite, the prostitute, the transvestite and their critics', in *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*, ed. by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 129-152 (p. 137).

historians have successfully challenged historical discourse and its construction, reliance on state documents, legal records and historical accounts has dominated examinations of the sexual experience in the past. As Megill elucidates in her article 'Foucault, Structuralism and the Ends of History', 'historical reality is merely a foreground, a work, an arbitrary stopping point, covering up an infinitude of other 'realities''.¹⁴

Similarly, Halperin quotes Foucault's insistence on the fictitious nature of historical discourse, as well as the fictive nature of his own writings. As he claims:

I am well aware that I have never written anything but fictions. I do not mean to say however, that truth is therefore absent. It seems to me that the possibility exists for fiction to function in truth, for a fictional discourse to induce effects of truth, and for bringing it about that a true discourse engenders or 'manufactures' something that does not as yet exist, that is 'fictions' it. One 'fictions' history on the basis of a political reality that makes it true, one 'fictions' a politics not yet in existence on the basis of a historical truth.¹⁵

Of course, Foucault's examination of the history of sexuality has not been without challenges. The much discussed dichotomy of same-sex practice between sexual acts and identities for example, has divided critics, historians and researchers on sexuality for quite some time and any examination of the sexual experience consequently has to succumb, sometimes unnecessarily, to Foucault's premises. The reason I am juxtaposing historiography and fiction through a poststructuralist viewpoint is because of the poststructuralists' major contributions to and dismantling of received notions vis-a-vis history and historiography. Bearing this in mind, the fictive nature of historicity needs to be scrutinised, especially in relation to deviant historiography.

Jennifer Terry has examined and commented interestingly on Foucault's effective history, by explaining that Foucault 'is attentive to the ruptures and discontinuities in history'.¹⁶ 'Effective history exposes not the events and actors elided

¹⁴ Alan Megill, 'Foucault, Structuralism, and the Ends of History', *The Journal of Modern History*, 51.3 (September 1979), 451-503 <<http://www.jstor.org>> [accessed 5 June 2005] (p. 498).

¹⁵ David M. Halperin, *Saint=Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 119.

¹⁶ Jennifer Terry, 'Theorizing Deviant Historiography', *Differences*, 3.2 (1991), 55-74 (p. 56).

by traditional history, but instead lays bare the processes and operations by which these elisions occurred'.¹⁷ 'Effects remain', as Terry explains:

[as] evidence of the violence of dominant discourses. They are traces of the unremitting and carefully crafted terms of hegemonic accounts which structure conditions of marginality for certain subjects who are marked as Others. Effects are deviant fragments which fall outside these accounts.¹⁸

She then exposes the three main dilemmas for historians interested in researching homosexuality. First, the evidence documents identities of 'lesbians' and 'gay men' in 'specific' and 'certain places and periods'. As she notes, '[o]ne cannot simply 'find' homosexuals everywhere'. Secondly, much of the evidence has been destroyed 'through homophobic vandalism, effacement and suppression'. Thirdly, the 'extant historical materials' apropos homosexuality and lesbianism are 'overwhelmingly pejorative and oppressive accounts of sin, criminality, or pathology'.¹⁹ In order to unravel such a history we need to appreciate the ways in which deviant historiography can address these issues. As she notes:

. . . lesbianism and male homosexuality are shaped by different kinds of historical elision, different conditions of visibility, and different strategies of resistance. The project of deviant historiography involves mapping these differences.²⁰

Similarly, Alan Megill instructs us in Foucault's relation to history, and like Halperin, stresses Foucault's lack of interest in the past.²¹ Certainly, Foucault was not the sole disqualifier of an obsessive examination of and dependence on history. Nietzsche had made a similar complaint 'against his own time that it was too historical; it suffered not from history but from an excess of history'.²² As Megill explains:

. . . the genealogical answer to the burden of history is to be found not in a perspectival reinterpretation of historical reality in the hope of accommodating that reality to the needs and interests of the continuing

¹⁷ Terry, p. 56.

¹⁸ Terry, p. 57.

¹⁹ Terry, p. 59.

²⁰ Terry, p. 68.

²¹ See Megill, p. 494.

²² Megill, p. 496.

present; it is to be found in the denial of historical reality, in the assertion that 'historical reality' is a mere projection of present needs and interests.²³

Julian Carter addresses further the method of genealogy. She notes:

Such an approach is characterized by a refusal to explain history by reference to origins, causes, and inner truths; rather, genealogy traces the inherently political process by which some institutional and discursive effects get constituted as original, causative truths.²⁴

This genealogical method 'Foucault adopted as his own',²⁵ as Megill has alerted us, and thus, history becomes simply one of the available discourses that could be used alongside others, as for example, science, literature, medicine or law. The crux of the matter is representation's incompatibility with signification. Megill instructs:

. . . while Foucault never raises the issue of difference, his assertions of the post-Classical fragmentation of language are a clear indication of his belief that the structure of things no longer establishes, as in representation, the structure of language.²⁶

As Megill affirms, Foucault saw the concept of episteme in 'terms of dispersion and exteriority' rather than in 'terms of depth, order and firm foundations'.²⁷ This leads to Foucault's scrutiny of the depth model, which Megill succinctly summarises:

True, he does assert that Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud added the dimension of depth to the field of interpretation. But this depth must be understood, Foucault maintains, not in the comforting terms of 'interiority' but rather in the disturbing terms of 'exteriority'. For in pursuing their descending course, Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud had discovered, according to Foucault, that there is no solid and objective truth that can serve as a point of termination, no final *signifie* in which all *signifiants* find their culmination. On the contrary, they had discovered that every *interpretandum* is already an *interpretans* – that interpretation does not illuminate some 'thing' which passively allows

²³ Megill, p. 498.

²⁴ Julian Carter, 'Introduction: Theory, Methods, Praxis: The History of Sexuality and the Question of Evidence', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 14.1/2 (January 2005), 1-9 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3704706>> [accessed 28 February 2009] (p. 8).

²⁵ Megill, p. 499.

²⁶ Megill, p. 467.

²⁷ Megill, p. 468.

itself to be interpreted, but rather seizes upon an interpretation already in place . . .²⁸

This is in fact what critics since Foucault have constantly warned us of with respect to histories of sexuality:

What Arondekar, Newman, Robertson, and others warn against is a historical praxis that seeks to unearth perfect and conclusive evidence that will allow us to establish the core truths, the pure origins, the unassailable meanings of sexuality's history. Such a praxis, they suggest, is dangerously naïve about the relations of power embedded in the production of knowledge. In contrast, the critical return to the field's earlier questions emphasizes the political and contingent qualities of evidence and interpretation.²⁹

However, selective use of literary writings has been, for some historians, a common practice. Where history is lacking, literature can fill in the gaps. We will see in Chapter 3 how historiographers of early modern theatre have used literary texts in order to construct their grand narratives. By saying this, I do not mean to disqualify the historians' constructions. If anything, such approaches should be appreciated once Sinfield's remark that 'we should regard 'literary' writing as a prestigious formation through which faultline stories circulate' has been taken into account.³⁰

Heavily relying on Foucault and the poststructuralist movement's understanding of historical representation and their recourse to literature, does not necessarily resolve issues around ways in which the history of sexuality, the sexual act or/and identity can be assessed. It does, however, raise concerns as to why some discourses are more privileged than others. Discourses such as slander, defamation, lexicography and fictitious stories, have been largely invalidated by historians and various literary critics. It is the purpose of this thesis to bring these discourses into play for an examination of male prostitution in early modern England.

There is also the problem of models concerning the study of sexuality. Our models have heavily depended on Foucault's concept of the epoch. As Sinfield notes:

A second, underlying problem is the Foucauldian principle that history falls into epochs, characterized by distinct modes of thought, with

²⁸ Megill, p. 479. Megill's italics.

²⁹ Carter, p. 9.

³⁰ Alan Sinfield, *Cultural Politics-Queer Reading*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 13.

change occurring through a sequence of large-scale epistemological shifts. This position makes his theories vulnerable to any scrap of empirical evidence showing ideas or behaviours occurring at the ‘wrong’ time. However, it is a mistake to expect an even development, whereby one model characterizes an epoch and then is superseded by another.³¹

Certainly these models have been circulating since their appearance and co-facilitated, together with indigenous cultural practices, constructions of textualized sexual experiences. Moulded with each era’s cultural anxieties and tested in literature, the Ancient Greek and Roman models of the sexual self have informed sexual experiences and provided a conceptual framework through which acts and identities could be negotiated and structured. In essence, the Greek and Roman texts constituted a system of discourse for subsequent eras through which the sexual experience/self was constantly measured and defined. In some cases the texts were used to validate, serve, or even simply to utter the sexual. The outcomes were unprecedented for art, science, language and in fact, the socio-sexual experience itself. This is the same role that discourses on sexuality played in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Yet, whereas commentators from the nineteenth until the mid-twentieth century tried to impose a uniform concept of the sexual and its classification, Foucault and poststructuralists managed to denaturalise such grand narratives. As Weeks asserts in ‘Remembering Foucault’, this is exactly what we got from Foucault:

[A] denaturalization of the history of sexuality; a challenge to linearity, to easy progressivism, to wanting sexuality to be a force against power; and, instead, a recognition of the significance of the social, a heterogeneous assemblage of practices where sexuality, as a human institution, had become increasingly the heart.³²

Contrary to the rubrics of psychology and especially of psychoanalysis, Foucault offered sexuality as another apparatus of power:

The importance of sex as a political issue can be better understood at the crossing of both the processes, that which disciplines the life of the body and that which regulates the life of the species: sexuality is but the name of a historical device of power.³³

³¹ Sinfield, p. 13-14.

³² Jeffrey Weeks, ‘Remembering Foucault’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 14.1/2 (January 2005), 186-201 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3704714>> [accessed 28 February 2009] (p. 191).

³³ Jean-Manuel de Queiroz, ‘Foucault: The Imaginary Sex’, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 25.1/2 (1993), 41-61 (p. 50).

The field of studies on prostitution and especially male prostitution has also suffered from lack of historical evidence. In some cases even the literary evidence cannot be used with certainty. Griffiths's informative article on female prostitution makes the following remark:

The recovery of Elizabethan prostitution from archival sources has only recently begun. Hitherto, authors have often flirted dangerously with contemporary perceptions, relying all too heavily upon the imaginative beings who parade through the pages of Thomas Dekker, John Taylor and other lesser, even anonymous figures.³⁴

In this respect, employment of fictive evidence should be applied with caution. I will return to Griffith's contentions in Chapter 1. Sinfield also comments on Bray's preoccupation with the fictive in *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*:

. . . paintings and fictive texts sometimes indicate a more positive attitude toward same-sex passion than the legal and ethical sources Bray mainly used. He believed it would have been virtually impossible to self-identify as a sodomite, so disreputable was that idea, and he set aside fictive evidence. [. . .] As Bray now agrees, fictive writing has to be plausible, however obliquely; it must indicate something about the place of same-sex practices in the culture that promoted it.³⁵

In an article 'What's so funny about ladies' tailors? A survey of some male (homo)sexual types in the Renaissance', Simon Shepherd convincingly argues for the importance of literature in accounts of homoerotic experience:

My analysis is not conceiving of writing as a mirror of society, but it is interested in the repeated creation of certain fictions. I want to ask why it was worth cracking the same joke again and again, who was being laughed at, and why. And is very different from the somewhat elite 'evidence' of aristocratic letters and legal documents. Satiric portraits are certainly 'the product of . . . political influences': show me writing that isn't. Jokes and character types are artworks, but also social history. To ignore them is to write only half that history.³⁶

³⁴ Paul Griffiths, 'The Structure of Prostitution in Elizabethan London', *Continuity and Change*, 8.1 (1993), 39-63 (p. 39).

³⁵ Sinfield, p. 13.

³⁶ Simon Shepherd, 'What's so funny about ladies' tailors? A survey of some male (homo)sexual types in Renaissance', *Textual Practice*, 6 (1992), 17-30 (p. 22).

Yet, it is not only a matter of ‘writing half that history’. The sexual types, acts, identities and language that researchers have tried to account for and revitalise are, and should always be, available for negotiation because they have been persistently employed and, in some cases, misused. They have created myths: structural narratives which insist on their formation but which need to be decentred and displaced from a hegemonic stance. In other words, received truths need to be undermined, and literature, as has been shown by many critics, can successfully become the medium through which such enquiries can take place. Sinfield usefully encapsulates the quality of the literary instance:

Textual instances are apprehended neither as documentary evidence of how people lived nor as myth or fantasy, but as contested representations through which early modern society sought to explore its most troubling insights. The processes of desire were uneven and risky and, pursued under pressure, might be threatening to the psyche and, at least in the drama, to life.³⁷

This does not mean a repudiation of history nor does Sinfield try to diminish the viability of historical discourse. It is rather an acknowledgement of the powerful nature of the written word. In the interdisciplinary and difficult field of sexualities where the sexual experience materialises mostly off the scene, following closely the literary is a quest for the appreciation of the disparate, if not unequal, discourses that helped formulate assumptions of what the sexual experience meant and the fears or dangers it entailed.

The acknowledgement of fiction’s power is not a modern invention or source of anxiety. Previous eras, including the early modern period, expressed a huge cultural neurosis with various kinds of deviance presented textually. Sodomy was just one of these instances of deviance. Its deployment in written language was assumed to have devastating effects on the subject. Censorship instructed diversion, new and various modes of expressing the illegitimate, unspeakable and catastrophic effects of same-sex sexual experience. Yet, the Ancient Greek and Roman literary narratives and philosophical treatises could not be silenced effectively. In addition, the enormous influence of the printing press did not annihilate claustrophobic tendencies towards continental narratives. Translations proliferated and cultural exchanges helped the

³⁷ Alan Sinfield, *Shakespeare, Authority, Sexuality: Unfinished Business in Cultural Materialism* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 86.

circulation of new cultural and literary fashions. The elision of the sodomite has of course frustrating effects for a student or researcher of early modern English culture, yet literary texts during the period show a considerable concern towards sexual deviance and especially sodomitical practice. However, the sodomite, at least the one who sleeps with his/her own kind, would not call her/himself a sodomite. Indictment channelled same-sex expression to diverse appropriation of linguistic utterances, for the state would not tolerate behaviours or textual instances that threatened authoritative assertions of patriarchy and manhood.³⁸

Therefore, imitation of and allusion to Ancient Greek and Roman models of same-sex eroticism provided popular and legitimate ways to address such desires. With this came a whole range of vocabulary that was to have an enormous impact on the ways in which same-sex expression was talked about but not without ambiguity and ideological interventions. For together with the Ancient Greek pederast, came the friend and mentor, the co-athlete, the comrade, the shepherd's boy, the paedophilic tutor, the occasional master who would occasionally or habitually engage in sexual intercourse with his slave or servant and the male prostitute.

To the early modern English mind - at least that is what the textual evidence and contemporary commentators suggest - all the possible different types of homoeroticism were classified as sodomy. Since the term sodomy indicated or implied more than same-sex desire and practice, including witchcraft, heresy, political treason and non procreative sex, its examination had always presented the researchers of Renaissance English sexualities with immense difficulties, in their attempts to trace possible manifestations of homoerotic experience.³⁹ Even when we do trace homoerotic experience it is hard to appreciate variant expressions of it. The term has become monolithic, making it impossible to extract any positive representations of the homoerotic subject. Like the nineteenth-century homosexual, who persistently carries pathological nuances, the Renaissance sodomite cannot escape the religious overtones that gave birth to him. Certainly, there were various linguistic articulations of homoerotic same-sex practice, but none of them had the devastating and defamatory effects that the term 'sodomite' had.

³⁸ See Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

³⁹ See for example Jonathan Goldberg, 'Introduction', in *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (California: Stanford University Press, 1992) and Tom Betteridge, ed., *Sodomy in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

From all the aforementioned possible expressions of homoerotic desire, it was the male prostitute, the boy/man hired to commit the sin of buggery, to whom allusions were made since the medieval period. An example of this could be found in Alan of Lille's text *The Complaint of Nature*, examined by Michael Jordan. The references that Jordan traces in his examination of the invention of sodomy equate the sodomite with the male prostitute. In Lille's text, sodomite and prostitute become identical. The following quotes are just a few of the instances where the complaints of Nature associate male prostitution with same-sex practice:

And many other young men, dressed by my grace in the honor of beauty, drunk with the thirst of money, exchanged their hammers of Venus for the roles of anvils.⁴⁰

Also:

But from this rule of such universality man alone is seduced as an anomalous exception, stripped of the state robe of modesty (*pudor*) and prostituted as an immodest and whorish hustler (*prostibulum*).⁴¹

The text, however, was produced in twelfth-century France and has not been found in early modern English printed material. In fact, even from the much-studied classic texts, the most explicit court case in Ancient Greece concerning prostitution, *Against Timarchus*, has not been found in early English books. There are only scarce references to Timarchus' case and these survive in footnotes, the earliest reference found so far in *The history of philosophy, in eight parts* by Thomas Stanley in 1656.⁴² The allusions only refer to issues of adultery with women, theft and youths spending their fathers' inheritances. No references exist apropos Timarchus' prostitution. Whether the case was readily available for an early modern English readership is impossible to say. The Ancient Greek examples of male prostitute practice can be found in John Potter's *Archaeologiae Graecae, or, The antiquities of Greece*, printed in 1697, where Potter narrates the Ancient Greek laws concerning male prostitution. The chapter is titled 'Laws relating to the love of Boys; Procurers, and the Strumpets' and in there we find that:

⁴⁰ Mark Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 82.

⁴¹ Quoted in Jordan, p. 82.

⁴² Thomas Stanley, *The history of philosophy, in eight parts* (1656)
<<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>> [accessed 10 November 2009].

He, that hath prostituted himself for a Catamite, shall not be elected an Archon, Priest, or Syndic, shall execute no Office, either within, or out of Attica's boundaries, conferr'd by Lot, or Suffrage; he shall not be sent on an Embassie, pass Verdict, set footing within the publick Temples, be crown'd on solemnary Days, or enter the Forum's purified Precincts; if any one convicted of the above-mention'd lasciviousness be caught offending in any one of these points, he shall suffer Death.⁴³

We are also informed that:

Let no one be a publick Orator, who hath struck his Parents, denied them Single illegible []aintenance, or shut them out of doors; who hath refus'd going into the Army in case of publick Necessity, or thrown away his Shield; who hath committed whoredom, or given way to effeminacy.

This was exactly what Timarchus was accused of but the text's date of publication falls outside the scope of this study. It was mainly the Roman satires of Martial and Juvenal that circulated the image of the boy prostitute, along with the Roman lives of Roman emperors by Suetonius, Plutarch, Tacitus and also some Italian literary narratives that had explicit references to male prostitutes. Some of these cultural and textual instances will be examined in Chapter 4.

As this thesis demonstrates, in early modern lexicography the male prostitute seems to emerge synchronically with the sodomite. The notion of the sodomite resembled so closely the figure of the prostitute, both male and female, that in the Renaissance lexicon definitions of sodomy and those types that practice it, rely heavily on the language of prostitution. This is similar to the homosexual and the male prostitute in the nineteenth-century, as Weeks has shown. He notes:

It is significant that writings on male prostitution began to emerge simultaneously with the notion of 'homosexuals' being an identifiable breed of persons with special needs, passions, and lusts. . . . But, although the existence of male prostitution is mentioned frequently, it has also been studied less often. . . . This neglect is unfortunate. The subject should not be regarded as marginal. A study of homosexual prostitution could illuminate the changing images of homosexuality and its legal and social regulation, as well as the variability of sexual

⁴³ John Potter, *Archaeologiae Graecae, or, The antiquities of Greece* (1697)
<<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>> [accessed 10 November 2009].

identities in our social history and their relationship to wider social structures.⁴⁴

This phenomenon is not due to intrinsic similarities that both eras might share. My contention is that there are huge differences around structures of male homoerotic practice and desire in each epoch. Yet, what the sodomite and the homosexual shared was a variation of homoerotic practice that was characterised by a specific sexual trade, the male prostitute. In both cases, legal discourse – for the sodomite – and medical language – for the homosexual – appropriated in their rhetoric what might seem at first a universally identifiable category, the male prostitute. This may undermine the common assumption of the act/identity dichotomy attributed wrongly to Foucault. Before I examine this binary opposition and why early modern criticism has capitalised extensively and obsessively on it, I will first consider the modern construction of male prostitution, its associations with homosexuality, its emergence in the twentieth century and its reception by academia. This may give us a better understanding of the problematic nature of male prostitution applied in different eras, illustrating therefore, Foucault's depth model, simply put, that there is no original or pure interpretation. For if interpretation is comprised of previous and various levels of interpretation, it is in these embedded interpretative constituents where elisions, ruptures and discontinuities occur. This is the 'effective history' Jennifer Terry, following Foucault, is trying to explain.⁴⁵ If I observe a concomitant interpretative process and classificational conflations between the sodomite and the male prostitute, it is because partially the nineteenth- and twentieth-century discourse on sexuality created the ground for it. In fact, this thesis acknowledges the dynamic that the system of sexuality has as power and by delinating its elisions and processes it can reveal its linguistic, social and political effects.

⁴⁴ Jeffrey Weeks, 'Inverts, Perverts, and Mary-Annes', in *The Subcultures Reader*, ed. by Ken Gelder and Sarah Thornton (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 268-280 (p. 268).

⁴⁵ Terry, p. 56.

The male prostitute and twentieth-century research

The danger of anachronism is always present in examinations of homoerotic practices, according to social constructionism's warnings about the incompatibility of using and applying terms that do not represent accurately sexual forms of desire and experience in past eras.⁴⁶ This is central for researchers of sexualities. Conflations of homosexuality with sodomy or other linguistic forms of same-sex practice could lead to an essentialist perspective, which can fail to acknowledge the distinct material conditions that were and are in operation in different epochs. Whenever this occurs in academic studies, it always happens with warnings and explanatory interventions. Quite rightly so, for researchers are cognizant of assumptions of dominant social groups and ideological tactics that tend to interpret and define marginal groups in a reductive and diminishing way, imposing social agendas on classifications of same-sex experience in diverse eras.

There are obvious differences concerning sexual practices and identities between different periods but that does not suggest that there is no continuum among attitudes concerning deviancy. As Dollimore explains:

Undoubtedly there is truth in the view which says that the homosexual *comes into being*, is given an identity, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In its primary, pejorative form, this identity is understood as a pathology of one's innermost being. But the idea of homosexuality as an alienated behaviour, or at least something separable from the person, is in part a mutation of the older idea of deviant sexual practices *as* activity rather than identity.⁴⁷

He later notes, through his exploration of the history of perversion, that even the sodomite could indicate a 'type' of person:

I suggest that in early modern England the sodomite, though not an identity in the modern sense, could and did denote subject positions or types; 'he' precisely *characterized* deviant subject positions as well as denoting the behaviour of individuals.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ See Claude J. Summers, 'Homosexuality and Renaissance Literature, or the Anxieties of Anachronism', *South Central Review*, 9.1 (1992), 2-23 <<http://www.jstor.org>> [accessed 15 February 2008].

⁴⁷ Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 41. Dollimore's italics.

⁴⁸ Dollimore, p. 46. Dollimore's italics.

There are similar interconnections that we can trace with regard to male prostitution. Weeks, as aforementioned, noted that the male prostitute emerged textually with the notion of the homosexual in the nineteenth century; so did the sodomite and the male prostitute in the early modern period.

In his study of male prostitution in the twentieth century Kerwin Kaye explains:

Indeed, the phrase ‘male prostitute’ did not originally refer to a man who sold sex for money, but rather to a man who either seduced married women and extorted money from them, or to a man who had sex with, or pimped for, a female prostitute. – The phrase itself only came to consistently refer to men who sold sex at the end of the nineteenth century.⁴⁹

In his informative article Kaye elucidates on the complexity of the cultural construction of the twentieth-century prostitute. In fact, the term ‘male prostitute’ has a significant history in language and signification. As Kaye explains:

In fact, far from limiting the field of significance, the joining of the terms ‘male’ and ‘prostitute’ has produced new representations, taking the strongly female-oriented set of meanings associated with prostitution and affixing them in unexpected ways with the imagery associated with ‘manhood’. The result has refigured the meaning of prostitution, producing both the ‘hoodlum homosexual’ as well as the ‘boy for sale’, depending upon the historical context and the political intent of the author.⁵⁰

Sometimes residing at the margins, other times becoming central to a homosexual subjectivity and most times thought of having a heterosexual identity, the male prostitute of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been oscillating between sharply opposing centurms.

John Scott’s study shows how scientific discourse constructed the ambiguous socio-sexual identity of the male prostitute. When the male prostitute was first studied he was generally considered to be heterosexual. Science’s decisive role in the cultural and ideological signification of the hustler was pivotal. Scott explains its history:

⁴⁹ Kerwin Kaye, ‘Male Prostitution in the Twentieth Century’, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 46.1 (March 2003), 1-77 <doi: 10.1300/J082v46n01_01> [accessed 7 October 2009] (p. 49).

⁵⁰ Kaye, p. 50.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, male prostitution was understood as a moral problem, typically associated with gender deviation or the crossing of class boundaries. By the mid-twentieth century, male prostitution was understood through a scientific lens, and typically associated with intergenerational sex and economic exploitation. Following from this, male prostitution has been transformed from a moral aberration of limited social significance into a social problem, closely associated with issues of health and welfare.⁵¹

Thus, from ‘moral aberration’ the hustler becomes a ‘social problem’. Two scientific studies by psychiatrists, the first ones to be conducted in the field, created the complex framework that attempted to define the male prostitute. Mainly ‘preoccupied with establishing aetiological narratives of prostitution’⁵² these scientific accounts sought to understand male prostitution as a social problem. Freyhan’s study in 1947 focused on a male prostitute. The man examined was to be treated for his homosexuality. In Freyhan’s study there was no distinction between homosexuality and male prostitution. Released the same year was another study conducted by Butts, who focused on a heterosexual male prostitute. This study challenged significantly the ways in which male prostitution was previously understood.⁵³

A subsequent study was conducted on young Danish prostitutes in 1956 by Jersild, who was a former chief of the Copenhagen morality police. Like Butts, Jersild was interested in the sexuality of male prostitutes. For both of them, the typical male prostitute was heterosexual. As Scott remarks, ‘[t]his revelation constituted a paradigmatic shift in the way in which male prostitution was conceptualised, which was to alter the governance of male prostitution’.⁵⁴ A division occurred where male prostitutes were ‘hierarchically ordered to according to the degree by which they departed from masculine standards’.⁵⁵

Classifications of male prostitutes heavily depended on cultural constructions of masculinity and the topographies they operated from, and seem to have facilitated the emergence of different types of male prostitution. Scott explains:

⁵¹ John Scott, ‘A Prostitute’s Progress: Male Prostitution in Scientific Discourse’, *Social Semiotics*, 13.2 (2003), 179-199 <doi: 10.1080/1035033032000152606> [accessed 7 October 2009] (pp. 179-180).

⁵² Scott, p. 180.

⁵³ Scott, p. 185.

⁵⁴ Scott, p. 186.

⁵⁵ Scott, pp. 186-187.

Prostitutes have been classified according to their place of work in scientific reportage on male prostitution. Place of work is thought to denote something about the nature of the male prostitute, work environments being closely associated with sexuality. Males who prostitute in public spaces have typically been represented as masculine and, correspondingly, this is taken to indicate that they are heterosexual. In contrast, males who prostitute in private spaces have been represented as effeminate/homosexual.⁵⁶

Largely viewed as a victim, immature and young, it was the male prostitute's client that instructed and defined his sexual orientation. One of these types of prostitutes was the kept-boy, considered to be, according to Scott, a form of private prostitution. This type of prostitute was for researchers explicitly homosexual. Scott explains:

In early scientific literature, the term 'kept-boy' was often used by researchers to signify a homosexual prostitute (often young and immature) who was supported and provided for (monetarily or otherwise) by an older male for, usually, an extended period of time. In contrast to street prostitution, relationships with 'clients' developed into semi-permanent, long-term relationships, where intimate contact replaced anonymity. The passive nature of the kept-boy was signified through references to his inability to engage in 'productive' or 'real' work. The kept-boy was presented as a degenerate, a perpetual child who failed to evolve into a man.⁵⁷

The client's influence played an intrinsic part in the male prostitute's examination, for '[i]t was argued that male prostitution was an outcome of *homosexual seduction*, which implied that it was caused by elderly perverts preying on the young and innocent/ignorant'.⁵⁸ The client was 'presented as villain and polluter' and 'homosexuality [was] being made to appear as a contagion, threatening to spread if left unchecked, reproducing itself remorselessly'.⁵⁹

However, it took another thirty years to associate the male prostitute with bio-political issues of contagion, hygiene and disease, whereas in the nineteenth century, it was the female prostitute who was strongly associated with epidemiological issues.⁶⁰ As Scott reports:

⁵⁶ Scott, pp. 187-188.

⁵⁷ Scott, p. 189.

⁵⁸ Scott, p. 191. Scott's italics.

⁵⁹ Scott, p. 193.

⁶⁰ Suggested in Scott, p. 182.

[T]he confusion and ambiguity surrounding male prostitution, which by the 1980's, had led many researchers to conclude male prostitutes were 'bisexual', and the stereotypical representation of the prostitute as drug-addicted (again, lacking agency), helped to increase and legitimate fears of contagion . . .⁶¹

This is not surprising. From the advent of AIDS until now, medical psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists have been exclusively concerned with the epidemiological aspect of the male sex-trade. These disciplines are discourses that would primarily rely on scientific findings, statistic results and processes of classificatory normalization. However, not even these discourses have managed to escape the heavily moralistically charged language of epidemiological discourse as informed by 'earlier epidemiological understandings of female prostitution'.⁶² As Scott insightfully remarks, 'in epidemiological literature on prostitution, there has been a tendency to count the activities of female prostitutes, while documenting the behaviour of male prostitutes'.⁶³ So far we have looked at the scientific contribution of understanding the male prostitute. I'll turn now to the complimentary cultural history of the male prostitute in the twentieth century as informed by Kaye's exciting study.

Kaye claims that the main problem posed for theorists of inversion was the male prostitute's sexual classification. He explains:

. . . the male prostitute posed a problem for the new theories of 'inversion' being developed by Victorian-era sexologists. Was a man still inverted if he engaged in sex acts with other men for money? Was he to be believed when he said his motivations were strictly financial? Did it matter that he only took the 'top' role, and never allowed himself to be penetrated, either anally or orally? Early writings on male prostitution took on questions such as these, striving to define the 'inner nature' of the male prostitute far more than they focused on the social conditions of his existence.⁶⁴

Within this new category, which was just starting to be considered a social problem, there were different types of male prostitutes. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, male prostitutes were transvestites, a basic distinctive feature that

⁶¹ Scott, p. 194.

⁶² Scott, p. 195.

⁶³ Scott, p. 195.

⁶⁴ Kaye, p. 2.

differentiated them from their clients.⁶⁵ Mainly centring his study in the USA, Kaye notes how commentators of prostitute practice observed the co-existence of male with female prostitutes. As Kaye notes, ‘commentators . . . noted that even brothels proffering mostly women featured an occasional man in women’s clothing, just in case a client might prefer him to a female’.⁶⁶ There were also brothels that accommodated young male prostitutes – ‘generally 15-22 years of age’ -, but not cross-dressed ones. However, womanhood, a common co-relative to the understanding of a cross-dresser or a feminine man, was not used to equate the so-called ‘fairies’ with all kinds of women but only with the female prostitute. As entities that occupied similar spaces, taking similar roles in sex and by ‘wearing similar make-up and dress’, male - cross-dressed - prostitutes ‘achieved a similar social position within working-class culture as that held by female prostitutes’.⁶⁷

The client, who Scott astutely includes in his account, played a crucial role in defining the male prostitute’s sexuality and appearance.⁶⁸ Viewed with suspicion and contempt because of his homosexuality, the client started to contribute to the marginalisation of the transvestite prostitute by preferring masculine male prostitutes. Yet, even the ‘masculine’ male prostitute’s service was under pressure due to the availability of a gay subculture with men who would engage in sex without asking for fiscal exchanges, as Kaye remarks.⁶⁹

Those manly prostitutes, who were not gay-orientated, would not be easily assimilated to the gay subculture and sexual services started to take a decisive turn. Many ‘normal’ men ‘in the working-classes’, whose identity was classified as heterosexual, ‘supplemented their wages by prostituting themselves to gay-identified men’.⁷⁰ Kaye explains:

If fewer straight men were willing to pay for sex with fairies, many remained willing to have sex, particularly if some sort of material benefit sweetened the exchange.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Kaye, p. 7.

⁶⁶ Kaye, p. 7.

⁶⁷ Kaye, p. 8.

⁶⁸ Discussed in my Introduction, p. 21.

⁶⁹ Suggested in Kaye, p. 9.

⁷⁰ Kaye, p. 9.

⁷¹ Kaye, p. 9.

So, from a demand for the transvestite prostitute, who was considered passive, the clientele, now including gay males, would demand the masculine active male prostitute, 'gaining the name 'rough trade' from gay men', as Kaye mentions.⁷² We have seen how this schematic categorization of sex roles is undermined by the Brazilian travesti subculture.

Kaye also suggests that male prostitution had its distinct history that could be traced back to the early 1700's and the molly houses in London.⁷³ Within the available category of male prostitutes in the USA, who basically belonged to the working class, we also find in Kaye's account the soldier prostitute:

Soldiers also might desire more from their clients than a straightforward cash for sex transaction, finding in the company of middle-class and aristocratic men an opportunity to be taught manners and tastes which would enable them more opportunity at upward mobility within bourgeois-dominated society.⁷⁴

There is a similarity here between the male working-class prostitute and the soldier prostitute with respect to their history.⁷⁵ Kaye finds a historical parallel with the early modern Italian boy prostitute. The difference, of course, was that in the nineteenth century the male prostitutes 'were overwhelmingly limited to the working-class', whereas the Italian prostitute boys 'came from all classes'.⁷⁶

According to Kaye, parents in twentieth-century USA 'knew of the sexual relationship that their sons had' with upper-class men, something that we will also see documented in Renaissance Italian source material.⁷⁷ However, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, male prostitutes were ruthlessly scrutinised for their deviance. They were 'the darkest stain of humanity'.⁷⁸ Note in the following quote, discussed by Cohen and quoted again by Kaye, how a tabloid newspaper would refer to male prostitutes:

⁷² Kaye, p. 20.

⁷³ Kaye, p. 19.

⁷⁴ Kaye, p. 10.

⁷⁵ Kaye, p. 11.

⁷⁶ Kaye, p. 12.

⁷⁷ Kaye, pp. 14-15.

⁷⁸ Kaye, p. 16.

. . . one of the tabloids at the time of the Wilde trial ran an editorial which called the young men involved a “gang of harlots”, continuing in no uncertain terms:

“These unsexed blackguards [sic] are the putrid spawn of civilization. It did not require Wilde to degrade them. They were brutes before he ever set eyes on them. It is appalling to think that the conviction of any man should depend upon the testimony of such loathsome creatures. (from *Reynolds' Newspaper*, May 26, 1895; quoted in Cohen, 1993: 255-6n8)”⁷⁹

As we saw in Scott's account there was a reluctance to consider the young male prostitute responsible for his transgression. The youth were supposed to be seduced by older men.⁸⁰

As mentioned earlier, being sometimes willing to engage even in a passive role and effeminacy, the heterosexual male prostitute provided services for a gay clientele due to the increasing divide between homosexual and heterosexual categories. Within the subculture he was now considered to be predominantly a ‘real man’. These were cultural attitudes that continued until the mid-twentieth century, with the majority of male prostitutes not willing to identify with a gay identity.

Further changes occurred and this thesis cannot possibly exhaust and present all the stages of construction. However, two last shifts in attitudes towards prostitution need to be mentioned. First, in the early 1980s, perhaps earlier, ‘for a brief time, the gay-identified prostitute came to represent the new spirit of gay liberation’.⁸¹ Entering now the ‘new gay cultural orbit’, the male prostitute acquired new social meaning.⁸²

The other shift that occurred during the 70s was to contribute to further victimisation of the male prostitute, as Scott has noted in his account. The new type, the ‘runaway young prostitute’, came increasingly from the middle class. Concerns increased and young male prostitutes were seen ‘as socially needy ‘victims’ in need of help’.⁸³ But problems around youth middle-class prostitution increasingly focused on their self-esteem and personal growth rather than their condition due to family abuse. This common attitude was reflected and eternalised by the media, misdirecting the actual problem that prostitute practice could reveal. Instead of criticising how the family

⁷⁹ Kaye, p. 17.

⁸⁰ Suggested in Kaye, p. 17.

⁸¹ Kaye, p. 36.

⁸² Kaye, p. 37.

⁸³ Kaye, p. 40.

contributed to the youths' vulnerability and the abuse that youths have suffered within it, according to Kaye, 'male prostitution' was:

depicted as the primary problem faced by street youth, rather than as an equivocal solution to yet other problems (being hungry and homeless, for example). Likewise, these depictions emphasized the danger posed by outside Others rather than acknowledging that runaway behaviour can be a reasonable response to abuse. The exclusive focus upon dangerous outsiders has thus created a narrative of risk on the streets which implicitly supports the reestablishment of a 'traditional' family unit.⁸⁴

Apart from the very interesting findings that both Kaye's and Scott's studies have shown, what one might want to notice, in the accounts of the twentieth century I reiterated, is the allusions to specific historical eras concerning male prostitution that researchers have found prior to the modern era, the London molly houses of the eighteenth century and the Italian Renaissance boy prostitutes. Interesting as these interconnections might be, it is impossible to find a linear structure and development that could explain the emergence of male prostitution in the twentieth century. Both Kaye and Scott do acknowledge the important differences between these periods and both accounts are dedicated to the socio-economic factors that constructed male prostitution. There are no essentialist arguments in their studies, and yet it is hard not to realise the resemblance in attitudes toward the nature of the prostitute occupation and its practice in both the early modern period and the modern one. In addition to the temporality of the profession for example, we might also want to notice the same social position that the male prostitute acquired vis-a-vis the female one, by co-habiting in similar social spaces, like those that Bray narrates in his study of *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*.⁸⁵

The language that also shaped and defined twentieth-century male prostitute practice seems to have a close similarity to the linguistic strategies employed during the early modern period. Centred on womanhood and specifically the female prostitute, discourses around disease, epidemiology, anxieties concerning sexual transgression and misogynistic attitudes towards passivity and femininity, the twentieth-century male prostitute does not appear that different to the early modern one. Add to this, the inevitable conflation of the homosexual/prostitute and sodomite/prostitute in both eras

⁸⁴ Kaye, p. 41.

⁸⁵ See Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, 2nd edn (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 53-55.

due to the absence of textual evidence that could clearly differentiate between a sexual orientation (homosexual) and an act (sodomite) to a working condition.

What will be assessed in the following chapters is literature's avowal and facilitation of these cultural dynamics that functioned to prolong ambiguity, indecisiveness and invisibility of the same-sex-trade. This is not a comparative study of the two eras and I do not wish to read the early modern period through the modern one or vice versa. Yet, as we will see in some instances in Chapter 1, it is the twentieth-century academic discourse on sodomy that has hindered further analysis with regard to attitudes toward possible manifestations of same-sex prostitution in early modern English literature, with a few notable exceptions.

Identity, subculture and the 'real' male prostitute

Defamation/slander, lexicography and fiction have all been disqualified as ambiguous, misleading and not representative of real life. Even if these discourses could be trusted, it would still be difficult, and it would take a tremendous effort, to trace and represent the 'real' male prostitute of early modern English culture. However, it is not so much a matter of who is the real prostitute but rather who the culture is ready to identify as a male prostitute and for what reason. As a reproachable act and accusation male prostitutes, and the language through which prostitution was represented, engulfed multiple meanings, just like sodomy. Treachery, heresy, mischief, deceit, excess, infidelity, adultery, incontinence are just a few of the varying degrees of bad behaviour that the accusation of whoredom, addressed to both men and women, was meant to contain.

Structuring a different argument concerning the boundaries between sexual orientation, victimization and pleasure in the ways we conceptualise the male prostitute, Kaye warns us against simplistic polarities:

To the extent the male prostitute once stood at the gate of homosexual identity, between modern and pre-modern codes of masculine affection and identity, today the question of his sexual orientation places him at a boundary between modernist familialism (which portrays him as a victim) and postmodern pleasure (which portrays him as an active agent

of his destiny). Clearly neither formulation can adequately capture the diverse lived realities of the hustlers, rent boys, desperate runaways, and call boys who sell their sexual services to other men, yet if researchers wish to move beyond these representational tropes, they must first examine what is at stake in such discussions, and whose interests are truly being served through their use.⁸⁶

This is just one issue we need to take into consideration when we study male sex-work. Sinfield also remarks, by quoting Weeks, the problematic identification of gayness, homosexuality and prostitution: 'As Weeks observes, someone we might regard as a 'homosexual prostitute' may not identify himself or herself either as a homosexual or as a prostitute.'⁸⁷ Sinfield employs this example in order to comment on the obsessive tendency to define who the 'real' homosexual is within constructionist and essentialist arguments and within the universalizing and minoritizing models. Either way, as he explains:

Gayness is not, primarily or interestingly, a property of individuals, but a mode of categorizing that circulates in societies like ours. It is a principal way that we use to demarcate the range of sexual potential. Trying to decide who the real homosexuals are, therefore, is to join the ideological circus, not to gain a vantage upon it.⁸⁸

Similar issues of sexual orientation and the feasibility of 'real' male prostitution in the early modern English culture will also be considered in this project. What both Sinfield and Kaye cautiously direct us to and suggest, although from different angles, is the ideological parameters that could be involved in a study of the male sex-trade. Let me explain.

In their study on 'Research Direction in Male Sex Work', Browne and Minichiello inform us that male sex workers who serve men 'need to be understood within the social construction of masculinity and the secular stigmas of both whoredom and homosexuality'.⁸⁹ Largely defined through 'discourses of criminology, deviance and social control', Browne and Minichiello note that:

⁸⁶ Kaye, p. 51.

⁸⁷ Sinfield, *Cultural Politics*, p. 71.

⁸⁸ Sinfield, p. 71.

⁸⁹ Jan Browne and Victor Minichiello, 'Research Directions in Male Sex Work', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 31.4 (1996), 29-56 (p. 30).

Male homosexual prostitution contradicts the belief that prostitution is a rehearsal of gender inequity or a response to consumer capitalism, and its very existence is contrary to the egalitarian ideals of the gay community, as sex workers do not necessarily have equal rights.⁹⁰

This is one of the reasons that male prostitution has not attracted extensive focus in academic studies apart from research that focuses on HIV/AIDS risk of infection. In addition, as Browne and Minichiello observe:

[m]any incidences of prostitution, however, have been found among gay and bisexual men without the attachment of the label. Many of these are transient encounters where sex is exchanged for money, accommodation, or favors-occasions which are reported to occur frequently among young gay men, but are not necessarily defined as sex work by the actors.⁹¹

This is as far as male prostitution in the twentieth century is concerned. Yet, the problem seems to be not only ideological but methodological as well. In fact, the methodological informs the ideological, as Sinfield has suggested.

The reality and effectiveness that a social constructionist perspective can have regarding sexuality is best explained by Karras in her exploration of Greek and Roman sexualities in respect of sexual acts and sexual roles. Mainly considered to be ‘counterintuitive’, social constructionism ‘had little effect on attitudes outside the academy’.⁹² As Karras explains:

Social construction does not imply that individuals choose their own identities – it is discourses of the broader culture, for example medical, legal or religious systems, that construct systems of sexual identities – but nevertheless it is often misunderstood as implying that these identities are not ‘real’.⁹³

So, no matter how persistently we stress the importance that discourses play in our sexuality and selves, real life or actual experience outside the academy will still resist. This, I suspect, is partly because people are interested primarily in sexual experience per se rather than logocentric particulars that formulate it. It also might be because a social constructionist perspective does not leave much room for individual choice. However, if

⁹⁰ Browne and Minichiello, p. 33.

⁹¹ Browne and Minichiello, p. 35.

⁹² Karras, p. 1251.

⁹³ Karras, pp. 1251-1252.

I am to examine a specific literary sexual type that might imply the existence of a specific social category of people, I need to address the importance of discourse and ideology. For it is primarily in these that I can witness - as far as this is possible - the essentializing tendencies to conceptualise the male prostitute and the homosexual and/or sodomite, together with the possible conflation of such variant types. The problem, then, becomes foremost a problem of interpretation, of the sources and our attitude toward what they might suggest and reveal.

Both Sinfield's and Kaye's suggestions raise important issues concerning the study of male prostitution in the early modern period. Bearing these views in mind I would like to examine the extent to which they can problematise or facilitate a study of male prostitution with regard to sexual orientation and the possible ideological drawbacks that such a study could present. Hopefully this could direct us to a clearer understanding of the sources from the early modern era and their efficacy.

Kaye's argument should be considered as a caution. The dichotomy of viewing the male prostitute either as a victim or an active agent of his profession cannot represent the real life experiences of male prostitutes. In other words, if the male prostitute is homosexual it does not necessarily mean that he enjoys or feels more comfortable selling his body for sex than a heterosexual who would sell his services to a gay clientele. The issue of sexual orientation is an important one for the early modern period as well. For the early modern lexicon, the legal records and historical accounts that are examined later, implicitly suggest that the boys who prostituted themselves were actually active agents in pursuing sexual encounters with men. However, most of the cases that had made it to the courts, especially in Italy and Spain, show a variety of attitudes as constructed within the legal texts. In these texts we find boys that confess openly their prostitution; in other cases boys would be allegedly victims of abuse, offered gifts or money, or would totally deny or change their confessions and statements due to the fear of punishment (I stress here that the statements have not survived; just texts written by the hand of the jurists). In addition, authorities would be reluctant to punish the passive partners of an alleged sodomitical act but, as the cases in Italy and Spain show, the increasing appearance of sodomy cases in courts suggested to the jurists that boys, supposedly the passive ones, could have been the actual instigators of the sexual act. If the boy/man were a social inferior, because of class or race, the passive participant would have an equal share in responsibility and therefore, punishment. I do not include age here, for the appreciation of youths in literary texts would require and

insist on the younger partner taking the passive role. Therefore, one question that we need to ask is whether the male prostitute – at least the ones that confessed it – were exclusively passive in their sexual experiences. This is impossible to answer since there is no way of retrieving the ages of these boys. Focusing on sex rather than the discursive discourses that talk about it and define it, seems to present us with a dead-end.

Another problem that Kaye's comment raises is the absence of a traceable homoerotic subculture, as most critics persistently certify, even those critics who do have evidence for it. Thus, it seems unfeasible to argue for a distinct homoerotic identity. Sodomy cases, including those that might have concerned male prostitutes, appear as something temporal, a transient phase in a boy's life that led to maturity. The literary cases will leave the prostitute's or potential prostitute's life incomplete. They are portrayed or staged as mere appearances without character development and always in the margins. In some textual instances the boy may be available to both women and men therefore suggesting a bisexual inclination.

In his discussion of male prostitution in the twentieth century, Kaye makes a very useful comparison between the male and the female prostitute and the different services each one of them offers. As he suggests:

The sex of the bodies in effect constitute a discursive act, complete with meanings of their own which are socially ascribed. Thus, the meaning of what is purchased varies with the sex of the body. Men and women who prostitute do not share exactly the same experience in their work because the same set of socially ascribed meanings are not applied to both patterns of transaction: they do not sell the same thing. Though 'sex' is sold in both cases, it is a sexual act whose meaning is distinctly gendered. Difference (and inequality) between women and men thus exists at the level of discourse, as well as within the material practices which ground the narrations.⁹⁴

It is therefore, a matter of how we perceive these acts offered.

The argument might at first appear incongruous for the early modern period. As it will be shown in Chapter 2, in Donne's satires, the boy prostitute appears to be interchangeable to that of a female whore, offering similar sexual services. Yet, the analysis of Middleton's satire 'Ingling Pyander' will reveal that the potential client is deceived by the transvestite prostitute, who manages to lure him to an act that did not match with what the client had in mind. Middleton's hermaphrodite has a different

⁹⁴ Kaye, p. 50.

service to offer, not so much an offer that involves the sexual act per se but a different aesthetic of the sexual experience. Similarly, for the boys and favourites that will be examined in the following chapters, different social meanings constitute their availability, whether as passive or active participants. The indecisiveness of the boy prostitute's role in sex needs to be stressed, for the Ancient Greek model of pederasty – younger with older – dominated Renaissance writings of homoerotic experience. This availability of boys, who sold something different from female prostitutes, may help us think of the gendered act the clients were hoping for and the possible locales (i.e. brothels, taverns) that sexual exchanges could take place. The trafficking of youth might indicate an unorganised formation of a male sex-trade. Mary Bly, for example, in her fascinating book *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans on the Early Modern Stage*, is convinced of the existence of male brothels in seventeenth-century London.⁹⁵ As she further suggests: 'Future work on the institution of the male brothel may well change our current understanding of the word sodomite, given that male brothels seem to have been condemned but not suppressed in the Stuart period.'⁹⁶

This, however, does not suffice for a formation of a specific homoerotic identity, and thus, subculture in early modern England, despite some critics' convincing proposals to discern a pre-schematisation of both identity and subculture. Sinfield, for example, comments regarding early modern England that 'if this society had no concept of the homosexual, it certainly recognized the Ganymede'.⁹⁷ So it would recognise the ingel and the catamite, to mention just two examples of the available lexicon in that era. For Bly, "Ganymede" was a label that mediated between a pederastic love object and a boy prostitute'.⁹⁸ She uses Blount's *Glossographia* (1656) in this instance, yet, her whole study supports the existence of boys prostituting themselves in Renaissance England. Similarly, the term 'cupbearer', alluding to Ganymede, was a 'code word', 'mask[ing] sexual content', as Kolve informs us in his study of medieval plays.⁹⁹ Yet, the significance of the terms would be constantly negotiated, employed in some cases solely for effect or for slander or even for satirical purposes. The instability of what the

⁹⁵ Mary Bly, *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans on the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 18.

⁹⁶ Bly, p. 19.

⁹⁷ Sinfield, *Unfinished Business*, p. 29.

⁹⁸ Bly, p. 89.

⁹⁹ V. A. Kolve, 'Ganymede/Son of Getron: Medieval Monasticism and the Drama of Same-Sex Desire', *Speculum*, 73.4 (October 1998), 1014-1067 <<http://www.jstor.org>> [accessed 16 December 2005] (p. 1067).

vocabulary actually signifies makes it difficult to prove the uses to which these *ingles* and *catamites* could be put: whether they signified solely sexual availability, male prostitution or companionship in terms of service.

If I wish to enter this complex argumentation concerning prostitution and identity, it is because I contend that the process of constructing male prostitution around identity politics and nomenclature proves more interesting and beneficial than a successful application of the concept 'identity'. The latter can in fact prove to be essentializing, whatever constructionist notions or tools are employed in order to structure identity upon a pre-agreed social constructionist basis. If we agree that texts and words evoke and denote various and diverse meanings diachronically, in some cases synchronically as well, to establish an identity apropos a specific sexual practice would be to misrepresent the multiple factors that play upon and define identity nomenclature in distinct epochs, as well as, in different nations and cultures. It would be to extract the worse kind of power constituent from the apparatus of sexuality.

So the way I read Sinfield's remark of a gay identity that 'has, for a long time, been always in the process of getting constituted'¹⁰⁰ and Halperin's notion of 'emergent identity', despite the different epochs that both critics work on, is for my purposes beneficial.¹⁰¹ A continuous emergence of identity could be helpful because it acknowledges and allows different and subsequent cultures and epochs to use, exploit and interpret various sexual practices and forms of desire, each one in its own distinct way. Concepts such as 'gay', 'homosexual' or 'lesbian' have always been, and still are, exploited differently in various cultures ever since their emergence. I am not against identifying and explaining the origins of utterances that seek to describe the sexual self. On the contrary, this thesis supports such historio-linguistic research. Yet, attribution of similar characteristics that we tend to take for granted cannot do justice to the multiplicity and relevance of international sexual identities. The ways in which we speak of various homoerotic identities and the analogies we use are indicative of our constant effort to interpret and achieve a sense of meaning and control over sexual identities that do not belong to the Anglo-American sphere of interpretation. Some cultures will react and have reacted ambivalently, possibly homophobically or misogynistically, by employing foreign terms for conceptualising their sexual practices

¹⁰⁰ Sinfield, *Cultural Politics*, p. 14.

¹⁰¹ David M. Halperin, *How to do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 43.

and identities. The terminology for them might signify something completely different from what these words were intended to mean. The terms will be heavily charged, possibly, with the national characteristics of the country/ies they originated from. This has equally been a problem and a consequence within the Anglo-American world, which is precisely the phenomenon the early modern culture had also to deal with by trying to redefine itself (i.e. through Roman and Greek narratives), albeit with different repercussions.

One of the achievements of academic discourse and its attempt to define, stabilise or expose the intrinsic indeterminacies of identity is apparent in the ways in which it deals with historical sexual identities and/or acts. Exploration of sodomitical discourse, ever since its invention and subsequent application to various social behaviours, unravelled and generated enormous implications for sexual, social and linguistic practices. The same applies to the vast vocabulary that we inherited from the Greeks and Romans, which has been put to use selectively in a plethora of ways in each period, serving different purposes. Thus, such an exploration and articulation of an identity in the process of being constituted, allows a constant and open-ended emergence of identity, with the desire to reach one. This process can reveal more than identity itself can offer.

For this reason I would like to turn to medieval perspectives on identity with regard, this time, to female prostitution. The arguments constructed within medieval studies may open up different channels through which I can apprehend the distinctive cultural materialisation of male prostitution.

Research on medieval female prostitution and medieval sodomites

Turning to the medieval context is important for several reasons. Studies on medieval prostitution have made an immense contribution to the field of sexuality and the history of the sex trade. The legitimization of female prostitute practice and interventions by the authorities in the profession during the period have allowed the proliferation of academic works that expose brilliantly the cultural, linguistic and ideological circuits

through which sexual practices were materialised.¹⁰² This shows the importance and power of historical discourse, which is used to validate some areas of research, in comparison with other areas of study where evidence is scarce or absent.

To invite and include medieval perspectives on female prostitution and sexuality in a thesis concerned with early modern male prostitution might at first look inapposite. Yet, I am not interested exclusively in the historical evidence the period has to offer. For argumentation around the conceptual space of the female prostitute occupies in the field of sexuality is not conducted solely through the discipline of historicity. The prostitute's symbolic significance for womanhood and manhood is an issue of textual interpretation and not of factual evidence. A glimpse into theoretical work around female sex-workers during the Middle Ages may offer insights and interconnections to sodomitical identities and acts that can reveal similar difficulties to those with which researchers of early modern sexualities have to deal.

Ruth Karras has rightly noted that 'to write the history of prostitution is to impose a modern category on the past'.¹⁰³ For 'prostitution was defined by promiscuity rather than financial exchange'¹⁰⁴ therefore, prostitution is socially constructed. 'The association of disorderly and immoral women with prostitution'¹⁰⁵ was also prevalent during the early modern period. Prostitution's symbolic significance emerged primarily 'not because of its practical importance, but because of the medieval connection of the feminine with the sexual'.¹⁰⁶ Condemned largely for their promiscuity rather than the profit they were making, medieval female prostitutes were the primal signifiers of sexual dissidence in Europe.¹⁰⁷ As Allen Frantzen shows, women, presumably tribades,

¹⁰² See for example Jacques Rossiaud, *Medieval prostitution* (Oxford: Blackwell 1988); Ruth M. Karras, 'Sex, Money, and Prostitution in Medieval English Culture', in *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West*, ed. by Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996), pp. 201-216; Ruth M. Karras, 'Prostitution in Medieval Europe', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (New York: Garland Publishing Inc, 1996), pp. 243-260.

¹⁰³ Ruth Mazo Karras, 'Sex, Money, and Prostitution in Medieval English Culture', in *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West*, ed. by Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996), pp. 201-216 (p. 201).

¹⁰⁴ Karras, 'Sex, Money, and Prostitution', p. 201.

¹⁰⁵ Karras, 'Sex, Money, and Prostitution', p. 201.

¹⁰⁶ Karras, 'Sex, Money, and Prostitution', p. 211.

¹⁰⁷ Suggested in Karras, 'Sex, Money, and Prostitution', p. 201.

who engaged in sex with each other were the first to enter the category of sodomy for St Paul, and men then followed by turning to their own kind.¹⁰⁸

Financial exchange, however, was not put aside in accounts of prostitution. In the medieval period arguments around the labour and service that women offered were just starting to be articulated. As Jeffrey Richards describes:

Thomas Choblan went so far as to argue that: “prostitutes should be counted amongst wage earners. In effect they hire out their bodies and provide labour. If they repent, they may keep the profits from prostitution for charitable purposes. But if they prostitute themselves for pleasure and hire out their bodies so that they may gain enjoyment, then this is not work and the wage is as shameful as the act”.¹⁰⁹

Once again, like with the male prostitute in the twentieth century, argumentation evolved around victimization and active agency. Sexual orientation was taken for granted for those women, despite St Paul’s indications. In addition, prostitution was recognised as labour, although a shameful one.

The strong and prevailing association of immorality, lust and femininity with the female whore during the Middle Ages had created unprecedented social conditions for women belonging to the sex trade. The argument cannot be extended to include Ancient Greek and Roman female prostitutes, or at least all types of prostitutes, due to the different structuring of prostitution in these eras. In addition, as will be discussed later, the co-existence of male prostitutes with female ones, as well as the diverse terminology and categorization used during the classical eras, do not allow similar representational frameworks. As Ruth Karras explains, ‘meretrix was actually closer to the modern ‘whore’ than ‘prostitute’ – she was not a woman who committed certain acts but a type of woman’.¹¹⁰

Karras employs Sedgwick’s categories in order to explain and assert a distinct medieval sexuality for the female prostitute. She finds ‘sexuality’ the ‘best term

¹⁰⁸ Allen J. Frantzen, ‘Between the Lines: Queer Theory, the History of Homosexuality, and Anglo-Saxon Penitentials’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 26.2 (1996), 255-296 (p. 266).

¹⁰⁹ Jeffrey Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 198-199.

¹¹⁰ Ruth Mazo Karras, ‘Prostitution and the Question of Sexual Identity in Medieval Europe’, *Journal of Women’s History*, 11.2 (1999), 157-177 <<http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>> [accessed 12 May 2007] (p. 162).

available'.¹¹¹ On the one hand, the dichotomy act/identity is not adequate enough and Sedgwick's categories 'elide the boundary' within the so-called Foucauldian polarity. As she explains, '[s]uch a discourse may attribute a minority identity on the basis of acts'.¹¹² On the other hand, through these categories, Karras acknowledges that dominant discourses are 'rules . . . designed to maintain prostitutes' commodity status, ensuing that they belonged to the city rather than in it'.¹¹³ Furthermore, Karras suggests that:

[m]inoritization involved taking a behaviour or attitude that might be relevant to a wide range of individuals across the society, and defining it as constitutive of membership in a particular group.¹¹⁴

This could also be argued for the female prostitute in the early modern period, indicating the tremendous cultural significance and social positioning of deviant women belonging to the sex trade. For Karras, 'the (minoritized) prostitute thus was a paradigm for the (universalized) lustful woman'.¹¹⁵

Responses to Karras' article by Theo van de Meer, Carla Freccero and David Halperin question her theorization and risky application of sexual identity to the medieval female prostitute. Halperin usefully encapsulates the problems concerning such a proposition by claiming that 'to be a whore is not to reveal the lifelong configuration of one's erotic desires but to display a sexually depraved character attached to a disreputable social identity'.¹¹⁶ For Halperin, "whore" is [. . .] a category of persons but not the name of a psychosexual orientation of erotic desire'.¹¹⁷ However, it is another issue that interests me in Karras' article - the issue of associating prostitution with homosexuality. To pre-empt a possible misunderstanding I do not aim

¹¹¹ Ruth Mazo Karras, 'Response: Identity, Sexuality, and History', *Journal of Women's History*, 11.2 (1999), 193-198 <<http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>> [accessed 12 May 2007] (p. 194).

¹¹² Karras, 'Prostitution and the Question of Sexual Identity', p. 160.

¹¹³ Karras, 'Prostitution and the Question of Sexual Identity', p. 165.

¹¹⁴ Karras, 'Prostitution and the Question of Sexual Identity', p. 167.

¹¹⁵ Karras, 'Prostitution and the Question of Sexual Identity', p. 170.

¹¹⁶ See Theo van der Meer, 'Medieval Prostitution and the Case of a (Mistaken?) Sexual Identity', *Journal of Women's History*, 11.2 (1999), 178-185

<<http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>> [accessed 12 May 2007]; Carla Freccero, 'Acts, Identities, and Sexuality's (Pre)Modern Regimes', *Journal of Women's History*, 11.2 (1999), 186-192 <<http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>> [accessed 12 May 2007]; discussed also in David M. Halperin, *How to do the History of Homosexuality*, pp. 66-68 (p. 67).

