

**CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY**

**A SINGULAR NOMAD:  
THE MINOR TRANSNATIONALISM OF CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD**

by

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**Doctoral Dissertation**

Submitted to Central European University  
Gender Studies Department

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**Comparative Gender Studies**

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Budapest, Hungary  
August, 2018



## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this dissertation contains no materials previously accepted for any other degrees in any other institutions, and contains no materials previously written and/or published by any other persons, except where appropriate acknowledgement is made in the form of bibliographic reference.

Calvin W. Keogh



## Abstract

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This project brings a transnational perspective to the work of Christopher Isherwood (1904-86), a writer who began his career in the UK in the 1920s, established his reputation in mainland Europe in the 1930s, and published most of his writing in the US from the 1940s-80s. Transnationalism in literary studies is presented as a critical methodology of selection and analysis, which calls attention to the work of migrant writers and involves a sophisticated approach to related issues of identity, selfhood, and subject positioning. A selection of novels and novellas from the three main periods of Isherwood's career is made according to his concept of *Wanderjahren*, or years of wandering, which refers to a time from before he left London in the 1920s to when he felt settled in the US in the 1960s. For the purposes of analysis, 'minor transnationalism' is presented as a theoretical framework on the basis of the philosophy of nomadism and the related concept of minor literature as devised by Gilles Deleuze (1925-95) and Félix Guattari (1930-92). This project has a general aim of advancing research in transnational literary studies. As a case study, Isherwood is significant because of the timescale and locations of his migrations, which include the UK, the US, and Germany at pivotal moments in the history of the twentieth century, and for the reflections in his work of several factors of identity and their relationship to social privilege and marginalization. This project also aims to contribute to a growing body of scholarship on Isherwood, while offering an alternative to it. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, several scholars have endeavored to make the writer visible, to restore his reputation, and to present his writing as relevant to new generations of readers. A focus on his life and work in the US has culminated in the production of an 'American Isherwood', who is linked to a 'Vedantist Isherwood' and to an increasingly outspoken 'gay Isherwood', whose life writing, history, and example are as important as his novels and novellas. Rather than reterritorializing Isherwood in such terms, this project contends that it is important both to recognize and to account for his development as a transnational writer across each of the three main periods of his career. Refocusing on the novels and novellas which were his life's work from the 1920s-60s, it considers his religious and sexual minority among several factors of identity, such as age, class, race, gender, and ethnicity, which fall within a range of major to minor and can be adequately addressed only in the context of his transnational migrations.



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## General Introduction

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### Research Objectives

This project brings a transnational perspective to the work of Christopher Isherwood (1904-86), a writer who began his career in England, established his reputation in mainland Europe, and published most of his writing in the United States. What has been referred to as a transnational ‘turn’ in literary studies occurred toward the close of the twentieth century, when scholars who were interested in issues of minority, post-imperialism, and postcolonialism began to respond to the conditions and pervasive effects of accelerating globalization (Jay, Lukić). It may be an exaggeration to claim that the principle of ‘national’ literatures, on the basis of which literary markets, criticism, and departments continue to be organized, has been displaced or even decentered. The transnational turn is nonetheless significant in regard to selection, in that it brings attention to writing which cannot be conveniently contained within the limited boundaries of ‘national’ literatures and is therefore often overlooked in processes of selection and canonization. This is especially true in the case of migrant writers, prominent throughout the twentieth century, who are becoming more and more prevalent in English. The transnational turn is also significant in regard to analysis, in that it addresses issues of nation, nationality, and nationalism in a much broader context and focuses, in particular, on such issues as “migration, multiculturalism, and the problematization of the concept of identity on very different levels” (Lukić, 36). In this respect, it involves a sophisticated approach to issues of identity, selfhood, and subject positioning and is attentive to a variety of factors which include, but are not limited to, age, class, race, sex, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality, as well as citizenship and national origin. Isherwood provides an ideal case study for a critical methodology of transnationalism. During his lifetime, as Victor Marsh explains, the writer passed through a “series of dislocations – geographical, psychological, and ontological”, which enabled him not only to “reposition his subjectivity, but give free rein to an inquiring intelligence to seek out tools for transformation wherever he found them” (2008, 82-83).

Christopher Isherwood was born into a family of prominent landowners at Wyberslegh Hall in Cheshire, England, and became the “Orphan of a Dead Hero” when his father went missing in action during the Great War (*K&F*, 356). From 1923-25, he availed of a prestigious scholarship to read History at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, but withdrew after deliberately failing his

second year exams. From 1925-29, he lived in London, where he worked as a private tutor and secretary before publishing his debut novel in 1928. In 1929, Isherwood visited Berlin in the company of W. H. Auden (1907-73) and returned to live in the city during the final years of the Weimar Republic. From 1933-37, he moved through Greece, France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland, and Denmark, while seeking asylum for his partner, Heinz Neddermeyer, who was eventually arrested and imprisoned by the Gestapo. In 1938, Isherwood accompanied Auden on a six-month tour of East Asia to report on the Sino-Japanese War. In 1939, they decided to move together to the US and, while Auden remained in New York, Isherwood moved on to California, where he found work as a screenwriter with MGM Studios and converted to the Vedanta branch of Hinduism. In 1946, having renounced his inheritance of Wyberslegh, he became a citizen of the US and settled in Santa Monica, California, where he would later meet his lifelong partner, Don Bachardy. Throughout his lengthy career, Isherwood published several novels, novellas, and memoirs in a characteristic mixture of fiction, documentary, and autobiography, often with a namesake character-narrator. A truism of scholarship is that he was a “man in search of a self”, who was “always prepared to relocate, moving out of situations that he felt were suppressing his need to explore new and various possibilities of being and becoming, and his own life experience was constantly re-visited for its re-working into literary ‘myth’” (Marsh 2010, 92). Whether his writing was ostensibly fictional, documentary, or autobiographical, Isherwood was “constantly probing, reflecting, and re-inventing versions of selfhood” (ibid.).