¹¹⁷ Halperin, p. 67.

to criticise any associations that Karras makes concerning homosexuality and/or sodomy with prostitution. As she explains, and this part needs to be quoted extensively:

The battles over the history of sexual identity are usually fought out on the territory of male homosexuality and/or sodomy. However, for the Middle Ages, prostitutes present a clear example of a group set aside as different from other people on the basis of sexuality. The point is not simply that 'prostitute' was a sexual identity in the Middle Ages. Rather, regardless of where in relation to the 'homosexual' one situates the 'sodomite', it is still possible to speak of medieval sexualities. [. . .] The premise of this article is not that heterosexual prostitution and sex between men are morally or socially equivalent. Rather they are comparable because in the Middle Ages, society saw them both as deviant sexual practices, and because they provided interesting contrasts that illuminate how medieval discourses defined or did not define groups, and how individuals did or did not cooperate to build their own subcultures within a world structured by those discourses.¹¹⁸

Indeed, heterosexual prostitution and sex between men are not morally or socially equivalent. I would argue that even the comparison between a male and a female prostitute could not be efficacious, due to the diverse linguistic strategies and socio-economic contingencies that defined each practice. Yet, what defamatory, religious and lexicographical discourses show is that sodomy was read and interpreted through the language of female prostitution. This does not mean that prostitution was an unproblematic label. Bly usefully encapsulates both terms' indeterminacy with respect to modern concepts of sexuality, for 'the category prostitute is as fraught a term historically as is sodomite'. For 'the terms prostitute and sodomite involve a similar construction of lust'.¹¹⁹

Karras also uses the legal proceedings of the Ufficiali di notte, the Office of the Night in Italy responsible for controlling sexual deviancy, in 1432, and explains that 'legal proceedings accused men of committing sodomy, not of 'being a sodomite', but charged women with 'being a prostitute' rather than having sex for money'.¹²⁰ She is right, for '[t]he legal discourse around sodomy seemed to have been less minoritizing than that around prostitution'.¹²¹ The anxieties surrounding masculinity and defamatory accusations of sodomy in the Renaissance resisted forcefully any associations of the

¹¹⁸ Karras, 'Prostitution and the Question of Sexual Identity', p. 161.

¹¹⁹ Bly, p. 16.

¹²⁰ Karras, 'Prostitution and the Question of Sexual Identity', p. 167.

¹²¹ Karras, 'Prostitution and the Question of Sexual Identity', p. 168.

sexual act of sodomy constituting a specific identity. The assumption that any man could commit sodomy was a source of cultural neurosis and eventually would have forced discourses to name the unnameable act. Such charges would have been catastrophic for the male citizen/subject of any early modern city, and authorities anxiously tried to disclaim and conceal such a supposition. As Sinfield explains, although his argument concerns homosexuality, if anyone is 'immune' to it then 'we arrive at a universalizing model' but 'if we require an acknowledged identity or engagement in a gay lifestyle before accepting that 'real' homosexuality is present, we will find fewer instances and hence arrive at a minoritizing model'.¹²²

However, the association of the female prostitute subculture and the sodomitical (homoerotic) act was constantly reiterated, by drawing analogies between acts and identities, something that may suggest that the distinction between act and identity was not so pronounced in the period or at least not easily readable. There seemed to be a constant redefinition of the unstable and mixed act and category of sodomy, for the tension and perturbation that critics witnessed in historical, legal and religious records point to a resistance to a clearly defined application of identity on the sodomitical subject. Interestingly, it is the translations and attempts of interpretation that bring these categories, acts and identities into question and not the primary sources themselves. For the issue of male prostitution has been a major debate in biblical and religious discourse.

Take for example the word ἀρσενokoίται (arsenokoitai) in the Corinthians (1 Cor. 6:9). Boswell considers the term to be referring to male prostitutes, but David Wright suggests it did not and that it referred 'unambiguously' to 'those who commit homosexual acts'.¹²³ Wright supports this by claiming that 'prostitution was manifestly of greater concern to Saint Paul than any sort of homosexual behaviour'.¹²⁴ Richards, who supports Wright's findings, cites the same passage, noting that the 'Jerusalem translation of the Bible renders the last two categories as 'catamites and sodomites''.¹²⁵

Fratzen however, in his exciting and carefully analytical article 'Between the Lines: Queer Theory, the History of Homosexuality, and Anglo-Saxon Penitentials',

¹²² Sinfield, *Cultural Politics*, p. 71.

¹²³ David F. Wright, 'Homosexuals or Prostitutes? The Meaning of ἀρσενokoίται (1 Cor. 6:9, 1 Tim. 1:10)', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 38.2 (June 1984) 125-153
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1583059>> [accessed 11 October 2009] (p. 125); discussed also in Jeffrey Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation*, p. 133.

¹²⁴ Wright, p. 125.

¹²⁵ Wright, p. 133.

mentions the variety of available translations of the Corinthians' extract. As his footnote indicates:

Translations vary. These categories are "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites," according to the *New Revised Standard Version*; "no fornicator or idolater, no adulterer or sexual pervert," according to the politically incorrect *Revised English Bible*; "neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor boy prostitutes nor practicing homosexuals," according to the *New American Bible*; and "the sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, the self-indulgent, sodomites," according to the *New Jerusalem Bible*.¹²⁶

There are even more variations. The *Authorised version of the Bible* will have 'neither fornicators, nor idolaters, not adulterers, not the effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind', as Richard again mentions.¹²⁷ Frantzen's careful reading of the Anglo-Saxon penitentials shows how the category that I am looking for, was employed differently by various authors, indicating the impossibility of a consensus with regard to the term's interpretation. Associations of sodomites with harlots were also made by the early eighth-century scholar Aldhelm, as Frantzen informs us. He translates '[harlots and molles (effeminate men), filthy catamites who performed the act of Sodom in an abominable way], 'effeminate men' being the translation of 'cenidos', that is 'cinaedus'.¹²⁸

In addition, Richards notes:

There is evidence of male prostitution in Italian cities and references to male brothels in Chartres, Orleans, Sens and Paris. Some Italian cities, particularly Venice and Florence, became notorious homosexual centres, so much so that in Germany pederasts were known as Florenzer (Florentines).¹²⁹

Whereas for Italy and France the evidence indicates the existence of male prostitutes and male brothels, in medieval England male prostitution is non-existent. Once again it appears to be an issue of nomenclature rather than the availability of historical evidence. Warren Johansson's article of medieval sodomites offers another terminology for the sodomite and the male prostitute. These include, 'glabriones', 'pusiones' and

¹²⁶ Frantzen, ft 110, p. 294.

¹²⁷ Richards, p. 133.

¹²⁸ Frantzen, p. 279.

¹²⁹ Richards, p. 137.

‘mascularii’ and are mostly translated as ‘hustlers’ or ‘male prostitutes’.¹³⁰ The more exploration we do, the more the terminology presents itself unstable and questionable, for even in academic discourse the male prostitute and the sodomite seem to work as referents to one another. Yet, even when historical evidence is available, as the medieval case of John Rykener will show, denomination persistently appears problematic.

John Rykener and the quest for the early modern male prostitute

Only one male prostitute is recorded from fourteenth-century London and he was neither referred to as a prostitute nor a sodomite. John Rykener, ‘calling [himself] Eleanor’¹³¹ was caught having sex with John Britby who, according to his account, thought Rykener was a woman. Both were referred to the Aldermen of London and the Mayor, John Fressh. Boyd’s and Karras’ insightful analysis of this case can be found in *Premodern Sexualities* where they explain the problems concerning Rykener’s classification of sexual behaviour and object-choice. What nowadays might be conceptualised as a transvestite bisexual identity, for medieval culture may not have been. First-person narratives that might suggest identification with sexual orientation in peoples’ experiences are non-existent. It is clear, however, from the court case against Rykener, whose gender transgression was facilitated by two women, that a man could freely practice his trade as a sex-worker without necessarily residing in a brothel. Furthermore this statement might also incline us to suspect a diversity of sexual practices and behaviours within the late medieval brothel. As the text indicates:

Rykener was also asked who had taught him to exercise this vice, and for how long and in what places and with what persons, masculine or feminine, [he] had committed that libidinous and unspeakable act. [He] swore willingly on [his] soul that a certain Anna, the whore of a former servant of Sir Thomas Blount, first taught him to practice this detestable

¹³⁰ Warren Johansson, ‘London’s Medieval Sodomites’, in *History of Homosexuality in Europe and America*, ed. by Wayne R. Dynes and Stephen Donaldson (New York: Garland, 1992), pp. 159-163 (pp. 159-160).

¹³¹ Ruth M. Karras and David L. Boyd, ‘“Ut cum muliere”: A Male Transvestite Prostitute in Fourteenth-Century London’, in *Premodern Sexualities*, ed. by Louise Fradenburgh and Carl Freccero (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 99-116 (p.111).

vice in the manner of a woman. [He] further said that a certain Elizabeth Brouderer first dressed him in women's clothing and saying that they had misbehaved with her.

The intense and strict regulation of the municipal medieval brothel certainly cannot be underestimated. Studies have clearly shown the scrutiny that medieval brothels, whores and pimps were subjected to by municipal and ecclesiastical authorities.¹³² These studies also testify that a great deal of prostitute practice escaped authoritative control and women, or men as in the Rykener case, could practice their sex-trade outside the brothel. Although these were illegal instances, prostitute practice and the sex market were not confined solely to the brothel areas as designated by the authorities. No matter how exclusive the authorities wanted to be concerning the regulation of sexual behaviour and activity, illicit sex could not and would not be so easily controlled.

The significance of Rykener's case is that his prostitution, together with his transvestism, is the closest court case available to us, concerning our investigation into male prostitution in the early modern English period. The references to sodomites, apart from the boy actors who played women's parts, do not indicate other cases of male transvestism. Nor do they betray prostitute practice, at least not in the same sense as female prostitution was perceived and talked about. However, the source material indicate that there is no equivalent era to that of the Renaissance, so deeply and anxiously preoccupied with issues of transvestism and prostitution, both male and female. As Archer suggests in his study of the criminal underworld:

The sources pose particularly intractable problems for those who seek to penetrate the underworld. Indictments are not a reliable indicator of the level of crime because of the 'dark figure' of unprosecuted crime. [. . .] Those who have been convinced by the reality of the underworld have tended therefore to rely on the literary sources. But these are also highly problematic. One cannot be sure about the representativeness of possibly sensationalised accounts of individual criminals,¹³³

¹³² See for example Jacques Rossiaud, *Medieval prostitution* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988). Also Ruth M. Karras, 'Prostitution in Medieval Europe', pp. 243-260.

¹³³ Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 205.

I am not suggesting that prostitution should be seen as a criminal act but bearing in mind Henry VII's act against whoredom in 1519, prostitution was considered an important offence.¹³⁴

Literature has proved so far an invaluable source for examining popular culture in the early modern era. This is not because of the repeated plot patterns and models that are ubiquitous in literary texts and therefore, are able to validate certain sexual and social behaviours, nor because the texts confirm the ideological frameworks around which these patterns were conceptualised. Many of the cultural models we come across in Renaissance writings are quite diverse: some are borrowings from classical literature, some belong exclusively to the English linguistic and cultural heritage, while others are a careful (or sometimes unconscious) blending of both. Yet, this blend of multi-cultural patterns and models are exploited in a variety of texts, including satires, tragedies, comedies and historical accounts. The literature of the period gives us an informal linguistic consensus through which behaviours (and possibly identities) were discussed. When the word 'sodomite' was evoked in pamphlets, sermons or treatises they all knew the possible and multiple meanings this utterance carried, unlike modern research, which intensely re-reads and redefines its possible religious, political or sexual implications. In many cases it seems that authorities would deliberately maintain the inherent vagueness surrounding the word 'sodomy'. When they talked about 'Ganymedes' or 'ingles' the authors apparently knew the significance underlying such vocabulary, no matter how inaccessible it may have been to an early modern readership or audience. When they discussed 'whoredom', 'doxies', 'drabs' or 'trulls' (the vocabulary on prostitution during this period was unprecedented), they knew that they were not only referring to commercial prostitution, but also adultery, sodomy, looseness in manners, criminality and 'uncleaness'.¹³⁵

However, the fact that so many words were interchangeable in medieval and Renaissance England, as demonstrated on discourses on sex and sexual behaviour, or equally important, on sexualised discourses on politics, religion and economy, manifests not only an agreement on linguistic terminology, but also an antagonism to meaning, with regard to definition and adherence. During the early modern period the English vocabulary expanded considerably due to the re-reading of the classics and the

¹³⁴ Suggested in Ephraim J. Burford, *London: The Synfulle Citie* (London: Robert Hale, 1990), p. 116.

¹³⁵ Thomas Becon, *A Homily Against Whoredom and Uncleaness* (1547), ed. by Rev. John Ayre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1844), pp. 641-650.

intense socio-linguistic mobility within and outside England. For example, narratives on cony-catching and the glossaries they contained, as well as dictionaries that circulated in the sixteenth century, show a major concern around the use of language.¹³⁶ It was not so much a competition as to who was using words accurately. As far as literary articulations were concerned it was more about expanding a word's essence, evoking multiple levels of meaning and even escaping censorship. Patterson's account of 'functional ambiguity' is instructive of the ways in which censorship facilitated and informed literary writing.¹³⁷ Her concept, as she notes, aims to 'free us somewhat from more absolutely skeptical conclusions about indeterminacy in language and its consequences for the reader or critic'. She claims, as this thesis supports, that 'authors who build ambiguity into their works have no control over what happens to them later'.¹³⁸ For Patterson, 'indeterminacy inveterate to language was fully and knowingly exploited by authors and readers alike'.¹³⁹ Yet, what is at stake here is whether authors were applying terms too quickly and too easily in their attempt to represent, regulate or conceal any kind of sexual deviancy. In the same vein, did readers fully grasp their intended meaning? Did they recognise and approve the mere effect of such a sexual vocabulary that could have had titillating, yet significant socio-linguistic implications? If such answers are intricate but crucial in order to comprehend the ways in which sexual language functioned – literally and metaphorically – it is because of the plethora of discourses that participated in its construction and reception. The issue of metaphoricity and male prostitution will be examined later. For now I want to turn to the opacity surrounding the male sex-trade during the early modern period and the possible linguistic implications it might entail for twentieth-century academic discourse.

On the one hand, as mentioned earlier, the problem is the lack of historical evidence and first-person narratives, something that applies to female prostitutes as

¹³⁶ For example see: John Florio, *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99838142> [accessed 3 June 2007] and Robert Greene, *The second part of conny-catching* (1591)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99841561> [accessed 16 May 2007] or Robert Greene, *The third and last part of conny-catching* (1592)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99841563> [accessed 16 May 2007].

¹³⁷ Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), p. 18.

¹³⁸ Patterson, p. 18.

¹³⁹ Patterson, p. 18.

well. On the other hand, it is the issue of the proliferation of a vocabulary that would insinuate men, and mostly boys, to be sex-workers, while at the same time abstaining from naming them prostitutes. Rykener was not named as a prostitute. Karras and Boyd name him as such. Historical narratives of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did not name sodomites as prostitutes either. The language that addressed and governed the domain of male sexual behaviour was carefully protected. Take for example Giovanni Della Casa, Archbishop of Benevento, whose *Galateo or A Treatise of the manners and behaviours* became available in England through Robert Peterson's translation in 1576. The following passage concerns prostitution and language. Della Casa claims that:

And it better becomes a ma[n]s and womans mouth, to call Harlots, vvome[n] of the worlde (as Belcolore did, who was more ashamed to speake it then to doe it) then to vse their common name: Thais is a Harlot. And as Boccac declared yt power of whores and boyes. For, if he had termed the males, by their beastly occupation, as he termed the women: his talke would haue byn foule & shameful.¹⁴⁰

What he is saying, in short, is beware of the language you use, especially concerning men. Men and prostitution combined in speech, according to Della Casa, would be atrocious. Earlier on he would refer to masturbation but not name it:

[...] for vve must not only refraine from such thinges as be fowle, filthy, lothsome and nastie: but vve must not so muche name them. And it is not only a fault to dooe such things, but against good maner, by any act or signe to put a man in minde of them. And therefore, it is an ilfauoured fashion, that some men vse, openly to thrust their hands in what parte of their bodye they lyst.

There are other instances in the text that Della Casa would abstain from naming, an example being, 'that me[n] may not say, thou hast Ganymedes hosen, or wearest Cupides doublet'. His obsession about how language was used betrays a major concern on the ways in which manhood was displayed.

For centuries the discourses on prostitution and whoredom have accommodated primarily women, with a successful attempt to continue to apply terms of deviance, irrespectability and looseness to female morals. When they discussed men, male sexual

¹⁴⁰ Giovanni Della Casa, *Galateo . . . First written in the Italian tongue, and now done into English by Robert Peterson, of Lincolnes Inne Gentleman* (1576)
 <http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99840654> [accessed 7 May 2007].

behaviour was linked to whoredom only by their association with female prostitutes. (Twice Della Casa in his treatise would call men ‘as harlots’ regarding dress and manners). They would be characterised as adulterers and even sodomites if anal intercourse was proved to have taken place. For those men who sought, or were thought to pursue, same-sex relations, sodomite, not male prostitute, was the applied term, and even then, not without presenting difficulty or ambiguity. In addition, they were called beasts in the same way female whores were considered, because prostitution for the medieval and Renaissance period was a term that was stripped, ostensibly, of any gender association. A woman who became a prostitute was no woman. Certainly associations between sodomy and prostitution underwent some changes by the end of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but for the early modern period – and the medieval era - the term was most commonly applied to women, simply because there was ‘no way to call a man a whore’.¹⁴¹ Donne could be seen as the exception, with his reference to a ‘prostitute boy’, in the same way as Rykener in late medieval England. However, if I add to Donne, Shakespeare’s Patroclus as a ‘masculine whore’, Hamlet as a ‘stallion’ or Cleopatra as a ‘prostitute boy’ actor, the case might seem different. These two authors have occupied a privileged place in the English literary canon and although their narratives are fictitious, their literary and linguistic genius does not deny the prostitute-like quality that men could also share with women. There are, after all, ways to name men or boys whores.

The point is that literary texts indicate a major concern surrounding male sexual behaviour and especially homoerotic sexual practice. ‘Ganymedes’, ‘ingles’ and ‘catamites’, just to name a few of the epithets that were addressed to boys used as sex-workers, were overabundant on the early modern stage. Interestingly, as far as male sexual behaviour was concerned, there were many ways to call a man a whore, or at least insinuate that he was selling sex for money or social advancement. Despite the fact that women’s behaviour was under intense scrutiny, there is a tendency to ignore that men’s sexual behaviour, whether it expressed same-sex or different sex desire, was closely observed and regulated. Even if men were not named commercial whores, in the way male sex-workers are defined today, pamphlets, sermons and diatribes of the time refer to them ‘as whores’ or ‘like prostitutes’. Thus, they functioned as metonymies for other disorderly behaviours.

¹⁴¹ Laura Gowing, ‘Gender and the Language of Insult in Early Modern London’, *History Workshop*, 35 (Spring 1993), 1-21 (p. 4).

Accusations of whoredom concerning men, whether literal or metaphorical, proliferated not purely in order to regulate men's desire and behaviour. Early modern English culture could observe something intrinsic in their behaviour associating them with prostitutes. In some cases the stigma of someone's profession and social behaviour, like actors, whoremongers, vagabonds, cony-catchers and criminals, would be enough to equate men with whores. Male - unlike female - same-sex prostitution seemed to be addressed in association with apparel, class, profession and age. So, returning to two basic questions that run throughout this study: were there any male prostitutes in early modern England? Can we trace anything that could inform us of their socio-sexual behaviour? Critics and historians would possibly argue no, or warn us of the unavailability of evidence. The literary sources indicate otherwise. Before I examine some instances of male prostitution in academic discourse, historical narratives and literature, let me explain the reasons I insist on the conceptual framework and the parameters it involves through which the sex-market and its participants should be viewed.

As mentioned earlier, like the female prostitute, the male prostitute seemed to be equally defined by his promiscuity and not so much by the financial exchanges the practice involved.¹⁴² This is reading a specific homoerotic type and practice of relationship with the same linguistic strategies that constructed the female prostitute. This is not a universalizing attempt to associate the medieval sodomite, the Renaissance sodomite and the twentieth-century homosexual with male prostitutes. I want to suggest that their simultaneous emergence could indicate a repetitive linguistic strategy and tendency to construct homoerotic experience. I consider those eras to inform, textually, each other. For some periods the boundary that separated the act from the identity was probably difficult to be conceptualised or to matter at all, rendering each component of the polarity as mutually dependent on each other. Yet, as labour, a moral act and a socially meaningful identity, the male prostitute presents us with diverse methodological challenges compared to those that seek to construe the female prostitute.

The distinction of male from female prostitution needs to be stressed if I want to expose the linguistic techniques that have facilitated their association. In many instances that is impossible. What needs to be queered is both the female and male prostitute

¹⁴² Discussed in my Introduction, p. 35.

because the stigma and reputation that defines them varies significantly across heteroerotic and homoerotic cultures and subcultures. In fact, as it will be shown in Chapter 5, male prostitution, more than female, is inextricably linked with social roles in the early modern period, which is one of the main reasons it becomes illegible in texts.

In an attempt to attribute a sexually distinct identity to the male and female prostitute different factors need to be assessed: the stigma and reputation and the ways in which it varied across different eras; modes of payment and the socially ascribed meaning to the fiscal and gift exchanges that took place; the nomenclature which was indiscriminately applied to both male and female sex-workers, as well as its origins and use; style and dress, together with the prosthetic parts of the body, and the ideologies through which they were defined and talked about;¹⁴³ the diverse skills that both genders needed to acquire (or not) in order to be successful in their transactions; and finally the textual tendencies that sought to define both gendered prostitutes, including the slander that accompanied them.

For there seem to be variations on same-sex practices in the Renaissance, not to mention different types of male prostitutes within the sex trade, that need to be analysed. In this sense, this thesis could have been about the construction of male prostitution from the early Renaissance until the early twentieth century, evoked in literary narratives, plays, lexicography, discourses on education, favouritism and legal records. In order, however, to attempt such an enormous task and explain the construction of a specific form of homoerotic practice, the popular language of male prostitution, or what appears to indicate a male sex-trade - no matter how independent or dispersive it was - needs to be assessed. It is academic discourse that needs to be scrutinised so that we can estimate how male prostitution is described, defined and perceived within the academy. In fact an analysis of secondary material on homoeroticism and sodomy will possibly reveal a similarity between the strategies of effect that authors employed in the Renaissance and the ways in which the discipline of literary studies have attempted to construe them.

One last point concerning Karras' comment on heterosexual prostitution and same-sex practice between men: she did not mean to equate each with the other. As deviant behaviours, the sodomitical act and the female prostitute subculture could be

¹⁴³ On prosthetic parts of the body see Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

compared because they were marginal practices, subject to abuse, punishment and death, and defined through stigmatisation. The female prostitute, in fact, even more so than the male sodomite. I deliberately insist on the ambiguous distinction between act and identity/culture. When the COYOTE organization (an acronym for ‘Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics’) finally managed in 1973 to form a sort of resistance and give a voice to prostitutes by acknowledging their service and the inherent dangers that were prevalent in their profession in an attempt to overturn the discriminatory and over-moralizing attitudes toward them, they alluded to ‘the gay community in San Francisco that had successfully organized to protest police harassment’.¹⁴⁴ As Valerie Jenness notes, by quoting Bryan, Margo St. James, founder of the organization claimed that, ‘it’s well past time for whores to organize. The homosexuals organized and now the cops are afraid to harass them anymore’.¹⁴⁵

Ideology insisted on equating female prostitute practice with the homosexual subculture: a hazy parallelism between the gendered act that a female prostitute offered with the organized gay lifestyle that eventually started to become visible.¹⁴⁶ The twentieth-century masculine and so-called ‘straight’ male prostitute from both groups was, ironically, absent.

¹⁴⁴ Valerie Jenness, ‘From Sex as Sin to Sex as Work: COYOTE and the Reorganization of Prostitution as a Social Problem’, *Social Problems*, 37.3 (August 1990), 403-420 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/800751>> [accessed 6 October 2009] (p. 407).

¹⁴⁵ Jenness, p. 407.

¹⁴⁶ Discussed in this thesis with reference to Kaye’s suggestion on p. 31.

Chapter One: Male prostitution in Early Modern Europe

The medieval and twentieth-century perspectives outlined in my introduction have shown the significance of exploring the conceptual framework through which male prostitution has been examined in academic discourse. As this thesis will demonstrate, its implications are enormous for the study of male prostitution in Renaissance England. Yet, as mentioned earlier, most theoretical work on homoeroticism and its variants has been done in the field of Classical studies. This is important because the historical and literary determinacy of their findings has instructed the field of sexuality in ways that cannot be easily challenged or ignored, even when historical evidence is available, as in the case of early modern Europe. Thus, we may find similar patterns and interpretational problems instructing research on early modern sexuality to those that classisists confront, as for example in the case of the validity of historical accounts. What this chapter aims to expose is the problem of historical representation of male prostitution in Renaissance Europe, the linguistic strategies that are in play and the implications these might have when we reach the historical vacuum of male prostitution in Renaissance England.

Before I look closely at the instance of Renaissance England, I would like to account for the cases in which we do have historical evidence for male prostitution. Italy, France and Spain serve as important examples for the existence of male prostitution in early modern Europe. Other instances can be found in the Ottoman Empire, as well as in northern and central Europe. The reason why I focus on these three countries is because of the immense influence they had on the English texts, as countries of new fashions and as sources of textual productions that infiltrated English culture.

It will become clear that class, age and race were the prime constituents in defining the male sex-trade in all three countries, significantly informing legal and authoritative discourses. The following section will only provide glimpses of the social

and sexual issues involved with regard to male prostitution. It will introduce specific concepts, such as the ‘other’ and sexual ‘misalliances’,¹⁴⁷ and look at institutionalised practices, such as patronage, slander, the family and legal records, that may prove useful in my investigation of male prostitution as it was performed socially in the selected countries.

Spain, the Muslim Other and sexual misalliances

My choice of Spain is instructed from Berco’s detailed study of legal records in Valencia. There are a few instances of male prostitution that Berco mentions in his study and these are significant because of the ways in which authorities dealt with them. Once again, the ‘pecado nefado’, the sin contrary to nature, overshadowed all the various types of same-sex practice. As in England, the term ‘sodomy’ was rarely articulated. My interest in Spain’s golden age is because it highlights and exposes the tense relations that authorities had with the Muslim other regarding same-sex relations.

Thus, in Berco’s study we find Juan de la Vega, eighteen years old, and his friend Nicolas Gonzalez engaging sexually with Muslim slaves in exchange for money and food. The Spanish lads, according to Berco’s sources, took the passive role with the Muslim slaves in ‘illustrious households’. As Berco explains:

Apparently, as inquisitors’ letters to the Suprema confirmed, Juan had finally approached the authorities and commenced a process which would uncover a wide ring of informal prostitution centred around Muslim slaves and their white, Christian adolescent acquaintances.¹⁴⁸

Ethnicity and class in this case are of major importance, for ‘inquisitors concentrated their might on both Moriscos and Muslim and black slaves found guilty of sodomizing Christian teenagers’.¹⁴⁹ Moral attitudes toward youngsters varied from city to city.

¹⁴⁷ Christian Berco, *Sexual Hierarchies, Public Status: Men, Sodomy, and Society in Spain’s Golden Age* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 130.

¹⁴⁸ Berco, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ Berco, p. 12.

Crompton reports that, in Valencia, although ‘the legal age of majority was twenty-five, in some cases it was seventeen’.¹⁵⁰

It seems that for the authorities, major ‘anxieties around homosexual behaviour stemmed from the identity of the active partner, for the accrual of status by the wrong man signified a breach in social stability’.¹⁵¹ Later on Berco explains that the ‘internal rules of the homosocial world where men engaged each other sexually created a constant opportunity of sexual misalliance’.¹⁵² Such anxieties of course, concerned sexual misalliances between different same-sex couplings but the act of male prostitution seems to have been doubly demonised. Berco proposes that male prostitution proliferated due to poverty. He notes that, ‘on the verge of poverty, these teenagers thought it worthwhile to sell their bodies in an informal manner in exchange for a few reales, some food, or even a knife’.¹⁵³ As far as the slaves were concerned, ‘the slaves who procured the services of these youngsters probably had enough surplus money to pay for sexual favours. All of the slaves implicated in the scandal worked for important households in Valencia.’¹⁵⁴ Note the young age of the passive partners. Although the ages of the slaves are not mentioned in the legal records, ethnicity and class are prioritized, indicating a hierarchical interest in differences when foreign slaves were involved.

Another instance is recorded in 1529, where Martin de Hortege, ‘named by a Granadan canon’,

met a variety of young students in Valencia whom he sodomized after giving them one or two reales. The ease with which adults could effectively ‘buy’ an adolescent’s body for a short sexual experience created a problem because almost anybody, regardless of social and ethnic status, could approach these teenage boys with such promises.¹⁵⁵

Approaching young students to engage in sexual practice in exchange for money and gifts was not an exclusively Spanish characteristic of same-sex practice that could

¹⁵⁰ Louis Crompton, *Homosexuality and Civilization* (Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 304.

¹⁵¹ Berco, p. 130.

¹⁵² Berco, p. 130.

¹⁵³ Berco, p. 126.

¹⁵⁴ Berco, p. 126.

¹⁵⁵ Berco, p. 68.

denote prostitute activity. As it will be shown later, it was a common feature in most countries in Europe.

Two further cases indicate male prostitution in Spain, one being the case of Manuel Roma, fourteen years old, in 1712, who accepted gifts in return for his sexual services.¹⁵⁶ The importance of money exchange and opportunistic liaisons with older men is also repeated in a case in 1651, where we are informed that Miconet cost Carlo Charmarinero a fortune. Berco's source indicates:

The young man (Miconet) cost him a lot of money, having already spent more than fifty pounds on him, and that everyday he would give him one real so that he would remain his friend.¹⁵⁷

Berco, however, is reluctant to name such a network of informal prostitution as a subculture. He explains:

Whether high-born and powerful or abject and downtrodden, and all variations in between, men of different backgrounds often explored same-sex eroticism in a manner that could highlight social and ethnic variables. No such thing as a sodomite or group of sodomites could exist precisely because their everyday personae already found a well-established niche within a social and ethnic hierarchy.¹⁵⁸

In Berco's account, ethnicity appears as the primal signifier of social hierarchy around which social practices and legal judgements were materialised. Crompton, in his massive study of *Homosexuality and Civilization*, also mentions the case of Gonzalez and La Vega's prostitute practice where 'sixty men and boys' were exposed in total.¹⁵⁹ Crompton reports also the case of a teenage Neapolitan soldier, who 'tried to escape from a city jail in Valencia in 1640 when some Italians accused him of being a male prostitute. He was terrified 'because he had seen a man burned at Madrid as a 'sodomite''.¹⁶⁰ The difference from Berco is that Crompton, following Carrasco, allows for a consideration of a homosexual subculture in Valencia. Crompton argues:

¹⁵⁶ Berco, p. 28.

¹⁵⁷ Berco, p. 52.

¹⁵⁸ Berco, p. 15.

¹⁵⁹ Crompton, p. 298.

¹⁶⁰ Crompton, p. 305.

The fact that sodomy was a practice open to masculine men who had nothing in common with *maricas* does not mean, of course, that it was not the anonymous practice of those whom we would have to call homosexuals and not sodomites . . . There was in fact in [early] modern Valencia a complete crypto-society organized in a homosexual style . . . In the trials we see . . . small groups of men [whose] speech and manner of revealing themselves or signifying their femininity, and whose code for making approaches, reveal the existence of a true homosexual *ghetto*.¹⁶¹

Both Crompton and Berco inform us that the vocabulary around homoerotic practice in Spain portrayed the hostility towards same-sex acts. As in the English language, the linguistic utterances were colloquial:

Men suspected of homosexual inclinations were labelled *sodomitas* or *bujarrones* (from the Italian *buggiaron*). Especially degrading were the terms for men perceived as playing a feminine role – *bardaje* (from the Italian *bardassa*), *marica* ('little Mary'), and *puto* ('male whore'), the ultimate degrading insult. This last epithet was hurled derisively at an effigy of Isabella's brother, Henry IV of Castile, at the climax of a public ceremony of dethronement in Avila on June 4, 1464.¹⁶²

Not even royalty could escape such an invective. From the aforementioned words, *bardaches* and *bardajes* were used in relation to 'many Indian tribes in North and South America'. For Spanish people were introduced to a novice 'cultural tradition' when they reached America: '[the] publicly recognized gender-role reversal. The Spanish called these men *bardajes*, passive sodomites', indicating another instance of reversing and misrepresenting foreign rituals and explaining them for what was commonly believed to be an abominable practice, passivity.¹⁶³

The Inquisition was important in this context: as Andre Fernandez explains concerning the Aragonese Inquisition, 'it was a first attempt at classification of sexual deviants. It gives us information about the type and the character of the deviants as well as about the prejudices of the judges facing them and of society at large'.¹⁶⁴ This is crucial. Classification stems from the common law rather than the medical narratives that Crompton quotes, as for example, *A Study of Intellectual Aptitude for Learning*,

¹⁶¹ Quoted in Crompton, p. 303. Crompton's italics.

¹⁶² Crompton, p. 293. Crompton's italics.

¹⁶³ Crompton, p. 315.

¹⁶⁴ Andre Fernandez, 'The Repression of Sexual Behavior by the Aragonese Inquisition between 1560 and 1700', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 7.4 (April 1997), 469-501 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3704158>> [accessed 28 February 2009] (p. 470).

published also in English in 1594.¹⁶⁵ Yet, for Berco, it is the historical accounts that ‘give glimpses of sexual preference’.¹⁶⁶ Accounts of sexual preference and inclination in history depend upon the sources employed.

It seems that informal male prostitution in Spain confused authorities considerably, as in other European countries. Sometimes the passive boy would be treated with leniency, as long as he was not considered a prostitute, something that would indicate active agency. However, some of the active men involved seem not to have paid for the sexual act only, but for the silencing of it. This indicates that the boy was not a prostitute. This does not change however, the way in which the act could be perceived. In the eyes of the inquisitors it was still characterised as a prostitute practice, only this time, the active partner was responsible for it. Yet, when the sexual encounter involved Muslims, it was the Muslim subject that was considered responsible for the act, whether active or passive. It will become clearer when I examine the Italian sources why authorities were so bewildered with sodomy and why there was no differentiation from male prostitution. As the stories and the textual narratives indicate there was an ambiguity with regard to who instigated the sexual encounter. In fact, this is the most titillating aspect in these accounts rather than the act itself.

France and historical narratives

The French accounts of travel in the Middle East and North Africa reveal similar patterns of accusation concerning Muslims. Once again, male prostitution, no matter how fictive, is represented as the worst instance of homoeroticism and is ubiquitous in the Ottoman Empire. Thus, from the ambassador Nicholas de Nicholas, sent by Francis I to the Empire of Suleiman, we learn that ‘[t]he Hagia Sophia Church is transformed into a brothel for both female and male prostitutes’.¹⁶⁷ However, the problem is not the male prostitutes in this account. Female prostitutes reside there as well. It is the Hagia

¹⁶⁵ Crompton, pp. 302-303.

¹⁶⁶ Berco, p. 132.

¹⁶⁷ Guy Poirier, ‘Masculinities and Homosexualities in French Renaissance Accounts of Travel to the Middle East and North Africa’, in *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West*, ed. by Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996), pp. 155-167 (p. 158).

Sophia Church that has become a 'brothel', in de Nicholas' attempt to gain sympathy and alert the French King of the abominations that took place in what used to be a Christian locale.

Also, 'Belleforest, in his version of Munster's *Cosmographiae universalis*', referring to the Arabic city of Fez and the culture of the 'Elchevas' - transvestite men inhabiting types of hotels - 'introduced an interesting comparison [of these houses] with European brothels'.¹⁶⁸ Similar to Spanish attitudes towards racial foreign others, French accounts represented foreign cultures as imbued in sodomy. Poirier informs us that travel accounts show that '[i]n North Africa . . . heterosexual prostitution is transformed into same-sex prostitution'.¹⁶⁹ He also suggests this may well be Belleforest's attempt to 'show the way to legislate against European brothels'.¹⁷⁰ Male prostitution, once again, is used to describe homoerotic practices, or what might possibly denote a homosexual transvestite subculture in Fez.

Despite the closure of most brothels in France in the sixteenth century because of the pressure imposed by the Counter-Reformation and the spread of syphilis, both male and female prostitution flourished rather than diminished during the Renaissance. As far as French homoerotic subculture is concerned, historians draw attention to its visibility and existence in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Michael Rey's account, for example, analyses the police archives from 1700 to 1750, and he notices the association of 'homosexuality' with female prostitution. The language of female prostitution infiltrates and informs representations of same-sex desire and practice. He notes that:

[T]he majority of the places we have pointed out were equally well-known for female prostitution, which the police readily equated with the homosexual solicitation (the term *raccrochage* was used for both cases), even when there was no payment for sex.¹⁷¹

Studies of the French early modern period and the late seventeenth century focus largely on male coterie circles. The elite courts, for historians of homoeroticism in France, have been an invaluable source of information, narrowing their attention on the life of Henry

¹⁶⁸ Poirier, p. 162.

¹⁶⁹ Poirier, p. 164.

¹⁷⁰ Poirier, pp. 163-164.

¹⁷¹ Michael Rey, 'Parisian Homosexuals Create a Lifestyle, 1700-1750: The Police Archives', in *Unauthorized Sexuality during the Enlightenment*, ed. by Robert Purks Maccubbin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 179-191 (p. 180).

III and Philip d'Orleans, the flamboyant brother of Louis XIV, the Sun King. Other elite courts are examined as well, as in Rey's study, but royal records and historical royal narratives have dominated perceptions of homoeroticism in France, at least in the secondary sources available in English translations. Chapter 5 will examine how Henry III was scrutinised by his contemporaries, and the ways in which the language of prostitution dominated historical narratives and literary texts which sought to represent the evil-doings of the French King. The era of Louis XIV however, is more revealing.

Louis Crompton, Michael Rey and Joseph Cady in their research construe the plethora of royal records, letters, narratives and police archives that bring to life the homoerotic discourse and practice in Louis' court. The situation for Louis XIV seems to have been especially embarrassing, as Crompton succinctly encapsulates:

Contemporaries testify unanimously to the strength of his homophobia. Yet Louis had a homosexual father (Louis XIII), a homosexual uncle (Cesar de Vendome, whose Hotel de Vendome in Paris was popularly known as the Hotel de Sodome), a flamboyantly homosexual brother (Philippe d'Orleans), and a son (the comte de Vermandois) who he punished for his affairs with other youths.¹⁷²

Under elite protection the homoerotic subculture seems to have proliferated in Paris, in spite of the constant slanderous attacks and defamatory satires that criticised royalty. Whether this was simply defamation, serious political propaganda, or both, needs further investigation. As will be illustrated in Chapter 5, a similar pattern existed in English and foreign reports concerning English royalty. However, this was materialised textually through the language of prostitution. For the remainder of this section I want to focus on Joseph Cady's elucidation and attempt to interpret the language of homoeroticism in France.

In a manner similar to that in England, the fluidity that characterised the terminology of same-sex desire indicates a tendency to sustain the plethora and ambiguity of homoerotic expression. Cady explains:

Our public vocabulary for same-sex attraction today tends to be narrow and monolithic, dominated by only two terms, 'homosexual' and 'gay'/'lesbian'. In contrast, in earlier periods the public denotation of homosexuality tended to fall into what I call a 'variegated' pattern, where various languages for same-sex desire coexisted and were used

¹⁷² Crompton, p. 338.

simultaneously, but where there typically was no confusion about what those languages meant.¹⁷³

In accordance with Berco and Crompton, Cady finds indications of a sexual orientation in the literary narratives available, in this instance, the *Memoires-Journaux* by Pierre de L'Estoile, directing us to a conceptualisation of the formation of an identity. As he notes: '[o]ne of the most telling conventions in the *Memoires-Journaux* is the use of 'ganymede' terminology to denote not just 'male homosexuals' but 'male homosexuality' as an orientation'.¹⁷⁴ Indeed, the language of homoeroticism falls into various and contradictory patterns, depending on the sources looked at.

Yet, Cady does not distinguish the various expressions of same-sex practice to be represented in that vocabulary. For Cady, 'Ganymede', in L'Estoile's text, 'is often used as a label for the *mignons*, signifying what we would call 'a homosexual male' now, the same general sense John Boswell found for the term in medieval writing'.¹⁷⁵ While for Sinfield, the term 'translates, approximately, into the early-modern page boy'.¹⁷⁶ Ganymede can be used differently in various sources. Here royal favouritism, service and homosexuality are all implicated in the term 'Ganymede'. The following chapters will reveal that in some cases the word would denote a male prostitute as well, which is in fact what Cady also shows but abstains from naming explicitly.

Cady quotes John Milton's notes on a composition of a tragedy to be called 'Cupid's Funeral Pile': 'every one with mistresse, or Ganymed, glittering along the streets, or solacing on the banks of Jordan, or down the stream'.¹⁷⁷ The 'Mistresse or Ganymede' pattern is distinctive: a similar binary opposition is represented in Donne's satire which I will analyze in Chapter 2. The variegated pattern Cady finds 'continued in broad outline until at least the early twentieth century'.¹⁷⁸ His example is drawn by Havelock Ellis' book on *Sexual Inversion*. For Cady:

¹⁷³ Joseph Cady, 'The 'Masculine Love' of the 'Princes of Sodom' 'Practising the Art of Ganymede' at Henri III's Court: The Homosexuality of Henri III and His *Mignons* in Pierre de L'Estoile's *Memoires-Journaux*', in *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West*, ed. by Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996), pp. 123-154 (pp. 142-143).

¹⁷⁴ Cady, p. 140.

¹⁷⁵ Cady, p. 139.

¹⁷⁶ Sinfield, *Unfinished Business*, p. 113.

¹⁷⁷ Quoted in Cady, p. 139.

¹⁷⁸ Cady, p. 143.

our relatively monolithic modern terminology for same-sex attraction is the product of a twentieth-century shift towards uniformity in public language of all kinds, rather than the reflection of any basic change in cultural recognition of the existence of homosexuality (which is not to say, of course, that there have not been other important changes in homosexuality's situation in society between the Renaissance and the present).¹⁷⁹

He later notes that:

[t]he Renaissance seem to have allowed several different kinds of vivid language – affective, figurative, and plain *de facto* statements – to coexist in their accepted public vocabulary for a subject, a situation amply illustrated in the denotation of homosexuality in the *Memoires-Journaux*.¹⁸⁰

Interesting as Cady's conclusions may be, it should be acknowledged that the diversity his pattern suggests does not allow for further appreciation of the homoerotic expressions, types and ways in which they could have been represented. Nor does it acknowledge the slanderous nature of the terms and how they have been put to use in various discourses. 'Ganymede' was employed both pejoratively and positively. It all depended on the context and the purpose for which the term was evoked. In rare cases we see differentiation between orderly and disorderly love and/or favouritism, or a split between political and sexual alliances. As Crompton notes, there were also varieties of *mignons* in French attacks on Henry III, 'characterized either as *mignons d' état* (youth who supported Henry politically) or *mignons de couchette* ('bedroom favourites')'.¹⁸¹ Some literary instances would also use the Ganymede terminology, calling the *mignons* 'shameless Ganymedes'.¹⁸² From an already complicated and indecisive vocabulary in historical and travel narratives, the literary text deployed a similar ambiguity and fluidity of homoerotic terminology. In many cases these linguistic utterances would denote male prostitution.

¹⁷⁹ Cady, p. 143.

¹⁸⁰ Cady, p. 144. Cady's italics.

¹⁸¹ Crompton, p. 330. Crompton's italics.

¹⁸² Crompton, p. 330.

Italy, male prostitution and legal records

No country in Europe has provided such an extensive record of male prostitute practice as Italy. Popularly acknowledged as the country where sodomy originated, Italy was internationally renowned for the sexual opportunities its cities offered for young and older men to engage in homoerotic acts. The two cities widely recognised as places where same-sex practice frequently occurred were Venice and Florence. Thanks to Michael Rocke's detailed book, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence*, and Guido Ruggiero's informative study on *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex, Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice*, students and researchers of sodomy in early modern Europe can witness the documented sodomitical cases reported in courts, and especially cases pertaining to male prostitute practice.¹⁸³

As early as 1325, Rocke informs us, 'statutes set a fine of 500 lire for pimps and intermediaries, for men who enticed boys by offering them money or gifts, and even for fathers who persuaded or allowed their sons to commit sodomy'.¹⁸⁴ Rocke's study is the only one that examines the close association of the male sex-trade with patronage. As he notes:

The wide-ranging norms contained in the laws of the fourteenth-century suggest that male prostitution existed, that fathers sometimes promoted their son's trysts, that innkeepers and property-owners often accommodated them.¹⁸⁵

By 1403, the practice of men and boys prostituting themselves, as well as the occurrence of other encounters of same-sex practice, was so apparent that the 'civic fathers decided to promote prostitution [female] in public brothels . . . in order to prevent the even worse excesses of sodomy with boys or the rape of 'honest' wives and daughters'.¹⁸⁶ In 1432, Bernardino of Siena openly accused fathers and mothers of prostituting their sons. Sodomy was 'depicted almost as part of political and patronage

¹⁸³ Michael Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex, Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

¹⁸⁴ Rocke, p. 21.

¹⁸⁵ Rocke, p. 22.

¹⁸⁶ Rocke, p. 30.

networks'.¹⁸⁷ This is something that Richards notes also by quoting Bernardino's speech, who claimed:

I have heard of some boys who paint their cheeks and go about boasting of their sodomy and practice it for gain . . . It is largely their mothers' and fathers' fault for not punishing them, but especially the mothers, who empty their purses without asking where the money came from. And it is a grave sin to make them a doublet that reaches only to the numbril and hose with one small patch in front and one behind, so that they show enough flesh to the sodomites. You spare the cloth and expend the flesh!¹⁸⁸

In Bernardino's account there even seems to be a specific dressing style that could indicate availability for sexual service.

Rocke informs us that in 1467: 'An informant indicated a network of eminent citizens who allegedly sponsored a brothel of boys for sodomy that was run by a blacksmith, Zanobi di Baldo.'¹⁸⁹ What is noticeable in the account Rocke gives is that 'these powerful notables would use their influence to shield the man from persecution'.¹⁹⁰

Some parents had not any reservations about handing in their sons to authorities for the practice of sodomy, with the hope that as youngsters and innocent they would escape punishment. They would present them as victims, as in the case of Niccolo, whose mother, Maria Angelica, confessed that 'Francesco di Piero Benghi . . . takes him [Niccolo] out every evening and sodomizes him. He gives him a half-grosso [a coin] each time. Arrest the boy secretly. Put a little fear in him with a whipping and he'll confess everything.'¹⁹¹ In another case we have a wife complaining of her husband's expenditure on boys, who, as the wife complains, 'is dedicated to nothing else, and he's become poor on account of this wickedness because he spends everything he has on boys'.¹⁹²

Another instance, this time in Venice, is documented in Crompton's book *Homosexuality and Civilization*, indicating transvestite prostitution. As he narrates:

¹⁸⁷ Rocke, p. 41.

¹⁸⁸ Quoted in Richards, p. 146.

¹⁸⁹ Rocke, p. 74.

¹⁹⁰ Rocke, pp. 74-75.

¹⁹¹ Quoted in Rocke, p. 81.

¹⁹² Quoted in Rocke, p. 130.

Rolandino Ronchaia was a strikingly effeminate man who made his living as a prostitute, concealing his true sex from his clients. In 1354 he was convicted by the Signori and ordered to be burned alive between the Columns of Justice on the Piazzetta.¹⁹³

The practice of male prostitution was so common that even libertine texts involving the sex-trade flourished during the period, as Rocke indicates.¹⁹⁴ This has given leverage for a unique production of literary texts around homoerotic practice and male prostitution. Literary erotica in Italy presents us with a great opportunity for further exploration of its practice, acknowledging the important influences of the sex-trade and sexual practice on literary narratives during the early modern era.

In Venice in 1516 a statute was passed outlawing older men taking the passive role in sexual intercourse with younger lads. The language of prostitution is employed in order to describe and stigmatise passivity. The law ‘stated’ that:

an absurd and unheard-of thing has recently become known, which can in no way be tolerated, that several most wicked men of 30, 40, 50, 60 years and more have given themselves like prostitutes and public whores to be passives in such a dreadful excess.¹⁹⁵

As in Spain, ‘bardassa’ and ‘putto’ were the common terms used for male prostitutes. As Rocke remarks: ‘Given the connotation of *bardasse* as promiscuous boys who earned money from sex, it is unsurprising that accusers also compared boys who were sodomized to *puttane* (female prostitutes).’¹⁹⁶ Other terms included: ‘cagna’ (bitch), ‘cagniuola’ (little bitch) and ‘cagna in gestra’ (bitch in heat), terms also applied to female prostitutes, equating the boys with ‘estrous female dogs’.¹⁹⁷

Both Rocke and Maggi in their studies indicate the explicit use of the terms in various discourses, most notably in libertine texts produced by the Academy of the Unknown (Accademia degli incogniti), ‘which’ according to Maggi, ‘was notorious for its libertine ideology and its aggressive anticlericalism’.¹⁹⁸ The text of *L’Alcibiade*

¹⁹³ Crompton, p. 247.

¹⁹⁴ Suggested in Rocke, p. 93.

¹⁹⁵ Quoted in Rocke, p. 104.

¹⁹⁶ Rocke, p. 106. Rocke’s italics.

¹⁹⁷ Rocke, p. 107.

¹⁹⁸ Armando Maggi, ‘The Discourse of Sodom in a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Text’, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 33.3 (1997), 25-43 <doi: 10.1300/J082v33n03_02> [accessed 15 May 2009] (p. 26).

fanciullo a scola, by Antonio Rocco, is a libertine dialogue between a teacher and a student set in Ancient Greece. The tutor lectures the student that:

This name of *bardassa* . . . should not be and, in effect, is not given to boys who out of affection and kindness couple graciously with civil and praiseworthy lovers. . . . The *bardassa* correctly means mercenary and venal *putto*, who sells himself as mere merchandise, almost to so much per measure, and cares about nothing but his servile earnings.¹⁹⁹

Even Lithgow, a Scottish traveller, during his travels in Italy ‘mentioned in 1609’, according to Rocke’s reference, that:

‘bardassi, bugged boys’, were common in villages and cities throughout Italy, while in Malta in 1616, he recorded the flight to Sicily of ‘above a hundred bardassos, whorish boys’, after a Spanish soldier and a Maltese boy were burned to death there for sodomy.²⁰⁰

As in England, the bardassi were equivalent to female whores. Both were seen as interchangeable but what is striking in the Italian records is that the male prostitute did not escape criticism. He is openly recognised for his profession. The practice was so widespread that authorities could not but embarrassingly admit his existence. Rocke explains that one of the questions that Night Officers posed was ‘whether and how much the boy was paid’.²⁰¹ This I suppose would indicate to authorities the penalties that they needed to impose for the practice of sodomy for, if the boys were paid, this would denote active agency.

In one case Rocke documents the temporal and sometimes accidental nature of male prostitution. In 1497 Carlo di Domenico testified that he was sodomized and that his partner, who was masqueraded, ‘went to get money to pay him’ while ‘he was waiting for him’.²⁰² Carlo initially refused, but after he lost his friends, he met the man for a second time and finally accepted servicing him. The case is very interesting for while Carlo was waiting for the man to fetch the money, another potential sodomizer started pestering him. As Rocke narrates:

¹⁹⁹ Quoted in Maggi, p. 34 and Rocke, p. 106.

²⁰⁰ Rocke, p. 288.

²⁰¹ Rocke, p. 149.

²⁰² Rocke, pp. 153-154.

Despite his refusal, the newcomer, who he thought was twenty-one-year-old Sandro Buondelmonti, continued to pester him. Carlo told how he tried to lose the youth as they wandered the streets, but he persisted, yelling for all to hear that the boy had just ‘serviced’ another out by the gate but refused to do the same for him. Exasperated, Carlo finally stopped and bartered with his insistent molester. They agreed to play a game of chance . . . with Carlo’s submission as [sic] the stakes. Carlo lost, and, as arranged, they went off toward a nearby convent, where Buondelmonti sodomized the boy in a shed.²⁰³

Also we have the case of Jacopo di Nicollo Panuzzi, a fifty year old man who offered money to boys ‘who would agree to let him sodomize them’.²⁰⁴

Other cases involve men who rented their houses for committing the sin of sodomy. ‘Houses’, according to Rocke, ‘were used as virtual brothels’, as in the case of the aforementioned Zanobi di Baldo, who ran a brothel of boys. Another case reports that Antonio di Geri Bartoli ‘kept a brothel for boys’.²⁰⁵ Even shops were available as bordellos.²⁰⁶ The plethora of such cases, as documented by Rocke, is extraordinary. As he notes, ‘some evidence suggests there was even a market, linked to the brothel taverns, in teenage male prostitutes who worked on their own or for procurers. Three cooks at the Chiassolino were convicted in 1492 for pimping boys in their tavern rooms’.²⁰⁷ Near those taverns there were other taverns that accommodated female prostitutes indicating therefore that female prostitutes and male ones used the same locales to practice their profession. There also seems to be a specific gendered act that most male prostitutes offered and this usually was passivity. Indeed, the cases are so many that not even Rocke narrates all of them. He just extracts unusual or interesting textual instances.²⁰⁸

Bernardino’s comment was not based upon dubious grounds. Families in Italy openly prostituted their boys and solicited sodomitical intercourse and affairs with men from the elite courts. Rocke for example reports the case of Cipriano in 1481 who prostituted his son Giuliano.²⁰⁹ The cases of families encouraging their sons to have

²⁰³ Rocke, p. 154.

²⁰⁴ Rocke, p. 154.

²⁰⁵ Rocke, p. 157.

²⁰⁶ Rocke, p. 158 and p. 187.

²⁰⁷ Rocke, p. 160.

²⁰⁸ Suggested in Rocke, p. 165.

²⁰⁹ Rocke, p. 175.

affairs with elite men for the exchange of money or even a place in the court are inexhaustible, as well as the accusations that assimilated boys into whores.²¹⁰

By 1542, the laws in Florence became harsher on sodomitical assaults. The youths were no longer favoured in the legal courts and tougher punishments were enforced, depending on the frequency of the practice committed by individuals. Whereas in the fifteenth century ‘adult men who took the passive role in sexual relations’²¹¹ were publicly punished to serve as an example for other offenders, boy prostitution continued to grow. That was of course, as long as the nature of the practice remained concealed (i.e. passive or active) and whether involvement in sodomy was ‘fleeting’ or ‘habitual’.²¹² It was this that led to a ‘flourish of teenage prostitution’ in the fifteenth century, due to the Officials’ lack of concern for detail.²¹³ The new law of 1542 drew ‘sharper distinctions’ regarding the frequency of sodomy rather than the age of the practitioners.²¹⁴ As far as Venice is concerned, the laws started, as early as 1424, to consider boys as ‘willing accomplices’.²¹⁵

However, contrary to Ruggiero’s and Crompton’s suggestions, Rocke denies the existence of a homoerotic subculture in Florence. As he explains:

Both casual sexual encounters and more durable relationships occurred or evolved in largely familiar, everyday social contexts and were tightly insinuated into other typical forms of male sociability, from the camaraderie of gangs of youths or the bonds of work and neighborhood to relations between patrons and clients or the sodalities of kin and friendship networks.²¹⁶

There is a total absence of reference to all the interesting prostitution cases he narrates throughout his study. The same argument runs through his exploration of the rendezvous areas and networks where casual same-sex practice and prostitution occurred.²¹⁷

²¹⁰ See Rocke, pp. 175, 176, 177, 210.

²¹¹ Rocke, p. 234.

²¹² Rocke, p. 234.

²¹³ Rocke, p. 234.

²¹⁴ Rocke, p. 234.

²¹⁵ Crompton, p. 250.

²¹⁶ Rocke, p. 13.

²¹⁷ See for example Rocke, p. 150.

Rocke's reluctance to name the sex-market, at least as an available homoerotic subculture, is understandable. He insightfully indicates in his introduction that the problem is the nature of the court records. He notes that:

[j]udiciary records by their nature normally represent the vision of only a hegemonic social and political elite. In addition, they are often fragmentary, superficial, or inaccurate; the details they record may correspond more to a need to observe proper bureaucratic form than to a concern to describe what really happened; the individuals or behaviours they document may not be representative of the broader universe of sexual activity.²¹⁸

Another parameter that needs to be taken into consideration is the defamatory nature of accusations of sodomy. Yet, as far as the cases of male prostitution are concerned, together with the growing anxieties of the *Ufficiali di Notte*, there is no doubt that the sex-market in Florence evolved around numerous boys who prostituted themselves, helping some individuals to profit from the city's male sex-trade. Rocke might not have located a subculture but his account certainly suggests the formation of a sex-market that was centred around boy prostitutes.

This is not the only instance where Rocke is reluctant to accept the appearance of a specifically male-orientated sex-market. He does not even represent some of his documented evidence as instances of male prostitution. No doubt, the slanderous nature of the accounts, which focuses on boys, indicates a sexual preference towards them. The plethora of Rocke's historical instances centre around these teenage prostitute boys, with only a few of them suggesting an inclination towards adult men. The highly commercialised world of the Italian cities of Florence and Venice became sites where the homoerotic sexual experience found expression and facilitated an observable sex-market that accommodated pursuance of same-sex pleasures through prostitution.

This is not to suggest that the evidence indicates exclusively the practice of the sex-trade. There were certainly cases of intimate sexual friendships and habitual sexual encounters that did not rely necessarily on fiscal exchanges or gifts. Even if the court records may be suspected of inaccuracy and insufficiency of true evidence, this definitely indicates an anxiety towards the acceptance of the possibility of male sex-work and the construction of same-sex practice through a language that would involve male prostitutes.

²¹⁸ Rocke, p. 8.

Two further issues must be addressed before I examine the English context. First, the literary erotica of the Italian Renaissance and its display of homoerotic practice needs to be scrutinised because it may be a useful resource from which we can extract popular attitudes towards homoerotic experience and its association with prostitution. It will inform significantly the cultural transactions that took place between Italy and England and the ways in which the latter was influenced literarily and socially. Early modern English literary culture, despite its distinct erotic representations of prostitution - in most cases female - relied and displayed a male aestheticism that was increasingly informed by Italian literary narratives. Secondly, the availability of ancient sources in the Italian cities might have had an immense impact on the ways in which sexual experience was conceptualised and organised around same-sex relations, especially with the circulation of Roman and Ancient Greek texts. As a recurrent feature of Greek and Roman erotic experience, the narratives that capitalised on male and female prostitution were sources of imitation and inspiration to the Latin authors of the Renaissance. The Italian bawdy narrative – like Aretino’s novella *Ragionamenti*, written in 1543 - must have borrowed important features from the ancient sources. In turn, it could have influenced the English bawdy texts significantly. But even in Aretino’s text there are scarce references to sodomy or prostitution. Written in a satirical mode, the novella approximates the philosophical diatribes on love. Philosophical and literary texts portrayed the female prostitute with eloquence, imbued in the art of rhetoric and capable of conducting discussions around philosophical issues. Take, for example, Tullia of Aragon and her philosophical treatise on the ‘Infinity of love’: whether her narrative was instructed by the tradition that would have a female courtesan as the centre of attention in dialogues, such as the courtesans of Lucian’s *Chattering Courtesans* or Athenaeus’ Book 13 *Peri Gynaikon* (On Women), is worthy of further investigation.²¹⁹ But what about the case of the male prostitute? His case, as it will be examined in the following chapter, seems to have been more suitable to the satiric mode of writing.

²¹⁹ Tullia d’Aragona, *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*, ed. by Rinaldina Russell and Bruce Merry (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997). Lucian, *Chattering Courtesans and Other Sardonic Sketches*, ed. by Keith Sidwell (London: Penguin, 2004). For Athenaeus’ book on hetairai see Laura K. McClure, *Courtesans at table: Gender and Greek Literary Culture in Athenaeus* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

England, court records, lexicography and slander

If England appears so problematic with regard to male prostitution it is not only because of the unavailability of historical evidence. Resistance to acknowledging the literary instance as an important contribution to an apprehension of social life has impeded attempts to tease out possible particulars that could disrupt and upset dominant ideological assumptions. For Griffiths, the literary must serve the court record in his examination of prostitution in Renaissance England, no matter how interesting the literary accounts are. He suggests:

[. . .] the pamphlet, ballad or play must adopt a supporting role to the court book. We cannot reconstruct experienced realities from imagined characters and scenes alone.²²⁰

He does acknowledge however, the records' problematic construction. As he notes:

Yet, the court books also have their characteristic flaws. Real bawds and prostitutes could tell tales to satisfy a given line of inquiry. What we discover is mediated by the chosen strategies of the bench. [. . .] The view from the archives is also fraught with linguistic puzzles. Titles like 'bawd' and 'whore' belonged to a broader vocabulary of moral meaning in both elite and popular discourse, which labelled individuals who either encouraged or tolerated illicit sex: a look-out at a door, for instance, or a harbourer of pregnant women.²²¹

Griffiths later proposes that we should adopt:

a theoretically informed integrated reading of archival and creative literary sources, teasing out and explaining similarities and differences to satisfy contemporary sentiment and context, always being aware of the moral subtext and story-telling which can affect all types of sources.²²²

That is quite problematic and does not explain adequately the intrinsic difficulties that historical accounts and governmental texts present. It does not acknowledge the ways in which historical discourses have been constructed, nor does it explain the 'moral

²²⁰ Paul Griffiths, 'The Structure of Prostitution in Elizabethan London', *Continuity and Change*, 8.1 (1993), 39-63 (p. 53).

²²¹ Griffiths, p. 53.

²²² Griffiths, p. 54.

subtext' that informs historical accounts. I agree, that if we compare court records and the literary instances we will certainly find stylistic differences, even similarities, and ways in which discourses inform each other. Yet, if it is a matter of 'satisfying the contemporary sentiment and context', I seriously doubt how far these are validating barometers of (con)textualization, since they are mediators of social and moral agendas, which rely heavily on individual interpretations - the depth model, as outlined in the introduction, exposed by Foucault. Throughout his essay Griffiths uses the court case to confirm the literary but nowhere does he question the historical aspect of his arguments. For, before his proposition of a 'theoretically informed integrated reading', he claims that the literary sources, if uncontested or unconfirmed by historical accounts, 'remain a simple fiction: a corrupt view of everyday experience and mentalities', much like the bawds' and whores' tales he finds in the historical archives.²²³ The jurists' participation and authorship is never questioned.

The 'linguistic puzzles' Griffiths also finds in words like 'bawd' and 'whore', imbued with morality, should remain open to interpretation and negotiation. I do not doubt the heavily moralistic meaning imposed on them - the historian Laura Gowing and others have alerted us to this - but I do suspect that they were utterances that did more than simply apply morality to personas. They defined someone's life, condition of being, reputation and social status. The fact that they circulated indiscriminately shows the power of their effect, as instances of mediating patriarchy and organizing its dividends. When applied to looks, behaviours, gestures, manners, concepts (i.e. metaphors) and even products (i.e. tobacco) their function was partly to confirm and stabilise these dividends. Certainly, their functionality and effect were more complex and had intrinsic interconnections with the conceptualisation of the body, erotica, gender and the body's social roles. In order to understand how these articulations functioned socially, and also literarily, they need to be seen in the context of who said them, for what purpose, what they ascribed to the body and how they were challenged or negotiated in diverse discourses. An examination of the status of the literary within Renaissance English culture is needed in order to appreciate its quality and powerful function. Similarly, we also need to realise the fictional nature of the legal and historical discourse, which can be witnessed by exposing the processes of their construction.

²²³ Griffiths, p. 54.

Stephen Robertson, in his examination of legal records and sexual histories, successfully scrutinises the commonplace belief in historicity's claim to truth. Muir and Ruggiero support that:

[court proceedings] record the voices of the illiterate, of workers, and of women, and that allow the historian to "hear people talking about love, emotional and sexual intimacy, power, betrayal, and broken promises".²²⁴

Robertson questions the validity of such argumentation, claiming that historians 'have crafted legal records into a seamless narrative, with little if any explicit discussion of where within the records they drew specific details'.²²⁵ He, too, acknowledges that 'records offer evidence that has been polluted by authority'.²²⁶ As he later explains, by quoting Brewer:

[historians] transform the method of reading against the grain into a "process of dissection", [. . .] involving "a lot of ripping and tearing: facts that historians think are relevant are torn out of their context and transplanted to the 'true' story". [. . .] When the source are legal records, the historians performing such dissections risk slipping into "the role of retrospective judges who render verdicts by deciding who is telling the truth".²²⁷

As far as early modern England is concerned, Cynthia Herrup notices that 'the rules that govern a trial and that shape the content of the documents that recorded the proceeding are rarely part of the story told by historians'.²²⁸ In addition to this, Miranda Chaytor, quoted again by Robertson, reveals the structure of the legal narratives in early modern England. As Robertson summarises:

a complainant's statement typically differs from those of the defendant and of the witnesses. A complainant's account often took the form of a full narrative; although almost certainly mediated by both the input of an investigator or a prosecutor asking questions, the clerk or legal official

²²⁴ Quoted in Stephen Robertson, 'What's Law Got to Do with It? Legal Records and Sexual Histories', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 14.1/2 (January 2005), 161-185
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3704713>> [accessed 28 February 2009] (p. 161).

²²⁵ Robertson, p. 166.

²²⁶ Robertson, p. 162.

²²⁷ Robertson, p. 167.

²²⁸ Quoted in Robertson, p. 168.

recording such narratives generally strove to retain much of the structure and language used by the complainant.²²⁹

Christian Berco, Bruce Smith and Jonathan Dollimore also argue of the ways in which legal records, like state documents, are discourses that have their own distinct agendas. Another similar example could be the history of the early modern theatrical institution. As Chapter 3 will expose, historiographers and theatre historians have doubted suggestions of the interconnections of acting and prostitution as fictions and myths, disclaiming the use of literary evidence as a source of information. As I will illustrate, literary texts have been selectively alluded to in their grand narratives to fill in what historical accounts lack.

Various discourses, as aforementioned, have been disqualified as barometers of arguments regarding male prostitution in early modern England: defamation/slander is one of them. Chapter 5 will concentrate on defamatory historical records in an attempt to understand accusations of whoring in King James' court. My purpose is to underline the linguistic strategies that tended to conflate prostitute practice with homoeroticism. In addition, the ways in which the subject is treated within historiography needs to be assessed. Similar to theatre historians and their discrediting of the possibility that the early modern English actor might have been a prostitute or even had homoerotic sexual encounters, historians of courts and favouritism disparage, or in the best cases ignore, associations of male prostitute practice with favouritism. In many cases, even homoeroticism is absent from their agendas.

Lindsay Kaplan, in her study *The Culture of Slander in Early Modern England*, suggests:

By taking defamation as our model, we are able to see the places in which the state was not able to control transgressive language rather than focusing on those moments, as the censorship model does, where it was.²³⁰

Kaplan's 'defamation model' proposes an alternative examination of some textual instances, for which the 'censorship model' cannot accurately account. Thus, she manages to point out the corruption of popular, legal and literary discourses, due to

²²⁹ Robertson, p. 177.

²³⁰ Lindsay Kaplan, *The culture of Slander in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 2.

copyright's preoccupation with authority's intervention. She later explains that 'a review of libels from the period reveals that poetry was considered an excellent medium for defamation by its malicious practitioners'.²³¹

Authorities were not blind to propaganda and reactionary instances. Even the term 'sodomy' was employed for political dissidence and heresy as critics have persuasively shown. As Kaplan informs us 'the common law', by the end of the sixteenth century, 'measured slander both in terms of its content and its effects'.²³² The following chapters will follow closely these effects but not just in cases of defamation and scandal as documented in narratives that engage with the elite court. Schools, universities and the theatrical institution suffered substantial invective, which drew analogies of such establishments with brothels and whorish behaviour. Much of the criticism was aimed at possible homoerotic practice and desire. However, deprecatory statements referred not to sodomy but to the most contested area of sexual activity and behaviour, whoredom.

Creative writing did not remain unchallenged, for the invective concerning prostitution was constructed with references to femininity, effeminacy, deceit and the devastating effects it had on its readers. In many writings we witness not only authoritative intervention through censorship but also the authors themselves employing metaphors and analogies of prostitution to represent the nature of creative activity. It was a realisation of the instability of language and its ambivalent and uncontrollable reception, acknowledgement of its powerful effects and a manifestation of the anxiety towards metaphoricity itself, as an important but ineluctable constituent of creativity that disrupted normative ways of articulating truth. Representation, as well as inspiration, was questioned, oscillating between what is artful and meaningful and what is base and transgressive. Thus, Herbert in his poem 'The Forerunners' addresses the concept of metaphor:

Farewell sweet phrases, lovely metaphors.
But will ye leave me thus? When ye before
Of stews and brothels onely knew the doores,
Then did I wash you with my tears, and more
Brought you to Church well drest and clad;

²³¹ Kaplan, p. 11.

²³² Kaplan, p. 17.

My God must have my best, ev'n all I had.²³³

This is an instance of the seductive power of poetry and the ways in which notions of whoredom infiltrate literary writing. Similarly, Ben Jonson, in his 'Prefatory Epistle' to *Volpone* (1605), criticises bad authors and their writings. The Epistle states:

Where nothing but the filth of the time is uttered, and that with such impropriety of phrase, such plenty of solecisms, such dearth of sense, so bold prolepses, so racked metaphors, with brotherly able to violate the ear of a pagan (ll. 88-92)²³⁴

In this respect, an examination of the system of patronage as expressed in poetry is highly significant in order to understand the act of writing as an act potent enough to deceive and even prostitute its reader. Earlier on Jonson refers to 'the too much licence of poetasters in this time [that] hath much deformed their mistress' (ll. 13-14).²³⁵ So, it is not only the reader who is seduced by bawdy language. Poetry itself has become a prostitute, a 'mistress' to these poets. And what Jonson promises to do is 'to raise the despised head of poetry again, and, stripping her out of those rotten and base rags wherewith the times have adulterated her form, restore to her primitive habit, feature, and majesty' (ll. 128-131).²³⁶ This is not far from the notion of theatre as an institution that seduces its spectators, as purported by anti-theatrical writings. That such an activity was closely related not only with the erotic but also with the obscene and bawdy, verging on the pornographic, had threatening ramifications for the body politic. As Kaplan suggests 'the political climate, and not the truth of speech, determines whether language is defamatory or not'.²³⁷

True as this may be, certain words would never cease to be charged with degrading qualities. Distinctions between the bawdy, the erotic, the pornographic and the obscene were not necessarily apparent in Renaissance thought. As David Frantz claims, 'Renaissance writers themselves struggled to differentiate what they saw as

²³³ George Herbert, *The temple Sacred poems and private ejaculations* (1633)
<<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>> [accessed 26 May 2007].

²³⁴ Ben Jonson, 'Volpone', in *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, ed. by David Bevington and others (New York: Norton, 2002), pp. 679-773 (p. 681). Also quoted in Bly, p. 35.

²³⁵ Jonson, 'Volpone', p. 679.

²³⁶ Jonson, 'Volpone', p. 682.

²³⁷ Kaplan, p. 22.

wanton or bawdy from what they termed obscene'.²³⁸ Reproof of creative writing went hand in hand with its titillating effect, employing the most threatening, scandalous and socially disruptive image of the female whore. That her image was rendered, within poetical and literary narratives, as sexually arousing, exhilarating, always topical and permanently available was not a mere coincidence. It was instructed by classical literature, for throughout the classical Greek, Hellenistic and Roman eras the figure of the female prostitute was a privileged one in literary and philosophical writings, accommodated as an expert on issues about love and sex. It was a tradition to prevail in all major countries in early modern Europe, with English writers following very closely these literary examples. Yet, did the language of 'Ganymede', 'ingle' and/or 'catamite' fit into these textual instances? Ancient Greek narratives certainly accommodated and celebrated the eroticised boy for same-sex consummation. In addition, Barnfield's Sonnet 10 'Thus was my love, thus was my Ganymed'²³⁹ and Shakespeare's much contested and disputed 'master-mistress of [his] passion'²⁴⁰ were included in erotic poetry and the discourse on courtship, despite Foucault's contention that:

[. . .] the great heterosexual literature of the west has had to do essentially with the panel of amorous courtship, that is, above all, with that which precedes the sexual act. All the work of intellectual and cultural refinement, all the aesthetic elaboration of the west, were aimed at courtship. This is the reason for the relative poverty of literary, cultural, and aesthetic appreciation of the sexual act as such. In contrast, the modern homosexual experience has no relation at all to courtship. This was not the case in ancient Greece [. . .]²⁴¹

Like the male prostitute in early modern Europe, the modern homosexual was not included in the literary sphere of courtship. Male prostitutes fitted more comfortably in the satiric mode of writing, from the Classical age, especially Roman, to the early modern one. Once again, the terminology of homoeroticism proves inadequate to crystallize the variant linguistic meanings it might entail. There were both positive and negative versions of Ganymede, dependent upon the context in which the figure was

²³⁸ David O. Frantz, *Festum Voluptatis: a study of Renaissance Erotica* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1989), p. 5.

²³⁹ Quoted in Gregory Brebeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 154.

²⁴⁰ Duncan-Jones, Katherine, ed., *The Arden Shakespeare: Shakespeare's Sonnets* (London: Thomson, 1997), p. 151.

²⁴¹ James O'Higgins, 'Sexual Choice, Sexual Act: An Interview with Michel Foucault', *Salmagundi*, 58-59 (Fall 1982-Winter 1983), 10-24 (p. 18).

represented. In many pejorative cases concerning its meaning it was just a matter of propaganda and slander, a similar strategy employed for the female whore as well.

Laura Gowing gives us an excellent historical account of defamation and accusations of whoredom in early modern London. According to her study, it is the church records that establish and validate the practice of defamation for being an actual whore. Yet, as she notes, ‘the word ‘whore’ rarely meant a real prostitute and the words of insult were understood to be related only opaquely to actual sex’.²⁴² As the ‘privileged forum for disputes over words and reputation’, the church court was mostly used by women.²⁴³ She notes that:

[d]efamation, and especially litigation over it, characterized a particular social milieu; while the status and wealth of litigants varied, none were noble or gentry, and at the other end of the social scale the costs of going to court excluded most servants and the poor.²⁴⁴

– and actual prostitutes, it might be assumed. She later explains that ‘women could be defamed with the briefest of insults, ‘whore’, a succinct but legally actionable accusation that had no equivalent’.²⁴⁵ The men and boys in Gowing’s historical evidence, for obvious reasons, escape such litigations ‘for there was no way of calling a man a whore, or condemning his sexual promiscuity’.²⁴⁶

In fact, we have a sufficient vocabulary, although not as extensive as the one used for female prostitutes, that addresses sex practice between men. As will be demonstrated in Chapter 2, satires deploy and vividly depict the male prostitute in the street and the market so frequently that, even if someone is not a male prostitute, he becomes one. This is the only way to conceptualise same-sex desire and practice. The boy prostitute always seems to evade such attacks and accusations partly because of the prohibition to name such practices, partly because there was a reluctance to record them and partly due to the secret materialisation of such exchanges. I suggest that this occurs mainly due to the absolute misogyny that prevailed in the discourse on eroticism and the temporality that the homoerotic act was considered to sustain. Gowing gives an interesting example and explains that, ‘Benedict Putnam “fell a rayling” against

²⁴² Gowing, p. 59.

²⁴³ Gowing, p. 60.

²⁴⁴ Gowing, p. 61.

²⁴⁵ Gowing, p. 62.

²⁴⁶ Gowing, p. 63.

Theodosia Merrill in 1627 that “shee . . . gave . . . Norton £3,12s to be his whore”: even when it is the man who receives the money, it is still the woman who is the whore’.²⁴⁷ Gowing is right. As she later acknowledges ‘the ‘whores’ of the language of insult are not, generally, real whores’.²⁴⁸ For, despite ‘the real concerns’ that these utterances exposed, the ‘words of slander, ostensibly about sex, turn out to be almost everything else’.²⁴⁹ She later notes:

Slander insult defined whores again and again; in this way the meanings of gender are established through the sheer force of verbal repetition. Slander is one of the constitutive acts that establishes gender, repeating and rewriting its definitions of wives and whores, husbands and cuckolds.²⁵⁰

Yet, to ignore the invective and slander employed in satires for the boy prostitute is to narrate ‘half the history’.²⁵¹ For such repetitions of slander, gossip and humour endows society and individuals with gender attributes that cannot be easily divested. The literary examples are not mere fabrications; they report, circulate and effectively produce ideological instances that will be seized upon, manipulated and controlled. In best-case scenarios, they will be appropriated in order to give voice to resistance.

Similar to defamation in satires, the early modern English lexicon might also present us with some useful insights concerning the ways in which homoeroticism was conceptualised. Gregory Bredbeck considers the lexicon’s contribution to the language of homoeroticism by acknowledging that during the early Renaissance the vocabulary around sodomy was limited and quite undeveloped.²⁵² The later editions of the monolingual dictionaries he examines however, show a variety and a proliferation of meanings. As he asserts:

Moreover, the three terms *Ganymede*, *catamite*, and *ingle* suggest three separate modes of homoerotic interaction: a boy “loved for carnal abuse”; a boy “hired to be abused contrary to nature”; a boy “kept for Sodomy.” Roughly speaking, these three terms define a range of

²⁴⁷ Gowing, p. 66.

²⁴⁸ Gowing, p. 115.

²⁴⁹ Gowing, p. 118.

²⁵⁰ Gowing, p. 125.

²⁵¹ Sheperd, p. 22.

²⁵² Gregory W. Bredbeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991). See pp. 10-11 and 16-18.

meanings analogous to those of *lover*, *hustler*, and *kept boy* in the modern gay idiom.²⁵³

As his reference indicates, borrowed from Bruce Rodgers's book on gay slang, *Gay Talk*: '*Lover*' is "one's friend in all senses – social, sexual, etc."; '*hustler*' is "a male prostitute" and '*kept boy*' means "young lover who is kept, *ie* has all his bills paid for him by an older homosexual".²⁵⁴ For Kaye, as we have seen, a '*kept boy*' is/was another, more private form of male prostitution, whereas '*hustler*' is/was closer to the street male prostitute.

Two further observations need to be made at this stage. First, an examination of bilingual dictionaries can reveal more interesting insights and lexicographical interventions on sexual practices between men. Secondly, the interchangeable usage of terms such as '*Ganymede*', '*catamite*' and '*ingle*' during the early modern period, even within lexicographical discourse, cannot furnish evidence of a stable vocabulary that can easily find correlatives in modern terminology. Bredbeck, of course, knows this in his attempt to show the linguistic strategies around the discourse on sodomy. Indeed, many examples of Renaissance literature can show the congruity of his argumentation concerning equivalent terms available in our contemporary era. However, if placed in other contexts, the terms '*Ganymede*', '*ingle*' and '*catamite*' could signify other socio-sexual roles and diverse sexual practices. In addition, there are terms missing in Bredbeck's illustrated homoerotic terminology, such as '*mignon*', '*wag*', '*favourite*', '*cineadian*', and '*buggering boy*'. More specialised terminology such as '*exoletus*', '*sp(h)intrae*', ' *pornos*' and '*masculorum scortum*' from Greek-English and Latin-English were still available and in use during the early modern period. Other terms such as '*darling*', '*mollis*', '*pathicus*', '*obscaenus*', not to mention the Italian and Spanish terms aforementioned, were still prevalent in early modern lexicons, manifesting the remarkably rich, however borrowed, vocabulary of same-sex desire and practice. In fact, as nouns, the aforementioned terms denote types of boys rather than simply desire and/or sexual roles. For, when Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida* referred to Patroclus as a '*masculine whore*' (5. 1. 16) it is quite strange that we cannot find anything similar to such a configuration but only the phrase '*scortum masculum*', the first definitive in Jean

²⁵³ Bredbeck, p. 18. Bredbeck's italics.

²⁵⁴ Bredbeck, p. 18. Bredbeck's italics.

Crespin's dictionary *Lexicon Graecolatinum* (1581) of the word πόρνος (pornos).²⁵⁵ When Jonson referred to Tiberius' favourite as a 'stale catamite' in *Sejanus* (Act IV) it was the term 'exoletus' he was possibly alluding to, defined in Thomas Thomas' dictionary *Dictionarium linguae Latinae et Anglicanae* of 1587 as 'one that hauing beene abused against nature, -u -um, overgrowne and too stale for that unlawfull pleasure'.²⁵⁶ The phrase is also mentioned in Suetonius' and Tacitus' narratives, as well as the Spanish narrative authored by Mexia Pedro, *The imperiall historie: or The liues of the emperours* translated in 1623. In the latter's narrative, 'stale catamites' are equivalent to 'baudes', something that might help us reconsider the meaning of 'bawd' or the possible connotations the term might have with regard to actual male prostitute practice, rather than just alluding to a person who facilitated sexual encounters. This is the kind of 'word-playing' concerning the word 'bawd' Bly also discusses in her study of erotic puns with references to Marlowe and Jonson.²⁵⁷

As Mexia Pedro notes, alluding to Suetonius:

[. . .] stale Catamites or baudes, and such also as inuented monstrous kindes of libidinous filthines, whome he tearmed Spintrie, who being in three rankes linked together, should pollute one anothers bodie before his [Tiberius'] face . . .²⁵⁸

I am not trying to suggest that the early modern lexicon was a source of inspiration for creative writing. However, it did follow, and in turn informed closely, the usage of words as indicated in creative and historical narratives. In other words, the lexicographers have been relying on similar narratives to those which inspired creative authors.

Certainly, as the plethora of dictionary editions show, the English lexicon, both mono- and bi-lingual, became increasingly 'more sophisticated and more commercially

²⁵⁵ William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt and others (New York: Norton, 1997), pp. 1823-1913 (p. 1895); Jean Crespin, *Lexicon Graecolatinum* (1581) <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>> [accessed 17 October 2009].

²⁵⁶ Ben Jonson, 'Seianus' in *The Workes of Beniamin Ionson* (1616) <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>> [accessed 15 June 2008]; Thomas Thomas, *Dictionatium linguae Latinae et Anglicanae* (1587) <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>> [accessed 15 October 2009].

²⁵⁷ Bly, p. 12.

²⁵⁸ Mexia Pedro *The imperiall historie: or The liues of the emperours* (1623) <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>> [accessed 19 November 2009].

competitive over the course of the century' in the book market.²⁵⁹ Therefore, 'definitions in general became more extensive'.²⁶⁰ In earlier editions, language on same-sex desire is generally absent and very few dictionaries actually allow the words sodomy and buggery to be represented in lexicographical terms. Yet, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the English lexicons, especially the bilingual ones, accommodated more words concerning homoerotic practice. Some compilers of bilingual English-Latin, English-Greek and polyglottic dictionaries offered extraordinary etymologies in their attempt to explain the derivation of some words. Thus, we find an out-of-the-way etymology of the term 'catamite', the most popular word presented in most early modern dictionaries denoting homoerotic practice, in Minshen's *The guide into tongue* printed in 1627:

Catamite - , or Ingle, a Boy kept for Sodomie, G. Catamite, H. catamito, L. catamitus, q. mercenarius, απο του μισθου, (apo tou misthou), mercede, vi Ganimede.²⁶¹

'[A]po tou misthou' denotes 'deriving from wage'. Other dictionaries prefer different terminology with no clear distinction why some terms have been prioritised over others. However, most of the lexicographers enrich their compilations, not only in words but in their definitions as well. Therefore, we see in Thomas Elyot's lexicon *The dictionary of syr Thomas Eliot knyght* in 1538, the 'cinaedus' defined as 'a wanton boy without shamefastnes. Also a dauncer of galyardes and wanton maskes. It is also taken for a tumblar'.²⁶² Yet, in the 1548 edition and the subsequent ones titled *Bibliotheca Eliotae = Eliotis librerie*, we find the following definition:

Cineadus: of Ronius [sic] Marcellus is expounded to be an exerciser of wanton dances and mocions of the body in diuers formes. Perottus in Cornuco declareth it to be a person exercising actes of lechers detestable, against naturall forme and order, whiche I will not expresse. If he had omitted it, he had nothing offended, being a thing worthy to be out of

²⁵⁹ Phil Withington and Alexandra Shepard, *Communities in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 10.

²⁶⁰ Withington and Shepard, p. 10.

²⁶¹ John Minshen, *The guide into tongues* (1627)

<<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>> [accessed 25 October 2009]. My transliteration.

²⁶² Thomas Elyot, *The dictionary of syr Thomas Eliot knyght* (1538)

<<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>> [accessed 22 October 2009].

remembraunce -other interprete Cinaedos to be them, which be with out all shame -other, children that be abused.²⁶³

The lexicographer renders his sources with stricture, in his attempt to repudiate the use of the word. 'Catamitus' is absent in the 1538 edition but appears in that of 1548 as 'a boie hyred to be abused, contrary to nature'. Such absences and repetitions we find also in the bilingual dictionaries. Research on early modern English lexicography shows that for lexicographers, sodomy was specifically referring to same-sex practice, especially with boys. Defining that boy however as 'hyred to be abused' is the most reiterated interpretation, indicating the early modern lexicons tendency to register such terms as prostitute practice.

My second intervention is that, if words were used indiscriminately with regard to homoerotic practice and prostitution, this does not confirm the commonality or ubiquity of male prostitution. We have to think of the early modern English lexicon as a mediator of cultural knowledge and not as a source of uncontested true meaning and use. Uses of words cannot always be controlled successfully. Which brings me to my enquiry as to why such terminology was deployed obsessively in plays and poems. As Sinfield indicates with reference to dramatic composition, it is strange why reiteration of the same sexual themes was so frequent.²⁶⁴ As this thesis argues in relation to Renaissance drama and poetry, homoerotic language might have been largely included for reasons of effect. This certainly has to do with the metaphoricity of language, an aspect I will examine shortly. Yet, the notion of effectiveness and the highly eroticised articulations cannot be separated from the homosocial environs within which they took place. Nor can we abandon suppositions of the significant political and social effects that the theatre had on the terrains of gender, sex, sexual desire and experience, whereas for other social constituents – law, family, kingship – insist on the theatre's effectiveness.

Unsurprisingly, the bilingual dictionaries are more extensive concerning homoeroticism and reveal more information on the language of prostitution than the monolingual ones. The classical languages of Ancient Greece and Rome offered remarkable articulations of male prostitute practice and could not be overlooked by lexicographers for reasons of accuracy, authenticity, competition and prestige. The

²⁶³ Thomas Elyot, *Bibliotheca Eliotae = Eliotis librerie* (1548)
 <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>> [accessed 22 October 2009].

²⁶⁴ Suggested in Sinfield, *Unfinished Business*, p. 14.

classical cultures were increasingly seen as exemplary instances of civilization and their sexual language was significantly rich. For the early modern English scholar and reader, accuracy, specificity and authenticity were qualities to be admired, as for example the instance of Francis Bacon, who preferred the narratives of Tacitus from the ones written by Suetonius due to their chronological accuracy.²⁶⁵

Such narratives were constantly utilised in early modern English culture, and the homoeroticism embedded in them informed and fuelled literary culture in an unprecedented way. Certainly, during the Middle Ages, classical narratives were available, although to a limited readership, and almost certainly to the one that was most susceptible to homoerotic practice, the monks and clergy. The early modern era however, manifested a deeper interest in them. The book market and the theatrical institution are just two agents that facilitated expression of homoerotic desire. Social mobility, the newly emerging consumerist tastes and fashions and the challenging socio-economic conditions played an equally major role in the production of homoeroticism and the sex-trade. With prostitution becoming illegal, notions of immorality associated with trade, counterfeiting, heresy and thus, political treason, were reinforced. These were exactly the concepts sodomy was also supposed to include in its representational domain.

Metaphor and effect

Earlier I mentioned the concept of effect with regard to theatrical and textual representations of the sexually available boy who can be classified as a whore. A useful way of distinguishing the two different uses of prostitution in defamation discourse and literature is by utilizing Paul Ricoeur's (following Aristotle) partition of the representational domains in which metaphor was mostly employed: rhetoric and poetry.²⁶⁶ In the first instance prostitution as a metaphor – and in some cases as a metonymy – is deployed for reasons of persuasion. In poetry, it is used for reasons of mimesis. Both kinds of metaphors have the purpose of cosmesis (decoration) but there

²⁶⁵ Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, transl. by Catharine Edwards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. x.

²⁶⁶ Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, transl. by Robert Czerny and others (Oxon: Routledge Classics, 2003).

is an important difference. Prostitution, as a metaphor in rhetoric, attempts to create analogies and similes of the subject accused as a whore, investing it with what is considered to be prostitute-like qualities. Legal records, slanderous discourse, various diatribes on theatre and treatises on education, as it will be shown, create metonymies and analogies for diverse disorderly behaviour and manners in order to persuade.

In the case of poetry however, its use upsets denomination – categorization – of prostitution and man/boyhood itself. The boy is not like a ‘Ganymede’, ‘ingle’ or ‘catamite’ (as a metonymy). The boy is a ‘Ganymede’, ‘ingle’ or ‘catamite’. Due to metaphor’s mimetic nature, he becomes the category itself. Yet, not without difficulties. As Bly explains:

Part of the difficulty in analysing theatrical puns comes from the fact that aural resonances would have been doubled by visual action. On the more basic level, the early modern theatre offered illusions that operated like puns: a boy and a queen occupied the same bit of stage when Cleopatra feared to see a ‘squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness’. A pun can become a self-contradiction, unwrapping the primary illusion (the theatrical dressing) in service of a greater irony . . . or possibly a doubled vision.²⁶⁷

In both cases, history cannot be involved theoretically, or support metaphor’s tropes of schematization, with historicity’s alleged claims on truth. However, as it will be argued in the following chapters, in theatre historiography, historical narratives and humanistic writings, prostitution as a metaphor is constantly employed to provide authenticity and credibility, and not just for reasons of cosmesis. The only case where Ricoeur, by following Beardsley, does not find metaphor’s use is in the lexicon: ‘the dictionary contains no metaphors; they exist only in discourse’.²⁶⁸ Yet, even there, early modern English and European lexicography, due to the conditions of its construction, does retain the metaphorical level of words concerning prostitution. In the case of ‘drabs’, ‘doxies’, ‘punks’ and so many lexicographical instances of female prostitution, the dictionaries offer explicit meanings: whore, prostitute. But in the case of ‘Ganymede’, ‘bugger’, ‘ingle’, ‘mignon’, or ‘catamite’ some lexicons rarely offer interpretation. Only in later editions we witness the definition ‘a boy abused contrary to nature’. If the

²⁶⁷ Bly, pp. 12-13.

²⁶⁸ Ricoeur, p. 12.

lexicon is problematic or bewildering concerning signification of male prostitution, the literary instances in drama and satire appear even more ambivalent.

The reason for this is that the issue of playwriting in the early modern period was not only a literary matter. It was political as well as historical, it was poetic as well as rhetorical, and despite its fictive context, playwriting was potent enough to actively participate and influence social changes. It was not just a matter of different reception processes to which an audience might have been accustomed. It was primarily a matter of language. If these servants, mignons, favourites and Ganymedes have been insistently evoked only in these contexts and within similar plots, where character development is non-existent, the boys then acquired a terminology for reasons of *cosmesis* rather than *mimesis*. In this sense the metaphor loses its substitutive nature and according to Ricoeur this is the ‘postulate of ‘no new information’’.²⁶⁹ However, ‘figurative meaning’, in contrast to ‘proper meaning’, cannot be easily invalidated as ‘a deviant meaning of words’. According to Beardsley and Ricoeur, “figurative meaning of words’ is still to be spoken of, it can only concern meanings that are wholly contextual, ‘emergent meaning’ that exists here and now’.²⁷⁰ In this sense, even if male prostitution was evoked figuratively, for purposes of reprobation, instruction or entertainment, it did carry a metaphorical truth that was facilitated by the contexts through which its configuration was given birth. Its effects can be significant, even for concepts such as ‘subculture’, and as Bly has argued in her study of the Whitefriars boys’ company, ‘puns create communities, if only for a few hours’.²⁷¹

This thesis cannot certify the validity of metaphorical language and truth concerning the male sex-trade but it will try to expose and address it. It will question and accept the dynamics of such a vocabulary and trace its utility in various discourses that have been used selectively by critics and historians to verify arguments for and against the existence of male prostitution in the early modern era.

²⁶⁹ Ricoeur, p. 52.

²⁷⁰ Ricoeur, p. 112.

²⁷¹ Bly, p. 6.

Chapter 2: Male prostitution in early modern English satire

In this chapter I propose to undertake a close reading of Marston's, Middleton's and Donne's satires in order to trace the representation of the male prostitute and the environment they inhabited. A plethora of references occupies the English Renaissance dramatic canon concerning Ganymedes, ingles and catamites. The boys that appear in plays as sexually available objects have offered opportunities for research in order to appreciate instances of same-sex relations. However, the boys rarely occupy the main plot of dramatic scenarios. They usually inhabit sub-plots and marginal spaces as apprentices, servants, favourites or friends but never explicitly as male prostitutes. The terminology the playwrights use is as ambiguous as these boys' socio-sexual roles and practices. The linguistic utterances that define them do not differentiate the sexual from the social. Rather, the two co-exist, mutually informing each other. Even when the boys/men are important constituents of the main plot, as for example in Jonson's *Epicoene*, *Tiberius* or Marlowe's *Edward II*, their social role is prioritized, allowing only an opaque space for considerations of homoeroticism. Dispersed references that are more explicit about their sexual use, with very few instances indicating male prostitution, are part of a rhetoric that is incomplete, slanderous and satirical. Thus, critics are confronted with an incoherent and ambivalent representation of homoeroticism and its possible variants when it comes to literary analysis. Quite rightly so, for the language and dramatic plots do not allow for clear-cut distinctions and interpretations.

In my attempt to trace the male prostitute I will avoid providing a list of references concerning 'male stews', 'catamites' or 'ingles'. My interest in this chapter is to offer a different analysis of what I identify as a representation of male prostitute practice. My reading will allow the boy prostitute to occupy a central space in the following satires in order to facilitate further investigation of plays and literary narratives where male prostitution or other variants of homoeroticism might exist.

Before doing so, some studies that have referred to the existence of male same-sex prostitution in early modern England need to be mentioned.

Bray, in *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, dedicates three pages to male prostitution and the homoerotic sex-market, which he considered to be ‘homosexual prostitution’:

A third area where homosexuality appears to have been institutionalised and tacitly tolerated was homosexual prostitution, and there is substantial evidence that this was an important part of the sexual life at least of London well into the second half of the seventeenth century. [. . .] There is also reason to think that homosexual prostitution existed in elaborate and developed forms as well as the more straightforward. Alongside the casual prostitution of the streets and public places – which is the least this could have referred to – there is evidence of more sophisticated forms and in particular of the existence of homosexual brothels. [. . .] and we should probably not think of them as brothels in the strict sense of the word, visualising commercial establishments more or less exclusively concerned with homosexual prostitution. If the parallels with heterosexual prostitution are a guide – and there certainly are such parallels – these are more likely to have been taverns (which could earn notorious reputations) where prostitutes were able to entertain their clients.²⁷²

I have quoted Bray extensively because I believe that his argument has not been given enough importance in studies concerning male same-sex relations in early modern England. DiGangi in *The Homoerotics in Early Modern Drama* also has a few references on male prostitution, by following Bray and Mullaney. As he notes:

There is evidence of male homoerotic activity in the geographically and socially accessible spaces of brothels, alehouses, taverns, and public theatres, the latter significantly located, as Steven Mullaney has demonstrated, in the unruly Liberties of London.²⁷³

His other references include Guilpin’s, Middleton’s and Marston’s satires and a few references to Renaissance English plays.²⁷⁴

Another critic who refers to ‘male prostitutes’, with regard to censorship, is Gordon Williams in his book *Shakespeare, Sex and the Print Revolution*. The text he

²⁷² Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982) pp. 52-53.

²⁷³ Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 48.

²⁷⁴ DiGangi, p. 95 and p. 121.

alludes to is Fletcher's *Honest Mans Fortune*, by referring specifically to a 'heavy deleted passage [. . .] where an unemployed servant toys with setting 'vp a male stewes, we shold get more then all yo female sinners'.²⁷⁵ Bruce Smith also dedicates seven pages to male prostitution and although in his index these pages come under the heading 'prostitution', he is careful not to mention even once the phrase 'male prostitute'.²⁷⁶ He remains loyal to the vocabulary of 'Ganymede', 'ingle' and 'cynedian'. His readings of Marston's, Middleton's and Donne's satires, together with Jonson's plays, shed light on the way homosexual desire was textualised in Renaissance England. As he claims:

In the satires of Donne, Marston, and Jonson is proof positive, or rather proof negative, of Bray's contention that 'homosexual' did not exist in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a way of defining one's self. The satirist stood ready to make sure it never was. [. . .] What is more, he [the satirist] sees and hears a great deal less than he thinks he does. Blinded by satiric stereotypes, he can picture no subject of homosexual desire but a fat, lazy lecher. Instructed by the law, he can imagine no object of homosexual desire but a boy.²⁷⁷

His argument primarily is structured around homosexual desire and the way it was defined by authors who positioned themselves against it. Since authorial intention here is prioritized, the satirist becomes an active agent of indictment. In Smith's broad categories of same-sex desire, the young boys may not be prostitutes but feature in these narratives as 'grotesques', formed by the satirists themselves as such.

To summarise then, Bray accepts the existence of homosexual brothels. DiGangi agrees, yet, like Bray, appreciates the scarcity of historical evidence and Williams exemplifies DiGangi's and Bray's arguments – although not specifically replying to their arguments - that censorship with regard to literary sources played a pivotal role in textual construction and, possibly, to the loss of more references on male brothels. Hence our inability to access this domain of sexual practice from the remaining evidence. Smith does not focus on the boys themselves but on homosexual desire per se, the ways in which satirists instructed that desire, and how the examples of Ovid and Juvenal contributed to the formation of that desire. Smith's examples are Donne,

²⁷⁵ Gordon Williams, *Shakespeare, Sex and the Print Revolution* (London: The Athlone Press, 1996), p. 33.

²⁷⁶ Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 175, 179-182, 185, 198.

²⁷⁷ Smith, pp. 185-186.

Marston and Middleton and, therefore, I would like to start with these authors in order to trace possible references to male prostitutes.

Marston's male prostitutes

Marston, in his second satire *Quedam sunt, et non videntur*, gives us an insight of how gentlemen displayed themselves in London:

In fayth yon is a well fac'd Gentleman,
See how he paceth like a Ciprian:
Fair Amber tresses of the fairest haire
That ere were waued by our London aire,
Rich laced sute, all spruce, all neat in truth. (ll. 107-111)²⁷⁸

This 'well-faced Gentleman' poses like a 'Ciprian', a word that stood for a male or female individual who, according to the editor of Marston, Davenport, is a 'devotee to Venus'.²⁷⁹ Interestingly, Marston uses 'Cyprian' or 'Ciprian' only in relation to male figures in his satires. Williams, in his *Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature*, is more enlightening concerning the meaning of the word: 'Cyprian = whore. 2. penis.'²⁸⁰

The fact that Lais is mentioned in line 117 is a bit confusing because according to Davenport's endnote:

Lais] G. suggests that this was Moll Cutpurse (Mary Frith), who was notorious as 'The Roaring Girl' and for wearing men's clothes. But Mary Frith was not born until c. 1584 [...] and was not yet notorious in 1598. If Turbio is in part based on Barnabe Barnes [...] then 'Lais' may be intended to recall the wanton mistress, whom he calls Laya, in Parthenophil. Lais is a common name for a prostitute, from the two famous Greek courtesans named.²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ All quotes have been extracted from *The Poems of John Marston*, ed. by Arnold Davenport (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1961).

²⁷⁹ Davenport, p. 234.

²⁸⁰ Gordon Williams, *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature* (London: The Athlone Press, 1994), pp. 359-360.

²⁸¹ Davenport, pp. 234-235.

The issue gets more perplexing when Marston wonders about the identity of this ‘brisk neat youth’:

Tis loose legg’d Lais, that same common Drab,
For whom good Tubrio tooke the mortall stab.
Ha ha, Nay then I’le neuer raile at those
That weare a codpis, thereby to disclose
What sexe they are, since strumpets breeches vse,
And all mens eyes saue Linceus can abuse.
Nay steed of shadow, lay the substance out,
Or els faire Briscus I shall stand in doubt
What sex thou art, since such Hermaphrodites
Such Protean shadowes so delude our sights. (ll. 117-126)

Add to this, his instruction to Luceus that the youth is not what he seems to be: ‘Thou Knowst I am sure, for thou canst cast thine eie/ Through nine mud wals, or els odd Poets Lie.’ (ll. 115-116). The youth’s gender is ambiguous, the persona suggests, and the association with the famous Ancient Greek prostitute Lais renders ‘Ciprian’ not so much as a devotee of Venus, but an actual commercial prostitute. A few lines later the identity of the youth remains undisclosed: ‘I’le neuer raile at those/ That weare a codpis, thereby to disclose/ What sexe they are’. Apparently, this gentleman is not a boy or a man but may be a woman, dressed in men’s clothes ‘allur[ing] all men’s eyes’. Then the speaker refers to Briscus, addressing him in the first person: ‘I shall stand in doubt/ What sex thou art’. Davenport assumes that Briscus is ‘ . . . not the same as the lover-courtier of I 19, above’,²⁸² but Marston’s preoccupation with false apparel and what essentially hangs between men’s legs indicate that Briscus might as well be the lover-courtier in the first satire. As the persona states:

Come Briscus, by the soule of Complement,
I’le not endure that with thine instrument
(Thy Gambo violll plac’d betwixt thy thighes,
Wherein the best part of thy courtship lyes)
Thou entertaine the time, thy Mistres by: (ll. 19-23)²⁸³

Even if he is not the same character, Briscus is still associated with Lais since both are called hermaphrodites. Trumbach in his study on ‘London’s Sapphists’ claims that hermaphrodites were associated with both women and men during the late

²⁸² Davenport, p. 235.

²⁸³ Satire I, *Quedam videntur, et non sunt*, ll. 19-23.

seventeenth century, whereas in the early eighteenth century some authors referred to men as hermaphrodites, although the word ‘molly’ was also available. Other writers, like Edmund Curll, referred to them as distinctively female.²⁸⁴ However, the use and vagueness of the term ‘hermaphrodite’ resists the easy definition that the term could have had for an early modern readership. The point is, that even those women that appropriated men’s apparel were still considered false and dangerous since ‘[they] delude our [men’s] sights’ (l. 126).

There are other qualities that cause nuisance to the persona in this satire, such as deceit, hypocrisy and excessive/transvestite apparel. The figures in men’s clothes, whether men or women, are represented as sources of deviant desire. For the male spectators, false apparel is the source of deceit, and those that pace like Cyprians use ‘strumpets breeches’ and abuse men’s eyes. Discouragement of deceit, villainy, excessive dressing up and ‘foule impietie’ (l. 160, Satire II) are themes that are obsessively repeated in Marston’s satires.

The figure that opens up Satire III, *Quedam et sunt, et videntur*, is another example Marston uses in order to expose youths who are ‘Fair outward show, and [have] little wit within’ (l. 23). This youth is so striking in his apparel and extravagance that the persona cannot ‘ore’slip’ him. The satirist notes:

He hath been longer in preparing him
The Terence wench, and now behold he’s seene.
Now after two yeeres fast and earnest prayer,
The fashion change not, (least he should dispaire
Of euer hoording vp more faire gay clothes)
Behold at length in London streets he showes. (ll. 5-10)

Notably this youth is characterised by his vanity. He does not eat in order to keep himself fit and hopes that the fashion will not change so that he can always be fashionable. Then a description of his clothes follows:

O dapper, rare, compleat, sweet nittie youth!
Iesu Maria! How his clothes appeare
Croست, and recrost with lace, sure for some feare,
Least that some spirit with a tippet Mace

²⁸⁴ Randolph Trumbach, ‘London’s Sapphists: From Three Sexes to Four Genders in the Making of Modern Culture’, in *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History*, ed. by Gilbert Herdt (New York: Zone Books, 1996), pp. 111-136 (pp. 115-121).

Should with a gastly show affright his face.
 His hat, himselfe, small crowne & huge great brim,
 Faire outward show, and little wit within.
 And all the band with feathers he doth fill,
 Which is a signe of a fantasticke still (ll. 18-26)

As signs that signify extravagance, clothes become the primary indicators of deviance. Turner astutely comments that: 'Overdressing was a form of semiotic prostitution, an impure traffic between signifier and signified, an exchange muddled by an immoderate attention to materiality.'²⁸⁵ As Polonius claims in *Hamlet*: 'For the apparel oft proclaims the man.'²⁸⁶ This youth has a reputation of a prostitute, the persona seems to suggest, by exposing the 'semiotics of prostitution' with regard to posture and setting. As the satirist narrates:

As sure, as (some doe tell me) euermore
 A Goate doth stand before a brothel dore.
 His clothes perfum'd, his fustie mouth is aired,
 His chinne new swept, his very cheeks are glazed. (ll. 27-30)

After the youth's description of style, posture, character and clothes the narrator finally exposes him as a prostitute. The narrative here gradually constructs the figure of a commercial male prostitute who poses outside a brothel: 'But ho, what Ganimede is that doth grace/ The gallants heeles. One, who for two daies space/ Is closely hyred' (ll. 31-33). The invective that follows shows clearly the balance (or imbalance, 'humorize') that exists between the prostitute's outward show and inward spirit, a comment that the narrator will later reiterate more strongly in line 74, 'In show, and essence a good naturall':

Now who dares not call
 This Aesops crow, fond, mad, fantasticall.
 Why so he is, his clothes doe sympathize,
 And with his inward spirit humorize.
 An open Asse, that is not yet so wise
 As his derided fondness to disguise. (ll. 33-38)

²⁸⁵ James G. Turner, ed., *Sexuality and Gender in early modern Europe: institutions, texts, images* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 239.

²⁸⁶ Quoted in Turner, p. 237.

The market this youth is aiming at is explicitly a homoerotic one. Davenport claims by commenting on ‘closely hyred’:

‘Closely’ means secretly, and since there is nothing secret about hiring a boy as a page the phrase implies ‘hired for services to be done in secret’ – i.e. underlining the implication of ‘Ganymed’. The word ‘close’ in a context like this often carried a hint of sexuality.²⁸⁷

I do not think that Marston ‘hints’ anything. He is specific concerning Lucian’s prostitute practices and the uses to which he could be put.

Lucian however, is in love, and the persona’s evocation of ‘Bedlam, Frenzie, Maddness and Lunacie’ (l. 51) not only encapsulates Lucian’s style, dress and behaviour, but also presents him as a youth ‘inamorato’ (l. 54). Thus, ‘distracted’ (l. 53) is referred to both love and prostitute practice. Oxymoronic as this may seem, Marston deliberately describes Lucian as ‘distracted’. Lucian will soon confess that he is in love with a Lady called Lilla:

For when my eares receau’d a fearefull sound
That he was sicke, I went, and there I found
Him layd of loue, and newly brought to bed
Of monstrous folly, and a franticke head.
His chamber hang’d about with Elegies,
With sad complaints of his loues miseries:
His windowes strow’d with Sonnets, and the glasse
Drawne full of loue-knots. I approcht the Asse,
And straight he weepes, and sighes some sonnet out
To his faire loue. And then he goes about
For to perfume her rare perfection
With some sweet-smelling pinck Epitheton. (ll. 45-56)

Noticably, the speaker includes poetry - sonnets and elegies - as a trope of erotic expression, only to demystify it in the end by exposing literary writing as common: his chamber ‘hang’d about with Elegies’ and his ‘windowes strow’d with sonnets’. This is in sharp contrast to the speaker’s composition of satire, which relies heavily on menace, ridicule and invective. As we shall see later by examining Middleton’s and Donne’s satirical literary writings, the satire emerges as a common literary locale in which the male prostitute resides. This contrasts with sonnets and elegies, which were traditionally thought to be serious erotic manifestations of desire.

²⁸⁷ Davenport, p. 241.

To complete this dramatic configuration of Lucian the persona proceeds with a theatrical exposition of Lucian's hypocrisy. We soon find out that Lucian has been lying. As the satirist describes:

Then with a melting looke he writhes his head,
And straight in passion riseth in his bed;
And hauing kist his hand, stroke vp his haire,
Made a French conge, cryes. O cruell feare
To the antique Bed-post. (ll. 67-71)

Further ridicule is employed with the persona claiming:

Art not thou ready for to break thy spleene
In this vaine-glorious foole? When thou dost know
He neuer durst vnto these Ladies show
His pippin face. Well, he's no accident,
But reall, reall, shamelesse, impudent. (ll. 81-86)

Excessive in his vanity and lies, Marston constructs Lucian as a youth who has an already fixed sexual-object preference. Obviously, hyperbole instructs all satirical writings yet, in this one, there are no options available but to accord with the speaker's argument that Lucian actually cannot conform to heteroerotic sexual activity or desire. The satire is constructed in such a way as to make us believe the narrator, not Lucian. Effeminacy - in the early modern sense - in Lucian is ruled out. It is dramatic posture, vanity and deceit in language that characterises this 'fantasticall' Ganymede. If we want to look for the birth of the queen in male same-sex expression of desire in texts, this is one of the most prominent satires.

Whether afraid or incapable being involved with ladies, Lucian's 'secret sin' is exposed. The satiric mode is called upon to ensure this: 'But humble Satyre, wilt thou daime display/ These open naggs, which purblind eyes bewray?/ Come, come, and snarle more darke at secrete sin' (ll. 93-95). Although 'nag' means a 'contemptible or worthless person', a 'fool' for Davenport,²⁸⁸ for Williams, the word has also sexual overtones by also meaning 'penis' and 'whore'.²⁸⁹ Yet, this is only part of the invective. There are also problems of social class concerning Lucian's 'priuate selfe' (l. 92). Not only does Lucian dare to be a hypocrite, but he is also a low-born individual: 'And yet

²⁸⁸ Davenport, p. 243.

²⁸⁹ Williams, *DSL*, pp. 931-932.

he boasts, and wonders that each man/ Can call him by his name, sweet Ducean:’ (ll. 87-88). ‘Duceus’, according to Davenport, originates from ‘Ducianus’ meaning in Latin ‘a commander’s servant – a batman. I do not know whether M. meant this, but it makes a suitable name for a low-born social pretender.’²⁹⁰ Once again, within a single utterance – ‘nag’ – the social informs the sexual and vice versa.

So what is happening with Lucian? What the narrative suggests is that since prostitution was illegal for both males and females, Lucian as a male prostitute (a Ganymede) conceals his erotic preferences concerning his clientele, in order not to be caught committing the sin of sodomy. Sodomy and prostitution here are not named, but his ‘secret sin’ cannot simply refer to pretence.

Marston’s preoccupation with prostitute practice, either as commercial prostitution or as a practice that was only associated with excessive and immodest sexual desire, also figures in his satiric poem *The Scourge of Villainy*. The same themes run throughout this satire as in his previous ones: deceit, villainy, vanity, false manners and excessive dress. Like the previous satires, *The Scourge of Villainy* follows closely the examples that were set by Juvenal and Martial concerning satirical writing. The vocabulary on male and female prostitution is ubiquitous in all satires, but contrary to the satire that Lucian occupies in *The Scourge of Villainy* there is not a consistent or linear plot that we can closely follow. Nor do the references to ‘Cyprians’, ‘Ganymedes’, ‘cynedians’ (l. 59, *Fronti nulla fides*, Satyre I) reveal much about prostitute practice. Male prostitution might be addressed in multiple and diverse ways but it is mentioned only in instances where the satirist attempts to show that the world has turned upside down. These figures of male prostitution are only there to denote decadence (l. 49, *Redde, age, quae deinceps risisti*, Satyre III). Luscus, in Satire III, is an intriguing figure who is discussed a little bit more than the scattered Ganymedes and Cyprians in the text:

Luscus hath left his female luxurie.
 I, it left him; No, his old Cynick Dad
 Hath forc’d him cleane forsake his Pickhatch drab.
 Alack, alack, what peece of lustfull flesh
 Hath Luscus left, his Priape to redresse?
 Griue not good soule, he hath his Ganimede,
 His perfum’d shee-goate, smooth kembd & high fed.
 At Hogsdon now his monstrous lust he feasts,

²⁹⁰ Davenport, p. 242.

For there he keeps a bawdy-house of beasts.
 Paphus, let Luscus haue his Curtezan,
 Or we shall haue a monster of a man.
 Tut, Paphus now detaines him from that bower,
 And claspes him close within his brick-built tower.
 Diogenes, th'art damn'd for thy lewd wit,
 For Luscus now hath skill to practise it.
 Fayth, what cares he for faire Cynedian boyes?
 Veluet cap'd Goates, duch Mares? Tut common toies.
 Detaine them all, on this condition
 He may but vse the Cynick friction. (ll. 34-52)

Leaving his female whore because of Paphus's detention (Cynick Dad/Paphus), Luscus keeps a male prostitute termed in the text 'Ganymede'. Ganymede however, is a 'shee-goate' presenting him therefore, as sexually passive, as well as beastly, since goats were notoriously thought to possess overabundant sexual proclivity. 'Goat' was another common utterance for harlot. It is here very unlikely that Marston is describing the previous female whore Luscus kept, mentioned in line 36, 'Pickhatch drab', unless the satirist refers to a female whore who is dressed in male apparel, something that is difficult to decipher. The bawdy-house of beasts in Hogsdon, that Luscus keeps, could refer to a brothel, where possibly all sorts of illicit sexual acts took place, including male same-sex practice. Yet, female prostitution was often associated with beastliness, thus the reference here to a male brothel is questionable. So far I cannot justify Burford's reference to Lord Hunsdon in *London: The Synfulle Citie* by utilizing Marston's phrase 'a bawdy-house of Beasts'. As he states:

The numbers of prostitutes increased mightily, as also the numbers of catamites. The Queen's cousin Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, kept 'a bawdy-house of Beasts' in Hoggesden (Hoxton), then a salubrious suburb.²⁹¹

In the book *The Bishop's Brothels* Burford claims:

²⁹¹ Burford, p. 128. I have great difficulty in verifying Burford's references due to the lack of cross-references and absence of footnotes. Thus, Burford's reference to Lord Hunsdon's Hoxton 'House of Beasts', where 'Alban Cooke was taken in flagrante delicto with a man under twenty years of age therein', cannot be used in this project until further research has been conducted. The same applies to the homophobic comments Burford has made on King James' visits to brothels, insisting that King James was not a 'homosexual'. The following quote is from *The Bishop's Brothels*: 'His visits to 'Holland's Leaguer' were no secret either, and must give the lie to the canard that he was homosexual', p. 175.

Great lords, like Queen Elizabeth's cousin Lord Hunsdon, were not above dabbling in the immoral traffic. In 1603 he is recorded as having leased out a mansion in Paris Garden to a famous Madam, setting down the terms on which men and women were to be received. If she allowed men to bring in too many women, or if the women brought in more than a specified number of men in a day, the lease could be forfeited. It says much for the entrepreneurial skills of this lady that she was still in possession some thirty years later.²⁹²

Marston here uses the phrase 'immoral traffic' for all illicit sexual activities. In Burford's account male same-sex prostitution is non-existent. Yet, lines 43-44 in Marston, - 'let Luscus haue his Curtezan,/ Or we shall haue a monster of a man' - indicates the common anxiety about sodomy, promulgating female prostitution as a necessary evil in society that could keep male same-sex activity to a minimum.

Once Luscus is detained in a 'brick-built tower' by Paphus he does not need 'common toyes', with toys indicating the accessibility of boys and female whores ('Goats, duch Mares') as sexual partners. The pairing of Cyprian boys and female prostitutes in literary texts will be a recurrent theme, as will be explained later. The 'toy/boy' rhyme is a common scheme used by both Marston and Middleton.²⁹³ Luscus, like the cynic philosopher Diogenes, who was famous for his dog-like manners and defiance of laws and customs, can now practice masturbation. This is the 'cynick friction' Marston is referring to in line 52 therefore, representing Luscus' satyromania.

In lines 53-54 we have one of the rare linguistic instances in Renaissance literature of 'male stewes': 'O now yee male stewes, I can giue pretence/ For your luxurious incontinence' (ll. 53-54). Bray, in his comments on male brothels, refers to this phrase and uses it as 'evidence of more sophisticated forms [of homosexual prostitution] and in particular of the existence of homosexual brothels'²⁹⁴ although, he warns us that we should probably think of them as taverns, 'where prostitutes were able to entertain their clients'.²⁹⁵ Smith suggests that these 'male stewes' are referring actually to the 'Catholic seminaries and [. . .] Cambridge colleges'.²⁹⁶ We might want to trace here religious connotations concerning Catholicism and the papacy, which were

²⁹² Ephraim J. Burford, *The Bishop's Brothels* (London: Robert Hale, 1993), p. 168.

²⁹³ Marston's and Middleton's other examples include the following works: 'The Wisdom of Solomon Paraphrased' by Middleton in Chapter VI, ll. 20-23, see Bullen, Vol. 8. Also 'Pigmalion' by Marston, stanza 19, p. 56, in Davenport, *The Poems of John Marston*.

²⁹⁴ Bray, p. 53.

²⁹⁵ Bray, p. 54.

²⁹⁶ Smith, p. 180.

associated with male brothels. The 'pretence' that the speaker gives for the existence of these 'male stewes' might give us an extra reason for the association of papacy with sodomy and the brothel culture. Yet, 'male stewes' could as well refer to male prostitutes themselves. Williams in his *Dictionary of Sexual Language* gives us four definitions of the 'stew': 1. brothel, 2. bawd, whore, 3. soak (in the humid vagina) and 4. Syphilitic scalding is overtone with sense 1.²⁹⁷ Williams actually places Marston's reference to 'male stewes' under the second definition: 'bawd, whore'.

The grounds the narrator gives for incontinence are quite revealing with regard to the places where we can find same-sex prostitution. He angrily exclaims:

Hence, hence, yee falsed, seeming, Patriotes,
 Returne not with pretence of saluing spots,
 When here yee soyle vs with impuritie,
 And monstrous filth, of Doway seminary.
 What though Iberia yeeld you libertie,
 To snort in source of Sodom vilanie?
 What though the bloomes of young nobilitie,
 Committed to your Rodons custodie,
 Yee Nero like abuse? yet nere approch,
 Your newe S. Homers lewdness here to broch.
 Tainting our Townes, and hopefull Accademes,
 With your lust-bating most abhorred meanes. (ll. 55-66)

Schools, academies and seminaries have become brothels as well, for they house tutors and youths that have studied either in Spain or France and practiced, as it was commonly believed, the sin of sodomy. We can see here how the brothel culture vocabulary is used to describe the decadence present in the other social institutions such as universities, by implying that these academies have become whorehouses. Tutors do not escape Marston's menace either:

Had I some snout faire brats, they should indure
 The new found Castilian callenture:
 Before some pedant-Tutor, in his bed
 Should vse my frie, like Phrigian Ganimede. (ll. 75-78)

A *Cynicke Satyre*, Satire VII, reiterates the same invective against lewdness, luxury and whoredom. Diogenes once again features in this satire. Marston alludes to the cynic philosopher's aphorisms concerning manhood, in an attempt to expose the

²⁹⁷ Williams, pp. 1312-1313.

cultural neurosis surrounding manliness.²⁹⁸ Thus, the phrase ‘a man, a kingdom for a man’, is repeated throughout the satire, accompanied by diverse figures that disgrace manliness. Lines 13-16 encapsulate the speaker’s anxiety on masculinity:

These are no men, but Apparitions,
 Ignis fatui, Glowwormes, Fictions,
 Meteors, Ratts of Lilus, Fantasies,
 Colosses, Pictures, Shades, Resemblances. (ll. 13-16)

One of these characters is Linceus who is effeminate, lewd and vain accompanied by his whore (either female or male) who serves him in ‘Sodom beastlines’ (ll. 25). Later on Linceus is presented ‘open breasted’ and ‘plumy crested’ (ll. 30-31) and his ‘invention effeminate’. Effeminacy here could have the sense either of ‘the one that has survived, an attribute of the boys who serve the pleasure of the gallant and the courtier’ or ‘the one that dominates early modern usage, an attribute of the gallant and the courtier themselves’.²⁹⁹ Smith, from whom the quote has been extracted, claims it is both. If that is the case, the ‘effeminate sanguine Ganymede’, who is a ‘beuer, hunted for the bed’ (ll. 158-159), where ‘beuer’ indicates the beastliness of practicing prostitution, could either refer to a male prostitute that goes with women or with men. Therefore, Ganymede cannot signify exclusively a male prostitute involved in same-sex practice. Once again the interchangeability of the Renaissance vocabulary on sexual activity poses important questions concerning classification and the ways in which such a vocabulary was used. Other terms present us with the same interpretative problem.

In Satire VIII, *Inamorato Curio*, other male prostitutes feature as well, but this time of a different kind. These are male prostitutes that give their services to women, termed as ‘monkeys’, another popular animal considered to be uncontrollable in its sexual appetite. Monkey as a figure of lust could be applied to both women and men but what Marston stresses here is an excessive sexual desire toward women.

²⁹⁸ Davenport’s footnote provides us with three stories concerning Diogenes’ aphorisms: ‘i. ‘One day he shouted out for men, and when people collected, hit out at them with a stick saying, ‘It was men I called for, not scoundrels.’ ii. ‘He lit a lamp in broad daylight and said, as he went about, ‘I am looking for a man’. iii. ‘He was returning from Olympia, and when somebody inquired whether there was a great crowd, ‘Yes’, he said, ‘a great crowd, but few who could be called men.’ See Diogenes Laertius, VI. 32, 41, 60.’ See Davenport, p. 327.

²⁹⁹ Smith, p. 180.

A host of men feature in this satire, like Curio, Phrigio, Martius and Publius, but their desire seems exclusively heteroerotic. These men are slaves to women, but strangely enough, though they address their desire to women, they are termed hermaphrodites. By inverting, therefore, the popular belief of hermaphroditism as associated with female and male transvestism, sodomy and beastliness, the speaker conflates gender confusion and transgression with effeminacy, that is, associating oneself too much with women. These men are women-lovers, thus turning themselves into hermaphrodites:

I am not saplesse, old, or rumaticke,
No Hipponax misshapen stigmaticke,
That I should thus inueigh gainst amorous spright
Of him whose soule doth turne Hermaphrodite,
But I doe sadly grieue, and inly vexe
To view the base dishonors of our sexe. (ll. 143-148)

The speaker in fact seems not to be repelled by such women-lovers. It is dishonour of manliness that annoys him, with men turning themselves ‘to brutish shapes’ (line 150) like Gods in antiquity, and ‘crop[ing] the beauties of some female trull.’ (ll. 154). The argument is that these men would do anything to satisfy their sexual desire for women, not through rape, but by flattery. Note that the female trulls are not necessarily commercial prostitutes but women who in the speaker’s eyes are adulterous, shallow, and lustful. It seems that these are prostitute-like qualities that women possess which makes these men turn in their souls to hermaphrodites and beasts. For all they do is:

Raue, talke idlie, as’t were some deitie
Adoring female painted puppetry
Playing at pup-pin, doting on some glasse
(Which breath’d but on his falsed glosse doth passe)
Toying with babies, and with fond pastime
Some childrens sport, deflowering of chast time,
Implying all his wits in vaine expence,
Abusing all his organons of sence. (ll. 203-210)

The following Satire IX, *Here’s a toy to mocke an Ape indeede*, continues the same motif with further insults addressed to gentlemen who frequent Paris Garden and the whole area of Southwark, dressed in ‘clothes Italianate’ (line 92) and ‘strange fantastique sute shapes’:

Or let him bring or'e beastly luxuries,
 Some hell-deusied lustfull villanies,
 Euen Apes & beasts would blush with natiue shame,
 And thinke it foule dishonour to their name,
 Their beastly name, to imitate such sin
 As our lewd youths doe boast and glory in. (ll. 95-100)

'Italianate' apparel here denotes the importation of such habits from Italy, notorious at that time for sodomy. As George B. Parks has shown in his study of 'The First Italianate Englishmen', Italianate had a variety of uses.³⁰⁰ Some of the most popular were treachery, espionage, contempt for marriage, lustfulness, socialisation with whores, scandalous behaviour, deceit and Catholicism. Sodomy does not feature in Parks' essay but as we will see later in Chapter 4 'Italianate' was also used to refer to the sin of sodomy and male prostitution.