Isherwood’s concern with versions of selfhood is exemplified by the title of his most celebrated memoir, *Christopher and His Kind* (1976), whose ‘kind’ can conceivably be extended without limit, beyond older and younger; male, female, and transsexual; queer, straight, and asexual; landed-, mercantile-, and working-class; English, German, and American; fascist, socialist, and pacifist; Jewish, Christian, and Vedantist. Nevertheless, the memoir differs from his earlier novels and novellas which feature the same namesake narrator. In an interview conducted in 1973, Isherwood explains that his intention was to recount his “*Wanderjahren*”, or years of wandering, from before he left London for Berlin and until such time as he felt settled in Santa Monica, California, which became “kind of [his] home” (Kaplan 2001, 268). Although *Christopher and His Kind* is based on the same material as the *Berlin Stories* (1935-39), he reports that he is now engaged in writing an “autobiography, that is to say, it’s absolutely true, not fiction at all” (ibid.). As Brian Finney argues, such a distinction between fact and fiction is

uncharacteristic of Isherwood, who based his work, irrespective of genre, on foundations of actual experience and consistently reiterated his position that what is of interest to him as a writer is the “interpretation of existing experience rather than the invention of new experience” (281). More significant, therefore, is Isherwood’s explanation that he is revisiting the material from a “different angle”, which is to say, “it’s that the wandering stopped” (Kaplan 2001, 268). It is this perspective, that of a person who is now settled and feels relatively stable and secure in identity, which distinguishes Isherwood’s memoir from his novellas of the *Wanderjahren*. In ‘Why Christopher Isherwood Stopped Writing Fiction’ (2002), Katherine Bucknell suggests as much in her attempt to explain why it was that Isherwood turned to autobiography in the 1970s, beginning with *Kathleen and Frank* (1971), a biography of his parents, and continuing with *Christopher and His Kind* (1976), *Lost Years, A Memoir, 1945-1951* (1971-77), and *My Guru and His Disciple* (1980).

This project picks up on Isherwood’s concept of *Wanderjahren* in order to make a selection of the novels and novellas he produced during the period from before he left London for Berlin and eventually felt settled in Santa Monica, California. For the purposes of analysis, it applies a theoretical framework derived from the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze (1925-95) and Félix Guattari (1930-92). ‘A Singular Nomad’ characterizes Isherwood’s wandering perspective in terms of nomadism, a postmodern attitude to issues of identity, selfhood, and subject positioning which prioritizes not ‘being’ but ‘becoming’ and the related phenomenon of ‘deterritorialization’, or proceeding from a condition of being stable and self-identical to becoming unstable, multiple, and identifying with difference. ‘The Minor Transnationalism of Christopher Isherwood’ indicates that his deterritorializations of identity take place in the context of the literal deterritorializations of transnational migration. It is also a reminder that nomadism is predicated on a revaluation of minority, which Deleuze and Guattari conceive not as a state or quantity but as a sub-system of a standard, namely that of the “average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language” (2004/a, 116). “All becoming is minoritarian” (ibid., 117), in the sense of deterritorializing a majoritarian standard; it is, moreover, necessarily political, and demands a “labor of power (*puissance*), an active micropolitics” (ibid., 322). ‘The Minor Transnationalism of Christopher Isherwood’ also refers to a specifically literary theoretical framework based on Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of minor literature, which is defined as “that which a minority constructs within a major language” and according to three interrelated characteristics: language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization; everything in it is political; everything in

it assumes a collective value (1986, 16-17). The concept provides a means to approach Isherwood's writing of the *Wanderjahren* as a reflection of his becoming-minor transnationally. Deterritorializing the English of London and Cambridge in Berlin and Los Angeles allows him to take possession of the language and to take it even further in the direction of deterritorialization by experimenting with it in content and expression.

This project has a general aim of advancing research in transnational literary studies. In applying a critical methodology and theoretical framework of 'minor transnationalism', it answers Paul Jay's call for an "aggressive approach to developing theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary structures for studying literature and culture in a transnational framework" (2010, 73). Although it has been described and regularly discussed as a "blueprint" (Seyhan, 27) or potentially "productive theoretical formula" (Ugrešič, 174) for the analysis of literary texts from a transnational perspective, the concept of minor literature has been consistently set aside and rarely applied in practice. In *Minor Transnationalism* (2009), for example, Françoise Lionnet and Shumei Shih borrow the term 'minor' directly from Deleuze and Guattari only to misrepresent their understanding of minority and to dismiss the concept of minor literature for "falling back into a recentered model" (2). As well as attempting to prove its relevance and utility, this project advances research in transnational literary studies by providing a worthy case study. Isherwood is significant because of the timescale and locations of his migrations, which occur over five decades of the twentieth century, from the 1920s-60s, and include London at the zenith of the British Empire, Berlin through the collapse of the Weimar Republic, and Los Angeles during the pivotal years of the Cold War and US civil rights era. Isherwood is also significant because of the reflections in his work of several aspects of identity in these various contexts. As well as ethnicity, which has been the focus of much important research in transnational studies, these include such aspects as age, class, sex, gender, and sexuality, which have received much less attention. Isherwood is particularly interesting because of the relativity of his position in regard to social privilege and marginalization. Although he fulfills all of the criteria of Deleuze and Guattari's 'average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language' with the exceptions of 'average' and 'heterosexual', it is precisely his sexual and vocational minorities which provide an entry into becoming-minor and deterritorialization of the majoritarian standard.