The sin committed however, is not named. Though it could refer to any illicit sexual activity that could endanger the youth of the city, the ending indicates that it is sodomy, as well as female prostitution, that the speaker is addressing. As the speaker implores and subsequently threatens:

O take compassion
 Euen on your soules, make not religion
 A bawde to lewdness. Ciuill Socrates,
 Clip not the youth of Alcebiades
 With vnchast armes. Disguised Messaline,
 I'le teare thy maske, and bare thee to the eyne
 Of hissing boyes, if to the Theaters
 I finde thee once more come for lecherers
 To satiate? Nay, to tyer thee with the vse
 Of weaking lust. (ll. 117-126)

The plea to Socrates is sexualised here, for his condemnation by the Athenians was not because of Socrates' sexual abuse of the city's youth but due to the innovative religious and political thinking his teachings were promulgating. Next to Alcibiades we find Messalina, a whore who features in Juvenal as well. This is a familiar pattern with female whores and homoerotic subjects enmeshed in the same illicit sexual activities, thus pronouncing the association of homoeroticism with female prostitution.

³⁰⁰ George B. Parks, 'The First Italianate Englishmen', *Studies in the Renaissance*, 8 (1961), pp. 197-216.

Marston's last satire *Humours*, in *The Scourge of Villainy*, mentions a pander and a whoremonger named Luxurio who 'hath the sole monopolie . . . of the suburbe lecherie' (ll. 138-139). In his list of brothel-culture figures Marston places, once again, the Cynedian among the female prostitutes that crowd brothel areas:

No new edition of drabs comes out,
But seene and allow'd by Luxurios snout.
Did euer any man ere heare him talke
But of Pick-hatch, or of some Shorditch baulke,
Aretines filth, or of his wandering whore,
Of some Cynedian, or of Tacedore,
Of Ruscus nastie lothsome brothel rime,
That stincks like Ajax froth, or muck-pit slime. (ll. 140-147)

Although the invective is directed at Luxurio's bawdiness, it is the literary and the theatrical that stand out as sources of sexual deviance, corruption and disorder. Aretino's pornographic novella is mentioned and also the famous actor Roscius, who was renowned for being a male prostitute during Roman times. Thus, Marston renders both traditions as pornographic and suitable for a bawd and pander like Luxurio. And as the above lines indicate, the 'Cynedian' resides syntactically alongside the 'wandering whore'.

The whole satire, similar to the previous ones we have looked at, is addressed to gentlemen. Beastliness and brutish pleasures that constitute Luxurio's practices are the very ones that young men covet, demonstrating how the sex-market makes them 'slaue[s], to humors thare borne/ In slime of filthy sensualitie' (ll. 206-207). Marston was not alone in pursuing the exposition and ridicule of men and boys prostituting themselves, or those who associating with prostitutes. In early modern England, whoredom as an accusation was also applied to those men who frequented the Liberties area and engaged in a whole range of illicit activities, even if these were not primarily sexual.

Middleton's 'hermaphrodite'

Middleton's *Satire 5*, 'Ingling Pyander', is another literary example illustrating male prostitution in early modern England. In this case, rather than Marston's Ganymedes and Cyprians, we have a transvestite:

Old beldam hath a daughter or a son,
True born or illegitimate, all's one. (ll. 5-6)

. . .

The still memorial, if I aim aright,
Is a pale chequered black hermaphrodite.
Sometimes he jets it like a gentleman,
Otherwhiles much like a wanton courtesan.
But truth to tell a man or woman whether,
I cannot say, she's excellent in either. (ll. 23-28)³⁰¹

It is this literary figure, 'the chequered black Hermaphrodite', that Bray alludes to in order to distinguish two different uses of transvestism, the one in the seventeenth century which was manifested in the streets and the other in the early eighteenth century applied indoors.³⁰² Bray's contention is that the transvestite 'hermaphrodite' in this narrative is 'trying to avoid sexual intercourse so as to avoid being discovered'.³⁰³ We have seen already how extravagant and misleading apparel was criticised and discouraged by Marston. In 'Ingling Pyander' also, the ambiguously gendered figure is a deceiver due to his/her transvestism. As in Marston's satires, where male prostitutes are not easily discernible figures, in Middleton's text the featured hermaphrodite impedes attempts at classification of its gender and occupation.

Middleton's concern here is deceit relating to transvestism per se. One reason is due to the speaker's ignorance of the hermaphrodite's gender condition. He thinks that this 'hermaphrodite' is a woman. Another is that the persona gets seriously involved in the story line with no resolution concerning his feelings towards this ambiguous

³⁰¹ Allen H. Bullen, ed., *The Works of Thomas Middleton*, Vol 8 (New York: AMC Press Inc, 1964). The editor has 'relegated' the texts to an appendix because he contends that the *Satires* and *The Wisdom of Solomon paraphrased* are 'exceedingly uninteresting productions', p. 113. Therefore, all quotes have been extracted from Gary Taylor's and John Lavagnino's edition of *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 1981-1983.

³⁰² Bray, p. 88.

³⁰³ Bray, p. 88.

gendered figure. We are constantly reminded of the speaker's emotional involvement with this woman who turns out to be a man:

Because time was I loved Pyander well.
True love indeed will hate love's black defame (ll. 42-43)

...
O this sad passion of my heavy soul
Torments my heart and senses do control. (ll. 49-50)

...
For false Pyander, though I loved him well (l. 57)

...
I loved indeed, and, to my mickle cost;
I loved Pyander, so my labour lost. (ll. 80-81)

There are however, indications that the person the narrator is infatuated with is a whore. For, as he reveals:

Fair words I had, for store of coin I gave,
But not enjoyed the fruit I thought to have. (ll. 82-83)

...
And if you needs will do, do with advice.
Tie not affection to each wanton smile (ll. 91-92)

...
But if of force you must a hackney hire,
Be curious in your choice; the best will tire. (ll. 98-99)

This cheating youth is not named a prostitute. Only in the end the narrator associates him with a 'hackney', another popular noun for a prostitute, while warning gentlemen to be cautious of whom they hire for sexual satisfaction.

There are other instances in the satire where we can deduct the profession of Pyander. London, the New Troy or Troynovant, is the setting of the narrative: 'Yet Troynovant, that all-admired town,/ Where thousands still do travel up and down,/ Of beauty's counterfeits affords not one' (ll. 31-33). 'Pyander', the name chosen for the ambiguously gendered figure could derive from Pandarus, the Trojan companion of Aeneas in *The Aeniad*, who in Homer's *Illiad* fights on the Trojan side and wounds Menelaus with an arrow. Yet, it is Pandarus in Chaucer, who acts as a match-maker for Troilus and Criseyde, and also Pandarus in Shakespeare's play, who is presented as a bawd, that Middleton's Pyander echoes, alluding to the practice of pandering in seventeenth-century England. Another derivation could be Pindarus, the ancient Greek poet associated with pederasty, but I find this possibility quite remote. His name

however, is simply associated with panderism because this hermaphrodite is a 'still memorial' who 'sometimes jets like a gentleman/ Other whiles much like a wanton courtesan' (ll. 25-26). Whether a man or a woman, it is difficult to say - 'she's excellent in either' (l. 28). Note the persona's insistence on the female qualities of the figure. Through reports, the narrator finds out that this is a 'cheating youth' (l. 30). Pyander is dressed in a 'nymph's attire' (l. 35) but is also called a 'lovely smiling paragon' (l. 34), alluding both to the excellence of this youth as a model of beauty as well as to his clothing. 'Paragon' means, according to the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. 2, 'A kind of double camlet used for clothing and upholstery in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.' His infatuation with Pyander continues by drawing comparisons with female figures, the only exception being the 'pleasing boy':

No nymph more fair than did Pyander seem,
 Had not Pyander then Pyander been.
 No lady with a fairer face more graced,
 But that Pyander's self himself defaced.
 Never was boy so pleasing to the heart
 As was Pyander for a woman's part.
 Never did woman foster such another,
 As was Pyander, but Pyander's mother. (ll. 66-73)

The persona's first encounter with Pyander is out in the street:

Walking the city as my wonted use,
 There was I subject to this foul abuse;
 Troubled with many thoughts pacing along,
 It was my chance to shoulder in a throng,
 Thrust to the channel I was, but crowding her (ll. 60-64)

Probably these are the lines that convinced Bray that Pyander was trying to avoid sex by appropriating female disguise, for I find no other instances in the poem to indicate Pyander's efforts to escape visibility or recognition.

The ambiguously presented old 'mansion' is where this hermaphrodite resides. As the speaker narrates:

The house wide open stands; her lodging's free.
 Admit myself for recreation
 Sometimes did enter her possession,
 It argues not that I have been the man

That first kept revels in that mansion.
 No, no, the haggling commonplace is old;
 The tenement hath oft been bought and sold.
 'Tis rotten now ('earth to earth, dust to dust').
 Sodom's on fire, and consume it must,
 And wanting second reparations
 Pluto hath seized the poor reversions. (ll. 8-18)

It is a tempting assumption to view this house as a brothel – 'open stands', 'her lodgings', 'recreation', 'possession' – since the phrases indicate female passivity and economic exchange for pleasure. It could however, be a tavern or an inn where illicit prostitution did take place according to historians, including Bray, who acknowledges the tavern as a topos of homosexual prostitute practice.

Within this house other activities take place and there is abundant evidence that inns, taverns and ordinaries especially in Southwark were hosting revels, criminals and all sorts of 'cony-catchers', a popular phrase in Renaissance England indicating various swindlers involved in illicit practices. 'Bought and sold' illustrates how often the tenancies were changing hands, indicating the temporality that tavern houses and brothels might have had. Whether it is Sodom or Little Sodom, two brothels near Whitefriars owned by theatre managers, is not clear.³⁰⁴ However, the allusions to 'Sodom' in the satire gives us a glimpse of what sort of place this house is, preparing us for the events that follow. If this house is associated with sodomy and prostitution, the hermaphrodite could be male, female or an actual two-gendered person.

Pyander himself is considerably attractive. Yet, the poem seems to conceal whether actual sex has taken place between the narrator and Pyander. For the narrator confesses:

I loved indeed and, to my mickle cost;
 I loved Pyander, so my labour lost.
 Fair words I had, for store of coin I gave,
 But not enjoyed the fruit I thought to have. (ll. 80-83)

The narrator has paid for services but his 'labour is lost', meaning here that his physical sexual desire was not satisfied. But that is not due to Pyander's unavailability. The narrator seems to have lost his erection when he finds out that Pyander's sex is male.

³⁰⁴ Joseph Lenz, 'Base Trade: Theater as Prostitution', *English Literary History*, 60.4 (1993), 833-855 <<http://uk.jstor.org>> [accessed 27 December 2005].

So, things stay only on the verbal level - 'Fair words', 'His words, that no part of a she affords;' (ll. 81 and 85) - and that is where the story ends. However, the persona does appreciate prettiness in boys, who could be used as substitutes for women: 'Never was boy so pleasing to the heart/ As was Pyander for a woman's part' (ll. 70-71), meaning, of course, the sexually passive role a woman or a boy was supposed to take.

However, the narrative is rather ambiguous with regard to sexual intercourse. Obviously, the persona's anger is directed towards deceit, manifested in his obsessive idea to expose Pyander as a fake female prostitute. The shame and regret we find throughout the poem, informed by the satiric mode, reaches a climax with the phrase 'Ingling Pyander':

So loathes my soul to seek Pyander's shame.
O but I feel the worm of conscience sting,
And summons me upon my soul to bring
Sinful Pyander into open view,
There to receive the shame that will ensue. (ll. 44-48)

...

Shame thou, Pyander, for I can but shame;
The means of my amiss by thy means came.
And shall I then procure eternal blame
By secret cloaking of Pyander's shame,
And he not blush? (ll. 51-55)

...

So far entangled was my soul by love
That force perforce I must Pyander prove,
The issue of which proof did testify
Ingling Pyander's damned villany. (ll. 76-79)

The shame seems too grave to be handled by the narrator. Obsessively he threatens to make known Pyander's villainy by applying to transvestism a vocabulary similar to that applied to criminals ('sin', 'villany', 'roguery', 'abuse').

A closer reading can suggest that the speaker actually had sex with Pyander – if we take 'ingle' to mean anal intercourse rather than just coax or fondle – and that he found afterwards that Pyander was a male prostitute and a cheater.³⁰⁵ That is Pyander's 'damned villainy'. Thus, his 'labour lost' could mean that his idea that he had sexual consummation with a woman was not correct in the first place. His love for this

³⁰⁵ See Williams, *DSL* on 'ingle', p. 713. "The vbl sense is 'pedicate' (cf. *bardash*): 'Zanzerare, to ingle boies, to play wantonly with boyes against nature'. He also supplies the agent-noun: 'Pedicone, a buggerer, an ingler of boyes'. Cotgrave defines 'Ganymedes' as a 'boy that loued for carnall abuse; an Ingle'; and 'Bardechiser. To commit Sodomie; to bugger, to ingle.'

mistakenly identified figure is so forceful, that due to that force, he violently or vigorously wants to prove to Pyander his desire. If 'prove' is referred to 'that force', it could mean that in order to prove his love the persona had to have sex with Pyander. But what turned out ('the issue of which proof did testify') was that Pyander wanted sex just for money. We can take 'damned villainy' to refer either to deceit with strong connotations on money and exchange (that Pyander's love was not reciprocal), or that he had anal intercourse with him, which is damnable because he projects a fake identity, or both. Alternatively, we can follow Wendy Wall's commentary - the editor of 'Microcynicon' - in Gary Taylor's and John Lavagnino's edition of *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, where she proposes that the narrator actually had sex with Pyander but 'did not find the kind of sexual gratification that he expected'.³⁰⁶

In the finishing lines we read the narrator's condemnation of such vices:

The world was ne'er so drunk with mockery.
Rash-headed cavaliers, learn to be wise,
And if you needs will do, do with advice. (ll. 89-91)

...

The streets are full of juggling parasites
With the true shape of virgins' counterfeits,
But if of force you must a hackney hire,
Be curious in your choice; the best will tire.
The best is bad; therefore hire none at all.
Better to go on foot than ride and fall. (ll. 96-101)

Homoeroticism is here not condemned as such. It is transvestism that is discouraged because it leads to false assumptions. However, this is also problematic. Later on the narrator explains: 'For had he been a she, injurious boy,/ I had not been so subject to annoy' (ll. 86-87). The 1599 edition does not have a comma after 'she'.³⁰⁷ This could indicate that the 'injurious boy' does not refer to the person to whom the narrator addresses, but what the speaker wanted Pyander to be. Therefore, if Pyander was a harmless woman appearing as a boy (dressed in a man's apparel) the narrator would not mind that kind of transvestism. Even so, it is still uncertain whether homoeroticism is condemned or not. If it is same-sex practice that is reproached here, it is a specific

³⁰⁶ Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino, eds., *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 1983.

³⁰⁷ Thomas Middleton, *Micro-cynicon. Sixe snarling satyres* (1599)
<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845419> [accessed 10 May 2007].

expression of homoeroticism. It is the one that occurs within the context of transvestite prostitution in general. And if my supposition is right concerning the absence of a comma in 'she injurious boy', then it is only male to female transvestism that is disapproved and not vice versa.

'[B]oy so pleasing to the heart/ As was Pyander for a woman's part' suggests a pairing of the boy and woman who can take the receptive role in sexual intercourse. It is possibly understandable how anal intercourse could have been preferred in prostitute practice in early modern England for contraceptive reasons, and therefore, we can appreciate the ways in which male transvestite prostitutes, like Rykener, could escape recognition, or even, why the persona in Middleton's satire would mistake a woman for a man/boy during the sexual act.³⁰⁸ Female prostitutes who had anal intercourse were thought to collude in the sin of sodomy as much as the men who had sex with each other. But what Middleton suggests here is that Pyander is not the only one who frequents the streets of London in such a fashion. The city seems to be crowded with 'juggling parasites/ With the true shape of virgins' counterfeits' (ll. 95-96). The vocabulary employed here is deliberately chosen to alert the high-risk group of cavaliers and gentlemen who frequent houses for sexual pleasure.

Satire 4, 'Cheating Droone', has a similar instructive purpose: 'Be wise, young heads, care for an after-day!' (l. 90). This time the figure is a 'droone'. A drone is a non-worker whose only function is sexual according to Williams.³⁰⁹ As the narrator states from the beginning:

There is a cheater by profession
That takes more shapes than the chameleon.
Sometimes he jets it in a black furr'd gown,
And that is when he harbours in the town.
Sometimes a cloak to mantle hoary age,
Ill-favoured, like an ape in spiteful rage (ll. 3-8)

The subject matter of the satire is a popular one. The early modern era witnessed a proliferation of texts that dealt with criminals, rogue figures, vagabonds and cony-catchers. The female prostitute as a figure played an intrinsic part in this category of criminals. The phrase 'cony-catching' was applied loosely to all sorts of criminals and people occupying the underworld of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England.

³⁰⁸ For Rykener's case see my Introduction, p. 41.

³⁰⁹ Williams, *DSL*, p. 417.

However, the phrase principally characterises all illicit social behaviour as adultery. ‘Cony’ was another popular name for a prostitute and it is indicative that both cheaters and their victims (dupes) were described as whores. Such articulations facilitated perceptions of criminality to be viewed as adultery, thus incorporating cheaters within a discourse on prostitution. Authors like Greene (1592), Rowlands (1602), Harman (1592) and Rich (1593) repeatedly referred to cony-catchers as whores. Similar to sodomites and female prostitutes, these criminals were considered a disease to the state and the commonwealth by bringing degradation and financial destruction to their victims, the young gentlemen. Rowlands, for example, protests in *Greenes ghosts haunting conie-catchers* (1602):

But exceeding all these are the fine sleights of our Italian humourists, who being men for all companies, will by once conuersing with a man so draw him to them, that he shall thinke nothing in the world too deare for them, nor once be able to part them, vntill they haue spent all haue on them.³¹⁰

For Rowlands, the people responsible for all the ills of the commonwealth are these:

conicatching strumpets, who are the verie causes of all the plagues that happen [. . .] they not onely indanger the bodie by lothsom diseases, but ingraue a perpetuall shame in the forehead of the partie, and finally consume his soule and make him fit for the diuell.

‘Strumpets’ refers to female prostitutes. Narratives of female whoredom are highly relevant to criminality and homosociality in early modern England because they illustrate the ways in which the vocabulary of the Renaissance underworld was sexualised, attributing to criminals similar female prostitute qualities. Thus, these vagabonds, rogues and cony-catchers become sodomites and behave like whores. What the texts seem to suggest is that seduction by female prostitutes becomes eventually an intrinsic part of the criminal’s technique in his attempt to inveigle gentlemen. Once again, in Middleton’s satire ‘Cheating Droone’ the process is described thus:

My gentleman betook him to his rest.
Wine took possession of his drowsy head,

³¹⁰ Samuel Rowlands, *Greenes ghost haunting conie-catchers* (1602)
<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99853697> [accessed 22 May 2007].

And cheating Droone hath brought the fool to bed.
 The fiddlers were discharged, and all things whist,
 Then pilf'ring Droone 'gan use him as he list.
 Then pounds he finds, the reckoning he doth pay,
 And with the residue passeth sheer away.
 Anon the cony wakes, his coin being gone,
 He exclaims against dissimulation. (ll. 80-88)

Yet, with such an abundance of information concerning the early modern criminal underworld in England, the absence of the male prostitute poses important questions concerning his visibility in English Renaissance culture, even his very existence. Do these narratives on cony-catching and the Renaissance underworld deny us any access to male prostitution? Are the figures in Marston's and Middleton's satires mere fictitious representations informed by classic literary texts? The cheaters and their victims might be closely associated with prostitution as whores, but so far as my research has revealed no pamphlet or diatribe available that deals with male prostitution per se. Homoerotic activity seems non-existent in these accounts of cony-catching. This is missing from Middleton's *Satire 4* as well. Thus, language around homosocial bonds within the criminal underworld rested heavily on prostitute discourse, on the one hand attributing a homoerotic element to these bonds, employed mainly for financial gain, and on the other imputing these criminals as whores and adulterers of the commonwealth.

Fennor's exploration of different types of cheaters and criminals in *The Counter's Commonwealth* illustrates the ways in which a flirtatious and homoerotic language, as well as the appropriation of courtly manners and dress, could bear a resemblance to prostitute behaviour. In fact, the purpose was to enforce association with prostitution, as in the following account of the gentlemen-cheater:

Like his shadow, they will never be from his heels, but dog him into what place soever he goes, especially if he be a young country gentleman, whom his father hath sent up to the City to see fashions; and, rather than he shall go out of town as raw as he came in, they will season him, and give him a little of the City powdering. They will first seek what means his father doth allow him, then of what nature he is, either merry or melancholy, mild or dogged, and, according the garb and fashion he is of, bear themselves toward him. He shall not go into a tavern, ordinary, or almost any friend's house, but they will be as nigh his body as his sins are his soul, and by some sinister way cement and glue themselves into his familiarity, whatsoever it cost them. This being brought to perfection, and themselves grown something familiar – as in

much company-keeping a man shall join himself to much society- they never will be from his elbow, but seem to be his bosom friend, his masculine sweetheart, and that, like Hippocrates' twins, they must live and die together.³¹¹

Once again the term prostitute is not applied to these gallants. 'Masculine sweetheart' however, stands out, eroticising discourse on criminality and the bonds formulated through homosociality. As the author continues:

This is but the prelude, or prologue, to the play that is to come after, for my country novice being honeyed with these sweet and nectar delights, that these false brethren serve him with, thinks that all the kindness he can return them is not able to give them a true and due satisfaction; and, if at any time these practitioners perceive my fresh gallant to droop or languish, with these or the like speeches (which are as wholesome as a whore in the dog-days), will strive to shake off his melancholy . . .³¹²

Prostitution, like sodomy, becomes then a repository such that all different and diverse activities, sexual or non sexual, could be applied to any individual. Whether thief, rogue, criminal or generally cony-catcher, a multitude of associations with illicit sexual, religious or political activities could follow, like buggery, adultery and rebellion. In a similar way, Markham in *The Famous Whore* (1609) addresses gentlemen:

O you that rich in beauty are, and know
The strength of eies, & what from thence doth flow:
Know they must fade: then wisely spend your youth,
Lest scorned beggary bring hated ruth.
But aboue all, beware the plague of loue,
Lest you my torment and affliction proue.
Beware the Catamits, these gallant slaues,
Who lie to swallow you, like open graves:
Their oathes are periuries, O do not heare them,
Their soothings, falsehoods, fly & come not near the[m]:
For sea-nymphs like, if you but hear the[m] wooe you
They first inchant, and after doevndoe you.³¹³

³¹¹ Available in Arthur V. Judges, ed., *The Elizabethan Underworld* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1930), pp. 427-487 (p. 449).

³¹² *Counter's Commonwealth*, p. 450.

³¹³ Gervase Markham, *The famous whore* (1609)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845490> [accessed 21 May 2007].

Whether the ‘Catamits’, Markham refers to, are of a different sort to that of cony catchers is unclear. However, their practices are not that dissimilar to Fennor’s cony catchers or Middleton’s ‘Cheating Droone’. I am not trying to equate prostitution with forms of illicit sexual and non-sexual behaviour. The texts themselves suggest that, by assimilating criminality with whoredom, either male or female. Will Fisher in his shrewd account of sodomitical discourse and usury shows us the similarities and interconnections that governed the language on sodomy, usury, counterfeit money and even smoking. He claims:

Sodomy, whoring, and smoking are similar in that they are all unproductive modes of expenditure that interfere with the economy of legitimate reproduction – in Shakespearean terms they are an ‘expense of spirit in a waste of shame.’³¹⁴

Fennor’s reference to tobacco as an ‘Indian whore’³¹⁵ suggests the variety of social behaviours that the terminology of whoredom could contain. As far as counterfeiting is concerned, by following Bray, Fisher argues:

[C]ounterfeiting appears to have been linked with homosexuality (or, less anachronistically, sodomy) before the word queer came to mean homosexual. So while we might say that the present meaning of queer derives from coining terminology, sodomy and counterfeiting were also united conceptually long before the linguistic connection was established.³¹⁶

With regard to the figure of Ganymede, by examining Henry Peacham’s emblem of the cup-bearer, Fisher argues that: ‘The word ‘ganymede’ often referred to [...] a ‘degenerate’ type of friendship. To be a ‘ganymede’ is thus to participate simultaneously in illicit sexual, economic, and social exchanges.’³¹⁷ These interrelations between utterances that inform the vocabulary around economic and sexual relations appear to govern criminality as well.

So far we have seen how loosely the term ‘whore’ was applied to individuals occupying the criminal subcultures in their attempt to survive. The cultural anxiety concerning migration and social mobility in Renaissance England, especially London,

³¹⁴ Will Fisher, ‘Queer Money’, *English Literary History*, 66 (1999), pp. 1-23 (p. 1).

³¹⁵ Fennor, p. 438.

³¹⁶ Fisher, p. 1.

³¹⁷ Fisher, p. 3.

placed the financially privileged young man right at the epicentre of authors' concern. With the Renaissance underworld becoming an invaluable source of inspiration for literary writings, the high-risk group of gentlemen and their cheaters featured in many plays, diatribes and poems. However, it is one thing to learn about the urban criminal underworld through representations in narratives, in which concerns of meaning and control supersede actual experience, and another to participate in it, as Donne's narrator does.

Donne's 'prostitute boy'

John Donne's *Satire I* differs from the satires I examined earlier for it does not offer a coherent narrative concerning a possible male prostitute, as in Middleton's text, nor does it provide the reader with a plethora of references to boys and men involved in same-sex prostitution, as in Marston's poems. The satire is about two friends' experiences while they are wandering in the city, giving a vivid description of the early modern urban underworld. Various stock characters appear during their stroll, such as bawds, actors, courtiers and cony-catchers and what the narrative renders is a social commentary of the urban environment and its inhabitants. This satire is chosen not only for the colourful setting it offers and the significant figures that participate in it. Donne's narrative has become significant for studies on homoeroticism for a single reference that has been insistently quoted by critics: the 'prostitute boy' and his pairing with the 'muddy whore'.³¹⁸ However, rather than simply focusing on the boy/whore polarity, my reading will try to re-position these figures in their original textual setting. This may offer a better understanding of the discourse around male prostitution and the locales in which it materialised.

These are the two options - representation versus reality - with which we are presented when the persona initiates the narrative. The person satirised is a 'fondling motley humorist', a courtier who likes to frequent the city's notorious suburbs. The speaker, a scholar who is dedicated to studying, faces the dilemma whether to remain indoors with his 'gathering chroniclers' and 'fantastic poets' or follow his friend: 'Shall

³¹⁸ All quotes have been extracted from Albert J. Smith, *John Donne: The Complete English Poems* (London: Penguin Classics, 1971).

I leave all this constant company,/ And follow headlong, wild uncertain thee?’ (ll. 11-12). He reluctantly decides to follow him: ‘First swear by thy best love in earnest/ (If thou which lov’st all, canst love any best)/ Thou wilt not leave me in the middle street’ (ll. 13-15). The friendship between the courtier and the persona, although not sodomitic or homoerotic, implies strong bonding, alluding to a discourse of marriage and adultery: ‘For better or worse take me, or leave me:/ To take, and leave me is adultery’ (ll. 25-26). However, the courtier, who is easily misled by luxury and outward show, behaves carelessly and superficially in the narrator’s eyes. As the narrator with disappointment announces:

Oh monstrous, superstitious puritan,
Of refined manners, yet ceremonial man,
That when thou meet’st one, with inquiring eyes
Dost search, and like a needy broker prize
The silk, and gold he wears, and to that rate
So high or low, dost raise thy formal hat:
That wilt consort none, until thou have known
What lands he hath in hope, or of his own,
As though all thy companions should make thee
Jointures, and marry thy dear company. (ll. 27-36)

Eager to become acquainted with new fashions and socialise with wealthy courtiers, the narrator’s friend cares only for appearances and courtly manners. His encounters are constantly sexualised by the narrator, underlining the ways in which the physical informs and participates in the social. The conceit that follows is a juxtaposition between virtue and illicit sexual behaviour by presenting them both as naked and bare. Thus, the persona wonders:

Why shouldst thou (that dost not only approve,
But in rank itchy lust, desire, and love
The nakedness and barrenness to enjoy,
Of thy plump muddy whore, or prostitute boy)
Hate virtue, though she be naked, and bare? (ll. 37-41)

For researchers on sodomy the ‘prostitute boy’ is a prominent figure, indicating the possible existence of male prostitution in early modern England. Placed near ‘the muddy whore’, the text suggests that male sexuality was invariably directed towards both boys and women. As far as men’s sexual choice is concerned the prostitute boy is interchangeable with the female whore. It is this sexual ‘pairing’, to use Bly’s phrase,

that will present an impasse to the narrative's resolution with regard to the identity of the figure that the companion will attempt to have sex with. Dollimore's etymology of the word 'rank', in his discussion on a passage from *Othello*, is most useful here: 'rank could mean lust, swollen, smelling, corrupt, foul'.³¹⁹ The same meaning could be applied to Donne's use of 'rank: 'But in rank itchy lust, desire, and love' (line 38). All these meanings comply with the speaker's representation of his companion as lustful and always sexually aroused, prioritizing sexual immorality over virtue.

However, as a simile to the 'prostitute boy', the 'plump muddy whore' cannot be perceived as a simple correlative. For there is dirtiness and excess attributed to the whore, whereas the boy is just a prostitute, a potential insult to boyhood and manhood. There is nothing more to it. That is the boy's only pejorative quality and transgression, for the whore is imagined as chubby, loose ('plump'), repulsive, seedy and immoral ('muddy'). As far as the narrator is concerned both sexual objects are foul and appalling but seem to serve and satisfy equally well a man's desire. It is, indeed, a sexual and deviant polarity that is constantly represented in English Renaissance writings.³²⁰ As the Fool advises Lear and Edgar: 'He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath' (Act III, sc. vi, ll 18-19).³²¹

So, companion and narrator go out together and the stock characters they meet exemplify and justify the narrator's premonitions. First they come across a whore and her bastard:

But sooner may a cheap whore, that hath been
Worn by as many several men in sin,
As are black feathers, or musk-colour hose,
Name her child's right true father, 'mongst all those
(ll. 53-56)

Then, they meet a 'gulling weather spy', who encourages vanity in youth by advising on new fashions: 'By drawing forth heaven's scheme tell certainly/ What fashioned hats, or ruffs, or suits next year/ Our subtle-witted antic youths will wear' (ll. 59-61). They also encounter other gallants and courtiers, who according to the narrator are 'fools', just like his companion:

³¹⁹ Jonathan Dollimore, *Sex, Literature and Censorship* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), p. 132.

³²⁰ See for example Bredbeck, p. 34-35.

³²¹ William Shakespeare, ed. by Kenneth Muir, *The Arden Shakespeare: King Lear* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 123.

Every fine silken painted fool we meet,
 He them to him with amorous smiles allures,
 And grins, smacks, shrugs, and such an itch endures,
 As 'prentices, or school-boys which do know
 Of some gay sport abroad, yet dare not go. (ll. 72-76)

These are textual instances that have been largely neglected in studies of homoeroticism. For the 'sport abroad' that the companion does 'dare not go' suggests the practice of sodomy. The lines also suggest hesitation and fear on the companion's part to get involved with the people he encounters. He freely offers 'amorous smiles' to courtiers, as well as 'grins', 'smacks' and 'shrugs', according to his fancy. In other words, his pursuit of sexual intimacy with the people he meets comes to nothing. Either he remains unsatisfied with those he sees or he is unable to obtain whomever he likes. The comparison with the apprentices and school-boys is interesting here because it stresses the sexual nature of trafficking in the city's streets. If there is a sex-market available in the city, it is the one the narrator describes in these lines, with apprentices and school-boys constituting part of it. Note the swiftness and immediacy that is attributed to these ambiguous encounters: 'and such an itch endures', with 'itch' indicating the companion's and the courtiers' lustful desire. Yet, the narrator here does not seem to criticise the desire itself. He did that a few lines earlier while referring to the 'plump muddy whore' and the 'prostitute boy'. It is vanity and the tropes of courtly socio-sexual behaviour that he objects to as well as the immediate, shallow, unpredictable and unstable choices his friend makes: 'Than thou, when thou depart'st from me, canst show/ Whither, why, when, or with whom thou wouldst go' (ll. 63-64).

They are no obvious homoerotic feelings between the narrator and his friend. What the satire describes is the persona's disappointment at his friend's pursuit of pleasure, outward show and inconstancy. Thus, the theatrical metaphors of the 'fiddlers' (line 77), the 'politic horse' (line 80), the 'elephant' (line 81) and the 'ape' (line 81) that follow, which suggest pretence, superficiality, counterfeiting and mockery. The gentlemen in the streets, who are equated to performing animals in Elizabethan and Jacobean London, are seen as false, like his companion who is eager to associate with them. 'Or thou O elephant or ape wilt do,/ When any names the King of Spain to you' (ll. 82-83).

They then encounter various men and youths of whom the narrator strongly disapproves, constantly discouraging his companion from conversing with them. As he notices:

Now leaps he upright, jogs me, and cries, 'Do you see
Yonder well-favoured youth?' 'Which?' 'Oh, 'tis he
That dances so divinely'; 'Oh,' said I,
'Stand still, must you dance here for company?' (ll. 83-86)

And then another:

He drooped, we went, till one (which did excel
Th' Indians, in drinking his tobacco well)
Met us; they talked; I whispered, 'Let us go,
'T may be you smell him not, truly I do.' (ll. 87-90)

Yet, there are no indications in the narrative pertinent to the subject matter of their discussions. Erotic connections are constantly frustrated due to the narrator's intervention and the courtier's attempts to socialise remain unsatisfied. The complaints of adultery and inconstancy launched earlier might lead us to believe that the narrator is jealous. Yet, his earlier dilemma to stay in or go out does not suggest that. It is the speaker's inability to come to terms with his own feelings and the city's life-style: 'But how shall I be pardoned my offence/ That thus have sinned against my conscience?' (ll. 65-66).

The subject matter of this satire is not like Marston's male prostitutes, nor like Middleton's feelings towards an ambiguously gendered prostitute. It is the companion and his satyromania that Donne satirises, presenting the gallants, courtiers and cavaliers in the streets of London as no better than the cheaters, prostitute boys and female whores that frequent the city. The courtier in this satire plays a significant role in the early modern sex-market, simply because he forms it, like the street gallants do, through semiotics of dress and behaviour. When the companion contemplates on his last acquaintance with a supposed Italian or French courtier, he finds him to have the 'best conceit'. At least that is what the court 'reputes'. However, it is not wit that the companion is in search for but sexual satisfaction. The foreigner's 'conceit' is used as an excuse to finally achieve an intimate connection. The response he gets is a derogatory comment:

Saying, 'Him whom I last left, all repute
 For his device, in handsoming a suit,
 To judge of lace, pink, panes, print, cut, and pleat
 Of all the Court, to have the best conceit'.
 'Our dull comedians want him, let him go;

...

... he doth seem to be
 Perfect French, and Italian'; I replied,
 'So is the pox'; he answered not ... (ll. 95-99 and 102-104)

The response features as an invective against foreign manners imported in England, similar to the 'gay sport' from abroad mentioned earlier. The French or Italian courtier would be better for 'dull comedians' thus, together with a discourse of disease that surrounds foreign nationality and sexual activity, the theatrical institution is deprecated as well, exposing actors as mere prostitutes and transmitters of the pox.

Greene's *The defence of conny catching* (1592) presents a similarly deprecating tone in his description of gentlemen-cheaters in London who are:

[...] attyred in their apparel, eyther alla mode de Fraunce, [...] as if hee could with his head cosmographise the world in a moment, or else Allespanyole [...] his beard squared with such Art, [...] or else nickt off with the Italian cut, as if he ment to professe one faith with the vpper lippe, and an other with his nether lippe, [...] This Gentleman forsooth, hanteth Tabling houses, Tauerns, and such places, where yong nouices resort, & can fit his humor to all companies, and openly shadoweth his disguise with the name of a Traueller, so that he wil haue a superficiall insight into certaine phrases of euerie language, and pronounce them in such a grace, as if almost hee were that Countryman borne: [...] and to set the young ge[n]tlemans teeth an edge, he wil make long tale of La Strado Courtizano, wher the beautiful Curtizans dwel.³²²

These gentlemen will be later called 'Comaedians' and 'Cameleon like' in Greene's account of gentlemen-cheaters. Their association with prostitutes indicates that they may be panders but in fact, Greene suggests, they are not. Like Marston's Luxurio, their tales are pornographic and titillating. Their stories aim to arouse the young men – 'set the young gentlemens teeth an edge' – by narrating tales that involve prostitutes. They are just deceiving young men by making them spend their fortunes.

³²² Robert Greene, *The defence of conny catching* (1592)
 <http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99840788> [accessed 22 May 2007].

The narrator's companion does not give up: '[. . .] he answered not, but spied/ More men of sort, of parts, and qualities;' (ll. 104-105). Sexual preference here is instructed through observation of class ('sort'), clothes ('parts') and manners, i.e. 'conceit' ('qualities'). Note how spying is linked with the practice of cruising, suggesting possibly a desire that needs to remain secret. Although the companion's interest seems exclusively homoerotic the narrative's closure does not reveal the gender of the 'love' he finds: 'At last his love he in a window spies,/ And like light dew exhaled, he flings from me/ Violently ravished to his lechery' (ll. 106-108).

Smith, the editor of Penguin Classics, in his note assumes, in his attempt to explain the word 'command', that his love refers to a woman: '*command*] have her at his disposal.'³²³ If that is the case, the opening in line 106, 'At last' does not justify all previous attempts the courtier made to associate with men. There might be two options here if 'his love' refers to a woman. The first option is that since male sexual desire is indifferent concerning boys and women, it can easily shift from a male object of desire to a female one. The second option is that the courtier might not have been looking for sexual encounters with men after all but was only eager to rub shoulders with the elite, or what he thinks belongs to the elite and fashionable. This is a valid concern within the early modern English context of social mobility and aggrandizement but it does not justify the sexualisation of the gentlemen they meet in the streets; the 'amorous smiles' the companion offers; his 'prostitute boy's' 'nakedness' that he enjoys; the youth that dances 'divinely'; and the 'many-coloured peacock' who spies on them, like the companion's espionage of 'men of sorts, of parts, and qualities'. I take this 'many-coloured peacock' to be a projection, or mirror image, of the companion himself. What the companion does is what other men do as well. The issue of whether the companion pursues a male or female prostitute remains unresolved. 'His love' could be, after all, either a 'plump muddy whore' or a 'prostitute boy'. 'Ravished' in line 108 does not suggest the courtier's preferred sexual role but the ways in which representation and spectacle affect the recipient.³²⁴

The narration gives no explanation for the quarrel that follows and why the courtier has been turned out of doors. In his ambiguous finishing lines the persona states:

³²³ Smith, p. 474.

³²⁴ The word 'ravish' has been used in a similar sense by Fennor and Middleton.

Many were there, he could command no more;
 He quarrelled, fought, bled; and turned out of door
 Directly came to me hanging the head,
 And constantly a while must keep his bed. (ll. 109-112)

The place, according to the persona, is crowded, which could indicate that this place is actually a brothel, a tavern that hosted prostitutes or simply a tavern. The satire gives no satisfactory answer. Yet, its closure interestingly intensifies the sexual frustration the narrator's companion experiences. 'Hanging the head' indicates not only the courtier's droopingness, disappointment or even physical pain, but is a comment on the loss of his sexual appetite, with the words 'hanging' alluding to 'hanger', meaning penis, and 'head' to stand for the companion's phallus.

The question that arises, alongside with the indecisiveness of the satire's closure, is the option of the companion's 'love' standing for a boy or a woman prostitute. Earlier readings of this satire convinced me that the closing lines referred to a female prostitute because the rashness that characterises the companion's attempt to get involved with that figure, presents this figure as easily accessible. Female prostitutes were commonly known to pose in windows looking for potential clients, as Bly illustrates by quoting John Harris' sermon, written in 1628.³²⁵ Once again, 'desirous women' are included in the list of 'sodomes sinnes':

Indeed, *Peccatum nesandum*, that sin not fit to be named, the high hand of God hath kept out of our Countrey, and euer may it remaine a stranger . . . [but] do not women sit blowzing in their windowes, looking for their paramours, as the mother of Sisera did for her sonne?³²⁶

Yet, I suggest that it could equally refer to a male prostitute because the satire's preoccupation with the courtier's desire to socialise with men during his walk in the city cannot be overlooked. He 'grins, smacks, shrugs, and such an itch endures' in line 74, and all words chosen here indicate desire ('itch') towards a male. The apprentices and school-boys in line 75 that the companion resembles are all figures that have been associated with same-sex practice in narratives during the early modern era. Yet, literary criticism will not be persuaded of the choice of a male prostitute in the narrative's closure. The 'prostitute boy' is the single utterance and only indication of

³²⁵ Bly, p. 14.

³²⁶ Quoted in Bly, p. 14. Bly's italics.

homoerotic practice or sodomy that critics find in this satire, without taking into account the context through which this rare textual instance has been generated in the first place. If we do stick with the option of a 'prostitute boy', we may be accused of enforcing a reading that the text simply cannot support and is ambiguous about, whereas we are to be content with editions - like Smith's - that adopt the option of the female figure - and that would definitely mean a whore - as the only one available.

This has been an examination of the figure of the male prostitute as it has been portrayed in Marston's, Middleton's and Donne's satires. The reason I have insisted on close readings of the satires is because references to Marston, Middleton and Donne made by modern criticism have not been very enlightening concerning the ways homoeroticism is addressed. This is due to the non-acknowledgement of the whole frame of prostitution through which these figures are envisaged. In some instances where indeterminacy prevails apropos gender or sex choice, and even heteroerotic or homoerotic desire, the readings remain silent. The 'male stew' of Marston, the 'prostitute boy' of Donne and the 'black chequered Hermaphrodite' of Middleton feature as examples of same-sex practice in most studies of Renaissance English sodomy. However, they have not been analysed extensively so that we can understand how these narratives fit within a wider discourse on sodomy, and also to what extent they can contribute to perceptions of same-sex practice.

For example, the settings of the satires I have examined are important since they all narrate incidences or semi-plots that take place out in the streets of early modern London. As with issues of criminality, disease and female whoredom, these are literary texts through which a researcher can gain knowledge of the vocabulary, setting and socio-economic life of Renaissance London with regard to male prostitution. It is difficult to decipher a (literary) construction of a homoerotic subculture in early modern England. Yet, as far as commercial prostitution is concerned, there was a distinct branch of sex-workers that were available for people who desired or preferred same-sex activity. The satires and a few of the narratives we have seen, consciously or unconsciously, sketch out the topography of male prostitution, some of the ways in which a male prostitute was displayed, and the language through which it was talked about.

The narratives discussed here rely heavily on classical literary texts. The textual examples of Martial and Juvenal, as well as European Renaissance narratives on male prostitution, need to be examined closely in order to trace the origins of the male

prostitute as a literary figure. Through them the early modern satires revisit classical themes, like the figure of Ganymede and the hermaphrodite, but in a distinctive early modern English sense and with specific topical allusions to London. Male prostitution was part of a wider expression regarding same-sex activity: that of adultery and whoredom, two words that in early modern England were interchangeable. The satiric figures that we have been looking at are not referred to as sodomites. Foremost, they are insinuated as prostitutes thus aligning them with female sex-workers, the gender traditionally associated with whoredom.

Chapter 3: The actor as a prostitute

Theatre historiography and male prostitution

No historical records of actual players and boy actors engaging in same-sex prostitution during the early modern era have so far been found. The only evidence that has emerged takes the form of accusations against players, portrayed as sodomites, participating in same-sex activities. These accusations, primarily instigated by theatre polemicists, have largely contributed to and directed academic discourse to literary texts where homoerotic desire and activity can be securely witnessed. These texts form a cornerstone for academic accounts of male homoeroticism.

For a student of homoeroticism in Renaissance England, theatrical and anti-theatrical discourses constitute the basis on which any notion or implication of homoerotic practice and expression can be constructed. These are the primary sources on which Bray founded crucial arguments about homoeroticism in his book *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*. Other researchers soon followed his examination of male same-sex expression during the early modern era and yet, nobody apart from Bray has talked explicitly about male prostitution. He argues:

Another – but more specialised – form of prostitution existed in connection with the London playhouses. This is not surprising. The Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre acquired a reputation for homosexuality, as Philip Stubbes graphically claims.³²⁷

Two words stand for male prostitutes in the following paragraph: ‘sodomite’ and ‘ingle’. His argument relies on representations of ingles and sodomites in theatrical

³²⁷ Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 54.

narratives. Within the actual and textual theatrical space Bray discovers the homosexual prostitute:

It was also a claim made by Edward Guilpin in similar terms in *Skialetheia*, which describes a sodomite as someone ‘who is at every play and every night sups with his ingles’; and it is repeated in Michael Drayton’s *The Moone-Calfe*, where the theatres are denounced as one of the haunts of the sodomite. Given the prevalence of homosexuality in the theatrical milieu and the importance of prostitution in London generally, it is understandable that homosexual prostitution should have taken root in a distinctive way in the theatres. [. . .] it seems that at times an actor’s relationship with his patron could have overtones of homosexuality and prostitution . . .³²⁸

Another of his examples draws on a reference from Charles I’s court where:

[. . .] the fools and bawds, mimics and catamites of the former court grew out of fashion and the nobility and courtiers, who did not quite abandon their debaucheries, yet so revered the king as to retire into corners to practice them.³²⁹

For Bray, the correlation between the theatre and prostitution is obvious: ‘Fools and bawds, mimics and catamites’ – the expression is difficult to construe, but it clearly has overtones of the theatre and of prostitution.³³⁰ In addition to this, Bray claims:

As regards prostitution, the parallel between ‘bawds’ and ‘catamites’ suggests that ‘catamites’ is being used with the same connotation as in John Florio’s dictionary. And there is evidence that it was not only in the relations of actors and their patrons in the court circles that homosexuality was involved; the actors had distinctions in status of their own; some of them indeed were only boys.³³¹

‘Distinction in status’ and boyhood: boy actors seem to become participants in homosexual prostitution by default. This is an issue that will be addressed later concerning boyhood and whoredom. Bray then, uses a reference from Ben Jonson’s *Poetaster*, often quoted in academic accounts on homosexuality: ‘What shall I have my son a stager now, an ingles for players?’³³² In fact, in most studies of Renaissance

³²⁸ Bray, pp. 54-55.

³²⁹ Quoted in Bray, p. 55.

³³⁰ Bray, p. 55.

³³¹ Bray, p. 55.

³³² Quoted in Bray, p. 55.

homoeroticism, critics have been constantly extracting similar lines and phrases from plays where theatre and prostitution almost certainly interrelate. This thesis will not represent and reiterate the overabundance of textual evidence apropos theatrical prostitution. Critics like Alan Bray, Mario DiGangi and Mary Bly, have successfully done this in their studies. My main interest here is to expose and assess the textual and conceptual difficulties concerning the homoerotic vocabulary available and its multiple connections with other social and sexual schemata.

For example, Bray sums up his argument about theatre and prostitution by drawing an analogy with the male prostitute in the household, ‘a domestic prostitute’,³³³ a facet of the sex-trade we will examine later on with regard to servants. He suggests:

The parallel with the homosexuality of the household is striking – both between master and servants and between servants of different status. Changed and elaborated though it was, there is still discernible here – as in other forms of homosexuality in the society of the time – the powerful influence of a basic model: the patriarchal household of master and mistress, servants and children.³³⁴

This is an interesting moment in *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, because Bray encapsulates different social types and relationships within the phrase ‘male prostitution’. Friend and favourite, master and apprentice, patron and player, master and servant, feature in these two pages as instances of, or parallels to, male whores. Crucially, what is missing from Bray’s short account of male prostitution is the sex-market, a sexual milieu that created the space for male prostitutes to practice their trade. Was there a distinct same-sex market? Were there any readily available customers in the theatre who were after male prostitutes?

Bray also summarises the current thesis’ problems surrounding male prostitution as a distinctive expression of same-sex practice. Where can we draw the line for the male whore as a variant of homosexual expression? Could all of the above types of people involved in socio-sexual relations have been actively engaging in the sex-trade?

Take any study of sodomy and/or homoeroticism and/or male friendships and/or effeminacy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and you will find the same social relationships and types being represented and evoked through a similar vocabulary (‘ingle’, ‘catamite’, ‘cynedian’) but with one difference: they are not referred to as male

³³³ Bray, p. 54.

³³⁴ Bray, p. 55.

prostitutes. It is this interchangeable usage of early modern vocabulary surrounding homoerotic desire and practice which presents us with significant problems concerning classification and attempts to trace variations of (homo)sexual expression.

In this part of the study I address issues of acting and prostitution, attempting to find possible ways in which the theatre became a notorious locale for male prostitutes. The premise of this chapter is that actors, and especially boy actors, participated actively as bawds and prostitutes in the sex-market thus, rendering theatrical space, both on- and off-stage, as a topos where the sexual trade could be observed and used. However, there is a caveat to this assumption.

Theatre historians can easily undermine such a proposition simply because there is no historical evidence. Studies of Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre companies have closely followed, as far as they could, the lives of some players and apprentices, and no historical facts have been found to support such a claim. In fact, no sexual behaviour has ever been recorded by historians of the Renaissance English theatre apart from their contention that female prostitutes frequented the playhouses. While they would recognise theatrical space as a locale that facilitated heteronormative contacts, homosexuality and sodomy rarely feature in their studies, at least as a historical fact. Although charges of sodomy and prostitution are represented in polemical writings against theatrical practice, anti-theatrical discourse is dismissed as a puritan hyperbole that sought to threaten and frighten theatre audiences. Despite the fact that most theatre studies evoke and allude to the plays themselves in order to illustrate their arguments concerning theatrical management, organisation and practice, even with regard to audiences' tastes, in respect of sexual behaviour and especially homoeroticism, their comments are laconic. Popular attitudes towards acting and players are given voice, for example, players being seen as rogues, vagabonds and, for others, as great patrons and celebrity stars,³³⁵ but not as sodomites. Only familial bonds are highlighted, together with the father/child relations that some players and their apprentices developed during

³³⁵ See for example Susan P. Cerasano, 'Edward Alleyn, the new model actor, and the rise of the celebrity in the 1590's', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 18 (2005), 47-58 <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R03653663:0> [accessed 18 January 2008] and also Susan P. Cerasano, 'The Patronage Network of Philip Henslowe and Edward Alleyn', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 13 (2000), 82-92 <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R01590082:0> [accessed 18 January 2008].

the period of the apprentices' service. As Baldwin suggests: 'Indeed, the model apprentice of story was supposed to marry his master's daughter or widow, whichever fate made first available, and to carry on the business.'³³⁶ In other instances, the father and child relation is evoked: 'Being master and apprentice was not so different from being father and son.'³³⁷ Interestingly, the father/child relation is the same patriarchal model that Bray reads in player/apprentice affiliation, the only difference being that it has sexual overtones.

I am not trying to read sodomy and/or homoeroticism into these affectionate relationships that possibly had developed, although the fact that children were impressed as singers and actors does make it difficult to acknowledge such relations as loving or caring. My contention is that anti-theatrical discourse which gave voice to anxieties around same-sex encounters were not solely based on fantasy or fictitious accounts of sexual acts between men. As Orgel has noted:

It is a commonplace to observe that the stage in Shakespeare's time was an exclusively male preserve, but theatrical historians tend to leave the matter there, as if the fact merely constituted a practical arrangement and had no implications beyond its utility in a number of disguise plots. But it has very broad implications, which are both cultural and specifically sexual . . .³³⁸

Therefore, I would like to assess the limits posed by histories of Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre with regard to any speculations around acting and its association with prostitution. A broader study of theatrical male prostitution should include the multiple references that literary critics have already exposed. Yet, theatre historiography needs to be scrutinised as well, for it has significantly channelled and shaped literary criticism. Since, for Orgel, 'theatre historians leave the matter there', it is these 'broad implications' that I seek to examine.

The ambivalent status of the early modern players and apprentices has been studied and analysed quite extensively by theatre historians. Characterised primarily as 'befriended parasites',³³⁹ the Renaissance player could enjoy the privileges a patron

³³⁶ Thomas W. Baldwin, *The Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1961), p. 148.

³³⁷ Baldwin, p. 154.

³³⁸ Stephen Orgel, 'Nobody's Perfect: Or Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Women', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 88.1 (Winter 1989), 7-29 (p. 7).

³³⁹ Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage: 1574-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 64.

offered as a favourite. It was this system of patronage that gave rise to allegations against actors which sought to associate them with rogues, ‘vagabonds and motleys’.³⁴⁰ Andrew Gurr examines such accusations by referring to the Lord Chamberlain, Lord Hunsdon, who prevented his own players from moving into Blackfriars theatre in 1596 due to complaints instigated by the residents of the area.³⁴¹ Yet, the boys’ popularity, as well as the popularity of professional players, was unprecedented. Thomas Platter’s example shows how popular the players were by referring to a ‘‘tavern visited by players daily’ as a London attraction’.³⁴²

Less flattering accounts of the players and managers are also available. The kidnapping of Field by Evans, Robinson and Gyles, reported by Clifton in 1601, and also Thomas Clifton’s kidnap and impressment, indicate the importance theatre managers gave to the recruitment of boys.³⁴³ Jonson was definitely ‘aware of the sexual exploitation of children’ as Barbour notes, by referring to Jonson’s attack on John Owen, a schoolmaster.³⁴⁴ ‘Jonson even rescued two boys of the Chapel’, Pavy and Field.³⁴⁵ The aforementioned kidnaps do not necessarily indicate that sexual abuse or exploitation was involved in these cases. Field for example, continued as a successful player and manager even after the end of his apprenticeship. Certainly, his success does not confirm that he was sexually abused. We simply cannot know. There might have been other cases of impressments and kidnaps, which did involve sexual abuse, that have not come to light. But these are only speculations.

Yet, whereas most theatre historians mention associations of sexual exploitation and sodomy in relation to the boy actors, few of them take these charges seriously. Regarding anti-theatrical discourse Meredith Skura suggests that these accusations are ‘exaggerations’.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁰ Cocke quoted in Gurr, p. 62.

³⁴¹ See Gurr, p. 64.

³⁴² Meredith A. Skura, *Shakespeare, the Actor and the Purposes of Playing* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 34.

³⁴³ Baldwin, p. 33-34. See also Mary Bly, *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queens on the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 70.

³⁴⁴ Richmond Barbour, ‘‘When I Acted Young Antinous’: Boy Actors and the Erotics of Jonsonian Theater’, *PMLA*, 110.5 (1995), 1016-1022 <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0030-8129%28199510%29110%3A5%3C1006%3A%22IAYAB%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Q>> [accessed 26 April 2007] (p. 1013).

³⁴⁵ Barbour, p. 1013.

³⁴⁶ Skura, p. 36-37.

To a large degree these attacks tell us more about the attackers than about the players. Something seems to be going on in the stubbornly contradictory image of the wealthy penny-grubbing player, as if writers felt that the player was getting away with something he had no right to, whether it was money, sexual license, or social climbing. Or, perhaps more than any particular transgression, it was a matter of what we would now call 'attitude'.³⁴⁷

When Skura refers to 'homoerotic potential' in plays, she contends that these allegations were 'readily available for exploitation'.³⁴⁸ She also claims that:

We will almost certainly never know whether the accusations of sexual impropriety are true or, if they are, what meaning they would have had. But even if they were all false, the important fact is that players were so widely taken to be promiscuous that they would have had to live in the shadow of social stigma. [. . .] whether or not any given player transgressed, he had to live with that image.³⁴⁹

In this part of her study, Skura discusses issues of cross-dressing and boy actors as ingles. Her suggestion about social stigma and acting is significant in the ways in which boy actors were thought and talked about by audiences. However, there is an implicit dismissal of suggestions of any sort of sexual exploitation by players, especially homosexual ('sexual impropriety'), due to her sole focus on the stigmatisation of boy actors.

Another instance of minimising the importance of these charges is Gurr, in his aforementioned study *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, who shifts our attention from sexual exploitation of boy players to accusations concerning bad performance practice: 'Through the seventeenth century exaggeration was the only charge commonly flung at the players.'³⁵⁰ As far as the audience is concerned, Gurr claims that: 'Gosson took his description of Elizabethan audiences from Ovid's accounts of Roman audiences in the *Amores*'.³⁵¹ One wonders if there is any truth in Gosson's narrative in relation to actors and audiences.

In another study, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, Gurr, like Skura, addresses the issue of social stigmatisation by referring to the condemnation of boy

³⁴⁷ Skura, p. 40.

³⁴⁸ Skura, p. 44-45.

³⁴⁹ Skura, p. 45.

³⁵⁰ Gurr, p. 80.

³⁵¹ Gurr, p. 149-150.

actors as ‘ingles’ and ‘catamites’.³⁵² These charges feature in his wider argument about counterfeiting and acting, and Gurr abstains from attributing any homoerotic element to relations among players and apprentices. The sexual language and puns surrounding prostitution and acting are overlooked, whereas in other instances the plays are evoked selectively in order to validate arguments on theatrical organisation and meta-theatrical comments regarding levels of awareness. Gurr is not alone in this. Baldwin, Bentley, Skura and Mann, just to name a few historians, carefully avoid comments on homosexuality, theatre and pederasty.³⁵³

Yet, there is an agreement in these studies, initiated by Baldwin, that, ‘the play fitted to the company and not the company to the play’³⁵⁴ and therefore, the ‘characteristics of the role’, both age and physicality, ‘should be those of the actor rather than an ideal that the playwright had in mind’.³⁵⁵ Had literary analysis been used with regard to representations and meta-theatrical comments of sexual behaviour on stage, it would have been interesting to review examples of sexual and especially homoerotic tension in the light of this statement.

This is also the premise that runs throughout David Mann’s study of *The Elizabethan Player*. His book examines ‘a series of extracts from play-texts which feature players as characters for the information they provide about the nature of Elizabethan performance practice’. He then claims:

Too much attention to the text, in attempting to wrest from it some absolute, timeless, objective ‘meaning’, so often the purpose to which it is now put, can distort our view of its place in the performance. Although the scripts are virtually all we have to go on, we must learn to look through and beyond them to the centre of the activity itself, to which they give testimony only obliquely but which gives them their quality and their *raison d’être*.³⁵⁶

³⁵² Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

³⁵³ Gerald E. Bentley, *The Profession of Player in Shakespeare’s Time* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984) and David Mann, *The Elizabethan Player: Contemporary stage representation* (London: Routledge, 1991).

³⁵⁴ Baldwin, p. 196.

³⁵⁵ Baldwin, p. 227-228.

³⁵⁶ Mann, p. 1. Mann’s italics.

By prioritising the relationship of ‘actors-audience’ rather than ‘characters-audience’, Mann successfully illustrates ‘the rigour of actual performance conditions’ in Renaissance theatre.³⁵⁷ For as he notes:

[i]t is very evident in the preparations for these inner plays, when the mechanics of a performance are laid out before us, how far the final product is the result of the physical processes that have led up to it, and in particular the organization and personnel of the troupe.³⁵⁸

Later he asserts that ‘[t]he composition, organisation, and reception of a troupe is therefore of more than incidental concern in any review of what can be learned from the evidence of the plays’.³⁵⁹ This is an exciting account concerning the conditions of performance in Renaissance England. Highly informed by theatre historiography, the literary texts allow a space through which historical evidence can be viewed from another angle, the fictitious. It is a quite radical move for theatre historians of Renaissance drama. Yet, the text is more than fiction. It offers a range of possible interpretations, which are equally valid or at least debatable, in the light of historical evidence. The text gives us an access point to cultural practices, which could be lost through strictly historio-graphical methods. Hence, Mann’s belief that ‘the more we understand the player, the more we shall understand the plays’.³⁶⁰

When it comes to sodomy and male prostitution, Mann mainly refers to the war of the theatres and anti-theatrical discourse. In his glossary of *Poetaster* he defines ‘engles’ as ‘male prostitutes’,³⁶¹ but for the homoerotic elements, which are ubiquitous in some plays, Mann claims:

The period is too far away to be able to come to any final judgements about the prevalence of homosexuality in this phenomenon. The opponents of the stage were always ready to find it, with a hatred that suggests some measure of their own conscious vulnerability. On the other hand, an aesthetic response to physical beauty could be said to complement the grace of the movements and the harmony of the sounds, and relate to a much larger cultural phenomenon stretching back to the Middle Ages in which innocence and purity were expressed through androgynous representations of angels and the Virgin Mary.³⁶²

³⁵⁷ Mann, p. 3.

³⁵⁸ Mann, p. 5.

³⁵⁹ Mann, p. 6.

³⁶⁰ Mann, p. 13.

³⁶¹ Mann, p. 127.

³⁶² Mann, p. 115.

If anyone, it is the playwright who ‘prostitutes his talents on writing’,³⁶³ not the player, and that is of course on the metaphorical level. With regard to Stubbes’ belief that players and apprentices were ‘playing the Sodomites’, Mann contends that this is ‘another matter’.³⁶⁴

Within the wider argument concerning the existence of homosexuality, the study directs us to see the Elizabethan transvestite stage as the early modern equivalent of a drag show. Interestingly Mann suggests:

On occasion these representations must have been doubly immodest because played by male performers, who could be more shamelessly explicit, and who were themselves, through what Prynne described as ‘meretricious, effeminate lust-provoking fashions of . . . apparel’, the means of further sexual stimulation. The Victorian view, retailed in our own century by Granville-Barker, that the boys simpered modestly on-stage, and that the sexual attractiveness of the characters was not discussed until they had left, not only ignores a lot of explicit stage directions and the performance implications of the texts, but also much of the potential of the performance situation, as contemporary drag acts show, albeit they may seem to us in dubious taste.³⁶⁵

Whether some of today’s drag shows might seem in dubious taste or not, it is not clear if Mann is referring to the act of dressing as a drag queen or the actual content of a drag act. That is in case we want to see a direct evolution from the Elizabethan apprentice female impersonator to the modern performer in drag. However, I cannot agree with the equating of the Elizabethan boy actor to the modern drag performer. There are important differences. Possibly, the word ‘transvestit’, which appeared in the German language in the 1920’s, denoting the pleasure of dressing just for the sake of it, might still be confusing in a discussion of cross-dressing. Cross-dressing was not necessarily employed just for the pleasure of it, at least not for an apprentice whose job was to dress as a woman on stage. There is no deceit charged to the modern transvestite, whereas Middleton reminds us, like the anti-theatricalists, that cross-dressing was closer to what we would call ‘transgender’, which, to an early modern eye, would have had the power of deceit. This might explain Bentley’s claim of the credibility of the female

³⁶³ Mann, p. 128.

³⁶⁴ Mann, p. 200.

³⁶⁵ Mann, p. 200.

impersonations the boy would act out.³⁶⁶ For certainly, there were cross-dressers off-stage and in the streets of London, but we do not actually know the conditions surrounding their transgression.

For example, Robert Robinson, an on- and off-stage cross-dresser, seemed to have enjoyed dressing as a woman, according to Skura and Bentley, who both refer particularly to Jonson's play *Devil is an Ass*.³⁶⁷ Some of these apprentices possibly did enjoy cross-dressing and some of them possibly did not. Another interesting and bewildering reference in Baldwin involves Nicholas Tooley, who is supposed to have had a favourite role as a female impersonator, the 'garrulous nurse' in *Romeo and Juliet*.³⁶⁸ Does this mean that Tooley enjoyed cross-dressing or the actual character of this play?

The interesting issue surrounding speculations on the cross-dressed boy apprentice in the narratives of theatre histories is that first of all the boy actor renders womanhood persuasively. The boy is the perfect substitute for a woman, or the best choice one can have in all-male performances. Secondly, the male dominance of the stage was a matter of custom. As Barbour puts it: 'In any case, male possession of the stage appears to have been a matter of custom, not of statute.'³⁶⁹ Similarly, Mann argues:

Whatever else it was, all-male performance was an accepted convention of long standing, and such charges are not borne out by the general cultural estimation in which plays were then held.³⁷⁰

Last but not least, whenever cross-dressing and transvestism is addressed, the sodomite appears inseparable from the female impersonator. In other words, sodomy features as the actor's second nature. When Mann claims that it is 'another matter' as to whether sodomy took place between actors and apprentices, he appears to differentiate between a sexual act, which is obviously not part of his study, and the pleasure/delight that a cross-dressed individual might get just in the act of cross-dressing. Sexual intercourse is not what is at stake here. It is the act of cross-dressing per se. Yet, such a differentiation, if that is what Mann tries to make between sexual activity and

³⁶⁶ See Bentley, p. 115.

³⁶⁷ Skura, p. 34 and Bentley, pp. 115-116.

³⁶⁸ Baldwin, p. 247.

³⁶⁹ Barbour, p. 1007.

³⁷⁰ Mann, p. 200.

transvestism, did not seem to be conspicuous in Renaissance culture. Does this mean that the boy actors who dressed as women were expected to commit sodomy, compared to their masters, who were playing men's parts? It did for anti-theatricalists. It did not, one might argue, for the playwrights themselves, if we take into account the apologies written by playwrights in their attempt to defend theatrical representation.

However, if there is an abundance of nouns that refer to same-sex acts, and especially male prostitution, upon which the playwrights constantly capitalised, then there must have been something intrinsic that associated sexual activity and cross-dressing, verging on a trans-gender identity, for the early modern spectator. For cross-dressing seems to be a direct threat in some comedies, that can lead to potential same-sex marriages and intercourse (i.e. Jonson's *Epicoene*). In addition, if these sexual nouns explicitly refer to male prostitute practice, whether presented through notions of favouritism or servitude, there appears to be no other way of thinking of homoerotic desire and practice but through whoredom.

What is significant is that theatre historians do not recognise how far the theatrical conditions facilitated homoerotic expression – and I would even argue the birth of various homoerotic expressions of modern English society. Similarly, they fail to account for the complete misogyny that was apparent on the English Renaissance stage and the misogyny that was specifically directed to female spectators. Whether such homoerotic and misogynistic cultural instances pleased or appalled spectators 'remains obscure', as Sinfield notes.³⁷¹ That is because '[i]t is axiomatic in cultural materialism that no text can control the terms of its reception'.³⁷²

By 'text' I take it that Sinfield could easily be referring to visual images as much as to written language. These could not only be already textualised images in language, but actual, authentic icons that language seeks to contain within the text. The visual image here is produced and reproduced again and again, and there is no way of knowing, despite the linguistic attempt to control it, how it will be received, and in turn reproduced again. There may be no meaning behind it. While the boy actor persistently upsets normative perceptions of gender representation, (the boy that performs the girl/woman and in return pretends to be a boy, only in the end to revert back to a fictitious womanhood – there being a plethora of plays conforming to this formula), we

³⁷¹ Alan Sinfield, *Shakespeare, Authority, Sexuality: Unfinished Business in Cultural Materialism* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), p. 121.

³⁷² Sinfield, *Unfinished Business*, p. 121.

might choose as spectators to lose sight of the boy's meaning. He is indeed, a 'Proteus' and a 'chameleon' changing shapes constantly, creating and directing different possibilities of erotic stimulation for an audience.³⁷³ Imagine the multiple levels of awareness that could have been available to Robert Robinson if it is true that he preferred to cross-dress off- and on-stage.

Could this have been the case for anti-theatrical discourse? Possibly, for as literary critics openly certify, but theatre historians deny, the social stigmatisation of cross-dressing sought to erase boyhood from boy actors, even their identity. According to anti-theatrical discourse once you have cross-dressed you become a woman. Not only that, but as a boy actress on stage you could stir men's passion and desire for women, through lascivious and lewd display, presenting yourself as a potential sexual object. In some cases, e.g. Gosson and Stubbes, the boy transvestite actress is what men might desire. As a boy actor/actress on stage women might get ideas of how to behave loose and disorderly, possibly as prostitutes. Furthermore, female spectators might be attracted to you, and not solely as a boy, but as a cross-dressed boy. Therefore, according to anti-theatricalists, there is no way that these texts and images can control 'the terms of [their] reception'.³⁷⁴ That is of course, if you believe in the premises of anti-theatrical discourse.

'Markets of wantonness': theatres as brothels

Players and apprentices were indifferent concerning the attacks on the popular stage. This is what Mann claims:

The most obvious reason why there was no sustained rebuttal of the preachers' condemnation during the earlier part of the period must have been that it was not thought necessary. The players continued to perform, to be popular, and to make money. Much of the hysteria evident in the attacks comes from frustration at their failure to influence the players' noble and royal patrons.³⁷⁵

³⁷³ See Jonas A. Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (California: University of California Press, 1981).

³⁷⁴ Sinfield, *Unfinished Business*, p. 121.

³⁷⁵ Mann, p. 188.

The support from patrons and the crown proved efficient enough to protect the Renaissance dramatic spectacle from religious condemnations. Yet, literary critics have argued convincingly about the effects of anti-theatrical discourse on drama, and the ways in which theatrical spectacle and language used such a discourse to suit its own ends. Either as a counter-attack or as a satire, the play-script produced its own reaction towards deceit and artificiality. Sexual scandals continued to be represented on stage, as long as the crown and authorities were not implicated. The theatrical management off-stage, players, apprentices and audiences, attracted an equal share of hostility from City authorities and the Puritans. A common attack was the trafficking of prostitutes and vagabonds in the theatre, together with the players' association with whoredom, either as sexual partners or as pandars.

In his article 'Base Trade: Theatre as Prostitution' Joseph Lenz argues successfully about the interconnections between the theatrical institution and prostitution. Largely drawing his arguments from anti-theatrical discourse, using the same motif as Ann Cook and Wallace Shugg in probably the first articles written on prostitution and Renaissance drama, Lenz renders the theatrical space (both on- and off-stage) more or less a brothel.³⁷⁶ Three issues direct his discussion of theatre as prostitution.

First of all, Lenz analyses the ways in which the audience, 'with prostitute-seeking eyes', 'saw everything in relation to the properties they knew prostitutes to possess'.³⁷⁷ Secondly, he investigates the properties that the brothels and theatres shared, together with Puritan attacks on the stage, and thirdly, he considers the possible ways in which 'playwrights and players saw themselves'.³⁷⁸ With regard to prostitution Lenz, by following Orgel and others,³⁷⁹ certifies that:

the stage not only provides an occasion for female prostitutes to lure clients, it also provides a space for male prostitutes – the effeminate,

³⁷⁶ See Joseph Lenz, 'Base Trade: Theater as Prostitution', *English Literary History*, 60.4 (1993), 833-855 <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0013-8304%28199324%2960%3A4%3C833%3ABTTAP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-K>> [accessed 27 December 2005], Ann J. Cook, '“Bargaines of Incontinencie”: Bawdy Behaviour in the Playhouses', *Shakespeare Survey*, 10 (1977), 271-290 and Wallace Shugg, 'Prostitution in Shakespeare's London', *Shakespeare Survey*, 10 (1977), 291-313.

³⁷⁷ Lenz, p. 835.

³⁷⁸ Lenz, p. 835.

³⁷⁹ See Orgel, 'Nobody's Perfect', pp. 7-29.

cross-dressed actors themselves – to inveigle (male) children into ‘privy and unmeet contracts’ and imprint wounds of love.³⁸⁰

Here, it is the actor and not the male spectator that is associated with male prostitution. He further claims, by examining Castiglione’s and Northbrooke’s texts, that:

the means by which these entertainments are received – through the eyes – likewise becomes implicated in a dangerous exchange. [. . .] The theatre is seen through prostitution seeking eyes because the eyes, quite naturally and reflexively, seek prostitution. That is, they are attracted by, submit to, and enjoy visual stimulation.³⁸¹

Looking closely at anti-theatrical primary sources, we can notice that, even more importantly than sodomy, prostitution is obsessively addressed with reference to actors, audiences and language. Take for example Rainolds’ treatise *Overthrow of Stage-Playes* in 1599. He is extracting the term ‘dog’ from Deuteronomy to refer to male whores, in his attempt to attack the plays that staged transvestism. He claims that:

hee, who condemnth the female hoore and male, and, detesting speciallie the male by terming him a *dogge*, . . . might well control likewise the meanes and occasions whereby men are transformed into dogges.³⁸²

Williams defines ‘dog’ as ‘sodomite’ in his dictionary and not as a male whore. Yet, the early modern player, with his unique ability to represent reality, becomes a type of mentor for both men and women regarding prostitute behaviour. In 1613 William Turner wrote:

That’s the fat foole of the Curtin,
and the leane foole of the Bull:
Since Shanke did leave to sing his rimes,
he is counted but a gull.
The players of the Banke side,
the round Globe and the Swan,
Will teach you idle trickes of love,
but the Bull will play the man.³⁸³

³⁸⁰ Lenz, p. 839.

³⁸¹ Lenz, p. 840-841.

³⁸² Quoted in Gordon Williams, *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature* (London: The Athlone Press, 1994), p. 403. Williams’ italics.

³⁸³ Quoted in Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*, p. 235.

Everyone in the playhouse has an inclination to adultery. Language and spectacle, in Puritan attacks, rely heavily on their inherent capacities to adulterate an audience and, therefore, without discrimination, men and women become whores. Adultery, which was enmeshed with sodomy and prostitution, and constituted a substitute for these terms, was not exclusively directed to women. Rather, both genders were capable of becoming harlots in mind, soul and body. As William Harrison claims in 1577/1578:

no true Puritanes will endure to bee present at playes [. . .] few of either sex come thither, but in theyr holy-dayes appareil, and so set forth, so trimmed, so adorned, so decked, so perfumed, as if they made the place the market of wantonnesse, and by consequence to unfit for a Priest to frequent.³⁸⁴

Certainly, the choices offered for both men and women in early modern London for recreation were relatively few, but whenever playhouses were mentioned, the brothels always became equivalent locales for entertainment. In most cases, it is either the one or the other, or even both, as Samuel Rowlands wrote in 1600: ‘Speak gentlemen, what shall we do today?/ [. . .]/ Or shall we to the Globe to see a play?/ Or visit Shoreditch for a bawdy house?’³⁸⁵ And if you are looking for a whore within the playhouse make sure you socialise with players, as Dekker instructs: ‘Pay thy two-pence to a Player, in his gallerie maist thou sitte by a harlot.’³⁸⁶

In William Godland’s *A Neaste of Wasps* written in 1613, equivalent similes are drawn between the playhouse and the whorehouse, including acting and prostitute practice:

Goe to your plaie-howse you shall actors have
Your baude, your gull, your whore, your pandar knave
Goe to your bawdie howse, y’ave actors too
As bawds, and whores, and gulls: pandars also.
Besides, in eyther howse (yf you enquire)
A place there is for men themselves to tire
Since th’are soe like, to choose there’s not a pinn
Whether bawdye-howse or plaie-howse you goe in.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁴ Quoted in Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*, p. 244.

³⁸⁵ Quoted in Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*, p. 223.

³⁸⁶ Quoted in Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*, p. 230.

³⁸⁷ ‘Epigrame 64’, quoted in Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*, p. 238.

These are fascinating examples that associate the playhouse with the brothel and have remained unnoticed by literary critics. Goddard equates both locales, but more importantly the people who resided there. The analogy is quite striking and can be interpreted in two ways. Either prostitution has to be acted out within the brothel itself, thus suggesting the performative nature on which the sex-trade has to rely, or the actors from the playhouse engage in prostitution actively as whores, panders and bawds. Both interpretations are plausible in the closing couplet and the explicit suggestion is not to distinguish between those two places.

My suggestion is that the players were conscious of what was going on in the playhouses concerning sexual activity and the reasons for the authorities' hostility to performances. Therefore, prostitution was the first thing denounced in *The Actors Remonstrance* in 1643:

[. . .] we shall for the future promise, never to admit into our sixpenny-rooms those unwholesome inticing Harlots, that sit there meere to be taken up Prentizes or Lawyers Clerks; nor any female of what degree soever, except they come lawfully with their husbands, or neere allies: the abuses in Tobacco shall be reformed, none vended, not so much as in three-penny galleries, unlesse of the pure Spanish leafe. For ribaldry, or any such paltry stuffe, as may scandal the pious, and provoke the wicked to loosenesse, we will utterly expel it, with the bawdy and ungracious Poets, the authors to the *Antipodes*.³⁸⁸

In this sense, Lenz is right when he claims that:

The theatre could not change its image because it could not change its nature: by definition the professional theatre is a fabricator of pleasurable illusions for profit, in a culture that conceives the act of seeing as copulation and the transaction of trade as base. The more it succeeded at attracting, pleasing, and profiting from audiences by making a spectacle of itself, the more it resembled a prostitute.³⁸⁹

The players were also aware of their popularity. A similar language of abuse, suggesting how the spectators' morals were compromised by actors, is suggested by John Earle in 1628:

[Paul's Walk is] the other expence of the day, after Playes, Taverne, and a Baudy house . . . [a player] The waiting-women Spectators are ove-

³⁸⁸ Quoted in Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, p. 261.

³⁸⁹ Lenz, p. 845.

eares in love with him, and Ladies send for him to act in their Chambers. Your Innes of Court men were undone but for him, hee is their chiefe guest and imployment, and the sole business that makes them Afternoones men.³⁹⁰

Such suggestions indicate the ways in which the theatre was perceived as ‘a market of wantonnesse’. For accidental hook-ups were also possible. As the narrator in the following quote claims:

[. . .] to drive away grieffe, I would sometimes see a Play, and heare a Beare-baiting; whereas a handsome formall Bearded man made me roome, to sit downe by him, and he tooke such good notice of my Civility, in laughing at the sport, that indeed Love stricke him to the heart with the glaunces of mine eyes, in such sort as within short space we met at a Taverne, where with a Contract we made our selves as sure as sacke and sugar.³⁹¹

A Juniper Lecture is a fictitious dialogue between women and it describes a woman’s visit to the theatre after her second widowhood, illustrating how the theatre provided opportunities for members of the audience to get close to each other. ‘Contract’ in this extract stands for sexual intercourse, because the narrative that follows refers to her marriage with this ‘Bearded man’. How far the theatre was a space for men who sought same-sex encounters is difficult to ascertain until similar stories come to light, regardless of their fictitious nature. We should remember that for Gurr such references provide evidence about audience behaviour in the playhouses.

However, the gentlemen that were flocking to the theatre, acquiring stools to reserve a space on stage in order to be seen and flaunt their excessive apparel and style, similarly participated in this ‘market of wantonnesse’. The stage was the perfect place to display and advertise someone’s self and certain gentlemen seemed to have relied on the stage’s power to do that. The signs that they used - dress, style and manner - were not very different from those of the actors. In fact, these gallants constituted part of the play, becoming performers themselves. Advice, with a high degree of irony, was given to gentlemen who wanted to perform their identity in the playhouse. As Bailey illustrates, by quoting Dekker:

³⁹⁰ Quoted in Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*, p. 246.

³⁹¹ Quoted in Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare’s London*, p. 256.

Showing little fear of the authorities, the gallant, like those men described by local clothing ordinances, spends his days ‘haunting . . . inconvenient places,’ where he ‘converses, plots, laughs . . . talks,’ and, most significantly, ‘publish[es]’ his outfit. When he attends the theater, timing is essential, and Dekker instructs his gallant to calculate precisely when to ascend the scaffold so that all ‘eyes in the galleries’ move away from ‘the players and follow only [him]’, for if he bestow[s] [his] person upon the vulgar, when the belly of the house is but half full, [his] apparel is quite eaten up, the fashion lost’. Having found the perfect moment to present himself, he blends into the *mise-en scene* as if he were ‘one of the properties’ that had ‘dropped out of the hangings’ or ‘from behind the arras’.³⁹²

It was not only the theatre that made a prostitute out of the spectator. In the example just cited, Dekker brilliantly describes that it was the spectator who made a prostitute out of himself, and by association the player and the playhouse as well.

However, aligning the theatre with harlotry was not strictly a matter of shared language. As studies have shown, the theatres resided next to notorious brothel areas. Bly, for example, mentions the proximity that the Whitefriars district and company had with two brothels, Sodom and Little Sodom. The brothels have been characterised by Bray as ‘heterosexual’, yet Bly suggests that his ‘assumption of brothel structure may be misplaced’.³⁹³ In addition, other studies have shown the ways in which actors were seriously involved in the sex-market. Lenz’s examination of the associations of theatrical managers with brothel keepers and brothel keeping is significant because it shows the interconnections between players and whores. Thus, in Lenz’s account Henslowe and Alleyn are famous brothel keepers:

In the mid-1580’s Philip Henslowe established the place of the stage on common ground with the brothel, and demonstrated in the process that those who traded in theatrical entertainment also traded in whores.³⁹⁴

The ‘process’ Lenz refers to is Henslowe’s ownership of famous establishments, brothels like the Little Rose and the Unicorn. Through his association with Henslowe, Alleyn was also involved in brothel management. This ‘material fact’ of the

³⁹² Amanda Bailey, ‘“Monstrous Manner”: Style and the Early Modern Theater’, *Criticism*, 43.3 (2001), 249-284

<<http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/journals/criticism/v043/43.3bailey.pdf>> [accessed 25 February 2008] (p. 269).

³⁹³ Mary Bly, *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans in the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 141.

³⁹⁴ Lenz, p. 837.

interrelation between theatre and brothel, ‘recognised by everyone from Puritan to player to Privy Council’,³⁹⁵ has been disputed by Cerasano in her article ‘Edward Alleyn: His Brothel Keeper?’ Her investigation of Alleyn’s properties, ‘the Barge, the Bell, the Cock and the Unicorn’,³⁹⁶ is critically positioned against Burford’s study *The Bishop’s Brothels*, a book that is highly ambivalent concerning its sources and ubiquitous of hasty, if not judgemental, conclusions. By opposing the notion that ‘once a stew, always a stew’ Cerasano claims:

Tracing Alleyn’s holdings as properties is fairly straightforward. Determining what use they were put to is more complex. Theoretically, even in the sixteenth century, ‘stews’ were public bathing houses, not necessarily synonymous with brothels.³⁹⁷

Alluding to Ian Archer’s astute comments about the mobility that characterised prostitution and the indeterminacies posed by the early modern English language in relation to ‘illicit sexual activity carried on in these establishments’,³⁹⁸ Cerasano notes that:

This is not, of course, to argue that established houses of prostitution didn’t exist in the Bankside and elsewhere, or that the stews didn’t offer a rendezvous for illicit assignations – some perhaps more notoriously than others. But a reexamination [sic] of the Bridewell data points up the difficulting [sic] of finding concrete evidence to support Burford’s assertion that because some Alleyn’s properties were once houses of prostitution they must have remained so under his ownership. [. . .] Consequently, prostitutes and brothelkeepers moved around; and owners of houses used as brothels were evasive. Under such circumstances, researching prostitution becomes a slippery business.³⁹⁹

This is true with respect to the difficulties regarding research into prostitution, and especially male prostitution. Yet, I would prefer to maintain the indeterminacy of managers’ and actors’ engagement with the sex-trade, rather than the denouncing of any player’s involvement with brothel keeping and pandering. Even if ‘stewes’ were not

³⁹⁵ Lezn, p. 838.

³⁹⁶ Susan P. Cerasano, ‘Edward Alleyn: His Brothel’s Keeper?’, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 13 (2000), 93-100 <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqi:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R01590083:0> [accessed 18 January 2008] (p. 93).

³⁹⁷ Cerasano, p. 96.

³⁹⁸ Cerasano, p. 96.

³⁹⁹ Cerasano, p. 96-97.

always operating as brothels, literary evidence suggests that the word carried more than frequent overtones of illicit sexual activity. As Williams notes in his *Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature*, the word 'stew' referred not solely to a locale but was also used as a noun to describe a whore, male or female. This is not only an indication of the indeterminacy of early modern English language. What it also suggests is that the connotations of 'stew' with prostitute sexual activity were so strong that the word was often employed to define someone's self or identity. This is the impact that a place can have for its residents or clientele. They eventually become part of them. We may agree with Cerasano that 'for Burford there seem to be prostitutes behind every shrub',⁴⁰⁰ but similar assumptions and accusations were also made - apropos the plethora of prostitute activity - by authorities, playwrights and anti-theatricalists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Cerasano cannot be any more certain about prostitute practice than Burford.

Looking at other individual actors and apprentices, whose lives have been traced by theatre historians, makes us even more aware of the indeterminacies that surround theatre historiography itself. The difficulties that sources pose for historians are immense. Take for example Ingram's article on 'Lawrence Dutton, stage player: missing and presumed lost':

Another [document], from two decades earlier (1577), mentions his wife, but most unkindly; in it one John Shawe, a manager of bawdy houses, testified before the Masters of Bridewell Hospital that he had lost one of his working girls, little Margaret Goldsmith, to Laurence Dutton, who had taken her from him and set her up in business at the Bell, a house beyond Shoreditch church. Shawe told the Masters that 'one Laurence Dutton keeps her; he is a player; there is two brethen and by report both their wives are whores.' Manasses Stockdon, a goldsmith at the Key in Cheapside, was one of those who 'had the use of the body of little Margaret; she is now kept at the Bell by Dutton; he had the use of her divers times.' One doesn't know what to do with Shawe's gratuitous testimony. No doubt it was spiteful in part and may well have been unfair to the wives of both men, but little Margaret's status, affirmed by two witnesses, makes Lawrence's role as a whoremaster likely accurate.⁴⁰¹

⁴⁰⁰ Cerasano, p. 98.

⁴⁰¹ William Ingram, 'Laurence Dutton, stage player: missing and presumed lost', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 14 (2001), 122-143
 <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R01613122:0> [accessed 18 January 2008] (pp. 123-124).

Ingram here attempts to rescue players and apprentices from any connection with whoredom, whereas the play-texts offer abundant evidence that associates them with prostitute activity. The lives of the apprentices that historians follow pose even bigger problems, due to their marginal role. We do know that certain players' apprentices had other occupational positions in certain trades, for example: Andrew Cane who was a goldsmith;⁴⁰² 'Robert Armin, Robert Keysar, John Lowin who were [also] goldsmiths'; 'John Heminges was a Grocer; John Shank was a Weaver; Thomas Downton was Vintner; Thomas Taylor was a Pewterer; James Burbage was a Joiner.'⁴⁰³ Whether some of them, or other unknown actors, engaged in prostitution is impossible to assert.

Apprentices who belonged to players were also their service boys and the economic exchanges involving those boys illustrate the importance of their employment, the uncertainty of their birthdates, and the indeterminacy of their participation in certain plays. The examples of Fenn and Bird, two apprentices who played female parts, according to Baldwin's, Gurr's and Bentley's sources, show the insurmountable difficulties that theatre historiography faces. Street's answer to the abovementioned critics' conclusions in his article 'The Durability of Boy Actors' indicates the wrong assumptions we usually rely on surrounding the theatrical practice of cross-dressing and the durability of the boy-actors in the theatre market. The following reference is about a twenty-four year old man still playing a woman's part during the Restoration⁴⁰⁴ and this poses historiographic problems concerning the Restoration stage and for how long it remained a transvestite one:

Our women are defective, and so siz'd
You'd think they were some of the guard disguis'd:
For to speak truth, men act, that are between
Forty and fifty, wenches fifteen;
With bone so large, and nerve so incompilant,
When you call Desdemona, enter Giant.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰² John H. Ashington, 'The career of Andrew Cane, citizen, goldsmith, and player', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 16 (2003), 130-144
<http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R01702380:0> [accessed 18 January 2008].

⁴⁰³ Bentley, p. 125.

⁴⁰⁴ Discussed in Bruce J. Streett, 'The Durability of Boy Actors', *Notes and Queries* (December 1973), 461-465 <[doi:10.1093/nq/20.12.461](https://doi.org/10.1093/nq/20.12.461)> [accessed 18 January 2008].

⁴⁰⁵ Quoted in Baldwin, p. 227.

There is more work that needs to be done on literary references that address the inappropriate distribution of female roles to certain actors. Different circumstances might govern the casting of specific female roles to specific boys, and as the above quote suggests, even to men.

Boyhood and sexual servitude

The assumption that anti-theatrical discourse started to appear as late as the 1590's poses interesting questions concerning the playwrights' appropriation of theatrical and linguistic contrivances which sought to expose the fallacy of arguments directed against theatre.⁴⁰⁶ If Brown is right – and Williams seems to agree with those dates – that 'ingle', 'catamite' and 'Ganymede' entered the early modern English language in 1592, 1593 and 1591 respectively, we need to reconsider carefully whether such a linguistic incident presented an incentive for anti-theatricalists to launch their attacks.⁴⁰⁷ The appearance of such a vocabulary is striking because of the frequency with which it has been employed by playwrights and authors of other literary texts. Was it a mere coincidence? Was it an attempt to totally control boyhood in texts that simultaneously exposed and appropriated a boy's socio-sexual position? However, anti-theatrical discourse started as early as 1579 with Northbrooke's *A Treatise wherein Dicing, Daunsing, Vaine Plaies or Enterlides . . . are reproved*.⁴⁰⁸ It also had a well-known history, as Jonas Barish informs us in *The Anti-theatrical Prejudice*.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁶ Suggested by Charles Whitney, 'The Devil his Due: Mayor John Spencer, Elizabethan civic antitheatricalism, and The Shoemaker's Holiday', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 14 (2001), 168-185 <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R01613124:0> [accessed 18 January 2008]. The author of the article refers specifically to the years '1594, 1595 and 1597', 'the period during Marlowe's and Shakespeare's careers', (p. 168).

⁴⁰⁷ Steve Brown, 'The Boyhood of Shakespeare's Heroines: Notes on Gender Ambiguity in the Sixteenth Century', *Studies in English Literature*, 30.2 (1990), 243-263 <<http://www.jstor.org>> [accessed 26 April 2007].

⁴⁰⁸ James W. Binns, 'Women or Transvestites on the Elizabethan Stage?: An Oxford Controversy', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 5.2 (1974), 95-120 <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0361-0160%28197410%295%3A2%3C95%3AWOTOTE%3E2.0.CO%3B2-I>> [accessed 26 April 2007].

⁴⁰⁹ See Jonas A. Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (California: University of California Press, 1981).

The association of boys with ingles and catamites should also be addressed in relation to the terminology surrounding boyhood. As Brown notes, the term 'boy' was occasionally used as an insult to denote inferiority.⁴¹⁰ In Renaissance England boys were forming 'a distinct class particularly of urban labour in which the fortunes of the individual were always marginal at risk'.⁴¹¹ Boys ceased to be boys when they were independent. As Philippe Ariès suggested:

. . . nobody would have thought of seeing the end of childhood in puberty. The idea of childhood was bound up with the idea of dependence: the words 'sons', 'varlets', and 'boys' were also words in the vocabulary of feudal subordination. One could leave childhood only by leaving the state of dependence.⁴¹²

This is the same conclusion Barbour reaches by defining dependency as an effeminising aspect of boyhood: '[. . .] relations of power carried gendered force, and thus dependency was effeminizing'.⁴¹³

Brown's categories of boys/non-boys and his examination of boyhood are useful because they show the different aspects of boyhood and the social uses to which the boy could be put. According to Brown we have different categories of non-boys in Shakespeare's plays. First, we have boys who are actually adult men. As in *Coriolanus*' case, boyhood is evoked in order to diminish the valour of the opponent. Secondly, we have boys who play heroines. Last but not least, there is the 'royal boy' who due to his status eventually becomes a 'non-boy': '[c]haracteristically this boy is bright, loving, manly, and his destruction represents not only limitless villainy in his destroyer but also a blighted future for the kingdom.'⁴¹⁴

Interesting as these categories might be, the first and third category are of no concern here. The second category is the one of relevance in connection to servitude and prostitution. In addition, Brown notes the 'more or less anonymous young pages of Shakespeare's comedies and histories', who belong to the 'now obsolete *OED* meaning of 'slave, knave''.⁴¹⁵ As a boy actress (a heroine) the boy is a 'non-boy'. For Brown these boys are, and were, meant to be understood as women. As apprentices however,

⁴¹⁰ Suggested in Brown, p. 244.

⁴¹¹ Brown, p. 245.

⁴¹² Quoted in Brown, p. 245.

⁴¹³ Barbour, p. 1012.

⁴¹⁴ Brown, p. 244.

⁴¹⁵ Brown, p. 245.

the boys belong to the *OED*'s obsolete definition of boys as 'servants'. This does not mean that all boys who resided in this category were prostitutes. If we acknowledge them as potential sexual objects in plays and in accounts of sodomy it is for two reasons. First, they were not seen as sexless and secondly, they had more chances to become apprentices if they provided sexual service in addition to their normal servitude. Brown explains:

[. . .] if full manhood, as an ultimate emergence from social and economic dependence, was so long delayed, this does not mean that 'boys' so defined, though deterred in manifold ways from assuming the role of husband and father, were placed outside the boundaries of sex altogether. Quite the contrary. For a good many adult men in positions of mastery over boys, boys represented closely available and passive partners of considerable erotic interest.⁴¹⁶

These boys were also the apprentices of players, and because of their cross-dressing and display in public, they were persistently associated with whoredom. As we have seen, these are the boys of considerable interest for the playwrights, since they are mostly portrayed as the sexual objects of their masters. Bearing in mind the boy actors, Brown offers a 'shape of a triad', 'boy/varlet/whore', through which the boys could be seen.⁴¹⁷ This triad is suggested by Thersites' characterisation of Patroclus as 'male varlet' and 'masculine whore' in *Troilus and Cressida* and is further analysed in Jonson's *Epicoene*, allowing Brown to create a model through which these boy actors could be viewed as prostitutes. Other references involve *King Lear* ('He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath', III.vi. 18-19) and *Twelfth Night* ('For youth is bought more oft than begg'd or borrow'd', III.iv. 3).⁴¹⁸

This is a tempting model that confirms contemporary views on boy actors as ingles who coexist syntactically with female whores, as in the satires I examined earlier. Yet, it cannot be equally applied to all instances or accusations of same-sex prostitution. Patroclus as a 'masculine whore' is significantly different from Cleopatra's boy actress 'I'th' posture of a whore', in her imaginary representation of exposure and pillorying in Rome.⁴¹⁹ For, in the first instance, what is alleged to be whoredom is a devotion to a

⁴¹⁶ Brown, p. 246.

⁴¹⁷ Brown, p. 253.

⁴¹⁸ Quoted in Brown, p. 253.

⁴¹⁹ 'Troilus and Cressida', (5.1 l. 16) and 'Antony and Cleopatra', (5.2 l. 217), in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt and others (New York: Norton, 1997).

homoerotic friendship, whereas in Cleopatra's case, the theatrical queen is represented as a whore due to her obsessive disposition to performativity.⁴²⁰ In this sense, all performative action could be considered as an activity that is enforced by indecent exhibition and encompasses elements of prostitution.

The case of the boy actors in children's companies within universities was different. Some anti-theatricalists, like Alberico Gentili, William Gager and Dr John Rainolds could not equate the professional players and apprentices with the boy actors in children's companies. Their controversy apropos the transvestite stage in academia is examined by Binns.⁴²¹ Rainolds' disapproval of cross-dressing in university plays was opposed by Gentili and Gager. The only thing they did agree on was their dislike of the professional stage. What made the professional theatre and its actors condemnable was the fact that they received payment for their shows, while the children residing within universities did not. Profit was critically frowned upon, a further suggestion that boy actors of professional companies were in essence thought of as harlots.

If words like 'ingle', 'Ganymede', 'catamite', 'cynedian' and 'wag', suggesting illicit sexual activity, proliferated in early modern scenarios, and accusations of sodomy accompanied them, it is strange that playwrights insisted on the representation of boyhood as a sexually available category. If the theatre was under attack due to accusations of effeminacy and sodomy, why did the playwrights not try to discourage such allegations instead of capitalising on them? Bearing in mind that homophobia surrounded discourses of homoeroticism and theatrical representation, why did the playwrights not rescue the boys and the players from those scandalous analogies of acting and prostitution?⁴²²

⁴²⁰ See for example Phyllis Rackin, 'Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage', *PMLA*, 102.1 (1987), 29-41 <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0030-8129%28198701%29102%3A1%3C29%3AAMATMO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Z>> [accessed 26 April 2007] and Michael Shapiro and Phyllis Rackin, 'Boy Heroines', *PMLA*, 102.5 (1987), 836-838 <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0030-8129%28198710%29102%3A5%3C836%3ABH%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S>> [accessed 25 January 2008].

⁴²¹ Binns, p. 96.

⁴²² Claude J. Summers, 'Homosexuality and Renaissance Literature, or the Anxieties of Anachronism', *South Central Review*, 9.1 (1992), 2-23 <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0743-6831%28199221%299%3A1%3C2%3AHARLOT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Z>> [accessed 15 February 2008].

A possible answer could be that what partly attracted audiences in the playhouses was a fascination for sexual scandal,⁴²³ even if that scandal was of a totally fictitious construction. Yet, the vocabulary for illicit sexual behaviour could indicate for a historian or literary critic a new era of socio-economic relationships that was starting to take place. The ongoing changing formations of the early modern English household and service relations had enormous effects on sexual activity, notions of masculinity, effeminacy and misogyny. On the one hand, the Renaissance stage dramatised a socio-sexual mobility at work in early modern English society, and on the other, it produced a unique critique and reaction to the apparent social fluidity with its highly perilous consequences. Thus, while the images and language that the plays produced formed new erotic expressions, at the same time the texts themselves imposed no control over those expressions. Their reception was unpredictable. Some people apparently could not follow or understand the newly introduced linguistic utterances, as Thomas Tomkins indicates with Trincalo, a rustic clown who tries to woo a lady, in *Albumazar*, written in 1615:

[. . .] then will I confound her with complements drawn from the Plaies I see at the Fortune and the Red Bull, where I learne all the words I speake and understand not.⁴²⁴

We also know of the excitement that English actors produced among audiences that did not even understand the English language. Fynes Moryson who witnessed English performances, possibly Marlowe's plays, in Frankfurt around 1592, commented in the *Itinerary*:

[. . .] some of our cast dispised Stage players [. . .] came out of England into Germany, and played at Franckford in the tyme of the Mart, hauing nether a Complete number of Actours, nor any good Apparell, nor any ornament of the Stage, yet the Germans, not vnderstanding a worde they sayde, both men and wemen, flocked vnderfully to see theire gesture and Action, rather than heare them, speaking English which they vnderstoode not, and pronowncing peeces and Patches of English playes, which my selfe and some English men there present could not heare without great wearysomenes.⁴²⁵

⁴²³ Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, p. 121.

⁴²⁴ Quoted in Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, p. 238.

⁴²⁵ Quoted in June Schlueter, 'English actors in Kassel, Germany, during Shakespeare's time', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 10 (1998), 238-260
<http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-

It would be interesting to know the English audiences' reactions to Italian performances staged in England in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with actual women playing the female parts.

Putting aside for a moment what audiences understood, the socio-sexual relations performed on stage seem to have been replicas of the models that existed off-stage. Sinfield for example states that: 'When boys perform Ganymedes and page boys, therefore, they are rehearsing a version of their actual social position.'⁴²⁶ I would add that this position dictates the boys' sexual function within the master/servant relationship.

Many of the boys/servants, including the actor apprentices, sometimes changed their masters and patrons. The masterless youth of London anxiously sought for patrons, whatever the cost may have been. The patrons themselves were quite aware of the dangers apprenticeship involved. Many of the youths frequented locales where they could trick and cheat gentlemen with an eye to profit, as shown in Chapter 2 concerning cony-catching stories. These narratives that dramatised such relations, and men's urge for socio-economic advancement, described such dubious or failed relationships in terms of adultery, disease and promiscuity. This was the image of whoredom. If the boy's/servant's love was frequently evoked and juxtaposed with the female whore, it was not only to show the reserved place that the boy could have at a patron's or master's side. This might actually have been common knowledge for a Renaissance audience or readership, whereas for us it is a basis for studying notions of homoerotic desire. However, the boy/whore binary also had the effect of equating the boy with the harlot. As Bly reminds us, by quoting Rainoldes: 'Boy actors [. . .] are taught 'to counterfeit [a whore's] actions, her wanton kisse, her impudent face, her wicked speeches and enticements'.⁴²⁷ This was a powerful simile because it alerted gentlemen about the dangers of servitude. It was also a strong simile that defined homoerotic relationships. The boy was a whore and any relation with his patron or master entailed adultery. This is a relationship that informs both plays and anti-theatrical discourse, since the actor apprentice was essentially a servant. In this sense I agree with Sinfield

2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R01524433:0> [accessed 18 January 2008] (p. 242).

⁴²⁶ Sinfield, *Unfinished Business*, p. 117.

⁴²⁷ Bly, p. 76.

when he argues that ‘Ganymede translates, approximately into the early modern page boy’.⁴²⁸

Yet, the apprentice actor had a significant power when compared to apprentices belonging to other trades. The boy actor was on display; he was exchanged and employed if he was a distinguished performer, and even more significantly, he was in demand by both adult players and audiences. His impact on male and female spectators was considerable. No wonder then, that the boy actor’s position, like the player’s, was envied by spectators, who anxiously sought to sit on stage and acquaint themselves with him. As a celebrity he also became a sexual object. We need to remember that, even in courts and private performances, players and children were presented as gifts to entertain the guests. This possibly could explain the confirmatory role the masque played in order to secure power relations and bonds between powerful individuals.

Literary critics have extensively commented on the power of the stage to represent society and its power to seduce audiences. It is this seductive power that should interest us here, for the player posed a potential threat for spectators, including the female prostitute.⁴²⁹ Apart from homoeroticism, prostitution, either male or female, had something to gain from theatrical representation. Players and apprentices advertised apparel and sumptuous clothes that provided the audiences with new fashions. Companies might have been buying costumes from servants who could not wear their masters’ costumes, but the opposite was possible as well. As Bailey notes by quoting Stallybrass:

The provision that the head of the Rose theater, Philip Henslowe, included in his players’ contracts that prohibited them from leaving the playhouse in their costumes suggests that it was not uncommon for actors to wear their suit of silks off the stage. Henslowe, like other company heads, invested more money in apparel than in players, scripts, or stage properties. Clothes, unlike plays, retained their value, and theaters drew sizable profits from the renting and selling of sumptuous costumes to actors as well as to ‘whomever could afford them, including . . . members of the audience’.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁸ Sinfield, *Unfinished Business*, p. 113.

⁴²⁹ Orgel, p. 15. Orgel argues in this part of his study that theatre was a threat to manhood because of the participation of women in the audience. I am arguing about the threat that the players posed for both male and female spectators.

⁴³⁰ Bailey, p. 266.

In addition, female prostitutes could also appropriate male apparel in order to escape criticism and attract clients, for those females who went unattended to performances were always open to accusations of whoredom. The issue of women's transvestism is too complex to be addressed here. Obviously, not all male impersonators were prostitutes and not all of them were looking for male gendered partners. Yet, the ones who were seeking male sexual partners could have been contributing unconsciously to same-gender relationships, therefore facilitating and making visible homoerotic expression. However, if the threat and accusations of whoredom were always present in these acquaintances, then we need to acknowledge that cross-dressing and cross-gendering displayed a homoerotic desire that was dependent upon, and imbued with, images and articulations that characterised prostitution.

Those who have been persuaded of the existence of male prostitution, with specific reference to players and actors, are of course literary critics. As Traub asserts in her examination of John Disney's *A View of Ancient Law Against Immorality and Profaneness*, written in 1729:

We know, however, that men *could* be whores, not only because early modern plays employ the word and its variants to describe male characters, but because anti-theatrical tracts obsessively articulate the anxiety that men will use their 'feminized' bodies as loose women do (Kinney 1974; Stubbes 1583; Prynne 1632-3). Indeed, in the anti-theatricalists' conflation of the male sodomite and the male whore we find precisely the interpenetration of categories that Disney's treatise, one hundred years later, so assiduously denies.⁴³¹

What Traub argues against is Disney's belief that the 'sodomite' in Deuteronomy was referring to a pimp, even though it was 'linked to female prostitution'. For Disney 'not only can women not be sodomites; men cannot be whores'.⁴³²

Anti-theatrical discourse and plays have proved a goldmine for those who sought, and still seek, to extract instances of homoerotic expression within the sex-trade of the early modern theatrical institution. In this part of the thesis I have explored the processes through which main-stream theatre historiography marginalised such homoerotic expressions. What makes the male prostitute a challenge in these historical

⁴³¹ Valerie Traub, 'The (in)significance of 'lesbian' desire in early modern England', in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. by Susan Zimmerman (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 150-169 (p. 151). Traub's italics.

⁴³² Traub, p. 151.

narratives is that, as a deviant sexual behaviour, his presence cannot be certified. Yet, its connotations linguistically are everywhere. Whether it is defamation or merely a lexicographical incident, playing upon multiple socio-sexual relations (i.e. friendship and servitude), the male actor/theatre as the male prostitute/brothel polarities unsettle historiography's assumptions about social relations among men. These similes also contribute to a better understanding of how literary material has been employed and ways in which a variant of homoerotic expression can be represented or at least debated in early modern English textuality. Yet, as a 'market of wantonness', theatre was not the only locale that shared the linguistic properties that whoredom possessed. Education was another area where similar associations were made. So now, it is time to turn to the literary construction of the male prostitute within humanist writings produced in schools and universities, places that had also been referred to as 'brothels' or 'houses of prostitution'.

Chapter 4: Education and literary constructions of prostitution

‘Houses of Prostitution’

When the author of the *Children's Petition* launched his complaint against the beating of boys and girls in schools in 1669 he made an explicit, but quite puzzling, connection between schools and brothels. The petition reads:

But when our sufferings are of that nature as makes our Schools to be not meerly houses of Correction, but of Prostitution, in this vile way of castigation in use, wherein our secret parts, which are by nature shameful, and not to be uncovered, must be the Anvil exposed to the immodest eyes, and filthy blows of the smiter;⁴³³

The analogy is strange because throughout the petition the language that persists is that of torture, sadism and rape rather than whoredom: ‘Appetites [from the tutor’s part] are unnatural’, ‘depend on ebbs and flows of desire’,⁴³⁴ the ‘inflicter’⁴³⁵ gets pleasure and there is an ‘unclean curiosity, that is, A desire of knowing what is hidden, to wit, the pleasures, the secrets of another’.⁴³⁶ According to Castle ‘the petition made little impression to the Parliament’,⁴³⁷ whereas for Alan Stewart ‘[t]he petition failed to reach [it]’.⁴³⁸

⁴³³ Anon., *Childrens Petition* (1669)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:8939235> [accessed 7 May 2007].

⁴³⁴ *Childrens Petition*, p. 20.

⁴³⁵ *Childrens Petition*, p. 15.

⁴³⁶ *Childrens Petition*, p. 49.

⁴³⁷ Edgar B. Castle, *Moral Education in Christian Times* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1958), p. 99.

⁴³⁸ Alan Stewart, ‘Boys’ buttocks revisited: James VI and the myth of the sovereign schoolmaster’, in *Sodomy in early modern Europe*, ed. by Tom Betteridge, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 131-147 (p. 132).

Thirty years later another pamphlet with the title *Lex Forcia* readdressed the issue of the beating of children. By retaining the analogy of schools as ‘houses of prostitution’, the author of *Lex Forcia* enriched and expanded the 1669 petition by making direct associations of school beating with pleasure and sodomy. What the 1669 petition could not articulate, the 1698 pamphlet did. Thus, the petition states:

It is not to be forgotten upon this Occasion, how one, the Scourge, and Scourged of the Papists (I Name him not, being living) was accused of Sodomy, [. . .] that he did use in keeping Lads to wait on him to take down their Breeches often, and thrash them upon committing any Fault, [. . .]. Which Example may Warn those that keep Boys and Girls to Attend them, or be Taught by them, to forbear this Punishment after they come to their Teens . . .⁴³⁹

This time the schools were not only ‘houses of prostitution’ but also ‘schools as Hell’.⁴⁴⁰ A similar accusation was made by Marchamon Nedham in 1663 when he called grammar schools ‘Schools of Vices’, where students ‘learnt fashions, court[ed] mistresses, dance[d] a la mode and [swore] with a grace’.⁴⁴¹ In *Lex Forcia*, the beating of the boy was also considered as prostitute practice:

If a Father therefore shall bring his Child to School, and tell the Master, that to preserve the Modesty and Ingenuity of his Spirit, he will never allow this way of Beating him, which is a manifest Prostitution thereof:⁴⁴²

The concern here is not only the exposure of secret parts and the beating of boys. It was the noble youth that both pamphlet and petition sought to rescue from the humiliation of such corporeal punishment, by alluding to Quintilian:

It is a servile thing that becomes only slaves and bruits, and so unworthy of any that are free-born, and much less such who are the Sons of Gentlemen and Nobles.⁴⁴³

⁴³⁹ Anon., *Lex Forcia* (1698)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:11733709> [accessed 7 May 2007].

⁴⁴⁰ *Lex Forcia*, p. 8.

⁴⁴¹ Mark Nedham, *A Discourse concerning Schools and School-Masters* (1663)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12409242> [accessed 7 May 2007].

⁴⁴² *Lex Forcia*, p. 22.

⁴⁴³ *Lex Forcia*, p. 27.

According to Stewart, 'whereas the seventeenth-century texts are quite blatant in stressing sodomitical anxiety, provoked perhaps by the need to articulate strongly the cause for the proposed political reforms, earlier texts are at once less explicit and more complex'.⁴⁴⁴ However, I find it strange that prostitute practice was conflated with the category of sodomy during an era that had just started to witness a demarcation of whoredom from sodomy. By the eighteenth century the split between sodomy and prostitution, at least from a literary point of view, was becoming increasingly apparent. This could be due to the recurrent hostility that homoerotic practice and its participants, 'sodomites', were experiencing from female whores. As Trumbach has shown concerning mollies and sodomites:

In one contrasting instance, extreme force in a sodomitical assault was probably used not by a sodomite against a man who was not a sodomite, but by a group of whores and libertines against a sodomite. Here, Richard Renale, Robert Welch, and William Mott, with the help of Susannah Nutley and Susan Cooks, violently attempted to bugger Thomas Lile. In other words, the aggressive sexual overture was not limited to sodomites, but was an ordinary part of the sexual life of the streets and alehouses.⁴⁴⁵

In this light, what the 1698 pamphlet suggests is an attempt to re-associate the practice of prostitution with its original nomenclature, that of adultery and sodomy. It is not strange that female whores were so hostile to mollies and sodomites. A century earlier the female prostitutes belonged to the category of the sodomite as well, and now open dismissal and aggression towards the sodomites liberated them from at least one capital offence. Other narratives suggest that the prostitute did not belong to the category of sodomy. As early as 1534, Pietro Aretino in his highly influential narrative *Ragionamenti* excludes the female whore from sodomitical accusations. There are five instances where sodomy is mentioned and in one of them the central character of the novella, Nana, implies that sodomites 'steal' the profits from prostitutes.⁴⁴⁶ The text was available in England in 1584 in Italian printed by Wolfe and as a satire that focuses on

⁴⁴⁴ Stewart, 'Boys' buttocks revisited', p. 132.

⁴⁴⁵ Randolph Trumbach, 'Sodomitical Assaults, Gender Role, and Sexual Development in Eighteenth-Century London', in *The Pursuit of Sodomy: Male Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe*, ed. by Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1989), pp. 407-429 (p. 425).

⁴⁴⁶ Pietro Aretino, *Ragionamenti* (Athens: Stochastis, 1996), p. 168.

the lives of female prostitutes, it sustains sodomy as a separate category.⁴⁴⁷ It all depends on which texts a researcher examines, for the differentiation between whoredom and sodomy seems constantly negotiable. However, the split was probably not so pronounced during the English Restoration when the 1669 petition was written. More indicative, both in the 1669 petition and the 1698 pamphlet, is the argument around which schools are defined as ‘houses of prostitution’, due to the nakedness of secret parts, the beating of boys and the commensurate pleasure derived by the tutor. The outcome of such corporeal punishment possibly justifies accusations of prostitution:

If there be any [student] whose disposition is so illiberal, as that it will not be amended by reproof and ingenuous notices, it is to be expected it should become but the worse of blows, and grow the more obdurate.⁴⁴⁸

Earlier texts share the same anxieties concerning excessive beating of boys, as Castle suggests.⁴⁴⁹ However, no straightforward accusations were made about beating, nakedness and prostitution. Written primarily by schoolmasters, the texts attempted to resolve issues of school behaviour on behalf of the students, both in elementary and higher education, and to highlight the abuse of power by the schoolmasters, either as severe beaters or insufficient teachers. There were no connections of prostitute practice pertaining to the schoolmaster, the elementary student or the undergraduate. Nor do we have any available accusations of pupils or students prostituting themselves in the educational institutions in early modern England. The only clear associations of undergraduates with whores were condemnations of students pursuing sexual pleasure in brothels, taverns or theatres. Contrary to the plethora of Italian texts that suggest the prostitution of boys in schools, universities and the streets, sometimes even by their own parents, the English sources indicate, only implicitly, the danger of homoeroticism

⁴⁴⁷ Pietro Aretino, *La prima [seconda] parte de ragionamenti di M. Pietro* (1584) <http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:33143303> [accessed 11 March 2011]. The original reads ‘che noi vogliam male a i sodomiti’.

⁴⁴⁸ *Children’s petition*, p. 28.

⁴⁴⁹ See Chapter V in Castle, pp. 87-102.

and sodomy among students and between students and tutors, as the instance of Nicholas Udall suggests.⁴⁵⁰

Another major anxiety for humanists and educational authorities seemed to be the practice of masturbation. The first text available concerning onanism was the anonymous treatise written in 1718, *Onania*, which falls outside the era under examination.⁴⁵¹ However, it needs to be mentioned, for in the letter included in the preface by a 'pious divine', as the author claims, it is the schoolmasters and university teachers who are advised to supervise children and restrain them from committing this sin. Thus, the letter advises that:

Would all Masters of Schools have but a strict Eye over their Scholars, (amongst whom nothing is more common than the Commitment of this vile Sin, the Elder Boys teaching it the Younger) and give suitable Correction to the Offenders therein, and shame them before their School-fellows for it;⁴⁵²

The text also suggests that wantonness in students' lives is stirred by literature:

I shall not here meddle with the Causes of Uncleannes in general, such as Ill-Books, Bad-Companions, Love-Stories, Lascivious-Discourses, and other Provocatives to Lust and Wantonness; as these are sufficiently treated of in most Books of Devotion and Practical Divinity . . .

The cultural neurosis concerning erotic titillation in reading practices was immense, making the naming of prostitution, either male or female, impossible. And as the anonymous author suggests, the sin of Onan and its important cultural consequences was already available in religious texts, which means that preoccupation apropos masturbation and mutual masturbation was not only an early eighteenth century concern but a much earlier one. Similarly, the anonymous text *God's judgments against whoring*

⁴⁵⁰ See Elizabeth Pittenger, "To Serve the Queere": Nicholas Udall, Master of Revels', in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. by Jonathan Goldberg (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 162-189.

⁴⁵¹ For an examination of masturbation and the cultural significance of the text *Onania* see Thomas W. Laqueur, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (New York: Zone Books, 2004).

⁴⁵² Anon., *Onania; or, the heinous sin of self-pollution, and all its frightful consequences, in both sexes, considered, with spiritual and physical advice* (1718)
<<http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?&contentSet=ECCOArticles&type=multipage&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docId=CW3308327100&source=gale&userGroupName=sussex&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>> [accessed 10 March 2011].

being an essay towards a general history of it, from the creation of the world to the reign of Augustulus written in 1697, includes Onan's story together with the multiple Ancient Greek and Roman references of male and female prostitution.⁴⁵³ Yet, some of these textual instances of male whoredom, as well as its vocabulary, were known from the sources available in England in the original languages. As aforementioned in the first chapter, the early modern Latin and Greek dictionaries in England show that the vocabulary of male prostitution and homoeroticism was readily available.

What we are dealing with here is not so much prostitution as an actual fact that materialised in schools or universities. Rather, we witness an idea of prostitution that is evoked as a metaphor, showing us ways in which whoredom was being constructed to fit an argument of the growing anxiety concerning the education of young men, and the social problems evident in Renaissance culture and society. Boys and young men, as pupils and undergraduates, were again at the epicentre of the era's concern, with the issue of education appearing once more as the root of social changes and problems. Within this cultural neurosis surrounding teaching and learning, and in contrast to the model of the educated Renaissance man, the image of the whore infiltrated writings that consistently used the prostitute as the primary analogy to condemn illicit social and sexual behaviour, whether this was sodomy, prostitution or masturbation. As John Donne's *Iuuenilia or Certaine paradoxes and problemes* indicate, in the 1633 edition:

Venus is multinominous to give example to her prostitute disciples, who so often, either to renew or refresh themselves towards lovers, or to disguise themselves from Magistrates, are to take new names. It may bee she takes new names after her many functions, for as she is supreme Monarch of all Sunnes at large (which is lust) [. . .] It may be because of the divers names to her selfe, for her affections have more names than any vice: scilicet; Pollution, Fornication, Adultery, Lay-Incest, Church-Incest, Rape, Sodomy, Mastupration, Masturbation, and a thousand others.⁴⁵⁴

Once again, prostitution, in Donne's attempt to explain the nomenclature of the planet Venus, encompasses a wide range of deviant sexual expressions.

⁴⁵³ Anon., *God's judgments against whoring being an essay towards a general history of it, from the creation of the world to the reign of Augustulus* (1697)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:19530798> [accessed 22 May 2007].

⁴⁵⁴ John Donne, *Iuuenilia or Certaine paradoxes and problemes* (1633)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845608> [accessed 10 March 2011].

In many texts concerning education, it is the occasional female prostitute that provided examples of deceit, religious dissidence, rebellion and treason. The student's association with her was part of the cause for his corruption and defamation. As a recipient of a young man's sexual desire, the female whore was seen to have an enormous influence on his social behaviour. Her qualities made young men effeminate, lewd and lascivious, as most accusations indicate. However, once images of whoredom were inserted into humanist and educational narratives as metaphors for social corruption, prostitution became a male preoccupation. Within the schools and academies the female whore had no presence whatsoever. It was the student, the undergraduate or the upstart tutor or courtier who became the prostitute, burdened with the whore's notorious qualities.

This is just one part of the argument concerning the association of prostitution with education. The issues that need to be examined here are multiple and complex. First, we need to assess the early modern knowledge surrounding prostitute practices during the Roman and Ancient Greek epochs. Since education and humanism were mainly engaged with the study of Latin and Ancient Greek texts that were ubiquitous in their representation of homo- and hetero-sexual practices, we must trace the kind of information that was available to the humanist and early modern student concerning male and female prostitution.

Secondly, we need to appreciate the change in the monopoly that the church and the monasteries had on the education of young men, since the secular authorities started to set up schools for pupils in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁴⁵⁵ As locales of sodomy, the monastery and the church were not the only familiar topoi to be designated and defined as brothels. In the early modern era, Catholic seminaries and academies had an equal share in accusations of sodomitical practice. The metaphor of the brothel and stew enforced connections of same-sex practice with prostitution.

Thirdly, as Charlton suggests, 'the movement to and from Italy [which] became more frequent' during the fifteenth century, continued more vigorously in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, infiltrating the English culture with new fashions and manners.⁴⁵⁶ Viewed with hostility, the Italianate Englishmen were frequently referred to as the corrupting forces of society and were persistently alluded to in treatises on education, as I will shortly examine. For many authors of pamphlets and diatribes on

⁴⁵⁵ Kenneth Charlton, *Education in Renaissance England* (London: Routledge, 1965), p. 15.

⁴⁵⁶ Charlton, p. 42.

schools the Italianate English student had strong relations with the idea of whoredom through signs, such as dress and manners that signified panderism and prostitution.

In addition, the social mobility that preoccupied and shaped the early modern English society became a recurrent theme in writings that sought to discourage possible infiltration into the elite class from lower social strata. Universities, as places where a young man could acquire qualifications, were appreciated more as places of social aggrandizement than places of educational value. With the acceleration of some courtiers to the upper class and with the failure of others, libel and invective were employed as tropes, always relying on images and notions of prostitution. Severe criticism of university graduates as wits, seeking a living through the art of words, flourished, and they were considered as men who prostituted their intellect and corrupted the youth of the city. Theatre and poetry were the main literary forms attacked, representing poets as procurers of vice and whoredom.

In these contexts, the male student/graduate and the courtier-to-be, as well as the (possibly) sodomitical tutor, became exemplifications of prostitute behaviour. Rarely named explicitly as male prostitutes, attacks on youth and schoolmasters relied on the familiar language of sodomy, as 'ingles', 'Ganymedes' and 'catamites'. This semiosis, quite metaleptic in nature, emanated from within humanism. For humanist authors and schoolmasters attacked the prostitute and pornographic images from antiquity that actually evolved from their own efforts of revival, through translations and critiques of foreign literary sources. In other words, they opposed what they created.

As a process of signification, semiosis did not only rely on myths such as the Ganymede myth. The myth was only part of the wider 'semiotics of prostitution'⁴⁵⁷ that also involved dress, manners and the uses to which these texts would be put, for the benefit and pleasure of the individual. This process is characterised as 'metaleptic', or 'transumptive' in its Latin form,⁴⁵⁸ because verbal articulations around whoredom were frequently used to stand for immorality of any kind, as well as illicit sexual activity. Different social types of men were characterised and condemned for being immoral and deceitful, as for example in Donne's second satire on lawyers. A whore's qualities would be assimilated into different and various social occupations, rendering those

⁴⁵⁷ David Kuchta, 'The semiotics of masculinity in Renaissance England', in *Sexuality and Gender in early modern Europe: Institutions, Texts, Images*, ed. by James Grantham Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 233-246 (p. 239).

⁴⁵⁸ The concept of 'transumption' is examined in Leonard Barkan, *Transuming Passion: Ganymede and the Erotics of Humanism* (California: Stanford University Press, 1991).

occupations synonymous with prostitute practice. And to represent a man with whorish qualities was the utmost insult, as some texts suggest.