As well as advancing research in transnational literary studies, this project makes a timely contribution to Isherwood scholarship. A renewal of popular interest in the writer is evident in the

publication of his diaries and correspondence, the release of the documentary film *Chris & Don: A Love Story* (2007), and the production of high-profile cinema and television adaptations of *A Single Man* (2009) and *Christopher and His Kind* (2011). Since the beginning of this century, there has been a major revival of academic interest, led by the University of Minnesota Press, the Isherwood Archive at the Huntington Library, and an ongoing collaboration between James J. Berg and Chris Freeman. In an attempt to remedy Isherwood's neglect, Berg and Freeman have focused on his period in the US and presented him as a major American writer, whose life writing, history, and example, particularly in regard to his lifelong relationship with Bachardy, are as important as his novels and novellas. Other scholars have followed this lead, including longtime Isherwood scholar Stephen Wade, who claims that Isherwood is a "major American writer [...] because he meticulously wrote a sequence of enquiries into what it means to be both a victim and a success in the acculturation process of America" (2012, 10). This project contributes to a growing body of scholarship, while offering an alternative to it. Contending that it is important both to recognize and to account for Isherwood's development as a transnational writer across each of the three main periods and locations of his career, it refocuses on the novels and novellas which were his life's work from the 1920s-60s, and considers his sexual minority in the context of other factors of identity, which fall within a range of major to minor. Rather than attempting to reterritorialize Isherwood as a 'major' writer, the project demonstrates how he becomes of major interest precisely through becoming minor, in the sense of Deleuze and Guattari's paradoxical claim that "[t]here is nothing that is major [...] except the minor" (1986, 26).

### **Isherwood Scholarship**

Victor Marsh has identified three waves in Isherwood criticism and scholarship (2010, 15). The first of these, which can be assigned to the generally positive response to the *Berlin Stories* (1935-39), is exemplified in Cyril Connolly's *Enemies of Promise* (1938), which names Isherwood as an outstanding representative of realism, hailing him as a "hope of English fiction [...] who possesses the mastery of form, [and] the imaginative content of a true novelist" (73-75). For contemporary critics, Isherwood seemed to capture something of the times. In *The Spectator*, William Plomer praised *Mr. Norris* (1935) for being an "amusing and intelligent [...] full-length portrait with numerous implications – social, and psychological" (26). Later generations of critics attribute his

success to a merger of the personal and the political through a characteristic combination of documentary realism and autobiographical fiction. In the 1970s, Alan Wilde notes that the *Berlin Stories* represent a “successful fusion of private integrity with public morality”, and that critics praised him for an “ability to subsume the private sensibility of the 1920s to the journalistic immediacy required by a more agitated and hectic decade” (1971, 78/148). Paul Piazza writes that the creation of a “personal world, rendered in a ‘superlatively readable’ style and with remarkable irony, rescues Isherwood’s books from the excesses of mere reportage” (17). In the 1980s, Rose Kamel writes that the *Berlin Stories* “bridge the gap between public and private commitment” (162), while Lisa Schwerdt writes that they “exemplify a melding of private and public issues” (5). Isherwood also happened to be in the right place at the right time. In 1935, Plomer appreciated *Mr. Norris* for its record of social disintegration in Germany and the commentary it provided on the “state of civilization in general during these last few years” (26). Finney notes that, by the end of the 1930s, the author’s name had become inextricably associated with Berlin, giving rise to a critical and popular myth of “Isherwood, the beleaguered reporter, warning a deaf world of the dangers of Nazi-ism” (76).

All of this soon changed after Isherwood joined Auden in moving to the US in January 1939. In *Horizon*, Connolly referred to the pair as young men with an “eye on the main chance, who have abandoned what they consider to be the sinking ship of European democracy, and by implication the aesthetic doctrine of social realism” (69). Connolly is lamenting the end of an era but his tone is telling, for Isherwood’s emigration provoked a “radical change in his critical reputation” (Wilde 1971, 4). One of the reasons for this was resentment of his departure from England before the outbreak of war with Germany; another was “mockery and indignation” that he had abandoned the anti-fascist struggle, in which he had been so involved, when it came to military confrontation (King, 11). An “anti-Auden and Isherwood campaign” ensued in the British media and Parliament (Fryer, 140). Hostile articles were printed in the *Daily Express*, *Reynold’s News*, and *The Spectator*, while Major Sir Jocelyn Lucas, MP, singled out Auden and Isherwood by name when he asked in the House of Commons whether certain British subjects who had sought refuge abroad would be summoned back for registration (ibid., 144). Another reason for his reversal in reputation was a certain skepticism toward his religious conversion (Wilde 1971, 4). In *Horizon*, Connolly recognized that Isherwood’s profession of faith in “Yogi” had been turned into a weapon against him (69). Fryer notes that *Reynold’s News* accused Isherwood, along with Gerald

Heard and Aldous Huxley, of having “fled to California to contemplate their navels” (143), and that the main objection to his conversion to Vedanta was what was felt to be its “offensive irrelevance to the period” (140). Peter Shneidre sums it up: “He was criticized as a coward for abandoning his homeland in its time of need; his pacifism was seen as an adventitious dodge that only made matters worse. His spiritual aspirations [...] were derided as California faddishness, something to do between parties while sitting out a war” (222).

Finney stresses the importance of understanding Isherwood’s personal circumstances, “if one is to avoid the moral prejudices which have prevented a number of his readers and critics from appreciating his post-war fiction” (171). Nevertheless, the reversal of his reputation was due not only to such prejudices but to the perception that his emigration had had a “deleterious effect on his talent” (King, 4). Wilde notes that Isherwood produced only two novels during the 1940s and 1950s, which were “generally of a quality inferior” to the *Berlin Stories*, and that a reaction against the inflation of his reputation in the 1930s must also be taken into consideration (1971, 4). The turning point is exemplified by G. H. Bantock’s ‘The Novels of Christopher Isherwood’ (1947), which poses the question, “why should such a comparatively negligible figure [...] have achieved the reputation he has?” (46). Bantock turns previous criticism on its head. Whereas critics in the 1930s admired Isherwood for the detachment of his documentary realism, Bantock complains that his talent is for journalistic details, which “convey nothing beyond themselves” and are possibly responsible for the “peculiar a-moral quality of his writing” (51). After *Prater Violet* (1945), almost a decade was to pass before he managed to publish another novel and, since he had been such a prolific writer in the 1930s, many of his erstwhile admirers began to assume that his career as a novelist had come to an end (King, 14). When *The World in the Evening* (1954) was finally published to a poor reception, the “death knell was sounded” (Piazza, 15). Of the three works of criticism which Piazza has managed to track down in the 1950s, two were published in French language journals; the third, published by Richard Mayne in the *Cambridge Journal*, concludes that “Isherwood’s talents were well suited for comic novels such as *The Last of Mr. Norris*, but that he had not yet been able to combine his filmic conception of the novel with his desire to write serious fiction” (ibid.).

Such was the response in the UK and mainland Europe. Meanwhile, despite his change of citizenship, Isherwood was still regarded as a British writer and given scant critical attention in the US (Fryer, 199). In the 1960s, he published three novels and *Exhumations* (1966), a collection of

essays and shorter fiction, and heightened his public profile by delivering series of lectures on his work, namely ‘A Writer and His World’, at UC-Santa Barbara (1960), and ‘The Autobiography of My Books’, at UC-Berkeley (1963). At the beginning of the 1970s, these efforts began to receive some notice from critics in US journals. *Modern Fiction Studies* and *Contemporary Literature* published articles by Alan Wilde and Peter Thomas, focusing on style in his writing of the 1930s; *Critique* and *ARIEL* published articles by Terence Dewsnap and S. Nagarajan, focusing on the influence of Vedanta in his later novels. In 1970, Carolyn G. Heilbrun contributed *Christopher Isherwood*, a short career overview, to the series *Columbia Essays on Modern Writers*. The following year, *Christopher Isherwood*, the first book-length study of the writer, was published by Wilde in the series *Twayne’s United States Authors*. Heilbrun and Wilde both clearly want to rescue Isherwood from a fallen reputation. Lamenting that there is “probably no living writer [...] more in need of revaluation” (5), Wilde argues that over-attention to the *Berlin Stories* has created confusion in critical assessments of his subsequent works (149); Heilbrun agrees, stressing that “Isherwood’s imaginative life now comprehends postwar America as well as prewar Europe” (38). Both critics pick up on Isherwood’s statement that his work is “all part of an autobiography” (Heilbrun, 6; Wilde, 55) and present chronological overviews of his life and writing with the aim of demonstrating his “moral impulse” (Wilde, 4), or that he has been “close to the moral center of his generation” (Heilbrun, 46). In writing such an autobiography, Isherwood has also created a “biography of his time [...] and, more importantly, some of the major historical forces of our century” (ibid., 6).

According to Marsh, a second wave of critical and scholarly recognition accompanied Isherwood’s “‘out’ gay texts” of the 1970s (2010, 15). Having already developed a reputation as a writer “particularly associated with homosexuality” (Summers 2007, xii), Isherwood came out in *Kathleen and Frank* (1971) and subsequently spoke frequently at meetings on behalf of LGBT rights (Berg, 9). The success of the film *Cabaret* (1972), based on adaptations of the *Berlin Stories*, encouraged him to publish *Christopher and His Kind* (1976), which proved to be his greatest commercial success and made of him a “seventies gay cultural icon” (Harker, 171). Publicity brought Isherwood more attention from critics and academics. The writer’s “literary ‘canonization’” occurred in 1974-75, when he attended the Modern Language Association convention in New York and delivered ‘A Personal Statement’ on the subject of ‘Homosexuality and Literature’ (Berg, 9; Berg & Freeman 2001/b, xii). Further academic recognition followed in



1976, when *Twentieth Century Literature* published a special issue on Isherwood. That the articles are compiled for his existing audience, “now very much larger and more than ever intensely interested in both the works and the man” (Heilbrun 1976, 254) is clear in the descriptive rather than critical approach of the articles and the personal connections of their authors to Isherwood. There are two interviews by Heilbrun; two articles on Isherwood’s career in the 1920s; two articles on his collaborations with Auden and Lehmann in the 1930s; and two career overviews by Jonathan Fryer and Colin Wilson, with a focus on sexuality and spirituality, respectively. Following this issue, year by year, came a series of critical biographies by Francis King (1976), Jonathan Fryer (1977), Paul Piazza (1978), and Brian Finney (1979). Although there is a new centrality given to sexuality and spirituality, all of these have in common with Heilbrun and Wilde a regret that Isherwood has been studied only for his work of the 1930s and a focus on biographical analysis on the basis that all of his work is in some sense autobiographical.

The 1980s began with the publication of another critical biography by Claude J. Summers (1980); even so, scholarly interest had already peaked. In the 1980s, there was only one article of note, by Rose Kamel (1982), which deals with Isherwood’s retrospective narratives of the 1930s, and one other book, Lisa Schwerdt’s *Isherwood’s Fiction: The Self and Technique* (1989), which applies the theories of psychologist Erik H. Erikson to demonstrate the maturation of Isherwood’s narrative technique. At the beginning of the 1990s, Stephen Wade published another critical biography (1991), which follows the established pattern of championing Isherwood and relating his life data to his writing, with a focus on sexuality and spirituality. Linda Mizejewski published a study of representations of Sally Bowles in various media (1992), which includes a chapter on Isherwood’s introduction of the character, which she analyzes as problematically camp, in that it both satirizes and reproduces popular constructions of female sexuality. Scholarship picked up again in the final years of the 1990s. Katherine Bucknell began the task of editing and publishing Isherwood’s journals with *Diaries: 1939-1960* (1997). Three diverse book chapters followed, by Dennis Denisoff (1998), on why and how Isherwood used camp humor in response to politics in the 1930s; by Paul A. Robinson (1999), on ‘homosexual autobiography’ in Isherwood’s memoirs; by Joseph Bristow (1999), which raises and challenges the idea that *A Single Man* (1964) is a key text of gay identity politics. Meanwhile, in 1999, the University of Minnesota Press began to reprint several of Isherwood’s novels and to prepare a series of scholarly works. In the same year, the Huntington Library founded the Isherwood Archive, a 4,000 item collection, on the basis of

their acquisition of the writer's complete manuscripts and associated material from Don Bachardy, with later additions from various sources. The Archive, which is specifically designed to support scholarly research on the writer, includes notes, drafts, and outlines; essays and lectures; scripts and screenplays; diaries and correspondence; annotated books; audio and video recordings; photographs and assorted ephemera.