The Italianate Englishmen

Associations of Italy with prostitution and sodomy were more than common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Thomas Nash in *Pierce Penilesse* in 1592 claimed: 'O Italie, the Academie of man-slaughter, the sporting place of murther, the Apothecary-shop of poison for all Nations: how many kind of weapons hast thou inuented for malice?'⁴⁵⁹

The metaphor of 'academie' which Nash employed to describe Italy as a university of lasciviousness, sin, deceit and vice should be read literally as well as metaphorically. Italian cities such as Padua, Venice, Florence and Rome were places seething with foreign students from across Europe. With regard to England, English students had started travelling to Italy from the Middle Ages. The movement became more frequent, according to Charlton, during the fifteenth century.⁴⁶⁰ The trafficking to and from Italy was very significant for English culture, since the English who studied there brought home new fashions and manners popular in the Italian cities. This was a major cause of anxiety, as Charlton notes.⁴⁶¹ Called for the first time 'Italianate Englishmen' by Roger Ascham in *The Schoolmaster* in 1570, the English student from Italy was viewed with hostility:

A meruelous monster, which, for filthines of liuyng, for dulnes to learning him selfe, for wilnesse in dealing with others, for malice in hurting without cause, should carie at once in one bodie, the belie of a Swyne, the head of an Asse, the brayne of a Foxe, the wombe of a wolfe. If you thinke, we iudge amisse, and write to sore against you, heare, what the Italian sayth of the English man, what the master reporteth of the scholer: who vttereth playnlie, what is taught by him, and what is learned by you, saying, Englese Italianato, e vn diabolio incarnato, that is to say, you remaine men in shape and facion, but becum deuils in life and

⁴⁵⁹ Thomas Nash, *Pierce Penilesse* (1592)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845711> [accessed 24 April 2008].

⁴⁶⁰ Suggested in Charlton, p. 42.

⁴⁶¹ Suggested in Charlton, p. 224.

condition. This is not, the opinion of one, for some priuate spite, but the iudgement of all, in a common Prouerbe, which riseth, of that learnyng, and those maners, which you gather in Italie: a good Scholehouse of wholesome doctrine: and worthy Masters of commendable Scholers, where the Master had rather diffame hym selfe for hys teachyng, than not shame his Scholer for his learning.⁴⁶²

It was his involvement and pursuit of extravagance, deceit, whoring and sodomy that made the English student an agent of sexual vice, according to Ascham's attempt to justify the growing changes and corruption of the English society. Together with the student, the Italian schoolmaster is also presented as inadequate in his position as a tutor, for he defames 'hymselfe for hys teachyng, than not shame his Scholer for his learning'. The Italianate English young man was notorious also for being hostile to married lifestyle. As Ascham claims:

Our Italians bring home with them other faultes from Italie, though not so great as this of Religion, yet a great deale greater, tha[n] many good men can well beare. For commonlie they cum home, common contemnners of mariage and readie persuaders of all other to the same: not because they loue virginitie, nor yet because they hate prettie yong virgines, but, being frée in Italie, to go whither so euer lust will cary them, they do not like, that lawe and honestie should be soch a barre to their like libertie at home in England. And yet they be, the greatest makers of loue, the daylie daliers, with such pleasant wordes, with such smilyng and secret countenances, with such signes, tokens, wagers, purposed to be lost, before they were purposed to be made, with bargaines of wearing colours, floures, and herbes, to bréede occasion of ofter méeting of him and her, and bolder talking of this and that &c.

The Italianate Englishman's proclivity to 'sin and fleshlines' would link him with Catholicism and the Pope, the primal figure used to emblematisé sodomy and prostitution, both male and female. Bale, for example, in his play *Three Laws* performed in 1538 made the link between the Pope and brothels:

Within the bownes of Sodomye.
Doth dwell the spirytuall clergie,
Pope, Cardinall and pryst.
Nonne, Chanon, Monke and fryre,
With so many els as do desyre,

⁴⁶² Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster* (1570)
<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99840125> [accessed 18 March 2008].

To reigne vndre Antichrist.

Detestyng matrymonye,
They lyue abhomynablye,

And burne in carnall lust.
Shall I fell ye farthernewes?
At Rome for prelates are stewed,
Of both kyndes. Thys is iust.⁴⁶³

As Charlton suggested:

Much of the coming and going went on within the framework and under the aegis of the Church. During the fifteenth century there was a constant and increasing flow of churchman to and from Italy for one reason or another. [. . .] More and more young clerics, therefore, sought dispensations to absent themselves from their cures for the purpose of study in Italy, especially for the legal studies which would fit them for lucrative posts as archdeacon or diocesan vicar-general or bishop's chancellor.⁴⁶⁴

Probably, in this context we should interpret Marston's accusations of academies and Catholic seminaries in his satires as brothels. Ascham makes the same remark, rendering the Pope as owner of brothels:

And therefore, if the Pope himselfe, do not onelie graunt pardons to further thies wicked purposes abrode in Italie, but also (although this present Pope, in the beginning, made som shewe of misliking thereof) assigne both méede and merite to the maintenance of stewes and brothelhouses at home in Rome, than let wise men thinke Italie a safe place for holsom doctrine, and godlie manners, and a fitte schole for yong ientlemen of England to be brought vp in.

Other authors also capitalised on the image of the Pope as the greatest pander of men and women, as for example Gervase Babington in 1583:

Then howe the holie *Pope of Rome* can warrant by the worde of God the erection and continuaunce of his stewes, iudge you, although his gaine

⁴⁶³ John Bale, *Three Laws* (1548)
<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99846359> [accessed 7 May 2007].

⁴⁶⁴ Charlton, p. 46.

be neuer so much thereby. Nay howe could that monster *Sixtus* the fourth warrant the erection of a stewes of both kindes, that is both of women and men, whereby 20000 and some yeares 40 thousande ducketes came to his coffers? Or the whole Church of *Rome* so like of, and so diminish the sinne of fornication?⁴⁶⁵

Since religion was so strongly interconnected with education in England, relations of Catholicism and Protestantism with male prostitution produced images of male whores as heretics and atheists, images that were not far from the sodomitical examples that connected sodomy with religious dissidence and treason.⁴⁶⁶

They were counter-accusations as well, which Alan Stewart insightfully examines in his article 'A Society of Sodomites: Religion and Homosexuality in Renaissance England', revealing that the familiar image of the Popish sodomite needs reconsideration.⁴⁶⁷ In B.C.'s account, written in 1633, *Pvritanisme the mother, Sinne the davghter*, Stewart discusses 'perhaps the only English allegation of the existence of a 'Society of . . . Sodomites' before the so-called 'molly-houses''.⁴⁶⁸ Arguing that the popular image of the Pope and Catholicism associated with sodomy is 'a by-product of the Reformation's grasp on the English imagination',⁴⁶⁹ Stewart concludes that, '[t]he fact that he [the Popish sodomite] is the most 'familiar' is partly the result of successful Reformation propaganda, but also partly the result of Bray's own critical preoccupations'.⁴⁷⁰ Indeed, Bray's arguments need to be reassessed, as Stewart claims throughout his study by exposing Bray's personal 'agenda' and 'political engagement' with the subject.⁴⁷¹ Yet, Bray's findings need reconsideration not only with regard to homosexuality and religion but prostitution as well. For in the three pages that Bray dedicates to homosexual prostitution in Renaissance England, references on

⁴⁶⁵ Gervase Babington, *A very fruitfull exposition of the Commaundements* (1583) <http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99844060> [accessed 6 May 2008]. Italics in the original.

⁴⁶⁶ On references and associations of the Pope with sodomy and prostitution – especially references to Pope Julius and Pope Gregory as 'procurers' of boys – see Alan Stewart, *Close Readers: Humanism and Sodomy in early modern England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 41-42.

⁴⁶⁷ Alan Stewart, 'A Society of Sodomites: Religion and Homosexuality in Renaissance England', in *Love, Friendship, and Faith in Europe, 1300-1800*, ed. by Laura Gowing, Michael Hunter and Miri Rubin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 88-109.

⁴⁶⁸ Stewart, 'A Society of Sodomites', p. 88.

⁴⁶⁹ Stewart, 'A Society of Sodomites', p. 89.

⁴⁷⁰ Stewart, 'A Society of Sodomites', p. 104.

⁴⁷¹ Stewart, 'A Society of Sodomites', p. 91.

Catholicism are absent.⁴⁷² The examples that Stewart cites for both religious sects – Protestant and Catholic – are significant concerning the ways in which we need to re-think accusations of sodomy in the monasteries and of ‘incontinence’ and ‘adultery’ outside the monasteries’ walls.⁴⁷³ According to Stewart, ‘the nature of the charges of sodomy is profoundly influenced and differentiated by the doctrinal allegiances of those accusing and those accused’.⁴⁷⁴ For, if French seminaries and universities were considered partly responsible for the sin of sodomy in England, the reverse was also the case, as Stewart informs, by drawing attention to the example of a Protestant singing master, Peter Chambers, who turned to Catholicism in 1608.⁴⁷⁵ In the second version of the story that Stewart cites we find that:

in Italy he had practised that sin but, drawn to be a catholic and make his confession, he was by his confessor severely checked and exhorted to vow continency [. . .] forsaking that profession he fell to his old vomit.⁴⁷⁶

Extravagance in dress was also a popular accusation highlighted by English writers in their effort to reproach the Italianate Englishman with indecency. Ascham’s visit to Italy is revealing concerning the dressing style:

I was once in Italie my selfe: but I thanke God, my abode there, was but ix. dayes: And yet I sawe in that litle tyme, in one Citie, more libertie to sinne, than euer I hard tell of in our noble Citie of London in ix. yeare. I sawe, it was there, as frée to sinne, not onelie without all punishment, but also without any mans marking, as it is free in the Citie of London, to chose, without all blame, whether a man lust to weare Shoe or pantocle. And good cause why: For being vnlike in troth of Religion, they must nedes be vnlike in honestie of liuing.

Why is the ‘pantocle’, which stands for slipper, indicative of immodesty? There seem to have been certain clothes and accessories that would be suggestive of indecency, libertinism and whoredom. Are these possible signs that could suggest a boy’s or man’s association with indecent exposure, which in turn linked him with male prostitute practice? While for Ascham foot exposure denotes indecency, for John Mason ‘pantofle’ alludes to vagina. Bly in her study of the Whitefriars theatre company

⁴⁷² Bray, pp. 53-55.

⁴⁷³ Stewart, ‘A Society of Sodomites’, p. 98.

⁴⁷⁴ Stewart, ‘A Society of Sodomites’, p. 94.

⁴⁷⁵ Stewart, ‘A Society of Sodomites’, p. 100.

⁴⁷⁶ Quoted in Stewart, ‘A Society of Sodomites’, p. 100.

usefully interconnects issues of prostitution, erotic punning and the ways in which objects, like the pantofle, become signs of erotic pornography. Her examination of the play *The Turke*, written by John Mason, indicates the importance that metaphor and wordplay had in early modern English textuality. Pantofle, who is Bordello's page, is desired by his master. Both names suggest that metaphoricity connected prostitution with homoeroticism. For "pantofle" is a shoe, a soft floppy slipper that carried an innuendo of vagina'.⁴⁷⁷ She later claims:

The designation of Bordello as a dog-fish and Pantofle as a vaginal slipper signals an adulteration of language: female and male genitalia overlap, male and female prostitution link and embrace, male and female bodies are both seen as containing secret, uncased openings.⁴⁷⁸

Connections with Italian style, fashions, the court and sexual deviancy were constant.

In his section on the Italianate Englishmen, Ascham's argument follows his description of the court, suggesting, therefore, that Ascham's problem was the coterie, and that Italianate English graduates, or anyone who fashioned himself in Italian style, were already pretending to be courtiers. In addition, the noblemen's son's negligence of studying was considered a source of corruption for the commonwealth. Ascham instructs:

The fault is in your selues, ye noble men sonnes, and therfore ye deserue the greater blame, that commonlie, the meaner mens children, cum to be, the wisest counsellours, and greatest doers, in the weightie affaires of this Realme. And why? for God will haue it so, of his prouidence: bicause ye will haue it no otherwise, by your negligence.

The accusations were also severe for another reason. These students travelled abroad, wasting their families' fortune without acquiring a degree. As Parks notes:

[. . .] the English who now went to Padua were no longer serious students but were instead upper-class youth in search of pleasure. They registered at the university, to be sure, but they took no degrees – for which indeed they would be required to profess the Catholic faith.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁷ Bly, p. 66.

⁴⁷⁸ Bly, p. 66.

⁴⁷⁹ George B. Parks, 'The First Italianate Englishmen', *Studies in the Renaissance*, 8 (1961), 197-216 (p. 207).

Like the English student at home, the Italianate English student valued the university more as a place for the rehearsal and acquisition of social skills than for its educational role, as Charlton notes.⁴⁸⁰ His aim was primarily his social advancement. It was this image of corruption and libertinism that the Italianate Englishman attracted and could not shed, due to his association with whoring and pandering.

The presence of Italy and Italian manners was also felt strongly in three other distinct ways. First, Italian and other foreign theatre companies were performing in England displaying women on stage, indicating Italy's notoriety for sexual immorality. In an unexpected defence of the English transvestite actor in *Pierce Penilesse* in 1592, Nash launched his attack on the foreign stage:

Our Players are not as the players beyond sea, a sort of squirting baudie Comedians, that haue whores and common Curtizans to play womens parts, and forbear no immodest speach or vnchast action that may procure laughter, but our Sceane is more stately furnisht than euer it was in the time of Roscius our representations honorable, and full of gallaunt resolution, not consisting like theirs of a Pantaloun, a Whore, and a Zanie, but of Emperours, Kings and Princes: whose true Tragedies (Sophocleo cothurno) they doo vaunt.

The second popular way Italy was brought into the country was through plays produced within England. Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre produced images of the corrupt and demoralised Italian court, thus perpetuating the demonical figure of the Italian courtier. These Italian locales on stage served as analogies to England, either for reasons of avoiding censorship, or as negative examples of courtly life. Nevertheless, theatrical representation managed to circulate successfully the notorious image of the Italian.

Last but not least, Italy was experienced through its literature. According to Ascham, corruption in England occurred through the introduction of new literary genres that threatened English morals:

Than they haue in more reuerence, the triumphes of Petrarche: than the Genesis of Moses: They make more accounte of *Tullies* offices, than *S. Paules* epistles: of a tale in *Bocace*, than a storie of the Bible. Than they counte as Fables, the holie misteries of Christian Religion.

⁴⁸⁰ Suggested in Charlton, p. 150.

As Charlton notes, the Italian novelle as well as ‘a range of vernacular fictional literature [. . .] could too easily corrupt the morals of the faithful by a wordly attachment to all that was evil in man’.⁴⁸¹ Aretino and Boccaccio were but two of the authors frequently mentioned for their unsuitability for the English mind. Yet, other literary genres made their way into England, either through translations or in their original form that brought the young men closer to other cultural and, consequently, sexual practices.

Foreign Literary scandals

A great variety of texts from continental Europe became available to the reading public from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, especially in schools and universities. The texts were regularly attacked in various diatribes and pamphlets for promulgating lasciviousness, thought by humanists and schoolmasters to corrupt youth. The church had already begun in the Middle Ages to censure and control the circulation of books and written material suspect in content for religious dissidence, treason and immorality. Yet, the press and some publishers seemed to be irrepressible since the influx of foreign literary texts was increasing. An instance of this was Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, whose contribution was enormous, by importing books, commissioning translations and employing Italian secretaries.⁴⁸²

We should not think, of course, that the male and female prostitutes were deeply involved in reading foreign literary texts. Although the gap between the literate and the illiterate narrowed relatively in the sixteenth century, the larger part of the population could still not read or write, at least in Latin, through which most of the Italian, Latin and Ancient Greek texts were accessible. It was with this idea in mind that Mulcaster wrote his *Positions* in 1581, in his effort to reach and instruct a wider readership:

⁴⁸¹ Kenneth Charlton, ‘“False Fonde Bookes, Ballades and Rimes”: An Aspect of Informal education in Early Modern England’, *History of Education Quarterly*, 27.4 (1987), 449-471 <<http://www.jstor.org>> [accessed 15 February 2008] (p. 451).

⁴⁸² Suggested in Charlton, *Education in Renaissance*, p. 45.

I do write in my naturall English tounge, bycause though I make the learned my iudges, which vnderstand Latin, yet I meane good to the vnlearned, which vnderstand but English.⁴⁸³

This was a significant period for the Renaissance revival of classical learning, since there was a ‘rapid development of Greek studies which were fostered by Bruno and Ficino’, a development that made itself felt among Englishmen who visited Italy during this period. Greek scholars had already been introduced into the Italian and English universities in search of patronage, as for example in 1445-6, when the King of England disbursed cash payments to four Greeks.⁴⁸⁴ The issue of Greek studies was a recurrent theme of debate among humanists such as Erasmus and More, as Charlton suggests.⁴⁸⁵ The revival and interpolation of Greek studies in the English universities since the late twelfth century, placed Italy at the epicentre of education. Italy, again, appeared to be the medium through which these texts became known to England and, although this revival was taken up slowly,⁴⁸⁶ it has been appreciated as the most significant movement in the educational institutions of England. There was some discontent however, concerning the languor of Greek studies in universities, not only in England but also in other European countries.

Despite Erasmus’ claim of the inadequacy of learning Latin without knowledge of Greek, the popularity of Greek studies was declining. It was not until the eighteenth century that serious editing and studying of Greek texts began in English and other European universities, either from the Ancient Greek era, the Hellenistic period or those Greek texts produced during the Roman era.⁴⁸⁷ Two of the Greek authors that were introduced and relatively quickly circulated during the early modern period were Lucian and Plutarch.

Born in Syria in 125 A.D., the Greek author Lucian was a source for a variety of literary genres that had an enormous impact on Renaissance society from the fifteenth until the seventeenth centuries. His *Dialogues of the Gods*, imaginery voyages and

⁴⁸³ Richard Mulcaster, *Positions* (1581)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99848169> [accessed 6 May 2008].

⁴⁸⁴ Suggested in Charlton, p. 53.

⁴⁸⁵ Suggested in Charlton, *Education in Renaissance*, p. 64.

⁴⁸⁶ Warren Boutcher, ‘‘Who Taught Thee Rhetoricke to Deceive a Maid?’’: Christopher Marlowe’s Hero and Leander, Juan Boscan’s Leandro, and Renaissance Vernacular Humanism’, *Comparative Literature*, 52.1 (2000), 11-52 <<http://www.jstor.org>> [accessed 15 February 2008] (p. 13).

⁴⁸⁷ Suggested in Charlton, *Education in Renaissance*, p. 159-160.

paradoxical encomnia, inspired diverse imitations throughout the European countries, especially in Italy. The pre-eminence of Florence in reviving Greek studies made Lucian available to many authors who capitalised on and imitated his literary works.⁴⁸⁸ Appreciated as a ‘newly discovered Greek author’ by Italian humanists, whose ‘knowledge of Greek antiquity was often limited to allusions found in Roman authors’,⁴⁸⁹ Lucian’s corpus was appropriated and in turn utilised to produce narratives similar to his works. One of his most known work was *Chattering Courtesans* that inspired imitations like Aretino’s *Ragionamenti*. Fifteen comic dialogues known to us structure this work and the dialogues are mainly preoccupied with the art of female prostitution. Only one dialogue (Dialogue 10) has a reference to homoeroticism between men, yet the work is important not only for its comedy and the information it gives us about prostitution but for the diversity that characterises his use of the genre. His texts became available in Latin translations from the early fifteenth century in Italy.⁴⁹⁰

Plutarch, born in Boetia in Greece in 46 A.D., was the second most highly circulated Greek author having a significant influence on English Renaissance literary culture. Thomas North produced a translation of *Lives* in 1579 and Plutarch’s *Moralia* were first translated into English in 1603 by Philemon Holland. Translations in Latin did exist prior to the English ones. In Plutarch, one instance of same-sex practice was available to Renaissance readers: the life of Demetrius of Macedon, also known as Poliorcetes (Conqueror).⁴⁹¹ Plutarch censures the Greek King’s sexual practices and gives only two examples of homoerotic practice, both with reference to Demetrius’ attempts to seduce boys and make them prostitutes. I will cite the passage quite extensively because it is one of the rare instances of homoeroticism to which a Renaissance readership could have had access. In this extract we learn that:

[Demetrius] defiled all the castell where was the temple of these holy virgines, with horrible and abominable insolencies, both towards younge

⁴⁸⁸ David Marsh, *Lucian and the Latins: Humor and Humanism in the Early Renaissance* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), p. 13.

⁴⁸⁹ Marsh, p. 8 and p. 9.

⁴⁹⁰ Lucian, *Chattering Courtesans and Other Sardonic Sketches*, transl. by Keith Sidwell (London: Penguin, 2004).

⁴⁹¹ Scott Giantvalley, ‘Barnfield, Drayton, and Marlowe: Homoeroticism and Homosexuality in Elizabethan Literature’, *Pacific Coast Philology*, 16.2 (1981), 9-24 <<http://www.jstor.org>> [accessed 15 February 2008] (p. 16). Giantvalley also mentions the homoerotic relationship Barnfield capitalised on by referring to Plutarch’s Agesilaus in his work *Lives*.

boyes of honest houses, as also vnto younge women of the citie [. . .] It shall not be greatly for the honor of the citie of Athens, to tell particularly all the abhominable partes he committed there. But Democles vertue and honestie deserueth worthy and condigne remembrance. [. . .] [H]e [Demetrius] sought diuers waies to intise him, both by fayer meanes, large promisses and giftes, and also with threates besides. But when he saw no man could bringe him to the bent of his bowe, and that the younge boye in the ende seeing him so importunate vpon him, came no more to the common places of exercise where other children vsed to recreate them selues, and that to auoide the common stooues, he went to wash him selfe in another secret stooue: Demetrius watching his time and hower of going thither, followed him, and got in to him being alone. The boy seing him selfe alone & that he could not resist Demetrius, tooke of the couer of the kete or chawdron where the water was boyling, and leaping into it, drewnd him selfe.⁴⁹²

Greek love however, was popularised and constructed around the myth of Ganymede, probably inspired by Lucian from his *Dialogues of the Gods*. The following extract is Heywood's translation in 1637 of 'Pleasant dialogues and dramma's, selected out of Lucian, Erasmus, Textor, Ovid, &c. With sundry emblems extracted from the most elegant Iacobus Catsius',⁴⁹³ which suggests the availability of the myth by the late sixteenth century and its popularisation by humanists such as Erasmus. The dialogue reads:

Iupiter.

Now kisse me, lovely Ganimed, for see,
Wee are at length arriv'd where wee would bee:
I have no crooked beak, no tallons keen,
No wings or feathers are about me seen;
I am not such as I but late appear'd.

. . .

[Ganim.]

Where shall I sleep a nights? what, must I ly
With my companion Cupid ?

Iup.

So then I
In vaine had rap'd thee: but I from thy sheep
Of purpose stole thee, by my side to sleep.

⁴⁹² Plutarch, *Lives* (1570)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:20243184> [accessed 28 May 2008].

⁴⁹³ Thomas Heywood, *Dialogues* (1637)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99839810> [accessed 19 May 2008].

Ganim.

Can you not lie alone? but will your rest
Seeme sweeter, if I nuzzle on your brest?

Iup.

Yes, being a childe so faire:

...

[Ganim.]

for I

Am ever so unruly where I lie,
Wallowing and tumbling, and such coile I keep,
That I shall but disturb you in your sleep.

Iupit.

In that the greater pleasure I shall take,
Because I love still to be kept awake.
I shall embrace and kisse thee then the offer,
And by that means my bed seem much the softer.

Ganim.

But whilst you wake I'll sleepe.

Iup.

Mercury , see
This Lad straight taste of immortalitie;
And making him of service capable,
Let him be brought to wait on us at table.

The Ganymede myth's entrance into English literary texts would be capitalised upon by writers who represented sexual encounters between men and boys. Among other Latin authors who talked openly about boy prostitutes and same-sex practise were Suetonius, Martial and Juvenal in their historical narratives, epigrams and satires respectively. Their texts were important sources for Italian and English authors who employed and constructed a vocabulary around male prostitution. For example, one of the most famous texts inspired by Martial's bawdy Epigrams was *Hermaphroditus* by Antonio Panormita, initially circulated in 1425.⁴⁹⁴ Multiple references to boy prostitutes are represented in this work yet, as far as is known, no English translations existed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These narratives were also involved in what might be seen as foreign literary scandals which created an anxiety regarding the practice of reading. Research into early editions of Juvenal's and Martial's works indicates that the translators and annotators of these editions shared the same anxieties with lexicographers concerning the nomenclature of sodomitical practice. Despite their

⁴⁹⁴ Antonio Panormita, *Hermaphroditus*, ed. by Eugene O'Connor (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2001), p. 1.

significant knowledge of Roman sexual practices, they also had, like the lexicographers, interpretative dilemmas and challenges with regard to words such as ‘pathic’, ‘cinaedi’, ‘mollies’ and ‘catamites’.

Take for example Juvenal’s ninth satire. Although not highly popular, this satire openly addresses the issue of male prostitution in Rome. Naevolus, an old male whore, converses with the satirist on issues of client and patron relations. The satire was available in a London edition in Latin in *Q. Horatii Flacci Venusini, poetae lyrici, poëmata omnia doctissimis scholijs illustrate* in 1574 and reproduced in 1585 together with Horace’s works.⁴⁹⁵ There was a separate edition in 1612, which was heavily annotated in Latin. The translated editions of 1644 and 1646 did not include it. Only the first six satires were reproduced. In 1647 however, all the satires were translated by Robert Stapylton and in this edition we find interesting annotations and explanatory notes on the margins concerning the satire’s subject matter.⁴⁹⁶ Highlighting the satire’s argument right at the beginning, it is the client and patron relation that is evoked, not male prostitution. As the argument informs:

A Dialogue the Poet frame;
Where poore lew’d Naevolus declames,
That nothing now th’unchst bestow,
But poison, when they jealous grow.
For feare whereof, he silence prays;
But stones will tell, the Poet sayes:
Gives him good counsel, but in vain,
So jeers, and leaves him to complain.

⁴⁹⁵ Horace, *Q. Horatii Flacci Venusini, poetae lyrici, poëmata omnia doctissimis scholijs illustrate* (1574) <http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99841886> [accessed 7 March 2011]; Horace, *Quincti Horatii Flacci Venusini, poetae lyrici, poemata omnia. Quibus adiunximus I. Iuuenalis & A. Persij opera: doctissima etiam in vnumquemq[ue] scholia & annotationes quàm maximè idoneas coniecimus. Iunii Iuuenalis et A. Persij Satyrae* (1585) <http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:52633299> [accessed 7 March 2011].

⁴⁹⁶ Juvenal, *Iunii Iuuenalis et Auli Persii Flacci satyrae cum annotationibus ad marginem, quae obscurissima quaeque dilucidare possint* (1612) <http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99843622> [accessed 6 March 2011]; also, Juvenal, *Juvenal's sixteen satyrs, or, A survey of the manners and actions of mankind with arguments, marginall notes, and annotations clearing the obscure places out of the history, lawes, and ceremonies of the Romans by Sir Robert Stapylton* (1647) <http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12417949> [accessed 6 March 2011].

Loosely translated, but without altering the satire's subject matter, the translator, possibly for reasons of decorum, attempts to conceal as far as he can sexual references. Thus, in line 32 he translates 'pleased their husbands' instead of 'mounting their husbands'.⁴⁹⁷ Also in line 49 Stapylton's translation reads:

Beckon now my paines,
I'st easie, when a handsome _ one straines
Into a stinking _ and there shall greet
The Bowels, and the last night's supper meet.

'Penis' and 'ass' are omitted. The commentary on the margins stresses the patron-client relation as for example 'the malice of servants' in line 139 and in line 150: 'Great men slaves to their servants.' This is the point where the satirist advises Naevolus that 'The part that is most evill, is the tongue/ And yet the Lord's condition is far worse,/ Fears them, that live upon his bread and purse.'

However, there are instances where the translation is quite explicit concerning homoeroticism, where in fact it could have been avoided. In line 119 Stapylton translates 'For the smooth Cynade is the deadliest foe,/ So jealous of his secret, what we know,/ As if it were betray'd', whereas the Latin original text does not include the word 'cinaedian'. Current translations do not include the word either, and what Stapylton interprets as a cynaedian is Naevolus' patron. Yet, the translator not only names the patron cynaedian but also indicates in a comment on the margins that cynaedians are 'Wicked persons [and] ver[y] suspicious'. Similarly, in line 44, 'mollis' from the Latin original is translated 'pathick whore', whereas a modern translation would read 'pervert'. These are titillating textual examples for they are more explicit in comparison to the original text. Either for reasons of accuracy or of misunderstanding Stapylton attributes vice and prostitution only to the patron. Certainly, as a satire, it is Naevolus who is ridiculed, which the translator understands, when he indicates right from the start that Naevolus is a 'covetous person'. For example in line 361 he translates: 'Feare not, thoul't nev'e want Pathick friends, so long/ As these Hills stand and flourish, they will t[h]rong to Rome'. The commentary instructs 'Vice will flourish'. Further annotations at the end of the satire give more insight to Stapylton's reading process, knowledge and interpretation.

⁴⁹⁷ Juvenal, *The Satires*, transl. by Niall Rudd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 81.

In his annotation Stapylton indicates that the 'Fanes' are 'very stewes, as that of Isis sat. 6. verse 513'. Aufidius is defined as '[a] Lascivious Grecian of Childs, much cry'd up among the Beauties and the Pathicks.' 'Virro', a name also used in Juvenal's fifth satire is explained as 'one of that sect, whereof you read sat. 2. verse 105. where they worship the good Goddesse or Goddesse Bona the clean contrary way'. The name of course, plays upon the meaning of 'vir', which means 'man', as Hubbard indicates.⁴⁹⁸ As he notes the sect indicates a culture of 'transvestite men'. Yet, Stapylton in his annotation on 'Pathick' indicates 'Virro'. Juvenal's choice of the name is interesting for it does not allude only to 'vir' but also to 'virosus, a, um' which was defined in Thomas Thomas' dictionary in 1587 as 'desiron [sic] of or lusting after man, full of manlie force, valiant as a man. Virosa mulier Lucill. A flawed or arrant whore.'⁴⁹⁹ Thus, the effeminacy of Virro is exposed as in the annotation concerning verse 62:

Female] In the Calends of March, when the Matrimonialia, the female feasts were kept; the Roman Ladies dressed up in all their splendour, used to sit under a cloth of state, in a chaire set upon Carpets, and to receive presents from their husbands or servants. This the Effeminate Virro imitates, and his poor servant Naevolous must be at the charge, to send him Vmbrella's fannes, amber bowles, & c.

The above examples indicate that lexicographers and translators deciphered male prostitute practice in these texts, yet there seems to be some indeterminacy as to who the actual prostitute was, similar to the modern cultural anxieties concerning the application of prostitution to men. For like the Brazilian travestis mentioned in the Introduction, it is the patron who is named a whore, a pathic and a cynaedian, due to his sexual role as passive and his association with effeminacy through cross-dressing, as the above annotation indicates. 'Pathic' and 'cynaedian', two of the most easily defined utterances are used interchangeably and what is clearly prostitute practice between men becomes an amalgam of patron-client relations, transvestism, sexual roles and identities. For even in Juvenal's second satire, another satire popular for its homoerotic content, the translator comments in verse 14: 'Socraticke catamite] Socrates Tutour to

⁴⁹⁸ Thomas K. Hubbard, ed., *Homosexuality in Greece and Rome: A Sourcebook of Basic Documents* (California: University of California Press, 2003), p. 438.

⁴⁹⁹ Thomas Thomas, *Dictionatium linguae Latinae et Anglicanae* (1587)
<<http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk>> [accessed 15 October 2009].

Alcibiades did not only read virture to his pupil, but was shrewdly suspected to have practiced vice with him.’ This refers to lines 10-13:

No trust to faces. For what street but fills
With reverend vices? thou rebuk’st our ills,
When thou thy selfe art knowne to be so right,
So perfect a Socraticke catamite.

‘Reverend vices’ refers to what is now widely translated as ‘stern-faced sodomites’ whereas the Latin word in the original is ‘obsceni’. In addition, what we now read in modern editions as ‘Socratic fairies’ and Stapylton translates ‘Socraticke catamite’ reads in the original as ‘socraticos notissima fossa cinaedos’. In Juvenal’s Latin edition of 1612, edited by Thomas Farnaby, similar explanatory notes appear next to the word ‘cineadian’ but this time in both Latin and Greek: ‘αυτος αφ’ εφελκεται ανδρα κιναιδος, i. ipse cinaedus attrahit vel pellicit ad te virum’. In the 1585 edition of Horace and Juvenal, Naevolus is named ‘cinaedis’ and ‘pathicus’ and the editor’s annotation reads: ‘Qui digito, hoc versis, mollem & pathicum perstringit’, translated approximately ‘with his finger, and these verses, [he] vilifies him [the patron] as a molly and a pathic’. Such is the flexibility and ambiguity around the language of homoeroticism, which indicates not only the plethora of the vocabulary which was used during the Renaissance but also the tendency on the translator’s part to recapitalise and redefine the words available. As for the transvestite men that parodied the rites of goddesse Bonna, the translator indicates on the margins: ‘The progresse and decrees in sinning. Priests drest up like Curtizans.’ This is an explanatory comment on lines 100-104 in the second satire:

One of those Priests thous’t by degrees become,
That in long fillets bind their haire at home,
Be-jewell all their necks, and with a great
Full goblet and a young sow’s paunch, intreat
The goddesse Bona, an unusuall way.

Thus, the second satire is utilised in order to read the ninth satire, extracting lines from the former and inserting them as annotations to the latter.

As with Juvenal’s satires, Martial’s ‘Epigrams’ were famous for their pornographic and bawdy content. They were published in England in Latin in 1615 and

annotated by Thomas Farnaby.⁵⁰⁰ All of the extracts that refer to male prostitution and same-sex desire exist. Yet, the 1656 translation excludes all the epigrams that have a homoerotic content apart from one. This is Epigram 50 from Book 6 and Robert Fletcher chooses to translate it as follows:

Whiles *Thelesine* embraced his chast friends stil.
His gown was short and thred-bare, cold and mean,
But since he serv'd foul Gamesters and obscaene
Now he buyes Fields, Plate, Tables at his will.
Wouldst thou grow rich *Bithinicus*? live vain:
Pure kisses will yield none, or little gain.

‘Cinaedi’ is translated ‘obscaene’ in Fletcher’s attempt to interpret this epigram. Also, in the 1629 edition translated by Thomas Esquire, all homoerotic epigrams are missing and so it appears that homoerotic language in Martial was only available in the original Latin.

Historical narratives also provided Renaissance readership with interesting information with regard to the male-sex trade. An important translation of Suetonius in 1606 by Philemon Holland, concerning the life of Tiberius, later dramatised by Ben Jonson, is another instance of homoerotic practice with explicit reference to male prostitution. Probably, it is with this text that the popular Latin word in Roman times ‘spintria’ makes its entrance into English language, retaining its meaning of ‘male prostitute’. As Suetonius narrates:

But during the time of his private abode in Capreae, he devised a roome with seates and benches in it, even a place of purpose for his secret wanton lusts. To furnish it there were sought out and gathered from all parts, a number of youngs drabbes and stale Catamites, sorted together· such also as invented monstrous kinds of libidinous filthinesse, whom he termed Spintriae: who being in three rankes or rewes linked together should abuse and pollute one anothers bodie before his face: that by the verie sight of them he might stirre up his owne cold courage and fainting

⁵⁰⁰ Martial, *M. Val. Martialis epigrammaton libri Animaduersi, emendati et commentariolis luculenter explicate* (1615)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99847558> [accessed 5 March 2011]; Martial, *Ex otio negotium. Or, Martiall his epigrams translated. With sundry poems and fancies*, by R. Fletcher (1656)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99863018> [accessed 5 March 2011].

lust. Hee had bed chambers besides, in many places, which he adorned with tables and petie puppets: representing in the one sort, most lascivious pictures, and in the other as wanton shapes and figures.⁵⁰¹

However, schoolmasters and humanists in England were scandalised by references to prostitution and sexual practices and considered them to constitute a serious threat to young men's morals. Thomas Nash, although an ardent supporter of poetry, in his works sought to instruct the reading public of England with specific references to the Latin poets and Italians. These were some of the first instances in Renaissance English literary history where foreign literature was portrayed as evil. In *Strange Newes* in 1592 he condemned Latin poets and Italian authors for writing for pleasure, accusing them for gallantry:

Horace, Perseus, Iuuenall, [. . .] yet had you with the Phrigian melodie, that stirreth men vp to battaile and furie, mixt the Dorian tune that fauoreth mirth and pleasure, your vnsugred piles (howeuer excellently medicinable) would not haue beene so harsh in the swallowing. So likewise Archilochus, thou like the preachers to the Curtizans in Roome, that expound to them all Lawe and no Gospell, art all gall and no spleene. [. . .] Lucian, Iulian, Aretine, all three admirably blest in the abundant giftes of art and nature: yet Religion which you sought to ruinate, hath ruinated your good names, and the opposing of your eyes against the bright sunne, hath causd the worlde condemne your sight in all other thinges.⁵⁰²

The Italian novellas by Aretino and, once again, Latin poetry like Ovid's were also frowned upon. In *Summers Last Will and Testament*, published in 1600, Nash associated whoredom with foreign literature, indicating that these authors taught prostitutes and panders their trade:

Innumerable monstrous practises,
Hath loytring contemplation brought forth more,
Which t'were too long particular to recite:
Suffice they all conduce vnto this end,
To banish labour, nourish slothfulnesse,
Pamper vp lust, deuise newfangled sinnes.
Nay I will iustifie there is no vice,

⁵⁰¹ Suetonius, *The historie of tvvelve Caesars emperours of Rome* (1606)
<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99838999> [accessed 16 May 2007].

⁵⁰² Thomas Nash, *Strange Newes* (1592)
<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845689> [accessed 24 April 2008].

Which learning and vilde knowledge brought not in,
 Or in whose praise some learned haue not wrote.
 The arte of murther Machiauel hath pend:
 Whoredome hath Ouid to vphold her throne:
 And Aretine of late in Italie,
 Whose Cortigiana toucheth bawdes their trade.⁵⁰³

His reference, of course, is to Aretino's *Ragionamenti*, which had been made available by Wolfe from 1584. As Bly usefully suggests, by quoting Joseph Hall's sermon of 1629, even '[s]eventeenth-century theologians unhesitatingly condemn those who 'vpon your voluptuous beds act the filthinesse of *Sodomiticall Aretinismes*''.⁵⁰⁴ Similarly, in *The Anatomie of Absurditie* of 1589, Nash instructed youth to abstain from reading Virgil and Ovid, representing parts of Latin poetry as lustful and wanton. As he advises:

I woulde not haue any man imagine, that in praying of Poetry, I endeuour to approoue Virgils vnchast Priapus, or Ouids obscenitie, I commende their witte, not their wantonnes, their learning, not their lust: yet euen as the Bée out of the bitterest flowers, and sharpest thistles gathers honey, so out of the filthiest Fables, may profitable knowledge be suclted and selected. Neuerthesse tender youth ought to bee restrained for a time from the reading of such ribauldrie, least chewing ouer wantonlie the eares of this Summer Corne, they be choaked with the haune before they can come at the karnell.⁵⁰⁵

Yet, the single and most common figure to become a popular emblem of male prostitution was the Pope, and like the foreign literary scandals, this figure would be borrowed from Italy. References to the Pope, as aforementioned, were abundant, concerning his maintenance of 'stews of both kinds'.

University plays, performed either in Latin or translated into English, provided also a substantial contribution to the knowledge of antiquity in educational institutions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Through their performance, the student was able to practice eloquence and rhetoric, as well as comprehend Latin grammar. As popular literary theatrical genres, university plays would be performed either within the university or in noblemen's households. The patronage of the latter was important for

⁵⁰³ Thomas Nash, *Summers Last Will and Testament* (1600)
 <http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845698> [accessed 24 April 2008].

⁵⁰⁴ Quoted in Bly, p. 5.

⁵⁰⁵ Thomas Nash, *Anatomie of Absurditie* (1589)
 <http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845700> [accessed 2 May 2008].

the financial support of schools and some children's theatrical companies. The tradition of the university play had an enormous impact on the commercial theatre in Renaissance England, since it facilitated the development of the theatrical institution and attributed to the 'evolution of public modes of drama'.⁵⁰⁶ Yet, this was only part of the argument for the suitability of these plays for students, both as spectators and actors, and for adult audiences.

University plays did not escape anti-theatrical accusations of indecency and immorality. Not only did these plays teach students effeminate manners but also, in some cases, the children's companies provided actors to the commercial theatre. In addition, concerns were raised about university wits, poets and playwrights who prostituted their knowledge and language in the public domain, especially the commercial theatre.⁵⁰⁷ In Chapter 3 I examined the argumentation concerning university and commercial drama as instructed within anti-theatrical discourse. Here, I am concerned with the insertion of foreign theatrical genres in the educational institutions. Plautus, Terence, and to a lesser extent Aristophanes, were authors who were introduced in a debate around the corruption of the youth. The schoolmaster and university tutor were responsible this time, due to their endeavours to revive Roman comedies in schools and universities. Rainolds' opposition and requirement for the banishment of Terence from universities converged with similar ideas that arose in some Catholic countries, for example in France,⁵⁰⁸ where humanists thought that teachers 'inclined [their] students towards corruption' by teaching such material.⁵⁰⁹ In his *School of Abuse*, written in 1579, Stephen Gosson also states that:

But the Comedies that are exercised in oure daies are better sifted. They shewe no such branne: The first smelte of Plautus, these tast of Menander; the lewdenes of Gods, is altred and chaunged to the loue of young men; force, to friendshippe; rapes, too mariage; wooing allowed by assurance of wedding; priuie meetinges of bachelours and maidens on the stage, not as murderers that deuour the good name ech of other in their mindes, but as those that desire to bee made one in hearte. Nowe

⁵⁰⁶ Darryll Grantley, *Wit's Pilgrimage: Drama and the Social Impact of Education in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p. 6.

⁵⁰⁷ For further examination of playwrights and the ways in which they prostituted their wits see Grantley's Chapter Four, 'Poesies sacred garlands': education and the playwright', pp. 71-102.

⁵⁰⁸ David McPherson, 'Roman Comedy in Renaissance Education: The Moral Question', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 12.1 (1981), 19-30 <<http://www.jstor.org>> [accessed 15 February 2008] (p. 25).

⁵⁰⁹ McPherson p. 24.

are the abuses of the worlde reuealed, euery man in a play may see his owne faultes, and learne by this glasse, to amende his manners.⁵¹⁰

The issue of the suitability of these plays had been a matter of debate even as late as the end of the seventeenth century between James Drake and Jeremy Collier by giving a plethora of examples concerning instances of lewdness on stage. For plays like Plautus' *Curculio* also made available instances of male prostitution. As the theatre manager states in Act IV scene 1 while uncovering the sexual underworld of Ancient Rome:

Below the Old Shops are those who lend and borrow upon usury. Behind the temple of Castor are those whom you would do ill to trust too quickly. In the Tuscan Quarter are those worthies who sell themselves—either those who turn themselves or give others a chance to turn.⁵¹¹

Curculio, like many Roman and Greek comedies, was also available to Renaissance readers, and examples of men embracing and kissing actually featured in most anti-theatrical diatribes as scandalous instances of representation. It would have been interesting, as we saw with Juvenal's satires, whether annotators during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made comments apropos homoerotic scenes, and the kind of vocabulary they used to describe them.

Censorship and expurgation of some texts were required by commentators who opposed Roman comedy, by following Plutarch's and Quintilian's instructions. Ascham, although in a section of *The Scholemaster* praises Plautus, in other instances he is critical of the Roman dramatists by comparing them to 'meane painters':

that worke by halfes, and be cunning onelie, in making the worst part of the picture, as if one were skilfull in painting the bodie of a naked person, from the navel downward, but nothing else.⁵¹²

Once again, the exposure of nakedness and secret parts is the issue here. In addition, Vives would have liked 'to see cut out of both of these writers [Terence and Plautus] all

⁵¹⁰ Stephen Gosson, *The schoole of abuse conteining a plesaunt inuectiue against poets, pipers, plaiers, iesters, and such like caterpillers of a comonwelth* (1579)
<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99899035> [accessed 10 March 2011].

⁵¹¹ Plautus, *Curculio* <<http://artemis.austincollege.edu/acad/cml/rcape/comedy/4-1.html>> [accessed 10 March 2011].

⁵¹² Quoted in McPherson, p. 22.

those parts which could taint the minds of boys with vices, to which our natures approach by the encouragement, as it were, of a nod'.⁵¹³

As McPherson explains, this opposition to Roman comedy and its revival 'manifested itself chiefly in the Puritan movement in England and Counter-Reformation thought in Catholic countries'.⁵¹⁴ Yet, the translator of Terence, Richard Bernard in 1598, defended the reading of Roman comedies. In his dedicatory epistle, as McPherson notes, Bernard urged students to engage with reading such works. He claims:

[Terence] will tell you the nature of the fraudulent flatterer, the grimme and greedie old Sire, the roysting ruffian, the minsing minion, and beastly bawd; that in telling the truth by these figments, men might become wise to avoid such vices, and learne to practise vertue: which was Terence purpose in setting of these comedies forth in latin, mine translating them into english: & this end I desire you to propound to your selves in reading them, so shall you use them, & not as most doe such autors, abuse them.⁵¹⁵

Without being explicit about homoeroticism or prostitution, Bernard points out stock characters that proliferated on the Renaissance stage. He might not refer to them as panders, servants, courtiers, ingles, Ganymedes and prostitutes but his choice of words indicates precisely those figures with whom a Renaissance audience was so familiar.

These foreign literary scandals, surrounding prostitutes and male whores in particular, were some of the most popular examples imported from abroad. The ways in which they could influence the noble young mind was constantly talked about, betraying an anxiety that was very topical in nature. We might want to differentiate here the actual male whore from the figurative male prostitute and yet the texts suggest that we should view them as tautological. Represented in poetry, drama and prose fiction, the male prostitute was used and evoked for various reasons. An important one was to facilitate ideological formations around misogyny, class differentiation, social fluidity and anxiety about same-sex practice. Within this framework we should probably view accusations of effeminacy, sodomy and lasciviousness. Schoolmasters, humanists and literary writers imbued his figure with notions of treason, rebelliousness, heresy and sexual illegitimacy. Allusions to the Latin and Greek authors, who introduced the literary male whore in language, were always present in Renaissance writings, but that

⁵¹³ Quoted in McPherson, p. 27.

⁵¹⁴ McPherson, p. 23.

⁵¹⁵ Quoted in McPherson, p. 22.

did not legitimise the male whore's existence, nor his repetitive representation. For the figurative male prostitute now became visible in the streets and various social institutions, infiltrating indiscriminately the elite, the middling sort and the lower social strata.

Constructions of masculinity, effeminacy and learning

In the early modern period the appreciation of education was quite contradictory concerning its values and benefits. On the one hand we have views that acknowledge education as a prerequisite for the development of the proper man. Courtly, religious and chivalric notions of the self figured in a range of texts, eager to indicate ways through which masculine identity could be formed for the benefit of the commonwealth. On the other hand, authors criticised the scholar's extreme dedication to learning. Effeminacy, heresy and discontent were common accusations that burdened the humanist and, not surprisingly, these accusations evolved within humanistic writings, as Mike Pincombe argues.⁵¹⁶

The paradoxes of Elizabethan humanism are interestingly examined in Pincombe's book *Elizabethan Humanism: Literature and Learning in the later Sixteenth Century*. Pincombe forcefully argues that there were intrinsic contradictions within Elizabethan humanism, which denounced medieval chivalric romance as not orthodox⁵¹⁷ and the composing of courtly poetry as a traditionally idle and vain activity.⁵¹⁸ Pincombe reminds us that, '[a]s a discourse, humanism is a plurality of discourses'.⁵¹⁹ I do not wish here to reiterate Pincombe's examination of the different kinds of humanism(s) that constituted Elizabethan humanism. It needs to be mentioned however, that in some cases the model of the Renaissance man did not rely exclusively on chivalric notions. It was rather a mixture of courtly and scholarly qualities because of 'the humanist's polyhistorical impulse paraded by the courtly ideal of sprezzatura'.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁶ Mike Pincombe, *Elizabethan Humanism: Literature and Learning in the late Sixteenth Century* (London: Pearson Education, 2001), p. 81.

⁵¹⁷ Suggested in Pincombe, p. 150.

⁵¹⁸ Suggested in Pincombe, p. 55.

⁵¹⁹ Pincombe, p. 196.

⁵²⁰ Pincombe, p. 56.

Pincombe later notes: 'As a consequence, Elizabethan humanism occupies a wide range of positions between secular polymathy and amorous trifles, with a tendency to slip from the former to the latter rather than the other way around.'⁵²¹ In this part I would like to focus on the concepts of effeminacy and masculinity and the ways in which they were closely linked to learning and school life. For humanists, schoolmasters and educated courtiers who dedicated themselves to learning and its aspects of rhetoric, eloquence and courtesy, quite puzzlingly, were associated with images of prostitution.

Effeminacy in court and universities was seen to emanate not only from the Italian influence but also from excessive learning. Therefore, physical exercise was seen as an important part of a gentleman's training. As Mulcaster's *Positions* illustrate, hunting, hawking and fencing were significant practices that a young man should master. The schoolmaster should be responsible for the student's activities as much as his literary qualifications.

Although music and dancing were apprehended as feminising forces, Mulcaster supported these artistic qualities in a young man's education. By alluding to the Greek and Roman traditions of teaching and their intrinsic differences Mulcaster noted:

But howsoeuer daunsing be or be thought to be, seing it is held for an exercise, we must thinke there is some great good in it, though we protecte not the ill, if any come by it. Which good we must seeke to get, and praie those maisters, which fashion it with order in time, with reason in gesture, with proportion in number, with harmonie in Musick, to appoint it so, as it may be thought both seemely and sober, and so best besee me such persons, as professe sobrietie.⁵²²

Moderation was always advised for the use of such activities because they facilitated lewdness and effeminacy. We should keep in mind that these were qualities appreciated in young boy actors, by those who did not oppose the theatrical institution.

Yet, how were learning and school life connected to effeminacy? As discussed earlier, the literary scandals from abroad were seen as leading to loose behaviour. Vives, Mulcaster, Ascham and others were eager to stress the unsuitability of reading

⁵²¹ Pincombe, p. 56.

⁵²² Richard Mulcaster, *Positions* (1581)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99848169> [accessed 6 May 2008].

foreign literary genres that titillated the reader. Vives' *Dialogues* written in 1538, mentioned a certain Lusco who, because in love, gives himself to 'loose Latins'.⁵²³

In addition, women were seen as sources of degeneration leading to effeminate manners. Vives' very first dialogue takes place between a woman and a boy and displays how routine habits such as dressing, combing and washing could have an effeminising effect on the boy, once learned from a woman. The boy, called Emmanuel, refuses Beatrice's orders concerning morning practices. When she tries to dress him and make him ready for school, Emmanuel exclaims: 'With your worrying curiosity you would have already plagued a bull to death, let alone a man. You think you are clothing not a boy, but a bride.'⁵²⁴

Too much attention to female company led to effeminacy, as critics have noted,⁵²⁵ and schoolmasters, within the homosocial locales of schools and universities, warned students to avoid contact with women. Nash in *The Anatomie of Absurditie* claimed:

What is a woman, but an enemy to friendship, a necessary pain, a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desired calamity, a domestic danger, a delectable detriment, the nature of which is evil shadowed with the colour of goodness. Therefore if to put her away be a sin, to keep her still must needs be a torment.⁵²⁶

For Sir Thomas Elyot, who authored *The Governor* in 1531, 'boys should be removed from the company of women' by the age of seven.⁵²⁷ Yet as John Donne states in one of his epigrams on 'Manliness': 'Thou call'st me effeminate, for I love women's joys;/ I call not thee manly, though thou follow boys.'⁵²⁸ Thus, effeminacy is not solely associated with women but with boys as well.

⁵²³ Foster Watson, *Tudor School-Boy Life: The Dialogues of Juan Luis Vives* (London: Frank Cass & Co Ltd, 1970), p. 47.

⁵²⁴ Watson, p. 4.

⁵²⁵ See Chapter Two in Alan Sinfield, *The Wilde Century* (London: Cassell, 1994).

⁵²⁶ Thomas Nash, *Anatomie of Absurditie* (1589)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845700> [accessed 2 May 2008].

⁵²⁷ Alice T. Friedman, 'The Influence of Humanism on the Education of Girls and Boys in Tudor England', *History of Education Quarterly*, 25.1/2 (1985), 57-70 <<http://www.jstor.org>> [accessed 15 February 2008] (p. 61).

⁵²⁸ John Donne, 'Manliness', in *John Donne: The Complete English Poems*, ed. by Albert J. Smith (London: Penguin, 1971), p. 152.

Another agent that led to effeminacy was entertainment, which historians prefer to call ‘informal education’.⁵²⁹ Theatrical spectacles were referred to as lewd and effeminate. Gesturing and excessive physical movement of the body was censured. Vives in his *Dialogues* advised young gentlemen:

Our speech should be neither arrogant nor marked by fear, nor (would he have it by turns) abject and effeminate [. . .] When we are speaking, the hands should not be tossed about, nor the head shaken, nor the side bent, nor the forehead wrinkled, nor the face distorted, not the feet shuffling.⁵³⁰

In the same manner, speech and rhetoric should be used moderately. Notice in the following extract how Ascham connects learning and manhood through physical expression:

Is he, that is apte by goodnes of witte, and appliable by readines of will, to learning, hauing all other qualities of the minde and partes of the bodie, that must an other day serue learning, not trobled, ma[]gled, and halfed, but sounde, whole, full, & hable to do their office: as, a tong, not stamering, or ouer hardlie drawing forth wordes, but plaine, and redie to deliuer the meaning of the minde: a voice, not softe, weake, piping, womannishe, but audible, stronge, and manlike: a countenance, not werishe and crabbed, but faire and cumlie: a personage, not wretched and deformed, but taule and goodlie: for surelie, a cumlie countenance, with a goodlie stature, geueth credit to learning, and authoritie to the person: otherwise commonlie, either open contempte, or priuie disfaour doth hurte, or hinder, both person and learning.

Erasmus was probably one of the first to link speech and excessive talking with whoredom, by following the Bible:

If you see any man with uncontrolled tongue, think of him as a harlot; step back from this pit, lest, as the scripture warns elsewhere, loving danger, you should perish in it (4:725).⁵³¹

In her exciting article ‘On the Tongue: Cross Gendering, Effeminacy, and the Art of Words’, Patricia Parker examines ‘the anxieties of effeminacy which attended any man

⁵²⁹ Suggested in Charlton, *Education in Renaissance*, p. 229.

⁵³⁰ Watson, p. 241.

⁵³¹ Patricia Parker, ‘‘On the Tongue’: Cross Gendering, Effeminacy, and the Art of Words’, *Style*, 23.3 (1989), 445-465 (p. 447).

whose province was the art of words'.⁵³² Being repeatedly 'encoded as womanish or effeminate'⁵³³ such charges of effeminacy were 'applied not only to philosophers and makers of laws but to poets and scholars, 'excessive' in 'their enthusiasm for writing or lecturing''.⁵³⁴ An example that illustrates a close relation of talking to harlotry is Hamlet:

Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must like a whore unpack my heart with words
And fall a-cursing like a very drab,
A scullion! Fie upon't! Foh! (2.2, ll. 578-583)⁵³⁵

Pincombe notes that:

The last word should perhaps read 'stallion': a male prostitute to go with the female 'drab'. But whether we are dealing here with household menials or the whores of the streets, the point of Hamlet's self-accusation is the same: he has broken the first rule of humanitas by lapsing into vulgarity.⁵³⁶

This is not an arbitrary assumption to substitute 'stallion' for 'scullion'. The second quarto of Hamlet has 'stallyon' in place of 'scullion', suggesting probably a complementary synonym for 'drab'. This indeterminacy further suggests the mutual sharing of qualities that a servant could have with a female or male whore. Menials, as the worse kind of domestic servants, could have been used as sexual servants, since it was up to their master's preference whether to abuse them sexually or not. Similar to his vulgarity, Hamlet also accuses himself as a whore due to his indecisiveness to act. This seems to be the outcome of excessive learning and use of eloquence for the Renaissance man, which the play resolves in the end by staging Hamlet fencing with Horatio.

Yet, there seem to be contradictory ideological structures around womanhood and prostitution. Although 'proper' women were constantly disassociated from whoredom - 'a whore was no woman' - it seems that the vocabulary of womanhood never really got rid of whoredom. We would have expected here a kind of protection

⁵³² Parker, pp. 445-446.

⁵³³ Parker, p. 447.

⁵³⁴ Parker, p. 449.

⁵³⁵ Harold Jenkins, ed., *The Arden Shakespeare: Hamlet* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1982).

⁵³⁶ Pincombe, p. 187.

around womanhood through its demarcation from prostitution. Yet, this is not what happened and nor could that discourse possibly have operated in such a way as to release women from such associations. For when men were thought, misogynistically, to degenerate into womanhood, it was the image of the whore that authors relied on in order to portray boys and effeminate men. The image of the prostitute, although attributed now indiscriminately to women, men and boys, sustained its feminine qualities. Such constructions of womanhood, contrary and at the same time tautological with prostitution, contributed to different perspectives concerning the education of girls.

As a heavily charged insult to both men and women, whoredom was constructed ineluctably through discourses around femininity. Patricia Parker, in her discussion of *Hamlet* and *Othello* remarks:

We have to do here, of course, as in the whole tradition of humanism as an affair of men, not with two genders – though the topoi repeatedly erect the gendering division – but with one that expands to include both and, even more specifically, in the case of Shakespeare, with a stage tradition in which ‘the woman’s part’ is taken literally by men.⁵³⁷

Certainly, gender divisions became manifest and, with regard to prostitution, the differentiation between whores and prostitute boys betrayed a discriminative favouritism to the boy’s social status.

Yet, to mention associations between men and female harlots was more acceptable and socially tolerable than any references to sexual activity between prostitute boys and men. The latter instances were rarely mentioned, difficult to prove due to the status of the boy, and hard to be distinguished from the category of sodomy. Even silence seems to work here in favour of manhood. Indeed, in most early modern texts we have an abundance of literary evidence that associates men and students with female whores rather than ingles, catamites or Ganymedes.

Thus, textualised prostitute scandals, whether foreign or domestic, figurative or actual, would enforce pre-existing misogynistic images of adulterous sex outside marriage. Within this male business of textual production, literary scandals were constructed by men for men, and not for women and/or boys, another equation that rendered women and boys equally vulnerable to the practice of reading.

⁵³⁷ Parker, p. 453.

Social mobility, universities and the image of the whore

Social advancement was a major source of cultural and social anxiety for early modern English society. As locales that could provide the means for social aggrandizement, the universities and the Inns of Courts were populated by young men who sought to establish a career in court and infiltrate elite circles. Prioritising social skills over educational qualifications, the students were notorious for rebelliousness and violence. Not only the students from abroad, like the Italianate Englishmen, but students at home, did not acquire degrees and often did not even attend lectures. Their negligence was a common source of attack. In fact, studies like Charlton's have shown the overestimation of the revolution in the educational system in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵³⁸

The effects were felt in the city of London: law students raiding brothels and theatres; inadequate studying of Latin and Greek; overcrowding of taverns and theatres and insufficient skills on the schoolmasters' part to teach pupils at school. Opposition from humanists was severe. Ascham accused gentlemen and courtiers-to-be of brutishness and sensuality. Courtiers were seen as 'ruffians'. As Pincombe suggests, 'for Ascham, scholarship and courtiership were largely irreconcilable'.⁵³⁹

In addition, discouragement of students crowding the universities was frequent. Mulcaster, for example, would oppose the influx of students in universities, as Grantley suggests.⁵⁴⁰ For him the rising middling sort was to be preferred for entry into universities. In a telling comparison with the youth in foreign countries, Mulcaster mentions the ways in which foreign children are put into the sex-trade. This is in Chapter 36 in *Positions* written in 1581, concerning the education of boys, and we should take the youth in this paragraph as indicating boys rather than girls, since the education of maidens is discussed in a later section. Note again the association of practices 'contrary to nature' with religion:

But for my number I neede not to dwell any longer in to many, for troubling all with to many wordes, seeing all wise men see, and all learned men say, that it is most necessary to disburden a common weale

⁵³⁸ Charlton, p. 167.

⁵³⁹ Pincombe, p. 76.

⁵⁴⁰ Grantley, p. 20.

of vnecessary number, & multitude in generall, which in some countries they compassed by brothelry, and common stewes, to let the yong spring: in some by exposition and spoile of enfantes, both contrary to nature, and contermaunded by religion: but according to their pollicie and commaunded by their countries. In particuler disposing of them that liued, they cast their account, & as the proportion of their states did suffer: so did they allote them with choice, and constrained them to obey. If such regard for multitude be to be had in any one branche of the common weale, it is most needefull in schollers.⁵⁴¹

Still, the nobility overcrowded academies and the bursaries that were supposed to support poorer students were attributed to those who belonged to the upper class.⁵⁴²

By the mid-sixteenth century, narratives concerning the behaviour of courtiers started appearing, a popular genre that arose to fit the needs of the courtier-to-be and to enforce class distinction. Due to the rapid changing social conditions, these texts aimed at the protection of the young gentleman by offering advice and indicating the dangers in society. As textual strategies that supported the maintenance of the status quo by trying to come in terms with the financial crisis that the aristocracy was experiencing, pamphlets and treatises would designate various social types as the threatening elements in the society. These were vagabonds, servants (including page boys), merchants, actors, playwrights, poets, cony-catchers and whores.