These developments prepared the ground for a third wave of scholarship in the new millennium. Several collections of primary material were published, which include: *Lost Years: A Memoir, 1945-1951* (2000); compilations of interviews in *Conversations with Christopher Isherwood* (2001); compilations of lectures in *Isherwood on Writing* (2007); correspondence between Isherwood and his mother, Kathleen (2005), and correspondence between Isherwood and the novelist E. M. Forster (1879-1970) (2008). To mark his centenary, a definitive biography was published by Peter Parker (2004). Once again, there is a sense that Isherwood must be rescued from obscurity. Berg addresses this issue directly in his introduction to *Isherwood on Writing*, in which he ascribes Isherwood's continued neglect to a "complex set of overlapping assumptions and prejudices" (14-15). Prejudices include "British and American homophobia, British anti-Americanism, and American East Coast-West Coast rivalries" (15); assumptions include the persistent influence on literary studies of the "principle of national literatures" (11), and the post-war dominance of New Criticism, which damaged the reputation of such autobiographical writers as Isherwood (14). According to Berg, these factors are less an issue for more recent approaches, such as queer theory, feminist criticism, and New Historicism, which are more equipped to deal with memoir, autobiography, and Isherwood's peculiar brand of autobiographical fiction (Berg, 14; Berg & Freeman 2001/a, 4-5). Part of Berg's mission is to present a "new version of Isherwood, an American Isherwood on equal footing with the English or European Isherwood" (2). This 'American Isherwood' is complicated by the writer's ethnic, sexual, and religious minority. As Berg argues, to be an American writer in the late twentieth century is to be a "hyphenate"; whether "gay- southern- African- Jewish- British- Asian- woman- [...]" one may put as many descriptors before the hyphen as you may, but the final adjective to describe the writer that Christopher Isherwood became is American" (32-33). The minority identities which are peculiar to him are all elements of a "vision of the self" which Isherwood continued to explore in his novels and memoirs (13).

In the 1990s, Berg began his collaboration with Freeman, which resulted in the seminal critical text of the 2000s, *The Isherwood Century. Essays on the Life and Work of Christopher Isherwood* (2001). In their introduction, Berg and Freeman explain that, because “literary critics have not necessarily been Isherwood’s best readers, [they] have chosen to arrange this volume in a way that does not privilege their point of view” (5). Taking scholarship as “simply one part of the legacy of Isherwood’s life and work”, their aim is to present “Isherwood the man: the way he lived, the way he worked, and the way he and Don Bachardy made their lives together” (ibid.). Part 1, ‘Meeting Isherwood’, contains eight essays which introduce the writer, in the “words of people who knew him” (11), through reminiscences by scholars, writers, and educators whose lives were somehow affected by their personal contacts with Isherwood. Part 2, ‘Artist and Companion’, focuses on his relationship with Bachardy, presenting excerpts from his partner’s diaries of the mid-1950s and an interview with him from 1997; an essay on Bachardy’s understanding of Isherwood’s relationship with his family; and three essays on their artistic collaborations. Part 3, ‘The Writer in Context’, contains seven essays which aim to present a “wider view of Isherwood’s work” than is commonly found in criticism (139). These include an application of queer theory to familial relationships in *The Memorial*; an examination of Isherwood’s responses to political events in the *Berlin Stories*; two essays, which avail of gender and postcolonial theories, on his collaborations with Auden; and three essays on Isherwood’s influences and the influence of his autobiographical approach to fiction on both his readers and fellow writers, principally those of the post-Stonewall Violet Quill group in the US. Part 4, ‘Finding a Path’, contains four essays on Isherwood’s personal faith in Vedanta and its example in his life and works. The volume closes with a previously unpublished interview, ‘The Wandering Stopped’ (1973), which centers on the topics of sexuality and spirituality.

*The Isherwood Century* presents the writer’s life and enduring relationship with Bachardy as examples which are at least as important as his work. The volume also exemplifies certain trends in scholarship toward a focus on the ‘American Isherwood’, on his later life writing, and on his concerns with identity and selfhood, particularly in regard to sexuality and spirituality. A notable exception to these trends is an article by Stuart Christie in *Modern Fiction Studies* (2001), which returns to Isherwood’s work in the UK and Germany to argue that the ‘Mortmere’ stories and ‘On Ruegen Island (Summer 1931)’ present a queer critique of Forster’s English pastoral novels. In articles in *Critical Survey* (2001) and *ARIEL* (2008), Stephen Wade analyzes Isherwood’s early

novels in the US as the work of a “serious religious novelist” (17), while Victor Marsh calls for a reexamination of Isherwood’s life writing as a genre of “queer spiritual autobiography” (71). Correspondingly, in *A Spiritual Bloomsbury* (2006), Antony Copley considers the responses of Forster, Isherwood, and Edward Carpenter to the “problematic of relating their sexuality to their pursuit of mysticism” (5). Two monographs were published in the 2000s. In *Christopher Isherwood: His Era, His Gang, and the Legacy of the Truly Strong Man* (2001), David Garrett Izzo reviews all of Isherwood’s writings as “evolving chapters in a single long work about how Christopher Isherwood suffered from, then overcame, his adolescence” through emigration to the US and conversion to Vedanta (13). In *Queer Times: Christopher Isherwood’s Modernity* (2006), Jamie M. Carr questions the rationale of such a “teleological model of life and writing” (19) and calls for a shift from “developmental readings that function to essentialize (sexual) identity and toward historicized readings in which Isherwood is credited, rightly, with, at the very least, critiquing identificatory practices” (21). Drawing on Eve Sedgwick, Michel Foucault, and Judith Halberstam, her aim is to demonstrate Isherwood’s ‘queer modernity’ and his “aesthetic development of anti-identitarian politics” (2), especially in his reflections on the 1930s from his perspective in the US.

The 2010s began with the editing and publication of further primary material by Bucknell, which includes *The Sixties: Diaries: 1960-1969* (2010), *Liberation: Diaries: 1970-1983* (2012), and *The Animals: Love Letters between Christopher Isherwood and Don Bachardy* (2013). In general, scholarship continued according to the trends of the previous decade. In a new concise critical biography (2012), Wade acknowledges that work on Isherwood has undergone a “radical change since the turn of the last century” (75) but regrets, against all evidence to the contrary, that there has been a “notable neglect of his American writing in recent criticism” (70). His main aim is to demonstrate that Isherwood’s US fiction is important in regard to “gay identity, the dissolution of American self-regard and the need for spiritual understanding in a secular, mass-media world” (9); he also highlights Isherwood’s importance as an autobiographer and that his “fiction, life-writing, diaries and non-fiction are all unified by his fascination with selfhood” (10). Accordingly, Wade suggests that “our next critical position on him may well be to read him alongside Bellow and Roth as a different minority voice [...] with a perverse strength taken from his *deracine* status and his gay, dissenting voice” (74). This combination of minority interests was pursued by Marsh, who followed up his article on the subject of Isherwood’s ‘queer spiritual autobiography’ with the

book-length *Mr. Isherwood Changes Trains: Christopher Isherwood and the Search for the 'Home Self'* (2010). Commending Isherwood for bridging “allegedly irreconcilable ways of being and knowing – ‘queer’ and ‘religious’” (3), Marsh focuses on his “characteristic strategies of self-positioning [...], with an emphasis on the intertextuality of events in his life and the narrativisation of the life as text” (73). Although Marsh echoes Carr’s critique of identificatory practices and likewise refers to postmodern theorists of subjectivity in his theoretical framework, he nonetheless falls back on precisely the developmental and teleological model which is the main object of Carr’s criticism in his tracing of Isherwood’s maturation toward a ‘Home Self’ in the US and Vedanta.

The sophistication of the current wave of Isherwood scholarship is evident in ongoing discussions and disagreements, which are taking place in the context of various and often competing versions of the ‘American Isherwood’. In direct tension with Carr’s account of Isherwood’s ‘queer modernism’, Jaime Harker’s *Middlebrow Queer: Christopher Isherwood in America* (2013) attempts to present a literary genealogy which is not legible in terms of the aesthetics and cultural values of modernism. The title of her study, which is intentionally provocative, is intended to highlight Isherwood’s relationship to both “literary value and gay identity” by revaluing the 1950s pejorative, ‘middlebrow’. (xiv). In contrast to ‘queer’, another revalued pejorative, this can signify mediocrity, melodrama, middle-class mentalities, and the values of a “symbiotic relationship between reader and writer” (ibid.). Examining a number of networks and print cultures which influenced his American novels, such as camp, gay pulp novels, gay protest novels, and gay anti-heroes in popular novels, Harker analyzes Isherwood’s correspondence and multiple drafts of his novels in order to reconstruct his attempts to realize a mode of writing which extends the boundaries of both gay and mainstream fiction while facilitating his authorial self-reinvention as “simultaneously American and queer” (xvii). In an article in *Modern Fiction Studies* (2013), Octavio R. Gonzalez offers another perspective on Isherwood’s queer qualifications, which questions the critical consensus that Isherwood identified with gay liberation and anticipated post-Stonewall identity politics in *A Single Man*. Applying the queer, anti-identitarian theoretical frameworks of Tim Dean, Leo Bersani, and Lauren Berlant, he suggests, on the contrary, that the novel is committed to a “queer nonconformist or misfit-minoritarian ethos of impersonality and ascetic self-divestiture”, which is in direct tension with the representation in the novel of “gay identity as a minority consciousness” (761-62). In presenting such a reading of the novel, Gonzalez argues for a recuperation of Isherwood’s “pre-

Stonewall queer poetics and politics” (762), which, as an alternative to the post-Stonewall identity politics of gay liberation, “perhaps defines his contribution to Anglophone letters and queers everywhere” (776).

As the 2010s advanced, Berg and Freeman continued their collaboration with *The American Isherwood: Christopher Isherwood in the Twenty-first Century* (2014). In keeping with the prevalent focus of scholarship, this is dedicated to “Isherwood’s life and work after 1939, after his emigration to the United States” (xxi), and, in common with preceding publications, is framed in terms of minority interest: “Isherwood saw himself as an outsider in many ways. He was an Englishman living in Los Angeles, Vedantist, pacifist, homosexual. He used these circumstances to define a subject position in relation to issues he wrote about” (xviii). Part I, ‘A *Single Man* and Los Angeles Culture in the 1960s’, consists of seven essays which approach Isherwood’s novel as a document of life in his adopted city, including his personal relationships, in particular, with Don Bachardy. Part II, ‘The Religious Writer’, consists of six essays, including two on the novels *Down There on a Visit* (1962) and *A Meeting by the River* (1967), which consider the spiritual aspects of his life in the US, and the “tensions inherent in practicing Eastern religion in the American West” (xxi). Part III, ‘A Writer at Odds with Himself in Cold War America’, consists of six essays on a variety of topics, which include Isherwood’s correspondence with his friend, Edward Upward; interests he held in common with his fellow expatriate, Aldous Huxley; and his fascination with celebrity and the performance of self in Hollywood. The final three essays consider his longest and least successful novel, *The World in the Evening* (1954). As the second decade of the third wave of Isherwood scholarship advances, the collaboration between Berg and Freeman will continue with a forthcoming collection of essays, *Isherwood in Transit* (2018), the title of which suggests the beginnings of a shift from a predominant interest in the ‘American Isherwood’. How this project, ‘The Minor Transnationalism of Christopher Isherwood’, fits in with such a movement and with Isherwood scholarship in general will become clear in the outline of sections which follows.