Certain occupations would be seen with contempt, such as lawyers, tailors, merchants, theatre owners, actors, priests and tavern owners. However, in a society where invective and slander were common media for the discouragement of social mobility, the image of the prostitute was evoked regularly and attributed indiscriminately. The female and male whore would become a primal instance of vice, providing authors with a familiar and overused metaphor that imbued accusations of dissidence, whether social, sexual, religious or political. As whores, the servants, students, page boys and other familiar social types were displayed on stage as potential threats.

This metaphorical allusion to prostitution, that sought to characterise masculine social types with what was considered to be a female characteristic, might seem irrelevant for a search of homoerotic practice or the existence of a possible homoerotic

⁵⁴¹ Mulcaster, Richard, *Positions* (1581)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99848169> [accessed 6 May 2008].

⁵⁴² Lawrence Stone, 'The Educational Revolution in England, 1560-1640', *Past and Present*, 28 (1964), 41-80 <<http://www.jstor.org>> [accessed 15 February 2008] (p. 66).

sex-market in early modern England. However, anxieties around appropriate readership and spectatorship are ambiguous. Who were supposed to be the spectators of plays and the readers of poetry? Treatises, pamphlets and humanistic narratives constantly call for the substitution of the woman's, maid's and young man's 'ears' for more appropriate ones. Was only the educated male mind potentially capable of resisting such lewd writings? Anti-theatrical discourse indicated otherwise. Everyone was vulnerable to lewd spectacles and rhymes. The use of the verb 'ravish', as I mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, is indicative of the effects that representation could have on the self, by alluding to images of rape acted upon spectators and readers.⁵⁴³

In this male affair of formal and informal education, authors depended on sexual representation and eloquence to attract audiences and readers. Representation of sexual practices varied as much as the tastes of the people who constituted the literary market. Verging on the pornographic, theatrical spectacle and literary writings reiterated images of prostitution in order to excite and titillate. Some of them involved boys and men, and within humanist writings and anti-theatrical narratives we can trace how the literary market converged with the pornographic one, creating thus, a sex-market that was closely related to poetry and the theatre.

⁵⁴³ See my Chapter 2, p. 118.

Chapter 5: Sexual favouritism, friendship and male prostitution

Constructions of figurative male prostitution did not only occur within humanist writings that dealt with educational issues. What we think of as literary texts that had as their main focus the court also contributed to ideological formations of the male prostitute. Humanism on education and courtly literature shared equally a growing concern about the education of the courtier and his social and political responsibilities. Therefore, humanist writings on education and literature concerning courtesy theories were closely related, structuring their premises on popular assumptions concerning courtly behaviour. Their principles and axioms were complementary, mutually dependent on each other's narratives regarding arguments on courtship. In essence, the courtier was their creation.

Courtesy theories, drama, poetry and historical accounts were invaluable sources about life in the court and the ideology that structured such an experience. Within these texts the courtier as a favourite became the dominant figure. Authors during the early modern period sought to explore and define the boundaries of the court and the elite, its legitimacy and privilege of power, its hypothetically ascribed characteristics, as well as various social tropes of decorum that the elite had to sustain. I say hypothetically because historians and literary critics remind us that, at the time when a whole era's concern was to guard elite prerogative and stabilise its power, the redefinition of identity with achieved characteristics was starting to take shape. As Whigham notes in his book *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory*:

The second contribution to our understanding of the Renaissance transition has to do [. . .] with a new notion of personal identity, one based on achieved rather than ascribed characteristics. We learn more all the time about separating, for instance, sexual roles from the regions of ascriptive destiny. (Gender is perhaps the last bastion of the Given). [. . .] It seems to me very important for the success of this enterprise that we recognize and comprehend one of the first conscious departures from the

ascriptive: the gradual and halting realization of the human determination of social ranks. The move from a sense of *kinds* of humans to a sense of humans who *act* variously was a decisive change, and its causes were very complex indeed.⁵⁴⁴

What the texts tried forcefully to preserve, they also left open to interpretation, by allowing new ways of conceptualising identity that were not totally dependent on ascribed characteristics. It is this contradiction that these texts encapsulate giving us access to different concepts of individuality, which in turn is textually manipulated in order to define the perfect courtier. A courtier could not simply enter the court by virtue of his familial prerogatives and blood. He also had to learn and appropriate a courtly fashion as directed by ideas on courtship. Courtly fashion denotes the inseparability of politics, economy and love in factions within the court and relationships between patrons and clients. This fashion would be a significant investment for courtiers and a social trope through which they had to achieve social status, integrity, privilege and personal dignity.

The courtier as a favourite played a pivotal part in discussions around construction of identity. After all, 'the goal of the perfect courtier [. . .] [was to gain] the love of his master in such a complete way as to become his favourite'.⁵⁴⁵ Textually, he became a site of dialogical contest due to the privileges he enjoyed by being close to his ruler, master or patron. Severe criticism in early modern literature was always aimed at those who rose to power through favour, as authors sought to undermine a ruler's or patron's choices of those to whom he/she showed preference. In addition, the court as a locale, where the display of courtly behaviour had to be performed in front of the eyes of the most unfavourable and strict commentators of courtly manners, was at the epicentre of concern for the early modern society, constantly represented on stage, poetry and in historical accounts.

The criteria of entry were severe, and at times it seemed that nothing went unnoticed. In extreme cases of discontent, accusations of corruption would proliferate, sometimes verging on the fictitious. It all depended on how someone manoeuvred political circumstances, swiftly acted on contingencies and created favourable

⁵⁴⁴ Frank Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 186. Whigham's parentheses and italics.

⁵⁴⁵ Quoted in Antonio Feros, 'Images of Evil, Images of Kings: The Contrasting Faces of the Royal Favourite and the Prime Minister in Early Modern European Political Literature, c1580-1650', in *The World of the Favourite*, ed. by John H. Elliott and Lawrence W. B. Brockliss (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 205-222 (p. 206).

conditions around him/herself for personal benefit. As Spencer advises Baldock in Marlowe's *Edward II*, performativity was essential in order to gain favour from authority, reminding us of Gaveston's shows which aimed to delight his 'pliant King':

Then, Baldock, you must cast the
Scholar off
And learn to court it like a gentleman.
...
You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute-
And now and then stab, as occasion serves.
(2.1, ll. 31-33 and 42-43)⁵⁴⁶

Courtly style, manners, flexibility and linguistic eloquence; these are the ways in which preference could be obtained and Spencer seems to suggest that 'he is most successful who is the best actor'.⁵⁴⁷

In these literary texts, the courtier, and more significantly the favourite, would be characterised as a special friend, a darling or a whore. Worden's exhaustive account of theatrical language about favouritism is not that different from the language other literary genres employed to describe it.⁵⁴⁸ Here, my concern will be the sexualised male favourite and the ways in which he is talked about. This chapter will focus on accusations of sexual corruption and whoredom, by first setting some semantic problems with regard to the terminology through which favouritism was perceived. Looking at the sexualised male favourite might help us comprehend the ideology around perceptions of same-sex intimacy within coterie circles. It might also give us a different perspective on male prostitution as a distinct expression of homoeroticism as well as its connections with sodomy. In addition, it could offer possible suggestions concerning the impact that notions of whoredom had, not only in the court, but also on discourses around femininity, homoeroticism and misogyny.

⁵⁴⁶ Mark T. Burnett, ed., *Christopher Marlowe: The Complete Plays* (London: Everyman, 1999), pp. 174-175.

⁵⁴⁷ Debra Belt, 'Anti-Theatricalism and Rhetoric in Marlowe's *Edward II*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 21 (1991), 134-160 (p. 141).

⁵⁴⁸ Blair Worden, 'Favourites on the English Stage', in Elliott and Brockliss, pp. 159-183 (p. 161).

Favouritism versus friendship versus prostitution

The differences between the three terms in the title of this chapter are probably too obvious to be stressed. Each one of them carries a specific and unique social aspect of male-to-male relationships for early modern English culture. Friendship, for example, could be in direct contrast to prostitution and/or favouritism, the latter entailing and suggesting some sort of service. As antinomies to one another, prostitution foregrounds the sexual over the affectionate, friendship prioritises love over sexual practice and service, possibly between people of equal social status, while favouritism suggests service and love between people of different social classes and relations that are largely governed by, and defined through, economic reward.

The vagueness and indeterminacy that we have found in previous chapters with regard to male prostitute practice, such as *Ganymede*, *ingle* or *catamite*, can also be found in the phraseology around favouritism and friendship. Friend and favourite were equally ambiguous terms, like prostitute, and were appropriated in diverse contexts, by disrupting or misrepresenting possible established meanings. I suggest possible established meanings, for we cannot be certain what was intended by their use. Neither can we verify the ways in which they have been perceived within a wider socio-political discourse on patronage. Interpretation and usage of these terms was partial and with important political consequences. Thus, their intended meaning was under constant disruption and redefinition due to specific cultural and historical contexts through which these relations were understood.

As the title indicates I am concentrating on sexual favouritism. Yet, as a phrase, 'sexual favouritism' was not in use during the early modern period. For us, its use might possibly entail aspects of service and prostitution. For the early modern mind, favouritism would connote preference, desire and affection from a social superior to a social inferior, as it will be shown with regard to King James' and Francis Bacon's favourites. That relation implied service on the part of the inferior to a master/ruler/patron in return for gratification through rewards or gifts. Due to the social mechanisms and rules that defined the system of patronage and its dependence on economic exchanges, not much different to the system of marriage, affection or love and fiscal favours were indivisible. Sexual preference or sexual service was not a prerequisite in order to become a favourite. Most minister-favourites, a different

category within the concept of favouritism, were employed for various reasons and they did not necessarily rely on physical appearances and erotic politics to gain their position. As Brockliss notes in his essay 'Concluding Remarks: The Anatomy of the Minister-Favourite':

Some minister-favourites did begin their rise up the slippery pole by attracting the prince's wandering eye – most obviously George Villiers, later Duke of Buckingham – but most did not. Many were relatively colourless professional pen-pushers and lawyers, such as Burghley in England or Griffenfeld in Denmark. Some were downright ugly: Robert Cecil was a hunchback, while the most remarkable feature of Olivares was his bulbous nose. In this regard then the minister-favourite must be distinguished from the countless consorts, lovers and mistresses who have used their physical allure to pull the strings of state across the ages [. . .]⁵⁴⁹

Yet, friendship, like favouritism, either between social equals or people belonging to different social strata, relied heavily on courtly, intellectual and philosophical manifestations of love and affection. It was a kind of brotherhood, although brotherhood usually requires social equality among its participants, united for a common purpose. Friendship also depended on gift-giving, as in favouritism. I have mentioned courtly manifestation, but courtly should not be read only as affection or/and love. To behave in a courtly fashion meant to abide by social tropes that courts around Europe considered as prerequisites. These tropes were not only dependent on rhetoric, eloquence, decorum, sprezzatura and love toward someone's social equals or ruler. Love, like other modes of courtly behaviour, was a term that was inseparable from gift-giving, and was highly charged with a language of economic exchange or service. The gift was a manifestation of love, expressing and indicating special bonds that existed between individuals.

So there seems to be an interrelation between the terms friend and favourite since they could be used to designate relations of masters and servants, rulers and favourites or patrons and clients. These could materialise through the social tropes that were structured around distinct codes of behaviour and specific modes of address. How could prostitution fit among discourses of patronage, friendship and favouritism?

⁵⁴⁹ Lawrence W. B. Brockliss, 'Concluding, Remarks: The Anatomy of the Minister-Favourite', in Elliott and Brockliss, pp. 279-309 (pp. 280-281).

The economic aspect of social relations, the intense seeking of patrons and the importance these had for survival in the court might direct us to view such forms of social contact as verging on prostitute practice. I am not trying here to impose a moralising reading of patronage relations between men. However, as popular issues of early modern literature, friendship, patronage and favouritism were seen in a variety of ways, which were contradictory, partial and highly critical. As Harding notes in 'The Moral Boundaries of Patronage': 'Gifts intended to lure people from prior loyalties and obligations might be considered corrupt, although often with an element of subjectivity.'⁵⁵⁰

Courtly language concerning forms of coterie relations was not only characterised by gratitude, loyalty, praise and flattery. Slander, invective and criticism were also equally constitutive of the ways in which patronage relations were defined. In other words, it depended on who was speaking, for what reasons and what that person wanted to accomplish. As Tennenhouse succinctly notes:

The contempt-of-Court theme, so prevalent in Renaissance poetry, was either a luxurious indulgence for successful clients or a sign of frustrated ambition for unsuccessful ones. So long as patronage was certain, the poetry could register frustration, disappointment, even anger at forced absence and still be used to secure assurances of favor.⁵⁵¹

The texts I am focusing on are accusations of prostitution in court among males, either adult males or boys. As a highly negative term and burdened with moralising overtones, whoredom features in abundance in early modern literature. Charges of prostitution are the most common accusations we find with regard to political, religious or sexual corruption. In some instances, the kind of corruption the individual is involved in is ambivalent. In fact, the sexual, the religious and the political seem to work as referents to one another, making it difficult to understand the sort of corruption we are dealing with. Not all adult males or boys referred to as prostitutes were actual ones. Most of the individuals' lives against whom accusations were directed are impossible to retrieve historically. The court would be generally accused of having catamites, boys or base fellows, with no significant or solid evidence that it was open and welcoming to

⁵⁵⁰ Robert Harding, 'Corruption and the Moral Boundaries of Patronage in the Renaissance', in *Patronage in Renaissance*, ed. by Guy F. Lytle and Stephen Orgel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 47-64 (p. 56).

⁵⁵¹ Leonard Tennenhouse, 'Sir Walter Raleigh and the Literature of Clientage', in Elliot and Brockliss, pp. 235-258 (p. 242).

male prostitutes. Weldon's reference to Sir Anthony Ashley, 'who never loved any but boyes' and 'yet he was snatcht up for a kinswoman' seems strange.⁵⁵² Were there boys available within the court that served as sexual partners? What were their ages and under which criteria were they employed in the royal household and court? To give definitive answers to these queries is impossible.

What becomes apparent is that, with such a proliferation of charges of whoredom, prostitution functions textually on a metaphorical level. It was a manner, a way of behaving and talking, reminiscent of a prostitute. It was criticised as a fashion but only by those who were critical of, and discontented with, the court. The ruler's/master's sex was not important. Both Elizabeth's and James' courts were attacked for tolerating whoredom. It is not so much a matter of whether these accusations were true or false, or whether we are dealing with literal or figurative prostitutes. The evidence might, indeed, seem contradictory. What I am interested in here are ideological constructions around prostitution and the ways they might have organised sexual experience in courts. As McLuskie noted by alluding to Dollimore and Sinfield:

The contrast between these two realms of knowledge, loosely defined as 'literature' and 'history', is not just a matter of conflicting data. Rather it is a matter of different ways of conceptualizing sexuality so as to deal with contrasting sources of evidence and to locate them in the social experience of early modern culture.⁵⁵³

I agree with Blair Worden when he mentions that '[l]ike all types, the type of the favourite reveals at least as much about those who deploy it as about those who reportedly exemplify it'.⁵⁵⁴

Elizabeth's sex rescued her from associations with men who prostituted for favour. However, Harrison's manuscript 'Chronologie' associated Leicester with Edward II's favourite, Gaveston, the latter being a popular figure who evoked corruption and homoerotic desire:

⁵⁵² Robert Ashton, ed., *James I by his Contemporaries* (London: Hutchinson & Co Ltd, 1969), p. 130.

⁵⁵³ Kathleen McLuskie, 'Lawless desires well tempered', in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. by Susan Zimmerman (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 103-126 (p. 103).

⁵⁵⁴ Worden, p. 160.

the man of grettest power (being but a subject) which in this land, or that ever had bene exalted under any prince sithens the times of Peers Gavestone & Robert Vere . . . Nothing almost was done, wherein he had not, either a stroke or a commodities; which together with his scraping from church and commons . . . procured him soche inward envie & hatred.⁵⁵⁵

In Robert Naunton's *Fragmenta Regalia* the Elizabethan court would be seen more favourably:

Her ministers and instruments of state . . . were favourites and not minions, such as acted more by her own princely rules and judgement than by their own will and appetites; which she observed to the last, for we find no Gaveston, Vere or Spencer to have swayed alone during forty-four years.⁵⁵⁶

'Minion' is used here in a rather peculiar way. It indicates something more than simply class differentiation, class inequality or baseness. Why does Naunton differentiate between favourites and minions? Let me look at the word 'minion/mignon' more closely.

Minion/Mignon

The term 'minion' has a similarly complicated meaning to words like 'ingle' and 'Ganymede' or its Latin version 'catamite'. The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'minion' as follows:

[French *mignon* repl. Old French *mignot*: cf. **MIGNON**]

A noun. **1 a** A lover; (chiefly *derog.*) a mistress. Formerly also as a form of address. Now *rare* or *obsolete*. **E16. b** A favourite of a monarch, prince, or other powerful person; *derog.* a servile agent, a slave. Now also, a follower, an attendant, an assistant, etc. **E16. c** A favourite child, servant, animal, etc. Also as a form of address. Now *derog.* **M16.**

⁵⁵⁵ Quoted in Simon Adams, 'Favourites and Factions at the Elizabethan Court', in *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age c.1450-1650*, ed. by Ronald G. Asch and Adolf M. Birke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 265-287 (p. 275).

⁵⁵⁶ Quoted in Adams, p. 281.

Webster's dictionary also includes 'favourite' as a synonym and indicates that the word might derive perhaps from Celtic:

1minion *n* -S

[MF *mignon* darling, fr. *mignot* dainty, wanton, fr. OF, perh. of Celt origin; akin to OIr *mn* smooth, gentle more at **MITIGATE**]

1: an obsequious or servile dependent: **CREATURE**

2: a piece of light artillery of about 3-inch caliber and 125 paces range used in the 16th and 17th centuries

3: one highly esteemed and favored: **FAVORITE, IDOL**

4[F *mignonne*, fem. of *mignon*]: an old size of type of approximately 7-point and between nonpareil and brevier

5: a subordinate (as an agent, deputy, or follower) of an individual or organization *esp.*: one having an official status.

Williams' *Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery* is more enlightening since it preserves the sexual undertones the word had for early modern England. As he asserts:

minion paramour, mistress. If the word derives from OHG *minna*, love, rather than Celtic *min*, small, it has come to indicate a debased love (see **sooterkin**) *OED* has a 1489 citation for the cognate *mignotr*, wanton woman.⁵⁵⁷

Four examples associate 'minion' with male prostitution, according to Williams. His quotations are taken from Marlowe's *Edward II*, Dryden's *Don Sebastian*, the 'Ladies Complain' and Massinger's *Emperor of the East*:

[. . .] Marlowe, *Edward II* (1591-3) I.iv.87: 'The king is love-sick for his minion', where 'favourite' shades to 'effeminate' or '**ingle**'. The latter sense plainly operates in Dryden, *Don Sebastian* (1689) I.i, where Benducar, calling himself 'Favourite' to the emperor, is asked; 'What's that, his Minion? Thou art too old to be a Catamite!'. 'Ladies Complaint' (1690s; Lansdowne 852.279) declares of King William: 'In love to his Minions he so partial and Rash is He makes Statesmen of blockheads and Earls of Bardashes'. The '*Mignion of the suburbs*' in Massinger, *Emperor of the East* (1631), ironically favourite of the district, is both pimp and male prostitute.⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁷ Gordon Williams, *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature* (London: The Athlone Press, 1994), p. 890.

⁵⁵⁸ Williams, *DSL*, p. 891.

Interestingly, John Florio in his Italian-English dictionary, printed in 1598, defines 'minion' as follows: 'Mignone, a minion, a faurit, a dilling, a minikin, a darling'.⁵⁵⁹ Yet, the subsequent editions of his dictionary offer more explicit examples of what the term 'mignone' means. The 1611 edition dedicated to Queen Anne reads:

Mignone, is properly in Italian the chanell that runnes from the priuie parts vp aboue the fundament. It is now vsed for a minion, a darling or a fauorite, and is commonly taken in ill sence.⁵⁶⁰

The 1659 edition, elucidates on the phrase 'ill sence' and it suggests:

Mignone, is properly in good Italian, the channel or twist, that runneth along from the privy parts up along the fundament, but it is now used for a Minion, a secret favourite, a choice darling, and is commonly taken abusively, because it is supposed, that such a one will lend his Mignone, to be used at pleasure.⁵⁶¹

It also gives two derivatives: 'Mignoneggiare, to play with a Mignone, to mignonize' and 'Mignonaggine, Mignodarie, minion trics, wanton dalliances.' The 1688 and the 1690 editions retain the same meaning of the 1659 edition. A couple of things need to be clarified here. First, the definitions do not include gender referents. A 'mignone' in Italian could either be a boy or a girl. Ladies' minions can be found in multiple texts. Secondly, although the word is Italian, Florio and successive editors of his dictionary offer expansive definitions for the word 'minion' in English. Thus, we have its synonyms. In addition, they also provide us with the contemporary use of the term, which explicates its cultural context and use. Its use of course, rests in suppositions: 'it is supposed, that such a one will lend his Mignone, to be used at pleasure.'

We have seen that 'minion' derives from the French. The same sexual undertones seem to exist in all three languages and it is not hyperbole to suggest that, even in English, the term could indicate or at least imply a male or female prostitute,

⁵⁵⁹ John Florio, *A vvorld of wordes, or Most copious, and exact dictionarie in Italian* (1598) <http://UnknownEEBOdomain!/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:2505:123> [accessed 30 October 2008].

⁵⁶⁰ John Florio, *Queen Anna's nevv vvorld of words* (1611) <http://UnknownEEBOdomain!/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:22104:164> [accessed 30 October 2008].

⁵⁶¹ John Florio, *Vocabolario Italiano & Inglese, a dictionary Italian & English* (1659) <http://UnknownEEBOdomain!/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:95188:163> [accessed 30 October 2008].

probably a private one. Certainly, there would be variations on the ways in which a newly introduced term would be used. Yet, language traveled and new words were entering the English vocabulary. The cultural transactions that were taking place during this era were constant and multiple. The linguistic erudition that we should expect from courtiers and scholars of the early modern period, together with their immense interest in new cultural forms of linguistic expression, should probably indicate that there were other tropes through which meaning was perceived and achieved. I say achieved, for we need to remember that for a scholar, author or courtier in the early modern period, the signification of new linguistic utterances would inform his social being. Such an identity would sometimes rest on meanings that have not yet been crystallised. Other authors would offer different cultural definitions and would follow alternative processes.

In 1576 L'Estoile reported:

The name *Mignons* began, at this time, to travel by word of mouth through the people, to whom they were very odious, as much for their ways which were jesting and haughty as for their paint [make-up] and effeminate and unchaste apparel. . . . Their occupations are gambling, blaspheming . . . fornicating and following the King [Henry III] everywhere . . . seeking to please him in whatever they do and say, caring little for God or virtue, contenting themselves to be in the graces of their master, whom they fear and honor more than God.⁵⁶²

As far as apparel and manners were concerned, L'Estoile made analogies to whores, similar to the ones we will see for King James' favourites. He claims that:

[they] wear their hair long, curled and recurled by artifice, with little bonnets of velvet on top of it like whores in the brothels, and the ruffles on their linen shirts are of starched finery and one half foot long so that their heads look like St. John's on a platter.⁵⁶³

Such a variety concerning semantic definition, although it perplexes attempts at a stable meaning, it simultaneously extends the interpretive possibilities offered by the use of the term in diverse texts.

⁵⁶² Quoted in Katherine B. Crawford, 'Love, Sodomy, and Scandal: Controlling the Sexual Reputation of Henry III', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 12.4 (2003), 513-542 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3704668>> [accessed 10 October 2008] (p. 524). Crawford's italics, my brackets.

⁵⁶³ Quoted in Crawford, p. 524.

Let me return to the English sources. In some cases, either for reasons of censorship or decorum, in order to conceal inordinate love, minion would feature as a contrast to that for which we would expect it to stand. We saw how in Naunton's *Fragmenta Regalia*, minion is a contrast to favourite: 'Her ministers and instruments of state . . . were favourites and not minions [. . .].'⁵⁶⁴ The reference of course is to Leicester. As Adam notes, Leicester attracted negative comments even until the nineteenth century. In another quote from J. A Froude we find the same degrading nature of the word 'minion':

He combined in himself the worst qualities of both sexes. Without courage, without talent, without virtue, he was the handsome, soft, polished, and attentive minion of the court.⁵⁶⁵

Minions versus favourites; this was a similar accusation to that levelled against Henry III of France. As Harding explains:

The problem under Henri III (1574-1589) was that the brokers at Court were the *mignons*, 'new men' from lesser noble families, who had neither merit nor an accumulation of worthy services only 'the most infamous services'.⁵⁶⁶

Henry's sexual preference for his minions was common parlance at the time. Even his year of succession 1574, according to De Thou and Villeroy, was marked as the origin of corruption in their own time.⁵⁶⁷ Deeply involved in the 1572 Massacre of St Bartholomew's day and the religious wars in France, his sexual deviance provided to his political opponents a source on which to base their attacks. As Teasley notes in his examination of sodomy as a political weapon in Henry's time:

These Catholic attacks accused Henry's followers of being not only sodomites, but atheists, perpetrators of incest among their 'spiritual brothers' in the order, and passive prostitutes who have reversed their role as the sexually dominant male.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁴ Quoted in Adams, p. 281.

⁵⁶⁵ Quoted in Adams, p. 283.

⁵⁶⁶ Harding, p. 59. Harding's italics.

⁵⁶⁷ Harding, p. 58.

⁵⁶⁸ David Teasley, 'The Charge of Sodomy as a Political Weapon in Early Modern France: The Case of Henry III in Catholic League Polemic, 1585-1589', *Maryland Historian*, 18.1 (1987), 17-30 (p. 22).

When Naunton used the term ‘minion’ to denote the baseness of some courtiers in contrast to the elite favourite, he was not attacking only class issues. In order to exemplify the antithesis between minion and favourite, Naunton alluded to Gaveston, Vere and Spenser, Edward II’s favourites and lovers, as quoted earlier.⁵⁶⁹

It is in fact this word that Mortimer Senior uses to account for classical homoeroticism: ‘Let him without controlment have his will./The mightiest kings have had their minions’ (1.4. ll. 389-390). As Bruce Smith points out: ‘“Minion,” the contemptuous epithet that the lords always use for Gaveston, is on one occasion used even by Edward himself’ (1.4. ll. 30-31).⁵⁷⁰

Yet, none of the above is intended to mean male prostitute practice, at least in an obvious manner. For Hammond, ‘minion’ belongs to a list of linguistic utterances that designate a sexual act rather than a sexual identity. He claims:

Various words were used more or less pejoratively to describe homosexual men and boys – bardash, catamite, Ganymede, he-whore, ingle, minion, molly – most of which refer to what is assumed to be the passive or subordinate partner.⁵⁷¹

It is probably not that difficult to understand all the above-mentioned terms as a ‘passive or subordinate partner’. The power relations here are best explained by Smith:

[. . .] Renaissance Englishmen, like the ancient Greeks and Romans, eroticised the power distinctions that set one male above another in their society. Sexual desire took shape in the persons of master and minion; sexual energy found release in the power play between them.⁵⁷²

What Smith sees here as an eroticisation of power distinctions, I understand as an ineluctable power distinction that depended highly on gender differentiation. I follow Goldberg on this, when he explains that the power and age differentials marked gender

⁵⁶⁹ See in this chapter, p. 199.

⁵⁷⁰ Bruce Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare’s England* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 211.

⁵⁷¹ Paul Hammond, *Figuring Sex between Men from Shakespeare to Rochester* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), p. 8.

⁵⁷² Smith, p. 194.

difference.⁵⁷³ He also notes, commenting on Barbara Correll's 'Malleable Material, Models of Power', that 'male humanist anxiety about preferment at court often took the fear of effeminization that was policed by the production of women in their texts'.⁵⁷⁴ Could this be the reason why so many courtiers and favourites in courtesy literature were presented as effeminate and as whores? We shall see later the kind of accusations of effeminacy indicated in literature that had as its locus the court. It was through these power and age differences that King James structured and defined his relationships with his favourites, especially Buckingham. If this sort of gender differentiation informed social relationships between men, according to the critics, that would mean that all socially subordinate partners were to be passive in bed. Yet, we cannot know with certainty. There are different boys for different uses and any overgeneralisation of the boy's role in sexual intercourse could be misleading. The following passage has been extracted from *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*:

After logging the adolescent, Green would kneel down and 'kiss . . . [his] buttocks a dozen times or more'. The boy eventually objected to this treatment, whereupon Green suggested that perhaps the lad would like to reverse roles and try beating him instead. Another teenager claimed that Green had tried a variety of sexual games with him and, in the end, had been reduced to struggling furiously to remove the boy's breeches.⁵⁷⁵

This case is part of a quarrel between John Green, a pro-Jesuit priest and his accuser Christopher Bagshaw, who, according to Alan Stewart 'collected testimony concerning Green's behaviour from the adolescent local boys who either worked in the prison or were preparing for the seminary'.⁵⁷⁶ Leaving aside the religious propaganda that was well in place and is discussed - alongside other similar charges - in Stewart's article, there is no reason here not to suggest that boys sometimes played the active part in same-sex relations. In addition, boys' resistance to sexual games has often remained unnoticed by critics and historians while accounting for homoerotic desire, ignoring that in some cases the sexual games were conducted according to the boys' preferences.

⁵⁷³ Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (California: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 48.

⁵⁷⁴ Goldberg, p. 58.

⁵⁷⁵ Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 289.

⁵⁷⁶ Alan Stewart, 'A Society of Sodomites: Religion and Homosexuality in Renaissance England', in *Love, Friendship, and Faith in Europe, 1300-1800*, ed. by Laura Gowing, Michael Hunter and Miri Rubin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 88-109 (p. 98).

Power relations did not and do not work always in one way, as for example the master sexually dominating the servant.

The problem is that when we come to examine private and public homoerotic and homosocial relations such as favouritism and friendship, the same pejorative vocabulary seems to predominate in such relationships, and here I will agree with Hammond. This vocabulary is identical with the one that structures male prostitution in early modern England. Used indiscriminately, these accusations of prostitution in court suggest that all sexual service was to be considered a prostitute practice. For the Renaissance period, prostitute practice would be associated with passivity, possibly not that different to a nineteenth-century discourse around homosexuality. Yet, sodomy was not necessarily associated with passivity.

This might probably explain why the French word ‘mignote’, from which minion emanates, signified a ‘wanton woman’. Passivity was always viewed in misogynistic ways, as if it were the uttermost offence for a male partner, implying the degenerate nature of womanhood. Issues of pleasure need to be examined here. Which gender took most pleasure in sex? Could early modern literature have been engaging in discussions around pleasure like the ancient Greeks? Yet, even the male partner or boy seemed to be rescued from such a discourse. The boy was expected to become a man.

In Hammond’s examination of *The Most Delectable and Pleasaunt History of Clitiphon and Leucippe*, ‘translated by William Burton in 1597 from the Greek novel by Achilles Tatius (written originally in the second century CE) and dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare’s patron’,⁵⁷⁷ the boy is again contrasted to women but this time in favourable terms. The woman’s techniques make her a whore, whereas the love for boys is appreciated as more preferable. That is, of course, if the boy did not appropriate a woman’s techniques. For as King James reminded his son Prince Henry in *Basilikon Doron*:

Be also moderate in your rayment, neither over superfluous, like a deboshed waister, nor yet over base, like a miserable wretche; not artificially trimmed & decked, like a Courtizane, nor yet over sluggishly clothed, like a country-clowne.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁷ Hammond, p. 49.

⁵⁷⁸ Jody Green, ‘“You must eat men”: The Sodomitic Economy of Renaissance Patronage’, *GLQ*, 1 (1994), 163-197 (p. 168).

‘Like a courtizane’: whoredom as a metaphor

As discussed earlier, accusations of whoredom were mostly made on the metaphorical level. The language of slander was ubiquitous in narratives that explored the social boundaries of favouritism and friendship, appropriateness and inappropriateness, praise and flattery, decorum and indecorum. According to the individual who employed such invective there seem to have been right and wrong ways of entering the court and sustaining one’s position there. Not all declarations that the court had been crowded with whores, catamites and Ganymedes were true. Yet, the constant evocation of such nouns betray linguistic strategies and ideological patterns that were used with specific political resonances for the discouragement of social mobility.

On the other hand, we cannot treat these accusations simply as manifestations of discontent. The invective concerning whoredom, and especially male whoredom, shows the degrading qualities inherent in prostitute phraseology, whether this involved men, boys, kings, favourites or servants. On closer examination, prostitution as a metaphor might give us ideas of ways in which sexual behaviour was conceptualised in early modern England in relation to actual prostitute practice.

As a metaphor, whoredom seems to acquire a performative nature, the mimetic quality that Ricoeur examined in his study of metaphoricity in poetry, which we saw in Chapter 2. Even if these men or boys were not whores, they were certainly behaving as such in the eyes of their accusers and malcontents of courtly life. Donne’s *Satires* openly criticise courtly life, as Marotti explores in his essay ‘John Donne and the Rewards of Patronage’.⁵⁷⁹ In *Satire 4*, the speaker, probably the poet himself, visits the Court and his acquaintance with a courtier bring him to painful and harsh realisations of courtly life. Emerging as an overweening garrulous snob, the courtier uses slander and libellous speech to attack fellow courtiers. The gossip involves sexual scandal as well, for the speaker claims:

He like a privileged spy, whom nothing can
Discredit, libels now ’gainst each great man.
He names a price for every office paid;

. . .

⁵⁷⁹ Arthur F. Marotti, ‘John Donne and the Rewards of Patronage’, in Lytle and Orgel, pp. 207-234.

[. . .] and that great officers,
 Do with the pirates share, and Dunkirkers.
 Who wastes in meat, in clothes, in horse, he notes;
 Who loves whores, who boys, and who goats.
 (ll. 119-121 and 126-129)⁵⁸⁰

As in *Satire 1*, examined in the second chapter, the boy textually resides once again next to the whore. Accusations of scandal and associations with whoredom would involve remarks on manner of speaking, style of dress, decorum in courtly behaviour and flattery.

In *Satire 3*, Donne's attack on lawyers will also draw connections with prostitution: '[. . .] but men which choose/ Law practice for mere gain, bold soul, repute/ Worse than embrothelled strumpets prostitute' (ll. 62-64). For these lawyers, 'to every suitor lie in everything,/ Like a king's favourite, yea like a king;' (ll. 69-70). The invective continues by drawing similar analogies. Favouritism, bastardy, sodomy, whoredom and simony seem to characterise lawyers within the court. As the satirist argues:

Like a wedge in a block, wring to the bar,
 Bearing like asses, and more shameless far
 Than carted whores, lie, to the grave judge; for
 Bastardy abounds not in kings' titles, nor
 Simony and sodomy in churchmen's lives,
 As these things do in him; by these he thrives. (ll. 71-76)

The eschatological nature of the term whore/strumpet is what Donne displays here, implying the social ills that false courtiers bring to the body politic and the sovereign's court. Note how Donne connects prostitute practice with diverse aspects of social life like patronage, religion, politics and academia.

Ecclesiastical patronage was also under intense scrutiny. In his essay 'Religion and the Lay Patron in Reformation England' Lytle discusses favouritism within the Church. Complaints were made to Parliament and Queen. Edward Dering in 1570 advised the Queen to reform both the court and church:

I would lead you first to your [own] benefices . . . some are defiled with impropriations. . . . Look . . . upon your patrons . . . [who] are selling their benefices . . . some keep them for their children, some hive them to

⁵⁸⁰ Albert J. Smith, *John Donne: The Complete English Poems* (London: Penguin, 1971), p. 167.

boys, some to servingmen. . . . And yet you, in the meanwhile that all these whoredoms are committed, you at whose hands God will require it, you sit still and are careless.⁵⁸¹

John Colet in a sermon in 1511 preached:

Let the laws be rehearsed that command that benefices . . . be given to those that are worthy, and that promotions be made . . . by the right balances of virtue, not by carnal affection, not by acceptance of persons whereby it happeneth nowadays that boys for old men, fools for wise men, evil for good, do rule and reign.⁵⁸²

There seem to be connections with corruption and all these boys who are represented in narratives. The word ‘boy’, another degrading term addressed to those young men in the court who succeeded in gaining favours, did not necessarily refer to boy prostitutes. Associations, however, of boys with sexual scandals continued to proliferate in criticisms of the English court. Taking the form of accusations, these associations were perceived seriously, even when the term ‘boy’ was used to refer to officers. Southampton, for example, was questioned, as Lockyer informs us, whether he said that he ‘liked not to come to the Council Board because there were so many boys and base fellows’.⁵⁸³ Involved in a party that aimed to oppose Buckingham, Southampton and other members of the Commons were viewed suspiciously for accusing the King’s favourite. A threat to the favourite was considered to be a threat to the King himself.

As a metaphor, prostitution could function on various levels. It could involve literal prostitutes in sodomitical affairs or it could indicate relationships between masters and servants. The latter model denotes temporal prostitute practice that did not extend beyond the household. In that respect, it was a more private kind of sexual service. Efforts to acquire constant attention from the would-be-patron and the intense seeking of patronage would also be seen or characterised as prostitution. As Peck explains:

Writers have emphasised that the monopoly of patronage by favorites for their own benefit and the distribution of reward without regard for

⁵⁸¹ Quoted in Guy F. Lytle, ‘Religion and the Lay Patron in Reformation England’, in Lytle and Orgel, pp. 65-114 (p. 80).

⁵⁸² Lytle, pp. 93-94.

⁵⁸³ Roger Lockyer, *Buckingham: The Life and Political Career of George Villiers First Duke of Buckingham 1592-1628* (London: Longman, 1981), p. 101.

service produced dissatisfaction among those whom the state sought to conciliate.⁵⁸⁴

In addition, we need to remember that '[a]t the Jacobean court, the relationship established between patron and suitor was not necessarily exclusive' and that '[t]his continuing search for patronage characterized all levels of court life'.⁵⁸⁵

The key aspects of which a courtier had to be careful and attentive, were dress, manners and speech. For the courtier was continuously picked up on those features. Everything had to be calculated in order to attract attention. Whether the courtiers had sodomitical affairs with their patrons is another issue altogether. Yet, like the sodomite, who would evoke political, religious and social dissidence, the whore, man or woman, would be charged with similar kinds of deviances.

Classical mythology and historical figures would play an important part in the construction of metaphorical male prostitution. Figures of royal favouritism were burdened by prostitute qualities and were textually manipulated to suit political ends. Like homoerotic relationships in the classical world, historical and mythological royal favourites would be used to serve as metaphors of whoredom. Figures like Gaveston, Sejanus and Ganymede would be evoked, projecting them as similes of contemporary relationships between men who were thought corrupt.

This is important because employment of figurative speech could probably say more about the character/persona involved in charges of whoredom. In some cases it would seem that this phraseology around historical personas would state the obvious. However, there were ambiguities concerning the reception of such figures.

The difficulty and seriousness of these accusations was that the sovereign would also be implicated in metaphors of prostitution as a pander. When Sir John Eliot compared Buckingham with Sejanus in his speech in the House of Commons in 1626, Charles I was furious and exclaimed: 'Implicitly, he must intend me for Tiberius.'⁵⁸⁶ How could someone draw such scandalous comparisons if he was the king's favourite? Allusions to myths and history might have seemed ineluctable and prominent tools for political attacks but they did not escape notice.

⁵⁸⁴ Linda Peck, 'Court Patronage and Government Policy: The Jacobean Dilemma', in Lytle and Orgel, pp. 27-46 (p. 27).

⁵⁸⁵ Peck, p. 30.

⁵⁸⁶ Quoted by John H. Elliott, 'Introduction', in Elliott and Brockliss, pp. 1-12 (p. 2).

Another important issue is that prostitution would always be gender-specific whenever it was evoked. Misogynistic attitudes towards female occasional prostitutes and catamites fuelled perceptions of illicit sex and these were always linked to effeminacy. Even those who often associated with prostitutes were not rescued from criticism. In most instances, it is quite unclear who is the actual prostitute. As a quality it was applied without discrimination and quite loosely. Yet, sexual favour was an important trope for social aggrandizement. In fact, in some cases favour would seem to depend solely on sexual preference, thus, making it the only way for advancement, as John Colet's sermon suggested earlier.

In this light, a term like 'friend' might not be satisfactory to explain homoerotic relations that would involve fiscal and sexual exchanges. In some plays where economy implicates sexual service, homoerotic relations would seem inseparable from prostitution. My purpose is not to collapse all homoerotic relations to a single category and expression of same-sex practice that involved economic rewards for sexual encounters. This is the difficulty and danger of introducing male favouritism into a study of male prostitution, for it could enable ideological formations that tend to embrace diverse expressions of sexuality and sexual acts, and confine them to a homogenous system of language that would seek to control and efface them. This kind of obliteration seems to work with discourses on sodomy as well, by embodying and receding all kinds of dissidence into a single sphere of conceptualisation for more effective manoeuvring. Therefore, we might be presented with problems concerning acceptance of some distinct sexual expressions that were not traditionally thought to belong to the domain of one sex or another.

The argument could go that there is no need to distinguish between homosexual relationships and those of the prostitute. They are all homosexuals. The case of John Rykener, the medieval male prostitute mentioned in the second chapter does not seem to suggest that. I will extend my hypothesis. There is no distinction between homoerotic relations, be they male favourites or friends. They were all male prostitutes. No wonder twenty-first century ecclesiastical discourse in Catholic and Orthodox religions classify all relations outside marriage as prostitution, whether heteronormative or homosexual. This is no different from the way the terms 'adultery' and 'fornication' were used, which encapsulated any kind of illegitimate sexual encounter in early modern England.

Distinctions of sexual favouritism and whoredom could also enter discussions around love and friendship versus sodomy. David Halperin in a note in his

‘Introduction: Among Men – History, Sexuality, and the Return of Affect’ in *Love, Sex, Intimacy and Friendship between Men, 1550-1800* answers Haggerty’s claims that he [Halperin] makes ‘rigid distinctions’ between sexual love and friendship, ‘[reifying] male-male relations and [making] it impossible for men who see themselves as equal to express their love for one another’.⁵⁸⁷ Thus Halperin, with DiGangi’s support, replies that:

I hope I have done no such thing; what I intended to do was to pluralize the history of homosexuality, to put in place a multiplicity of both homosexualities and histories so as to allow historians greater leeway and subtlety in differentiating among pre-homosexual versions of homosexuality and thereby to make it easier for them *not to have to conflate* love and friendship with sodomy, passivity, effeminacy, or homosexuality. I did not assert that these things never coincided before the modern period.⁵⁸⁸

Later on, in discussing Bray’s examination of friendships and friends being buried in the same tombs and recorded on the same monuments, he ‘deduce[s]’ that:

the *rhetoric* of friendship or love employed in those monuments succeeded in sealing off the relationships represented in them from any suggestion of being sodomitical. And that was precisely my reason for wishing to foreground the multiplicity of different discursive traditions, or models, or figures of sex and gender practices that are now subsumed by the modern paradigm of homosexuality and that now appear as among its manifold aspects.⁵⁸⁹

No one could doubt the affection, love and friendship that existed in some relationships between males. However, entrapped within a system of patronage and service that sought to sustain distinct social boundaries between different classes, and where the means of survival was probably given greater significance, denigration of some courtiers and favourites as prostitutes would be inevitable. For sexual favouritism could be considered a distinct homoerotic expression in itself, possibly in opposition to male whoredom. Yet, it relied on the same semiotics that characterised female and male prostitutes as well. Therefore Buckingham, for some, would be a minister-favourite, for

⁵⁸⁷ David Halperin, ‘Introduction: Among Men – History, Sexuality, and the Return of Affect’, in *Love, Sex, Intimacy and Friendship between Men, 1550-1800*, ed. by Katherine O’Donnell and Michael Rourke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 1-11 (p. 9).

⁵⁸⁸ Halperin, p. 2. Halperin’s italics.

⁵⁸⁹ Halperin, p. 10. Halperin’s italics.

others, a friend to the King, and for some commentators a male whore. Distinctions would be blurred between these terms that designate intimacy and in some textual instances, as we will see, might be complementary to one another. The difference with womanhood should be highlighted. There are rigid distinctions with regard to a woman as a wife, a friend or a whore.

One distinction needs to be clarified. The prostitute boy has a different function to the adult male favourite as a whore, although both roles are largely socially constructed. The adult male favourite has a different social function from the servant or prostitute boy who was exploited, or became available for sexual purposes, due to the political impact that the favourite's actions had in the social and political arena, either for a master or a ruler. Whether he did provide sexual service for his ruler or not, an adult male favourite would be involved in foreign policy and royal economic exchanges by acting as a broker. The idea that the favourite had such an immense impact on economic issues and policies, and his rewards for acting as a broker, might be the reason that he attracted so much hostility to the point where he was considered a whore. Social mobility in King James' court for example was reminiscent of the Turkish court, which had been extolled by Machiavelli in *The Prince*.⁵⁹⁰ Sexual service could unsettle common tropes of social advancement. For, Buckingham and other favourites' sexual availability sustained their prerogative of economic growth and social acceleration. The confidence and trust they were burdened with was similar to the loyalty the black and white eunuchs offered to the Sultan in the Turkish court. The political implications were immense. As Asch argues in his 'Introduction', 'opponents of the duke now threatened to become opponents of the Court itself'.⁵⁹¹

Unfortunately, there appears a dearth of narratives exhibiting obvious associations of whoredom with favouritism in Renaissance England, in contrast to the Roman era where the story of the Roman emperor Heliogabalus provides a direct connection between bodily functions/parts, sexual preference, prostitution and favouritism. Fiercely scrutinised and constantly alluded to in a plethora of texts in early modern English culture, Heliogabalus was famous for promoting men with large penises to great offices. According to Lentakis, who discusses prostitution in Ancient Greece and Rome and cites from *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, these men were called

⁵⁹⁰ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, transl. by George Bull (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 18.

⁵⁹¹ Ronald G. Asch, 'Introduction: Court and Household from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries', in Asch and Birke, pp. 1-38 (p. 34).

‘onobeli’, that is ‘men with donkey’s penises’, assimilating the Greek word onos (ὄνος), meaning donkey which was also used in Ancient Greek as a prefix to refer to men with large penises.⁵⁹² As Lentakis informs us, the Roman emperor had also built a special bath, called ‘the bath of Plautinus’ in order to observe which men had big genitals and accept them in his government. Heliogabalus’ followers would also search for these men in brothels, baths and ports and bring them to the palace to appease his demands for pleasure. No love or affection is suggested in these narratives. Male prostitution is directly associated with favouritism as referent to one another. Heliogabalus’ story should not be considered as imposing or suggesting a pattern through which we can conceptualise relations between emperors and favourites in Rome. His case was quite distinct in the ancient world.

Now I would like to turn to Bacon’s and King James’ favourites in an attempt to retrieve textual manifestations of male prostitute practice within the early modern English court.

Bacon and his bedfellows: friends, servants or prostitutes?

Lisa Jardine and Alan Stewart in their book *Hostage to Fortune: The troubled life of Francis Bacon* cite interesting incidents concerning Francis Bacon’s intimacy with his bedfellows. Characterised primarily as servants, the facts pertaining to their sexual service do not come down to us from first-person narratives but from third-hand accounts. Bacon’s mother, Lady Bacon, provides us with some information with regard to her son’s sex life. In her letter to Francis’ brother Antony, who was accused of sodomy, she complained explicitly about Francis’ ‘companions’:

[Y]et so long as he pitieth not himself but keepeth that bloody Percy I told him then, yea as a coach companion and bed companion, a proud, profane, costly fellow, whose being about him I verily fear the Lord God doth mislike and doth less bless your brother in credit and otherwise in his health.⁵⁹³

⁵⁹² Andreas Lentakis, *Eros in Ancient Greece – Volume three: Prostitution* (Athens: Kastaniotis, 1998), pp. 178-179.

⁵⁹³ Lisa Jardine and Alan Stewart, *Hostage to Fortune: The Troubled Life of Francis Bacon* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), p. 201.

Such cases, of course, were not uncommon in early modern English society, as we have seen in Chapter 2. However, Lady Bacon did not view Bacon's servant as a prostitute but she named him 'companion'. This fellow is just a 'sinful, proud villain', and the only accusation she seems to be making is that 'bloody Percy' is a 'proud, profane, costly fellow'. Jardine and Stewart note that Bacon:

should have felt a good deal more comfortable around James's court than he had in Elizabeth's: he had, after all, operated for years within the coterie atmosphere of intimate male friendship in the service of the earl of Essex. He was used to the world of 'bed companions and coach companions'; and he knew how to indulge a passionate patron's susceptibility for the attentions of intelligent, entertaining and devoted 'friends'.⁵⁹⁴

The relationships are represented as friendships, not as relations between master and servants, nor as intimacies that verged on prostitution.

Two more charges of sodomitical sexual scandal are available to us, according to Jardine and Stewart, which implicated Bacon as Lord Chancellor, during James' reign. The first one was in June 1619, which involved Amy Lady Blount and concerned a complaint made against Bacon. This was a petition that apparently was degrading to him. Lady Blount was imprisoned, although not charged. It was a charge that scandalised the Lord Chancellor and, according to the authors:

what exactly was contained in Lady Blount's complaint against Bacon is unknown but clearly it was enough for the Lord Chancellor to feel justified in flexing muscles he was not ordinarily required to flex – presumably because her attack on him was personally demeaning.⁵⁹⁵

The other one involved a canon of St Paul's called Isaac Singleton. Jardine and Stewart cite:

As Chamberlain reported: 'Shingleton an Oxford man (who preaching in Paul's on May Day and finding himself aggrieved with some decree of his wherein he thought he had hard measure) declaimed bitterly against

⁵⁹⁴ Jardine and Stewart, pp. 270-271.

⁵⁹⁵ Jardine and Stewart, p. 436.

his court [Chancery], and glanced (they say) somewhat scandalously at him and his catamites as he called them.’⁵⁹⁶

These are important instances of court corruption, illustrating how seriously the King and the parliament took accusations of corruption and sodomy. Directed at Bacon’s household, Singleton’s accusation makes clear that Bacon was using his employees as sexual servants. It would be interesting to know whether there would be such scandals out in the open if the cases in chancery did not go wrong. As the authors claim, ‘a grievance against the Court of Chancery becomes an attack on the household morals of the Lord Chancellor: a wrong decision in the court somehow transmutes into scandalous charges of sodomy against that court’s judge.’⁵⁹⁷

The aforementioned cases of sexual scandal were not the only ones that contributed to Bacon’s denigration. Stewart’s and Jardine’s account suggests that Bacon was sexually intimate with his servants. Terms like ‘catamite’, ‘Ganymede’ and ‘favourite’ were used, even after Bacon’s death, in order to describe Bacon’s relationship with his servants who were maintained in his household. Narrated in the part of the biography where Jardine and Stewart discuss Bacon’s indictment for bribery(-ies) and his ‘indulgence of his servants’, which were considered the main causes of his downfall, these incidents might possibly be linked to issues of corruption and prostitution. The first case narrated is after Bacon’s death in 1655 where ‘a bookseller’s assistant overheard a conversation between two customers, one of whom had been to see Lord Chancellor Bacon at Gorhambury’. As the authors quote:

While Bacon was temporarily absent from the room, he said, ‘there comes into the study one of his Lordship’s gentlemen, and opens my Lord’s chest of drawers wherein his money was, and takes it out in handfuls and fills both his pockets, and goes away without saying any word to me. He was no sooner gone but comes a second gentleman, opens the same drawers, fills both his pockets with money, and goes away as the former did, without speaking a word to me.’ When the visitor informed Bacon of what had happened, ‘he shook his head; and all that he said was, ‘Sir, I cannot help myself’.’ The customer opined that Bacon ‘had a fault, whatever it was he could not tell’.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁶ Jardine and Stewart, p. 437.

⁵⁹⁷ Jardine and Stewart, p. 437.

⁵⁹⁸ Jardine and Stewart, p. 463.

The authors cannot offer an explanation for this account, nor could we draw any conclusive statements that could prove Bacon's bribery of his servants for sexual services. The incident is situated just after an account of Thomas Bushell - another of Bacon's servants - and his testimony of their intimacy, and just before the complaints and charges of Bacon using his servants as sexual partners. These examples offer a glimpse of what might have been going on in elite households between masters and servants who shared a common bed.

Another criticism of Bacon's lifestyle comes from D'Ewes with regard to the sexual service prevalent in his household. D'Ewes claims that:

His most abominable and darling sin I should rather bury in silence than mention it [. . .] yet would he not relinquish the practice of his most horrible and secret sin of sodomy, keeping still one Godrick a very effeminate faced youth to be his catamite. After his fall men began to discourse of that his unnatural crime, which he had practiced many years;⁵⁹⁹

Here, corruption, bribery and sodomy are enmeshed in a discourse concerning sexual favouritism. The cases of whoredom and sodomy should not be considered as separate incidents of sexual dissidence but rather as being part of a wider political scheme. Corruption signified injustice, not exclusively sexual scandals, and bribery meant illegitimate economic exchanges. Such practices are interwoven in Stewart's and Jardine's accounts indicating the difficulty of clear-cut distinctions of corruption from sexual practice. They suggest that:

The nature of the intimate relationships between high-ranking men in the patronage and friendship systems that sustained Jacobean England meant that sodomy was a charge that spread out in all directions – from patron to client, from master to servant.⁶⁰⁰

John Aubrey apparently had first-hand information from Bacon's assistant Thomas Hobbes that "Bacon was a paiderastos" who had "his Ganymedes and favourites".⁶⁰¹ I believe that here favouritism can only refer to a sexual relationship, for the word 'Ganymede' elucidates the kind of favouritism Aubrey is talking about.

⁵⁹⁹ Quoted in Jardine and Stewart, p. 464.

⁶⁰⁰ Jardine and Stewart, pp. 465-466.

⁶⁰¹ Jardine and Stewart, p. 464.

As aforementioned, patronage and favour were ‘not exclusive or permanent’.⁶⁰² In such a fragile political arena, the plethora of favours and the ascendancy to power depended on political alliances, right timing and careful handling. The language of prostitution was even used to describe distribution of titles as well. In Jardine’s and Stewart’s references we find that Bacon referred to a title of knighthood as being ‘prostituted’ when it was offered to him during Elizabeth’s reign.⁶⁰³

Perez’s case of his relation with both Bacon brothers was different. Hunted by Philip II of Spain for accusations of sodomy, treason, murder and adultery with the King’s mistress, Perez arrived in England and associated himself with both Bacon brothers during Elizabeth’s reign. In a letter to Anthony Bacon, following a dinner invitation, he referred to Francis as ‘some kind of chaste vestal virgin’. Later, Bacon appears as an ardent sensual lover. No connections with prostitute practice are made in the following extract:

You can tell immediately what this imagined modesty of his is all about. For I am just the same. Those who claim to love modesty are in fact the most bold of men, and submit to force, and enjoy the excuse of being taken by force, like the Roman matron in Tacitus who consented to be raped by her lover.⁶⁰⁴

The genre that was largely used to comment on political and sexual scandals could not have been other than the satire. An anonymous popular satirical poem ‘Great Verulam is very lame’ identifies Bacon’s servants and secretaries, according to the biographers. In there we find that: ‘Bushell wants by half a peck the measure of such tears/ Because his lord’s posteriors makes the buttons that he wears.’⁶⁰⁵ Bushell is an interesting case that illustrates the sexual service occurring in Bacon’s household. Stewart and Jardine elucidate, by again quoting Aubrey:

Aubrey explains the lewd reference to Bacon’s backside and buttons: ‘’Twas the fashion in those days for gentlemen to have their suits of clothes garnished with buttons. My Lord Bacon was then in disgrace, and his man Bushell having more buttons than usual on his cloak, they said that his Lord’s breech made buttons and Bushell wore them: from whence he was called ‘buttoned Bushell’. Aubrey can only be suggesting

⁶⁰² Peck, ‘The Jacobean Dilemma’, p. 30.

⁶⁰³ Jardine and Stewart, p. 275.

⁶⁰⁴ Jardine and Stewart, p. 163.

⁶⁰⁵ Jardine and Stewart, p. 465.

that it was maliciously put about that Bushell's ostentatious dress had been earned by sexual services to his master.⁶⁰⁶

As Williams defines in his dictionary, 'button' means penis.⁶⁰⁷ Such literary evidence shows that Bacon did not have just a single servant/favourite to offer him sex, but quite a few of them. This does not mean that associations with male prostitution should be made. The problem was that he was treating them as friends, according to Bacon's wife, as reported by John Aubrey.⁶⁰⁸

Bacon's servants were possibly thought of as male prostitutes by some commentators. Others might choose to view Bacon's relationships as failed intimate friendships. 'Upon his being in disfavour his servants suddenly went away; he compared them to the flying of the vermin when the house was falling', Aubrey reports again.⁶⁰⁹ I do not doubt that some of Bacon's sexual servants/favourites could have developed intimate and affectionate relations with their master. Yet, within the system of patronage where economic factors played a crucial, if not the primary role for favour, sexual service and special friendships would be offered elsewhere if the patron could not sustain them. Following Stewart's and Jardine's comments on the politics of marriage, I agree that the sources give us significant insights into the elite household. As the biographers argue:

If one were to view the early seventeenth century purely through these documents, the inevitable conclusion would be that marriage was no more than a cynical exercise in the acquisition of land, while the only true emotional bond was between master (or mistress) and servant.⁶¹⁰

The financial element should not be separated from these 'emotional bonds'. We are not far from the Ancient Greek model of marriage where the *heterai* (εταίρες), highly esteemed courtesans, and the boys that were hired for sexual services and companionship attracted greater interest than the wife.

Jardine and Stewart chose to close Bacon's biography with his friends and servants who preserved his legacy. Three of them, Rawley and Bushell, who we have seen earlier ridiculed in a satirical poem, and Tobie Matthew were the servants Bacon

⁶⁰⁶ Jardine and Stewart, p. 465.

⁶⁰⁷ Williams, *DSL*, p. 185.

⁶⁰⁸ Jardine and Stewart, p. 512.

⁶⁰⁹ Jardine and Stewart, p. 487.

⁶¹⁰ Jardine and Stewart, p. 513.

turned to when in need.⁶¹¹ Important as these servants might have been for Bacon's last years, his closeness to Buckingham and Essex was more significant for the development of his career. Yet, both relations had their own share in rumours about Bacon and sodomitical practice. Buckingham and Essex were viewed with suspicion by rival politicians and courtiers. The Earl of Essex was in fact accused of sodomy, as the biographers noted.⁶¹²

In addition, although Bacon might have felt more comfortable in James' court than in Elizabeth's, even his close association with Buckingham had negative effects on his career. As D'Ewes reported Bacon was 'immoderately ambitious' and 'excessively proud'. As far as injustice and bribery were concerned, 'to this later wickedness the favour he had with the beloved marquis of Buckingham emboldened him'.⁶¹³

Any associations with George Villiers were seen with suspicion, since James' favourite was the main recipient of attacks and abuse throughout his life. Not only Buckingham, but also all of James' favourites suffered criticism, due to their proximity to the King. As Clarke notes, the early modern elite society and court understood that erotic relations became 'politically meaningful'.⁶¹⁴

Clarke's remark refers to Edward II and Gaveston in her analysis of popular texts that dramatised the medieval king's downfall. Such a view succinctly describes the deep anxieties that members of the court had for favourites and their instant rise to power. Yet, such a concern does not belong only to the fictitious sphere. This interpretation of the conflation of the erotic with the political could easily be applied to real life anxieties that prevailed in the English courts. It encapsulates the constitutive elements through which social aggrandizement was realised and succeeded. The Overbury scandal and Bacon's ingenious treatment of it to rescue the crown from being involved in corruption, indicates how the sexual could easily become tangent to the political.⁶¹⁵

⁶¹¹ Jardine and Stewart, p. 520.

⁶¹² Jardine and Stewart, p. 231.

⁶¹³ Jardine and Stewart, p. 464.

⁶¹⁴ Danielle Clarke, 'The sovereign's vice begets the subject's error': the Duke of Buckingham, 'sodomy' and narratives of Edward II, 1622-28', in *Sodomy in early modern Europe*, ed. by Tom Betteridge (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 46-64 (pp. 52-53).

⁶¹⁵ For a thorough but highly partial and moralizing account of the Overbury scandal see Philip H. Gibbs, *King's Favourite: The love story of Robert Carr and Lady Essex* (London: Hutchinson & Co Ltd, 1909).

Certainly, opportunities where political corruption could be interpreted sexually, or at least would insinuate sexual misbehaviour, were often made. However, in the Overbury case, where the King feared being implicated in the scandal, Bacon managed to marginalise and rule out indications of royal sexual corruption by foregrounding the political nature of Somerset's and James' secrets. The King feared that he would be considered 'accessory to his crime' for 'it was rumoured that Somerset would claim that he had had sexual relations with James'.⁶¹⁶ Whether Bacon foresaw Carr's claims for sexual favouritism on James' behalf is ambiguous, according to Stewart and Jardine. What is certain is that Bacon could not do otherwise but isolate the ruler from possible associations with Overbury's murder and Carr's claims of sexual encounters with the King. After all, Bacon's career was dependent upon James' favouritism.

However, the King was never free from charges of corruption. As Peck suggests '[b]y creating a market for titles and offices he [James] evoked complaints that he was selling his honor'.⁶¹⁷ Economy was strongly tied to James' prestige since for economists 'corruption [. . .] involves a shift from a mandatory pricing model to a free-market model'.⁶¹⁸ In fact, gaining offices in James' court was always associated with corruption: 'Contemporary sermons and political literature argued that all offices were offices of justice and that gifts, favor and affection were as corrupt as bribery in gaining office.'⁶¹⁹ Favour, affection and gifts were principles around which the system of patronage was organised and defined. As Jody Greene reminds us 'gifts maintained alliances' and 'created mutual obligations'.⁶²⁰ It is time to turn now to James' favourites and investigate the ways in which his favourites were addressed and defined by commentators in the court.