## Outline of Sections

Following the General Introduction, ‘A Singular Nomad: The Minor Transnationalism of Christopher Isherwood’ is divided into four sections, each of which contains two of eight chapters

in total. Section I provides a detailed outline and description of the critical methodology and theoretical framework which are applied in the project. This is followed by three sections of analysis of selected novels and novellas which were published by Isherwood during his *Wanderjahren*, or years of wandering, from the 1920s-60s. Sections II-IV are divided according to the three main periods and locations of his life and career: Section II, on Isherwood in the UK in the 1920s; Section III, on Isherwood in Germany in the 1930s; Section IV, on Isherwood in the US in the 1940s-60s. Such a division does not mean to imply that Isherwood spent several distinct periods as a national writer in one of three nations or in the contexts of three national literatures. On the contrary, this project contends that it is important both to recognize and to account for his development as a transnational writer across each of the three main periods and locations of his career. In applying a critical methodology and theoretical framework of ‘minor transnationalism’, the project joins a certain stream in Isherwood scholarship which tends away from biographical criticism toward more theoretically oriented approaches to issues of identity and selfhood. Among these, it develops specific contributions by Denisoff (1998), Bristow (1999), Christie (2001), Carr (2006), Adair (2012), Harker (2013), and Gonzalez (2013). As well as the published versions of Isherwood’s novels and novellas, the project considers the extant relevant notes, outlines, and drafts which are contained in the Isherwood Archive at the Huntington Library. The Archive was made available to the author over a three month period in the fall of 2015, through the kind invitation of Chris Freeman, in his capacity as Professor of English at Dornsife College at the University of Southern California, and the generous funding of a Doctoral Research Support Grant from Central European University.

Section I outlines this project’s critical methodology of transnationalism and related theoretical framework of ‘minor transnationalism’. Chapter 1 presents and contrasts nationalism and transnationalism as alternative critical methodologies in literary studies. Since the inauguration of academic departments of modern language, the study of modern literature has been based on a national, or implicitly nationalist, perspective, which is evident in practices of selection and analysis as well as in the organization of curricular and departmental structures. Since the 1990s, literary critics and scholars have begun to realize the limitations of such a perspective and to argue the necessity of reorganizing literary studies on the basis of a specifically transnational perspective. Beginning in Comparative Literature, a transnational turn has called attention to the work of migrant writers, in particular, and many scholars are now engaged in selecting and

analyzing examples of their work in order to understand how literature reflects multiple differences, which include, but are not limited to, age, class, race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality, in transnational contexts. Chapter 2 presents ‘minor transnationalism’ as a theoretical framework based on Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy of nomadism. A postmodern attitude to issues of identity, selfhood, and subject positioning which is predicated on ‘becoming’ and a revaluation of minority, nomadism provides a means to conceptualize Isherwood’s movements between major and minor, while avoiding generalizations by taking into account all of the conditions which apply in his individual case. The related concept of minor literature allows Isherwood’s work to be approached and revalued outside the framework of national literature. In his writing, the English of London and Cambridge is deterritorialized in Berlin and Los Angeles, where Isherwood takes possession of the language and takes it even further in the direction of deterritorialization by experimenting with it in content and expression. The becoming-minor of his writing connects to politics and offers an alternative not only to the great, state, or established literatures in the English language but to the ‘imagined political communities’ of the nations or nation-states which correspond to them.

As a young man in the 1920s, Isherwood endured a crisis of identity in which he rejected the subject positions prescribed by family, class, and nation. In Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, his rejection signifies a nomadic movement of deterritorialization, motivated by his desires to become an artist and to become minor sexually, which were realized in a literal deterritorialization from his home country to that of the national rival, Germany. Section II examines *All the Conspirators* (1928), his first published novel; *The Memorial* (1932), which he wrote prior and subsequent to his move to Berlin in 1929; and his later novel-cum-autobiography, *Lions and Shadows: An Education in the Twenties* (1938). Following the example of Deleuze and Guattari’s *Kafka* (1975), it argues that an anti-oedipal move is the necessary first stage in Isherwood’s own motion toward a minor literature. Chapter 1 focuses on *All the Conspirators* and its protagonist, Philip Lindsay. Although Philip’s persistent failure to realize his ambitions appears to be attributable to an Oedipus complex, the novel’s style of willful absurdity, obscurity, and domestic comedy produces an exaggeration of Oedipus, which results in the double discovery of the social forces which operate behind the family triangle and the possibility of a line of escape from them. Read in comparison with *Lions and Shadows*, the novel demonstrates that it is possible to acquiesce to prevailing social forces or to pursue the paths of one’s own vocation. Chapter 2 examines *The Memorial*, which



addresses Isherwood's Oedipus-related 'War' complex. Its principal characters, Eric Vernon and Edward Blake, are 'Truly Weak Men', who constantly repress their desires and anxieties in order to pass the 'Test'. Whereas Eric remains trapped in a cycle of rebellion and reterritorialization, Edward discovers a nomadic line of escape by relocating to Berlin, where he resolves his complexes by finding a male, working-class, German lover. The contrast between Isherwood's literary 'doubles' reflects not only an expression but the final resolution of his own 'War' complex through an absolute deterritorialization from family, class, and nation.

Isherwood lived in Berlin during the final years of the Weimar Republic, from November 1929 through May 1933. In becoming an expatriate, he was enabled to realize his sexual and vocational desires by pursuing both a literal line of escape and a nomadic movement of deterritorialization from the subject positions prescribed by family, class, and nation. Section III returns to the *Berlin Stories* (1935-39) to examine how Isherwood addresses issues of identity and selfhood in his writing of the 1930s. Following the example of *Kafka*, it argues that he takes the English of London and Cambridge with him to Berlin, where he moves toward the creation of what can be considered to be a minor transnational literature. Chapter 1 begins with a consideration of Isherwood's narrative strategies, which do not attempt to represent being 'homosexual' but to communicate a non-identitarian becoming-minor sexually. By combining the influences of Wildean aestheticism, Forsterian tragi-comedy, and the performative excesses and ambiguities of Berlin clubland, he creates a minor transnational style of camp. This camp is the basis of a new approach to politics and community, which subverts bourgeois standards and offers an alternative to the majoritarian structures of family, class, and nation. Chapter 2 argues that Isherwood's political consciousness evolved, in the course of the 1930s, to a queer, pacifist, and transnational position, which repudiates the party politics of fascism and socialism in favor of a personally motivated politics of minority. Following Denisoff's views on the 'sympathetic impulse of camp' (1998), it examines how Isherwood extends his own sense of minority to include characters who belong to a variety of minoritized groups, such as women, sexual minorities, the Jewish ethnic minority, and the working-class social minority. Following Christie's reading (2001) of 'On Ruegen Island (Summer 1931)' as a 'queer rewriting' of Forster's pastoral novel *Maurice* (1913-14), the chapter goes on to consider how, in this and other episodes of the *Berlin Stories*, Isherwood reflects on the challenges posed to minor politics and community by historical reality in the 1930s.