⁶¹⁶ Jardine and Stewart, pp. 378-379.

⁶¹⁷ Linda L. Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), p. 11.

⁶¹⁸ Peck, *Court Patronage*, p. 8.

⁶¹⁹ Peck, *Court Patronage*, p. 9.

⁶²⁰ Greene, p. 170.

King James' sexual favourites

James' male favourites have attracted considerable attention in literary criticism and historical narratives. Viewed by some as significant political forces that shaped elite culture and politics in the Stuart court, and by others as a liability to the crown responsible for the court's corruption, James' favourites stood always at the epicentre of the political stage. The body of literature dedicated to favouritism is enormous. From plays, pamphlets and treatises, to poetry, historical accounts and biographies, royal favouritism was one of the most popular themes in English courtly literature.

Fuelled with suspicion, hostility, political rivalry and charges of sexual corruption, representations of favouritism in the Stuart court facilitated constructions of what it is now considered one of the most notorious courts in Renaissance England. With regard to charges of sodomy, commentators until the twentieth century viewed relations between the monarch and his favourites as improper and 'embarrassing'.⁶²¹ Comparisons between James' court to those of Elizabeth and Charles were unavoidable, as we have seen earlier. Osborne however, explicitly accuses the King's favourites for their association with prostitution. As he claims:

And these . . . his favourites or minions . . . like burning-glasses, were daily interposed between him and the subject, multiplying the heat of oppressions in generall opinion, though in his own he thought they screened them from reflecting upon the crowne; Through the fallacy of which maxime his son came to be ruined; . . . Now, as no other reason appeared in favour of their choyce but handsomnesse, so the love the king shewed was as amorously conveyed, as if he had mistaken their sex, and thought them ladies; which I have seene Somerset and Buckingham labour to resemble, in the effeminatenesse of their dressings; though in w_____ lookes and wanton gestures, they exceeded any part of woman kind my conversation did ever cope with all. Nor his was love, or what else posterity will please to call it, (who must be the judges of all that history shall informe,) carried on with a discretion sufficient to cover a lesse scandalous behaviour; for the kings kissing them after so lascivious a mode in publick, and upon the theatre, as it were, of the world, prompted many to imagine some things done in the tyring-house, that exceed my expressions no lesse then do my experience: And therefore left floting upon the waves of conjecture, which hath in my hearing tossed them from one side to another.⁶²²

⁶²¹ Lockyer, p. 234.

⁶²² Ashton, pp. 113-114.

Ashton suggests 'whoreson',⁶²³ Hammond 'whorish',⁶²⁴ to complete 'w____'. Like the sin of sodomy, whoredom is presented as something not to be named.

Interesting literary schemata and issues are presented in Osborne's account. He first equates 'favourites' with 'minions'. He then presents an atmosphere of general discontent concerning tyranny. The king had no idea of the 'heat of oppressions' because his favourites interposed between him and the public. Probably this is what we are supposed to understand by 'burning-glasses', as instruments that multiply the discontent of the public. For the conceit here is that the King's minions accelerated as magnifying glasses public disapproval and unpleasantness. James thought that his favourites were protecting the crown whereas clearly, favouritism had the opposite effect and damaged the body politic.

Having set the atmosphere and the favourites' malfunctions, Osborne elucidates the ways in which the favourites were presented. Here, womanhood is directly linked to appearances and presentation in court. The favourites 'labour' to be like women. Their dress is effeminate and their looks resemble whores. They are the worse kind of women and the King actively supports that by kissing them lasciviously. These are far from courtly manifestations of love and favour, for Osborne leaves open to interpretation the kind of affection the King showed to them. More revealing is the fact that some courtiers would refuse to allow the King to show his favour under such conditions. As Osborne testifies:

I have heard that Sir Henry Rich, since Earle of Holland, and some others, refused his majesties favour upon those conditions they subscribed to, who filled that place in his affection: Rich loosing that opportunity his curious face and complection afforded him, by turning aside and spitting after the king had slabeled his mouth.⁶²⁵

James' wantonness is being described here by wetting and staining Rich's mouth with saliva. Critics usually do not refer to these textual instances that provide fascinating contrasts of the king's favourites to courtiers, who were not necessarily honoured by this sort of manifestation of affection. Rich is also described as having a 'curious' face.

⁶²³ Ashton, p. 114.

⁶²⁴ Hammond, p. 129.

⁶²⁵ Ashton, p. 114.

As Greene has argued ‘curiosity was linked with notions of profligacy, debauchery, and effeminacy’.⁶²⁶ She later explains:

The gendering of ‘curiosity’ as a mark of the ‘effoeminate’ thus comes about when a man is accused of expending excessive energy on private matters – time which a woman could afford to spare for such pursuits, but which man was expected to devote to public functions. While the word is frequently found in discussions of apparel, Stubbes uses it also in relation to food: . . .⁶²⁷

Effeminate qualities seem to be applied even to those who did not fulfill the King’s desires.

During Charles I’s reign a manuscript poem refers to Buckingham as a ‘Ganymede’:

Heaven still preserve him, next I crave
Thou wilt be pleasd great God to save
My soveraigne from a Ganymed
Whose whorish breath hath power to lead
His excellence which way it list[:]⁶²⁸

Once again, the poem highlights the prostitute qualities that are attributed to the royal favourite. ‘Ganymede’ here is used derogatively to refer to Villiers’ prostitute quality, as well as to his first employment as the king’s cupbearer.

According to Goldberg:

Simond D’Ewes regaled a guest with modern license, ‘of things I discoursed with him that were secret as of sinne of sodomye, how frequente it was in this wicked cittye . . .’ adding, ‘I tolde him that boyes were growen to the height of wickedness to paint’.⁶²⁹

If this comment made in 1622 was ‘modeled on behaviour at court’, as Goldberg contends, then here we have another instance of boys prostituting in court, since ‘to paint’ would mean to apply make up. These were techniques that women used,

⁶²⁶ Greene, p. 168.

⁶²⁷ Greene, p. 169.

⁶²⁸ Quoted in Hammond, p. 142. Quoted also in Holstun who believes that Gill is the author of the poem, p. 530. Hammond states that the poem is sometimes attributed to William Drummond, ‘but the attribution is insecure’, p. 13.

⁶²⁹ Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and Their Contemporaries* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1983), p. 143.

especially prostitutes, and the sin of sodomy that D'Ewes is referring to here could only be interpreted as male prostitute practice. Whiteness combined with red, as a cosmetic, was 'feminized', as Dymphna Callaghan suggests in her examination of racial difference in "Othello was a white man": properties of race on Shakespeare's stage'.⁶³⁰ As she later notes:

Ostensibly, it was because of their [women's] power to beautify that the white and red were assumed to be a form of hypocrisy, misleading men by feigning a beauty that women did not really possess. Cosmetics were associated with prostitutes, as for example in Hamlet's reference to 'The harlot's cheek, beautified with plast'ring art' (III. i. 51). Women's use of cosmetics was roundly condemned, often by the same people who fulminated against theatre and associated all manner of artifice with femininity.⁶³¹

And, as D'Ewes' account suggests, applying make up was not only frowned upon in the theatre but in the court as well. Thus, the boys who paint their faces white in the royal court audaciously transgress to the worst kind of womanhood. D'Ewes here directly associates cosmetics and whoredom with sodomy.

These are just few of the numerous accounts that proliferated during and after James' reign. Arthur Wilson's *Life and Reign of James I* is indicative of the ways in which James' court became so notorious. As he interestingly narrates:

Some Parallel'd him to Tiberius for Dissimulation, yet Peace was maintained by him as in the Time of Augustus: An Peace begot Plenty, and Plenty begot Ease and Wantonness, and Ease and Wantonness begot Poetry, and Poetry swelled to that Bulk in his time, that it begot strange Monstrous Satyrs against the King's own Person, that haunted both Court and Country . . .⁶³²

Elucidating corruption in this successive generative process where peace begets wealth, wealth produces wantonness, wantonness gives birth to poetry and poetry creates monstrous satires, Wilson manages to capitulate astutely the constitutive elements that characterised James' reign. More significantly, Wilson pre-empted twentieth-century criticism on the Stuart court and the ways in which the political, economic, sexual and

⁶³⁰ Dymphna Callaghan, "Othello was a white man": properties of race on Shakespeare's stage', in *Alternative Shakespeares: Vol. 2*, ed. by Terence Hawkes (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 192-215 (p. 198).

⁶³¹ Callaghan, p. 200.

⁶³² Ashton, p. 18.

literary are all implicated and complement each other. This is similar to our own understanding of the seventeenth-century court. These rules of conduct that shaped James' rule, and its ineluctable degradation in the eyes of his critics, eventually designate the dynamics of corruption.

As far as 'peace' is concerned, in Wilson's account, the King was highly criticised for overestimating his importance in the political arena. Ashton explains:

In his own time too there were not wanting critics who maintained that the maintenance of peace, on which the King so prided himself, was achieved only at the price of national dishonour. Both the hostile Weldon and the far more sympathetic Oglander ascribed James' pacific inclinations to personal cowardice and they were by no means alone in this.⁶³³

Militaristic qualities were absent from the court and with the King's dislike of military looks and his avoidance of engagement in war, despite reason and opportunity, leads Wilson to present peace as a corruptive force. A Venetian ambassador also noted that 'he [James] loves quite and repose, has no inclination to war, nay is opposed to it, a fact that little pleases many of his subjects [. . .]'.⁶³⁴

As for the category 'plenty', the King was notorious for excess, extravagance and expenditure. Plenty here might be interpreted as wealth, but Wilson is careful in his choice of words. For such luxury and expenditure, which we may take 'plenty' to indicate, created the voluptuousness and moral looseness that 'wantonness' suggests.

Further constitutive elements were 'ease and wantonness' because the King was considered effeminate, careless and weak. In the words of a Venetian ambassador: 'it pleases them [James' subjects] still less that he leaves all government to his Council and will think of nothing but the chase.'⁶³⁵ The plethora of negative comments apropos James' character and the way he managed his court as early as 1584, as ruler of Scotland, represented the King as feeble. As the Venetian ambassador claims:

I have noted in him three defects [. . .] The first is his ignorance and failure to appreciate his poverty and lack of strength, overrating himself and despising other Princes. The second that he loves indiscreetly and obstinately despite the disapprobation of his subjects. The third he is too

⁶³³ Ashton, pp. 2-3.

⁶³⁴ Ashton, p. 10.

⁶³⁵ Ashton, p. 10.

idle and too little concerned about business, too addicted to his pleasure, principally that of the chase, leaving the conduct of business to the Earl of Arran, Montrose and the Secretary.⁶³⁶

His character mirrored his court, for James' primal concern, according to the sources, seemed to be his pleasure. In a letter from Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton we learn that:

. . . but above all Christopher Neville younger sonne to the Lord Abergeyny . . . spared not great personages about the court calling them arrisores et arrosors, which he Englished spaniels to the King and wolves to the people, with much other like stuffe not worth the remembering, neither were others behind in glauncing at principall peerres and counsaillors [. . .] I have heard from some of them, that there was never knowne a more disorderly house, and that yt was many times more like a cockpit then a grave counsaile, and many sat there that were more fit to have ben among roaring boyes then in the assemblie.⁶³⁷

This account imparts how James' court was perceived during his time, by promulgating the council as a theatrical arena. The officers themselves seem to be the primal danger to the people as beasts ('wolves'), while in the presence of James they are presented as dogs ('spaniels'), evoking the submission they showed, possibly by flattery and by pleasing him. In fact, the word 'spaniels' had a negative connotation concerning favourites and friends during the early modern period. In his short treatise *A Tipe or Figure of Friendship*, published in 1589, Walter Dorke makes explicit remarks with regard to how a true friendship should be, by comparing and associating the court with the city. After his list of axioms of how a friend should behave, he claims:

Wherefore, if Friendship were thus imbraced in the Court, there should be no Gnatho so often with filed tongue flattering, nor Thraso so commonly with brazen face bragging: nor Davus so continually with double heart dissembling. Currifauourers and clawbackes, should be contemned as irksome and perillous: Sicophants and Shifters, should be pronounced as execrable & odious: Parasites and platter-friends, should be proclaimed as pestilent and pernicious. In like manner in the Citie, if they would whip out the spaniels that will fawne when they are emptie, and beat out the dogges that will bite when they are full, and feare away the crows that will eate vp quicke bodies, and flap out the flies that will

⁶³⁶ Ashton, pp. 2-3.

⁶³⁷ Ashton, pp. 78-79.

sting Alexander, and ridde themselues of the Friers fleas that are bred in euerie corner.⁶³⁸

Let me return again to Wilson's account concerning King James. As a product of 'wantonness' and 'plenty', 'poetry' plays an intrinsic part in the court's bad reputation. For, according to Wilson, such indulgence to excess, luxury and wantonness could only breed rumours and libellous writings concerning the King and his favourites. It is textuality and language that Wilson highlights, in an attempt to represent the notoriety of James and, if possible, to diminish it. These are the threatening effects of writing and language in general. As Wilson continues narrating:

And the Tongues of those Times more fluent than my Pen, made every Miscarriage (being not able to discover their true Operations, like small Seeds hid in earthy Darkness) grow up, and spread into such exuberant Branches, that evil Report did often pearch upon them. So dangerous it is for Princes, by a remiss Comportment, to give Growth to the least Error;⁶³⁹

In such a hostile environment with constant and severe criticism James' careless distribution of titles and offices gave rise to all sorts of libellous language. Although accusations of sodomy and whoredom proliferated during James' reign, the King did not perceive his own person as a sodomite nor his courtiers as prostitutes.

Three courtiers during his reign are generally accepted to be his famous lovers. These were Esme Stuart, Robert Carr and George Villiers, and their relations with the King have been a cornerstone for studies on James and homoeroticism. Literary texts of the seventeenth century that dealt with favouritism alluded regularly to the King's sexual preferences. Although his intimate relationships were represented through a discourse that evoked friendship, literature on favouritism tended to pronounce the inappropriateness of his relations. The same degrading vocabulary that ruled discourse around same-sex acts was applied indiscriminately to James' favourites. More than sodomy, charges of prostitution in the court, both homosexual and heterosexual, were persistent, through a political propaganda that tried to expose the ruler's moral

⁶³⁸ Walter Dorke, *A tipe or figure of friendship, wherein is liuelie, and compendiouslie expressed, the right nature and propertie of a perfect and true friend. Also a conclusion at the end in the praise of friendship* (1589)

<http://gateway.proquest.com.ezproxy.sussex.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99841118> [accessed 15 September 2009].

⁶³⁹ Ashton, p. 18.

corruption. Yet, the scandals that brought James' favourites' downfall were not their homoerotic relations with the King. Esme Stuart was separated from the King for religious and political reasons. Robert Carr's downfall was caused by allegations that he was involved in his wife's (previously the Countess of Essex) murder of Overbury, who stood in her way to marry his (Overbury's) patron. Buckingham's growing unpopularity and assassination was the outcome of a political scheme that sought to displace him as the most powerful minister-favourite in seventeenth-century English history.⁶⁴⁰ If prostitution and sexual corruption were regular charges applied to all three male sexual favourites, these had nothing to do with their downfall.

Walsingham's document in 1582, found in the *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series*, according to David Bergeron, gives us an indication of the charges against Esme Stuart, James' first well-known favourite. The document states:

The overthrow of religion practised by seeking to seduce the King by filling his ears with wicked devices and speeches and withdrawing his residence to places frequented by Papists, full of traitorous persons . . . and overflowing with whoredom and all kinds of insolences.⁶⁴¹

In this description Esme Stuart emerges as a Gaveston, by seducing King James with wicked devices and speeches, reminding us of Gaveston's theatrical contrivances. Walsingham is neither clear about what sort of 'devices' and language Stuart relied upon to manipulate the King, nor, as Bergeron notes, gives any information on the King's and Stuart's abode in secret places, where papists, traitors and whores could be found. Osborne's view of the court as we have seen went even further.

Whoredom in Walsingham's text is ambiguous. It fails to indicate whether the prostitution involved is male or female. Could he be referring to homoerotic or heterosexual sodomy/whoredom? Obviously, reference to sodomy would be most unfitting to describe the sexual practices of the King's favourite. As with accusations of sodomy, we never get any explanatory comments when whoredom is represented. What we do know is that James had a great deal of interest in men and young courtiers who entered his court.

⁶⁴⁰ For an account of Buckingham's assassination and his murderer see James Holstun, 'God Bless Thee, Little David!': John Felton and his Allies', *English Literary History*, 59.3 (1992), 513-552 <<http://www.jstor.org>> [accessed 26 April 2007].

⁶⁴¹ Quoted in David M. Bergeron, *King James and Letters of Homoerotic Desire* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), p. 40.

In Weldon's account of James' character we learn that: 'his eyes [were] large, ever rowling after any stranger that came in his presence, insomuch as many for shame have left the roome, as being out of countenance'.⁶⁴² An anonymous tract also describes the conspicuous interest James had in men:

How could that blasphemous man doe any thing that might amend his language? [. . .] Who could not contract his horrid filthinesse within his Bed, his Ganimesdes Pallet, or his Closets . . . But he could not contract it there; He must have the Publique to be witnesse of his lascivious tongue licking of his Favourites lips, and his hands must (as his Court and Character mentions) bee seen in a continual lascivious action.⁶⁴³

The addiction to his male favourites was so apparent that, as Ashton notes, it brought distress to Queen Anne, although it was the Queen that facilitated George Villiers' aggrandizement, so that she could marginalise Robert Carr.⁶⁴⁴ However, effeminacy is not associated with sodomy but with whoredom, and if critics are right that effeminacy was signifying too much closeness to women, then we might deduct that whoredom could refer to female prostitutes. After all, as in Buckingham's case, it was well known that the minister-favourite was a 'notorious womanizer'. Lockyer cites a letter sent to Buckingham by his wife's father and explains:

If you court ladies of honour you will be in danger of poisoning or killing,' he warned him. 'And if you desires [*sic*] whores, you will be in danger of burning.' Buckingham was a notorious womanizer – though how much his reputation was based on fact and how much on malice and supposition is impossible to say – and when relations between him and the Spaniards deteriorated they charged him, amongst other things, with bringing strumpets into the royal palace for his own pleasure.⁶⁴⁵

The rumour that he contracted syphilis, according to Lockyer, was 'certainly false'. 'Burning', in his father-in-law's letter is referring to the effects of venereal disease, whether syphilis or not. If the accusations of whoredom in the Spanish accounts, that Lockyer alludes to without citing them, are like the English references also ambivalent and do not differentiate between male and female whoredom, there is no way of

⁶⁴² Ashton, p. 12.

⁶⁴³ Quoted in Hammond, p. 131.

⁶⁴⁴ Ashton, p. 86.

⁶⁴⁵ Lockyer, p. 153.

knowing what kind of sexual activities Buckingham was thought to have conducted while in Spain.

What Buckingham's father-in-law knew about George Villiers' sexual activities is another issue altogether. Significantly, we learn about Buckingham's associations with female prostitutes when he was in Spain. At home, Buckingham is represented having homoerotic relations with the King, as many texts testify, but abroad he is an irresistible womanizer. The indifference and the easiness of switching from a homoerotic to a heterosexual sexual activity might look perplexing. Could James' favourites be relying upon homoerotic relations with the King to advance their favours and economic and social privileges, while pursuing sexual encounters with women? Could the favourites be using homoeroticism as a tool for social aggrandizement?

Effeminacy did not only refer to excessive attendance and affection towards women. Beautiful, young-looking faces and well-formed figures were also considered effeminate. In McElwee's description of Robert Carr, the King's second popular favourite, Carr appears like Esme Stuart and George Villiers. 'Carr was a tall, brainless athlete with the slightly effeminate fair-haired good looks most calculated to catch James's eye'.⁶⁴⁶ In Bergeron's account we also find that David Harris Willson 'acknowledges a physical attraction between James and Carr'.⁶⁴⁷ He notes that:

The vice [unnamed] was common to many rulers and we need not be too shocked. Yet the completeness of the King's surrender to it indicates a loosening of his moral fibre.

Bergeron then continues to explain how the king behaved towards his favourite. Thus, we learn that:

[h]e appeared everywhere with his arm round Carr's neck, constantly kissed and fondled him, lovingly feeling the texture of the expensive suits he chose and bought for him, pinching his cheeks and smoothing his hair.⁶⁴⁸

Another account Bergeron offers is also telling of Carr's appearance: 'In his letter Thomas Howard describes Carr as 'straight-limbed, well-favoured, strong-shouldered,

⁶⁴⁶ Bergeron, p. 68.

⁶⁴⁷ Quoted in Bergeron, p. 68.

⁶⁴⁸ Quoted in Bergeron, p. 68.

and smooth-faced, with some sort of cunning and show of modesty; tho, God wot, he well knoweth when to shew his impudence'.⁶⁴⁹

It is 'cunning' and Carr's 'calculated' designs to seduce the sovereign that could suggest a different facet of effeminacy, which, as it appears in the descriptions of favourites, stands as an accusation in its own right. James' advice to Prince Henry not to be dressed like a courtesan appears to be somehow awkward. It shows that James did not actually realise or acknowledge the ways in which his courtiers were dressed and displayed their wealth in the court, nor even his own expenditure on his favourites' clothes. The same could apply to James' condemnations of sodomy. For example, in Stubbe's *Anatomy of Abuses*, sartorial excess is dismissed as 'sodomitical', in Prynne, as we have seen, 'meretricious'.⁶⁵⁰ To further complicate etymological issues around whoredom and sodomy, King James' version of Deuteronomy mentions 'sodomites' and 'sodomitesses', the latter meaning whores.⁶⁵¹

Here, whores and sodomites emerge as a tautological category since 'adulterous sex and sex with prostitutes was characterised as sodomy'.⁶⁵² What interests me here are the ways in which sodomy, whoredom, effeminacy and cunning are interrelated in texts that are ambiguous concerning signification. Used sometimes as substitutes for each other and in other cases as referents to one another, these concepts complicate clear etymological distinctions. In fact, if we take into account Ricoeur's postulates, these concepts, on a metaphorical level, give us no new information at all.⁶⁵³ Their appearance seems simply decorative. For cunning and ways of seduction were usually associated with women and especially female prostitutes, as Hammond examined in the *The Most Delectable and Pleasaunt History of Ciliphon and Leucippe* by Achilles Tatius,⁶⁵⁴ mentioned earlier in the first section of this chapter. Shakespeare's sonnet sequence also explored distinctions between affection directed to the noble youth and to the Dark Lady, with highly favourable terms for the boy. Could Shakespeare's sonnet sequence also be engaging in the same dialogue as the above-mentioned Greek novel? For

⁶⁴⁹ Quoted in Bergeron, p. 67.

⁶⁵⁰ Greene, p. 167. On Prynne and actors as prostitutes see my reference in Chapter 3, p. 131.

⁶⁵¹ Greene, p. 170.

⁶⁵² Greene, p. 166.

⁶⁵³ Ricoeur, p. 52.

⁶⁵⁴ See Hammond, pp. 49-52.

women's sexuality, and especially prostitution, was also implicated in the discourse of sodomy and usury.⁶⁵⁵

In the texts I am examining accusations of whoredom are linked to effeminacy and cunning. We might be presented here with two options. In the first instance, whoredom is a substitute for the word 'sodomy'. If that is the case the texts refrain from mentioning sodomy for reasons of censorship. The second option is that whoredom is applied to male favourites because they behave like prostitutes. Thus, in both cases they are used as metaphors, filling a semiotic gap. The figurative male whores are effeminate and crafty. They bewitch and seduce the King. However, it was the Machiavellian quality of the favourite that outraged most commentators. In Melville's account we find a certain Monsieur d'Obignie with Monsieur Mombirneau, the latter being 'a subtle spirit, a merry fellow, very able in body, and most meet in all respects for bewitching of the youth of a Prince'.⁶⁵⁶ As Melville reports, they quickly gained the favour of the King but most importantly '[u]nder their wings crept crafty fellows, who made the Reformation of Religion, and all the good service done for the King before, to be but turbulent and treasonable dealing & c;'.⁶⁵⁷

In both options I have suggested, however, effeminacy does not refer to excessive womanising. The texts rather suggest that these favourites and courtiers are like women, and in this case, the worse kind of them, meaning whores. This political propaganda through application of womanhood to men could only create a hostile and libellous discourse in order to overthrow James' favourites. As effeminate, Machiavellian and corrupted, the King's special friends would be accused of prostitution, either by behaving and appearing as whores, or by associating themselves with them. Certainly, these accusations cannot prove that favourites were actual male prostitutes. However, they were represented as verging on prostitute practice.

Discourse on favouritism and friendship was informed by and structured around historical figures as well, serving as analogies to James' chosen ones. In fact, the historical personas employed and projected onto the King's favourites could reveal significant aspects of male favouritism and provide latent commentary on how James' friends were perceived in early modern England.

⁶⁵⁵ Greene, p. 173.

⁶⁵⁶ Ashton, p. 115.

⁶⁵⁷ Ashton, p. 115.

Gaveston, Sejanus and the mythologies of prostitution

Historical narratives in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England were largely used for didactic and political purposes. Either domestic or foreign, historical discourse was invested with the idea that historical truth could offer Renaissance culture lessons to eschew former mistakes. So, when authors drew analogies of historical events and figures to contemporary issues their purpose was to make political statements and to instruct. In order to fit their own political agendas and propaganda, historical data was manipulated. Two of the most commonly used figures that authors alluded to when they referred to Jacobean favourites were medieval Gaveston, Edward II's favourite, and Roman Sejanus, Tiberius' favourite.

The reasons they were employed in narratives were primarily political. The royal household, being at the centre of political and social interest, provided the basic material upon which a whole literary culture depended, either for entertainment or pedagogy. In addition, traditional and dominant discourses circulated in narratives that were imbued with early modern political dogma. As Raymond Williams explains, concerning the concept of tradition:

What we have to see is not just 'a tradition' but a *selective tradition*: an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification. . . . Any tradition is . . . in this sense an aspect of *contemporary* social and cultural organization, in the interest of the dominance of a specific class. It is a version of the past which is intended to connect with and ratify the present. What it offers in practice is a sense of *predisposed continuity*. . . . [It is] a deliberately selective and connecting process which offers a historical and cultural ratification of a contemporary order.⁶⁵⁸

According to Whigham, '[s]uch selection gained new force when humanism reached England and revalorized its history'.⁶⁵⁹

In his chapter on 'Tropes of Social hierarchy', Whigham examines notions of baseness and gentleness. By historicising notions of social hierarchy, the idea of

⁶⁵⁸ Whigham, pp. 85-86. Whigham's italics.

⁶⁵⁹ Whigham, p. 86.

‘mystified origins’ that he examines, was a common trope to certify and maintain social order in early modern English society. As he notes:

The tools of humanistic thought were literary as well as historical; they were used in the interpretation and promulgation of *texts*. It is then not surprising to find the temporizing of the essence of the literary itself being presented as an original motor of social order.⁶⁶⁰

This is highly significant, for what we find in texts that deal with male favouritism in the English court is a constant need to interpret the present through the past. In some cases this interpretive process would create the present. Many monarchs throughout Europe tried to ratify their absolute power by creating mythologies around their personas. Art was the primal mode for the creation of powerful images of sovereignty. Tapestries, poetry, paintings, masques and theatrical spectacles facilitated constructions of authoritative images.⁶⁶¹ Yet these images were not always controllable. In James’ court for example, Inigo Jones and Ben Jonson were the authors who produced the greatest masques to glorify royalty. The décor of these masques, especially Jones’, was usually Italian in taste and linked to corruption, since it was reminiscent of the ‘sexual orgies and perversions’ with which the Italians were associated.⁶⁶²

In other instances, historiography and mythology would be an essential mechanism through which control and order could be maintained. Arguments around social stability and mobility would be based on the creation of powerful analogies that could carry specific social messages. Once again, their reception was not always predictable. This was the case with Gaveston, a figure who was constantly alluded to when authors wanted to address issues of baseness, corruption and sexual scandal. As Clarke notes:

The story of Edward II is only one of the available narratives which address the various political and ethical issues raised by Buckingham’s rise to power – others include Richard II and Sejanus – but, while these narratives also posit effeminacy and sexual excess as indices of tyrannical disorder [. . .], the question of sodomy is most obviously adumbrated in the Edward II stories, as the weight of critical attention to

⁶⁶⁰ Whigham, p. 87. Whigham’s italics.

⁶⁶¹ See Lisa Jardine’s and Jerry Brotton’s Chapter 2, in *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), pp. 63-131.

⁶⁶² Suggested in Ashton, p. 229.

Marlowe's version suggests. [. . .] These texts are less interested in evidence than in the means of its [the text's] organization and representation within pre-established form and pattern which provide the taxonomies through which a reader makes the necessary identifications for the text to signify politically and didactically.⁶⁶³

Clarke here discusses the genres chosen by various authors to represent Edward II's story and does not refer only to Marlowe. The case of Marlowe is interesting because Clarke refers to the revived and re-issued text of 1622, when Buckingham was in power. Yet, it is in Marlowe's version that critics have found sodomy to prefigure at large, in the sense that it typifies real perceptions of sodomy in the early modern era. Within all three texts Clarke examines, sodomy is evasive. As she explains:

At the point at which sodomy might be disclosed, it is always located elsewhere, legible only through the signs of other discourses, in particular classical myth, the conventions of courtiership and the language of friendship, but also within a semantic field packed with overlapping and overdetermined nouns: minion, catamite, favourite, creature, ganymede, siren, damon, ingle, special friend. Nowhere is this sin or act named [. . .]⁶⁶⁴

Yet, as this thesis argues, these are instances of the ways in which the language of homoeroticism elaborates itself. My interests here are literary and historical texts, and what I seek is an internal dialogue that might explain popular views of Edward's favourite and his reception in early modern English society. For if sodomy as a term was elusive in these texts, prostitution was not, because the 'overlapping and overdetermined nouns', that Clarke suggested above, do not allow much space to think otherwise.

My point is that in Renaissance lexicography there was not a good sodomite or a bad sodomite. Prostitutes, friends, servants and favourites were all implicated within the category of sodomitical assault, presenting us once again with the problem of ideology and the ways it conflated diverse expressions of same-sex practice and desire. If various authors could not employ sodomy as a term to designate these relations, the texts themselves suggest that by representing them as whores, no matter if they were literal or figurative, the authors could imply the sin of sodomy taking place within these social relations. For it was the prostitute's image and techniques that designated sodomy. It is

⁶⁶³ Clarke, p. 50.

⁶⁶⁴ Clarke, p. 50.

no wonder that a prostitute's qualities would be the ones evoked and contrasted with friends, favourites, servants and all sorts of boys that were engaged in same-sex relations. The whore with its intrinsic female characteristics provided a metonymy, in the light of which these relations were viewed and represented. This sort of ideological construct would ascribe to the sodomite of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, as well as the homosexual of the nineteenth century, accusations of adultery, promiscuity, effeminacy and disease.

We have seen Naunton's and Harrison's accounts and their allusions to Gaveston and Spencer, as far as the Elizabethan court was concerned. In Naunton's account Leicester was viewed favourably, while in Harrison's he was another Gaveston. In Sparke's text, as Bergeron informs us, Robert Carr would be compared to the Spencers of Edward II and not Gaveston.⁶⁶⁵

Another popular analogy that sought to criticise the Scottish King was Tiberius' favourite, Sejanus. According to Worden, in Jonson's play the real threat to Tiberius is his favourite Sejanus, who has acquired complete power from his master. He then notes:

. . . Jonson would allude to the same danger under the early Stuarts: princes who neglect their 'proper office', he wrote, have 'often-times' the misfortune 'to draw a Sejanus to be near about them; who will at last affect to get above them'.⁶⁶⁶

Brockliss also notes in his essay that 'traditional favourites, whatever contemporaries might have initially believed, were invariably toadies. They did not so much supplant royal authority as encourage it into unpopular channels.'⁶⁶⁷ He later asserts that previous narratives of favourites were evoked and used by 'hostile observers in court' but as far as Sejanus is concerned he makes the following comment:

There was no whiff of intimacy about the relationship between Tiberius and his favourite: the emperor purportedly invited young boys to his bed, not his principal administrative agent.⁶⁶⁸

What we do find in the play however, as Bushnell reminds us, is that Sejanus is called 'stale catamite', 'minion', 'pathic' and that 'he prostituted his abused body'.⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶⁵ Bergeron, p. 69.

⁶⁶⁶ Worden, p. 170.

⁶⁶⁷ Brockliss, p. 283.

⁶⁶⁸ Brockliss, p. 300.

Despite the fact that Jonson wrote the play before James became King of England, the play still created discontent and was frowned upon. As Goldberg informs us, ‘yet, the play spoke to present concerns; Jonson was called before the Star Chamber for possible treason’.⁶⁷⁰ We have also seen how Weldon’s account drew an analogy of King James to Tiberius for ‘Dissimulation’.

Jonson’s appearance in the chamber for possible treason manifests the threatening power that these historical figures carried. Literature’s role in the construction of favouritism and prostitution was crucial. In play after play we find fictional favourites and friends implicated in sexual scandals and named male whores. Gaveston, Patroclus, Sejanus, as well as the plethora of boys and servants as favourites in early modern literary culture, are represented and referred to as male prostitutes. Gaveston’s case is unique and here I follow Smith’s discussion of *Edward II*.

In his examination of *Edward II* in the ‘Myth of Master and Minion’ Smith highlights how Gaveston called ‘base’, a ‘minion’, ‘a Greekish strumpet’, alluding to Helen of Troy, and a ‘Ganymede’. Yet, Marlowe’s source did not represent Gaveston in those terms. Holished’s *Chronicles* represent Gaveston as follows:

The malice whiche the Lordes had conceyved against the Earle of Cornewall still encreased, the more in deede through the high bearing of him, being now advanced to honour. For being a goodly gentleman and a stoute, he woulde not once yeelde an ynche to any of them, which worthily procured him great envie amongst the chieffest Peeres of all the realme . . .⁶⁷¹

As Smith suggests, Gaveston is not a ‘literal Ganymede’, nor even a ‘boy’.⁶⁷² The case is that Edward’s and Gaveston’s notoriety was widely circulated and became so powerful, that not only did it continue to be applied right until the beginning of the eighteenth century, but their story also travelled to Europe. Even Henry III of France and his mignons were compared to the English medieval King and his special friend. As Crawford informs us, in August 1588, the political rivals of Henry ‘sponsored the printing of the *Histoire tragique et memorable de Pierre de Gaveston*, which compared

⁶⁶⁹ Rebecca Bushnell, *Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 133.

⁶⁷⁰ Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature*, p. 176.

⁶⁷¹ Quoted in Smith, p. 213.

⁶⁷² Smith, pp. 213-214.

the ill-fated English monarch Edward II and his mignon (and alleged partner in sodomy) to Henry and Epernon'.⁶⁷³

Stymeist in his article 'Status, sodomy and the theatre in Marlowe's *Edward II*' makes an interesting remark, not that different from Clarke's suggestion on Edward's political error. He claims that:

If Edward had maintained his male lover solely in a sexual capacity, then the nobles could simply categorise and dismiss Gaveston as catamite, whore, or ingle (male prostitute); what menaces them is Edward's demand that Gaveston be politically recognised and given official status as royal consort.⁶⁷⁴

But the nobles have already done that by implicitly presenting him as a Ganymede by calling Isabella, Juno. In addition, Isabella complains: 'For never doted Jove on Ganymede/ So much as he on cursed Gaveston' (1.4. ll. 180-181). When pursued in Act 2, scene 5, Lancaster compares Gaveston to the 'Greekish strumpet', meaning of course, Helen of Troy. Gaveston's promised shows to seduce Edward, his extravagant appearance, according to Mortimer, his Italian style and the constant evocation of 'minion', denoting not only baseness but also a paramour and sexual servant, all contribute to his conceptualisation as a male whore.

Favouritism in the late seventeenth century

Hammond's chapter on 'Politics and Sodomy' from the 1640s onward examines in detail accusations of sodomy within royal households and Cromwell's government. A similar vocabulary of homoerotic representations concerning royal favouritism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries continued to be at work until the eighteenth century. In his study we find that William III 'renews the shame/ Of J. the first, and Buckingham;/ He . . . his Wives Embraces fled/ To slabber his lov'd Ganimede.'⁶⁷⁵ In addition, William is compared to Tiberius, 'whose catamite 'rules alone the state,'

⁶⁷³ Crawford, p. 541.

⁶⁷⁴ David Stymeist, 'Status, sodomy, and the theatre in Marlowe's *Edward II*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 44.2 (2004), 233-253 <<http://muse.jhu.edu>> [accessed 10 October 2008] (p. 238).

⁶⁷⁵ Quoted in Hammond, p. 172.

Whilst monarch dozes''.⁶⁷⁶ Williams' favourite Bentinck would be referred as 'the Dutch-man who serves instead of a whore', 'a he-bedfellow' or a 'Bardasha'.⁶⁷⁷ Another interesting instance in Hammond's account is a reference to the Members of Parliament 'who passively submitted to Cromwell' and are called 'State-Catamites, upon whom any votes whatsoever may be begotten'.⁶⁷⁸ Such a reference, of course, highlights the Members' passivity, equal to that of a male-whore who is even impregnated, for a male-whore would always be associated with passivity.

Once again sodomy is conflated with whoredom in utterances that could not distinguish homoerotic desire and sex from adultery and prostitution. In these texts we still hear of 'Ganymedes', 'catamites', 'minions' and even a 'Hephestion', Alexander the Great's friend. Similar to the Stuart court, sodomy in William's household was considered the guaranteed route to preferment'.⁶⁷⁹ It is hardly surprising that sodomy was considered responsible for bringing a decline in the female prostitute trade, as Hammond's examples inform us. In Dryden's *Don Sebastian*, written in 1690, there is an interesting episode where the terminology around favouritism is equated to male prostitution. Favourite here becomes a synonym to a male prostitute: '*Bend*. Some call me Favourite./ *Dorax*. What's that, his Minion?/ Thou art too old to be a Catamite!'.⁶⁸⁰ By placing carefully one word after the other, Dryden links favouritism to male whoredom, promulgating, thus, one term as explicative of the other.

As in Donne's *Satire I*, literary texts of the late seventeenth century would insist on associations of amorous boys, catamites and mignons with whores. In *Cleomenes*, written in 1692, Hammond finds a reference where Cleomenes says to Coenus who brings horses to the King: 'Mistaken Man:/ Thou shouldst have brought him Whores and Catamites;/ Such Merchandize is fit for such a Monarch'.⁶⁸¹

The late seventeenth century still capitalised and relied on a pejorative language to characterise favouritism and its implication of homoeroticism, for, as Wotton suggests, 'at courts there was no love without utility'.⁶⁸² Service was also implied in friendships. In a letter to Bacon, James suggested that Bacon should be a servant to his

⁶⁷⁶ Quoted in Hammond, p. 174.

⁶⁷⁷ Quoted in Hammond, p. 175.

⁶⁷⁸ Quoted in Hammond, p. 153.

⁶⁷⁹ Hammond, p. 180.

⁶⁸⁰ Hammond, p. 182.

⁶⁸¹ Hammond, p. 182.

⁶⁸² David Wotton, 'Francis Bacon: Your Flexible Friend', in Elliott and Brockliss, pp. 184-204 (p. 201).

friend Buckingham.⁶⁸³ Wotton notes also that ‘the favourite’s friend must act as a servant’. Dichotomies between friendship, favouritism, service and homoeroticism were unsustainable. Those differences between diverse social relations, although quite distinct for us, were not so for the early modern elite culture whose maintenance depended very much on gift exchanges. As Elliott notes in his ‘Introduction’:

The court, for instance, was at the centre of a gift-giving culture, in which the boundaries between reciprocity and the expected returns for service on the one hand, and ‘corruption’ on the other, were not easily defined.⁶⁸⁴

This slippage from the politic and economic to the sexual/erotic and vice versa is in fact what Weldon’s account illustrated, as I suggested earlier. Therefore, the inescapability of conflating the political and the sexual in various social relations introduces a caveat to our examination of favouritism and its possible associations with male whoredom.

The possible disruptions in and degeneration of relations between masters and servants, ruler and favourites or among friends seem to embody corrupting elements. The language to describe corrupted relationships was the language of whoredom and all the miscreant characteristics the term carried. This, as we have seen, has been a preoccupation since the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Cornwallis, for example, in his essay ‘Of Friendships and Factions’, published in 1601, with subsequent editions in 1616 and 1632, made explicit associations between prostitution and friendship:

If he [friend] fits you, obserue then whether he comes faster to you, then you to him; If hee be very forward beware; for either hee is a common friend, and so no friend, or else hee meanes to betray you: they are surest that are wonne with labour, and certaintest that are purchased with difficultie: for an open prostitute man, or woman, is loathsome, and flexible.⁶⁸⁵

This is a rare acknowledgement and distinction of a male and female prostitute and it is quite uncertain whether we should understand this comment within a homoerotic or a

⁶⁸³ See Jardine and Stewart, pp. 197-198.

⁶⁸⁴ Elliott, p. 6.

⁶⁸⁵ William Cornwallis, *Essayes. By Sir William Corne-Waleys the younger, Knight* (1600-1601) <http://Unknown EEBO domain!/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99844355> [accessed 7 May 2007].

heteroerotic context. Given the fact that Cornwallis discusses friendship, it is probable that his concern is homosociality between men. Cunning, loathsomeness and flexibility are ascribed to both prostitutes. More strikingly, Cornwallis characterises them as 'open'. Williams' dictionary defines the epithet 'open', 'of a sexually receptive woman'.⁶⁸⁶ Thus, openness ascribes a sexual role to male and female prostitutes as being the receptive partners. Earlier in this section on friendship, uncorrupted and trustworthy relations between men would be defined with a discourse of love and marriage:

In the choise rests some apparence of safetie. In this choise there ought to be much vigilancie, for vntill the marriage of loue, hath coupled paires, wise natures are timerous in dilating themselues: and after that celebration, it is irreligious to diuorce a friend thogh guiltie of many deformities.

In no part of Cornwallis' essay, does friendship dissolve into sodomy. It only oscillates between marriage and prostitution. In addition, Cornwallis suggests that friendship with lower status persons should be avoided:

Your friends estate is to bee reckoned among your cares, for if he be too lowe, he will haue occasion to vse you too often, and his barenesse promiseth litle helpe: If the vertues of his pouertie be worthy to be knowne bee his acquaintance, not friend, so doth your liberalitie come voluntarily from you, and not exacted, and lesse serues in chari[]ie the[] when it is commanded by friendship.

The case of being a friend to a superior is also included and considered dangerous. In Cornwallis' eyes it is better to remain a servant than be a friend because the superior has the advantage and can cancel any 'obligation' towards his inferior. As far as princes are concerned, Cornwallis warns them of the indeterminacy and danger that their social relations with inferiors could have. For courtiers might approach and become friends with the prince not because of love but for economic rewards. Thus, Cornwallis claims:

It is daungerous if we enioy a friend much our superiou[r] to doo him Offices not easily requited, such impossibilities make him desperate, and desirous to cancell that Obligation with some Action, that you shall not

⁶⁸⁶ Williams, *DSL*, p. 973.

afterwards be able to complaine of his Ingratitude. To these I would performe duties, rather giuing assurance of fidelitie, the[m] of the[m]selues Assurance. For Princes, or great fortunes I think it much more vn safe, since they cannot easily determine, whether they loue them, or their fortunes, whether this league be entered for a mutuall safegard, or for the ones particular, and it is the more daungerous, since the name of a common good authoriseth this breach.

In a previous essay titled 'Of Love', Cornwallis talks about love and he associates 'common lovers' with 'common whores':

There is no Loue vpon the earth, God loueth vs vnderdeseruedly, and some good men loue and feare him: It is Loue from this last because God is a partie, or else it might be affection, not possibly Loue. Loue is diuine, and eternall; Affection like our flesh, momentary, and mortal. If I could be sure of them, I would say I loued too, and make men say they are my friends: but it is an vncertain trade this louing, and stands vpon such a company of circumstances, as I like it not. I make no difference betweene common louers, and common whores, they both flatter, and make the name of Loue their Bawdes to serue their particular pleasures.

Yet, this is an essay about friendship again among men and earlier Cornwallis finds love among men more agreeable than love with women. That is of course, spiritual love. As he instructs:

Loue thy neighbour as thy selfe, that which comes nearest to Loue is this, man with man agreeing in sexe: I cannot thinke it is so betweene man and woman, for it giues opportunitie to lust, which the purenesse of Loue will not endure.

If this is the case, friendships between men that are used to satisfy only pleasure are demoted to prostitute relations. It is sexual pleasure that Cornwallis refers to, for the essay tries to distinguish spiritual love from physical affection. As the previous citation indicates, love becomes a pander ('Bawde') to 'serve their particular pleasures'. Enter another caveat: interpretations around the problems of love and affection. Which term denotes physical proximity and which one a non-sexual relation is quite unclear in Cornwallis. However, various authors employ the phraseology around love and affection in different ways.

This chapter had as its premise the instability of the discourse on male favouritism. In my examination of favouritism and possible sexual encounters between

men, prostitution appears to be the dominant discourse of slander and blame through which sexual favouritism and/or friendship materialises. As a qualitative term that designates relations of power among friends, servants and favourites, it shapes notions of patronage and sexual service. Here, we might have lost sight of the male prostitutes in royal courts whose lives are irretrievable. Claims of a homoerotic sex-market within the court might seem unattainable or evasive. For there is a problem in conceptualising a sexual identity ascribed to a male prostitute, if that male prostitute was also a friend, a servant or a favourite. William III's court might look more pertinent to such an argumentation.

In the literature about courtship we find the semantic fields of social male relations to be extended, manipulated and constantly redefined. Such terminology relied on polysemantic interpretations that made no clear-cut distinctions. The new identity crisis during the early modern period was felt more strongly in invective about sexual scandals, and the terminology used insisted on the ways gender could inform social status. Yet, the absolute misogyny that governed discourses of slander could still rescue boys and young courtiers from the more heinous allegation of whoredom. The boy after all was expected to become a man.

Epilogue: subculture, the sex-market and male prostitution

In my introduction I mentioned Sinfield's assertion that, to pursue the real homosexuals in discussions that are primarily concerned with minoritizing versus universalizing arguments, or the unresolved issue of essentialism versus constructionism, is 'to join the ideological circus'.⁶⁸⁷ Sinfield's interest here is to theorise the concept of gay and lesbian subcultures by underlining a significant but easily overlooked component for the formation of group identity. As he notes: 'Our terms – "gay," "lesbian," "lesbian, gay and bisexual," "dyke," "queer" – are markers of political allegiance, far more than ways of having or thinking about sex.'⁶⁸⁸ For Sinfield, '[s]ubcultures should not be envisaged as homogenous or as having clearly defined boundaries'.⁶⁸⁹ As he suggests, for members of marginal groups, to belong simultaneously 'to diverse subcultures, or to one, is not a matter of principal, but an operational question – dependent on the kind of cultural analysis or political alignment one is attempting'.⁶⁹⁰ The reason why I evoke Sinfield's work on subcultures is because the modern male sex-market cannot easily fit within the notion of group identity. Only female prostitutes have done that by organising around the COYOTE organization, as aforementioned in my introduction. Male prostitutes have not; either they will not identify as such or they may easily infiltrate and be accepted by other sub-cultural networks. For the early modern period, we might want to imagine the male prostitute as a participant in various sub-cultural nexuses that infiltrated social institutions, by preserving patriarchal ideological formulations around whoredom, due to his ambivalent status and nomenclature; or we might consider the available terms such as 'Ganymede', 'ingle' and 'catamite' simply used for defamatory purposes, not denoting actual prostitute practice. In both senses, the

⁶⁸⁷ Alan Sinfield, *Cultural Politics-Queer Reading*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 71.

See my 'Introduction', p. 37.

⁶⁸⁸ Sinfield, *Cultural Politics*, p. 72.

⁶⁸⁹ Sinfield, *Cultural Politics*, p. 68.

⁶⁹⁰ Sinfield, *Cultural Politics*, p. 68.

early modern male prostitute in this project becomes insignificant in terms of culture and subculture. For as the preceding chapters demonstrated, male prostitution – like female – emerges neither as an act nor as an identity, but as a condition of being. This is a similar classification that John Cassian made in the fifth century A.D. with respect to ‘fornication’ in his taxonomies of sin, where ‘fornication’ appears as a ‘state’ rather than an ‘act’.⁶⁹¹ Moreover, the term ‘homoeroticism’ presents us with further problematic formulations.

Privileged among other terms such as ‘homosexual’, ‘gay’ or ‘sodomy’, ‘homoeroticism’, as used in art and literature, has become one of the most innocent terms available for cultural, historical and literary studies. This should be considered a drawback. Fluctuating between the real and the fictitious, ‘homoeroticism’ might suggest something that simultaneously is present and absent or, a desire and practice vitiated by its very contingency. Herdt’s concise definition of ‘homoeroticism’ as ‘a form of desire’ in contrast to the homosexual, which denotes ‘a social conformity to a sex role’ is expedient.⁶⁹² DiGangi also usefully elaborates the term’s actual connotations. As he notes, in contrast to sodomy:

concepts like “homoerotic” and “heteroerotic” usefully distinguish same-sex from different-sex relations, yet do not indicate in themselves – and may even elide – the status configurations or the political significance of such practices. [. . .] As I will use the terms, “sodomy” is always politically freighted, whereas “homoerotic” is politically neutral and merely descriptive.⁶⁹³

Yet, the term ‘sex-market’ may indicate a subculture that the word ‘homoerotic’ cannot easily support. If anything, the illegal sex-market during the Renaissance period for both male and female prostitutes should be described as ‘sodomitical’. Within this context, application of the term ‘homoerotic’ seems incongruous, antithetical or even euphemistic, with relation to the sex-market and prostitution as a profession. By evoking and using the term ‘homoeroticism’ throughout this project I do not wish just to concur with historical axioms. My intention is to stress the representational properties

⁶⁹¹ Thomas W. Laqueur, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (New York: Zone Books, 2004), p. 132.

⁶⁹² Gilbert Herdt, ‘Representations of Homosexuality: An Essay on Cultural Ontology and Historical Comparison Part II’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 1.4 (April 1991), 603-632 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3704418>> [accessed 28 February 2009] (p. 606).

⁶⁹³ Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 6.

of the term in an attempt to reveal the ‘necessary’ but unstable ‘fictions’ that the phrase ‘male prostitution’ carries in the period under examination.⁶⁹⁴ I say ‘fictions’ because I acknowledge their discursive textual construction. I characterise them as ‘unstable’, for in early modern texts their existence is negotiable and in emergence. Due to the male prostitute’s ambiguity as regards sexual orientation, the homoerotic can indicate the potential rather than the actual materialisation of same-sex prostitute practice.

The corollary is to consider anyone as a potential male prostitute, like the sodomite. This thesis has attempted to expose the temporal practice, ambiguous sexual orientation and textual construction of the male sex-trade. In effect, what the texts seem to dramatise is a phase in a boy’s or man’s life rather than an essence of identity or career. As temporal prostitutes, boys and men escape heavy stigmatisation in contrast to the female sex-workers, who were considered to be the worst types of women whose status is irreversible. Yet, some of the Italian and Spanish boys examined in the first chapter, who engaged in prostitute practice, in the Catholic tradition were considered the worst kind of sodomites. It was their masculinity or, rather, their future manhood that could not fit with the heavily gender-charged practice of prostitution as female. Boy prostitutes were considered to be passive in their role. The Ganymedes, ingles and catamites were supposed to be young and receptive. Their hypothetical gendered act in sex would associate them with what was offered by female prostitutes, thus, discourse on sodomy between men and boys would emerge simultaneously with notions of the sex-trade.

Such interpretative and linguistic strategies, however, can have the effect of enabling ideology, as I stressed in the beginning of this dissertation.⁶⁹⁵ For in claiming that friendship, favouritism, service and transvestism in the theatre can take the form of prostitution, then, in all expressions of homoerotic desire and practice, the type of the male prostitute prevails. The stigma attached to the term is too forceful to distinguish it simply as a profession or career. This is precisely what the sources will not allow, even for the female prostitute. Rather, this thesis has argued that prostitute practice infiltrated various types of social relations between men and boys. This explains why there were

⁶⁹⁴ Jeffrey Weeks, ‘Necessary Fictions: Sexual Identities and the Politics of Diversity’, in *Sexualities and Society: A Reader*, ed. by Jeffrey Weeks, Janet Holland and Matthew Waites (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003), pp. 122-131 (p. 129). Weeks uses the term ‘fictions’ to refer to sexualities.

⁶⁹⁵ See my ‘Introduction’, pp. 1-2.

different types of male whores, including the diverse locales and social relations in which they could be found, from the ancient eras until the modern one.

One of the reasons that male prostitution has been so intrinsically interwoven with the notion of homosexual and gay identity is because critics would have male prostitution emerging as a phenomenon in specific eras. As Boyer notes, 'Fisher suggested':

that male prostitution is a post-World War II phenomenon that has emerged only with the contemporary gay subculture. This runs counter to historical evidence given by Weeks (1977) and others who have demonstrated that the Western tradition of homosexual subcultures were organized around prostitution.⁶⁹⁶

She later comments on the ways in which the image of the male prostitute and the homosexual have been conflated and especially reinforced in the era of HIV/AIDS. She claims that:

[p]rostitution provides an identity and mode of conduct that corresponds with the cultural image of the male homosexual. The image of the homosexual is one of distorted and exaggerated sexuality of promiscuity and deviance.⁶⁹⁷

To impose this conflated image of the homosexual and prostitute on the available terminology on homoeroticism in the early modern context, suggesting that the sodomite and the male prostitute had a concurrent textual emergence, would presuppose the existence of a subculture in Renaissance England. Male prostitution has always been perceived as operating through networks and topographies visible and accessible to those who actively participated in it, thus, through a sex-market. Yet, it is the instability and fluidity of such terms as 'sex-market' that needs to be addressed, assimilating it to the concept of 'subculture', where its primal constituent is the exchange of money or services. Again, it depends on the way we perceive subculture, either as a mode of resistance, or as a variant form of grouping, expressing different needs. As Hebdige explains by quoting Hall, 'if we consider that':

⁶⁹⁶ Debra Boyer, 'Male Prostitution and Homosexual Identity', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 17.1/2 (1989), 151-184 (p. 155).

⁶⁹⁷ Boyer, p. 176.

culture is “. . . that level at which social groups develop distinct patterns of life and give expressive form to their social and material . . . experience” we can see that each subculture represents a different handling of the “raw material of social . . . existence”.⁶⁹⁸

This could hardly be the case for a sex-market that responded to the needs of a patriarchal society. In fact, it was the product of the very patriarchy that condemned it in the first place. The sex-market was a response and a product of socio-economic factors like poverty, slavery, immigration, the commodification of the body as a source of pleasure, governmental policies that viewed subjects and bodies as potential sources of taxation and financial indictment as well as active agency and individual choice. As such, the male prostitute cannot be separated from his female counterpart - they were both included in the sex-market. If anything was distinctive in the life-style of the male prostitute it was his ability to reside in- and outside the market, in many cases not even considered as a prostitute. Despite the separate interpretative and methodological techniques that need to be followed for the examination of male prostitution, as historians like McGinn have stressed, it should be noted that the male sex-market in the early modern period cannot be considered a separate subculture.⁶⁹⁹ The notion of the sex-market should not be perceived or accounted for only with respect to its prostitute participants. More importantly, the sex-market also included clients, the men who sought to satisfy their sexual needs, not to mention the category of the pimp, which easily escapes examination in studies of prostitution. If we have instances of prostitution for example in the molly houses of the eighteenth century, it is not because mollies were centred around the sex trade or perceived themselves as prostitutes. We should rather think of the molly houses as locales where prostitution could have easily made use of those spaces, gaining from the safety that the places possible offered. Therefore, I disagree with any attempt to parallelise molly houses with ‘male brothels’.⁷⁰⁰ For it is exactly this linguistic manoeuvre that associated gay bars and gay spaces in 1970s and 80s research with concepts such as ‘trade’ and ‘market’.⁷⁰¹

Yet, an association of molly houses and gay bars with male brothels can hinder attempts to trace and explain other forms of homoerotic expression that involved

⁶⁹⁸ Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 80.

⁶⁹⁹ Thomas A. J. McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 4

⁷⁰⁰ Julie Peakman, *Lascivious bodies: A Sexual History of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004), p. 10.

⁷⁰¹ See Boyer, p. 152.

affection and care, rather than perceiving them as relations that were based solely on monetary exchanges. As Foucault had observed, according to Queiroz: '[i]t is less the sexual content of relationships between men which raises social hostility than the intensity of affection tied within histories that seems suspicious to institutions because it escapes their instrumental rationale';⁷⁰² or, if we prefer to assess same-sex desire and its materialisation within social spaces in terms of identity, Sinfield stresses that, '[i]n another aspect, the mollies are a crucial stage towards modern gay awareness'.⁷⁰³ It is again the legal records of the eighteenth-century that would not allow associations of loving relationships with same-sex desire. I am not arguing here that the male prostitute had no equal participation, like the sodomite and the molly, in the formulation of a history of homoeroticism; nor do I seek sharp distinctions in expressions of same-sex practice. The preceding chapters documented the difficulty of accomplishing such a task. For example, Bray has argued that in the case of the servant and the 'domestic prostitute' in the Renaissance, it would be 'wrong' to consider them as easily distinguishable forms or types of expression of same-sex practice and sociability.⁷⁰⁴ The positions these young men occupied were 'ambivalent' and temporally limited, as Bray contends.⁷⁰⁵ As I tried to show in Chapter 5, with regard to servants and sex, these relations mutated. What started as prostitute-practice might have ended as an affectionate relationship and vice versa; or, as in the cases of some sexual favourites, one of the participants might have been more emotionally involved, while the other would prefer and insist on sustaining fiscal exchanges. Such mutations and destabilisations in sexual practices and/or identities are axiomatic in queer theory, as critics have shown in attempts to construe how desire and behaviour are 'ordered'.⁷⁰⁶ Bray's premise seems to suggest a preservation of the whore stigma - 'domestic prostitute' - as applied to the male servant whilst employed. Similarly, as it has been demonstrated with respect to actor apprentices and favourites, the separation of domestic service from the sexual service cannot be easily sustained. Although these

⁷⁰² Queiroz, p. 60.

⁷⁰³ Alan Sinfield, *The Wilde Century* (London: Cassell, 1994), p. 38.

⁷⁰⁴ Bray, p. 54.

⁷⁰⁵ Bray, p. 54.

⁷⁰⁶ See Karen E. Lovaas, John P. Elia and Gust A. Yep, 'Shifting Ground(s)', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 52.1 (2007), 1-18 <doi: 10.1300/J082v52n01_01> [accessed 15 May 2009] (p. 6); also, Mark A. Gammon and Kirsten L. Isgro, 'Troubling the Canon', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 52.1 (2007), 159-184 <doi: 10.1300/J082v52n01_07> [accessed 15 May 2009] (p. 173).

relationships were temporal and secret, in some cases, the pages and favourites would seem to participate in same-sex acts by default. In addition, such relations are constructed and perceived differently throughout different historical eras. There is nothing wrong in perceiving male prostitute practice as an intrinsic part of homoeroticism, which is, in fact, what this thesis promulgates. What needs to be stressed is the ways in which it relates to other forms of same-sex expression, how it is represented and, more crucially, how we read and interpret it.

I have already described how the twentieth-century male prostitute has been constructed prior to and after the gay liberation movement, becoming on the one hand a scapegoat for all the evils that accompanied theories on same-sex practice and on the other, a symbol, only for a short period of time, of the gay movement. If I am persistently alluding to twentieth-century perceptions of the male sex-trade, it is not because I want to find similarities or differences between the two eras. Discourses on sexuality and subculture have imposed for quite some time a conflation of male prostitution and gay identities; and, like the modern homosexual, the male prostitute has been perceived as a universal category and type diachronically, without examining the specific socio-historical and linguistic variables that contributed to the category's appearance and emergence within different cultural and textual instances. It is this widely identifiable universal identity that I have sought to uncover in this study and show how it characterised and infiltrated diverse social institutions and social practices.

Part of this dissertation on male prostitution aimed to account for its cultural and historical construction as a variant form of homoerotic identities. Easily identifiable in some eras (i.e. Ancient Greece, Rome) and difficult to interpret in others (i.e. Renaissance, Enlightenment), the male whore escapes easy categorization. Yet, a conceptualisation of the male-sex trade is unattainable, if it is not studied along with any form of textuality and discourse that informed its construction. Thus, a large portion of this study has been devoted to discourses that have not been analysed extensively, such as slanderous discourse, lexicography, early editions and annotations of classical texts during the Renaissance. The academic studies that gave rise to fascinating accounts of sodomy and homoeroticism have been reluctant to follow a cultural study of male prostitution in the early modern era. Therefore, the poststructuralist move to access the ways in which male prostitution was defined, insinuated or applied too easily to male relations is a useful methodological trope in order to reveal its cultural and linguistic representation. If historiography (i.e. theatre historiography) and historical

source material have been silent or incompetent concerning its examination, cultural and literary studies can significantly facilitate interpretations of variant forms of same-sex behaviour. As this thesis has tried to demonstrate, resorting to an analysis of single linguistic utterances and how they have been employed can reveal cultural and ideological alliances that tend to formulate language and behaviour on sexual practices and identities. This study has tried to explore only a part of the ambiguities, difficulties and interpretational problems that such a task can confront. Obviously, there is more work that needs to be conducted on the subject of male prostitution, and not only for the early modern period but for other epochs as well.

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