From 1933-37, Isherwood moved through multiple countries in Europe with his partner, Heinz Neddermeyer, who was denied asylum in the UK and was eventually arrested and imprisoned by the Gestapo. In 1938, Isherwood followed another nomadic line of escape from family, class, and nation. This led him from East Asia to New York and on to Los Angeles, where he renounced his inheritance, converted to the Vedanta branch of Hinduism, and eventually became a citizen of the US. Section IV argues that Isherwood brings the English of London and Cambridge with him to America, where he takes it further in the direction of deterritorialization. In illustration of this, it examines the notes, drafts and published versions of his two novels which are set entirely in the US, *The World in the Evening* (1954) and *A Single Man* (1964). Chapter 1 argues that *The World in the Evening* develops Isherwood's queer, pacifist, and transnational position in its representation of the minor politics and community of Dolgelly, which is a successor to the pastorals of *Maurice* and the *Berlin Stories* in its inclusion of a variety of minoritized groups. Developing contributions by Carr (2006), Adair (2012), and Harker (2013), it argues that Isherwood's unique style of 'Quaker Camp' is key to an understanding of the expression of his novel as well as his attempts to redefine himself in such terms as can be recognized as those of a minor transnational writer. Chapter 2 argues that Isherwood's movement toward a minor literature is checked by a contrary movement toward reterritorialization. Developing contributions by Bristow (1999), Harker (2013), and Gonzalez (2013), it argues that *A Single Man* reflects a resistance to the reterritorialization of minority according to identity categories tolerated by the majority in the 1960s. A transnational genealogy can be traced from *Maurice*, the *Berlin Stories*, and Dolgelly to Sana Monica, California, where minor politics and community have substantially failed and survive only in a nostalgia for an earlier decade, when becoming-minor was possible on one's own terms.

As stated above, 'A Singular Nomad: The Minor Transnationalism of Christopher Isherwood' has a particular aim of contributing to Isherwood scholarship and a more general aim of advancing research in transnational literary studies. In recognizing and accounting for Isherwood's development as a transnational writer, the project regards each of the periods and locations of the writer's career as being equally worthy of attention. Isherwood's novels of the 1920s have been almost entirely forgotten and have scarcely before been considered beyond the limits of critical biography; his novellas of the 1930s, which were the focus of the first wave of interest in his work, are revisited from a less biographical and more literary theoretical perspective;

his novels of the 1940s-60s have been the focus of more recent waves of scholarship, to which this project responds by developing certain previous contributions according to its own particular perspective of transnationalism. In advancing research in transnational studies, the project provides a worthy case study and attempts to apply a theoretical framework which is suited to a focus on migration and related issues of identity and selfhood. The first element of the title, 'A Singular Nomad', refers both literally and conceptually to the movements which were undertaken by Isherwood as a unique and noteworthy individual. The second element of the title, 'The Minor Transnationalism of Christopher Isherwood' refers to the becoming-minor of the nomad through its deterritorialization of majoritarian standards. It also refers to a specifically literary theoretical framework based on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minor literature, which is defined as "that which a minority constructs within a major language" and according to three interrelated characteristics: language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization; everything in it is political; everything in it assumes a collective value (1986, 16-17). The significance of these various terms and characteristics, both in themselves and in regard to a case study of Isherwood, is discussed in more detail in the section which follows, on the critical methodology and theoretical framework of the project.



## Section I: Critical Methodology and Theoretical Framework

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### Introduction

In 1947, G. H. Bantock acknowledged that Isherwood had ‘arrived’ during the 1930s and was “still, if recent pronouncements are to be trusted, accepted more or less as a major figure” (46). This status did not last much longer than the mid-1950s and a reversal in reputation became evident by the 1970s, when Francis King observed that the writer was “regarded in the thirties as a potentially major novelist, [but] has ended up as a minor one” (24). By the beginning of the twenty-first century, this status had become established. Carr notes that, despite his “prominence as a literary figure in the 1930s, [...] Isherwood has largely been considered, since the mid-twentieth century, a ‘minor’ modernist” (149). She also notes that his name was not included in the eighth edition of the *Norton Anthology to English Literature* (2000), and this remains the case in the ninth and most recent edition (2012). One plausible reason for this omission is Isherwood’s part appearance in literatures of the UK, the US, and Germany, which may well be responsible for a persistent oversight of his work in the curricula, criticism, and scholarship of all three national domains. Writing in 2002, the late sociologist Ulrich Beck (1944-2015) refers to ‘methodological nationalism’, an attitude determined by the “boundaries, categories, notions of order and variables of the national outlook” (43), which results in practices of selection and analysis in which the “national self-image is reflected and reinforced by marginalizing and excluding strangers” (47). Globalization has exposed the inadequacy of such practices, to which he opposes ‘methodological cosmopolitanism’ from a specifically transnational perspective, arguing that the social sciences must be restructured as a “reality-based science of the transnational – conceptually, theoretically, methodologically and, incidentally, organizationally” (40). Beck’s observations apply across the humanities and social sciences. In literary studies, an equivalent turn in perspective presents an opportunity to reassess Isherwood’s reputation as a minor writer, whose work has been arguably and unjustly neglected by practices of selection, analysis, and canonization determined by the national outlook.

Chapter 1 presents nationalism and transnationalism as implicit or explicit critical methodologies, which are applicable to practices of selection and analysis in literary studies, or, in other words, to what and how the critic or scholar reads. In *Imagined Communities: Reflections on*

*the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983), Benedict Anderson defines the nation as an ‘imagined political community’ (6). Such a phenomenon emerged at the same time as novels and newspapers in regionally differentiated languages, which not only made possible the imagination of the nation but provided a means for its dissemination. The connection of nation to language encouraged the development of national philology, which resulted in a proliferation of departments of national language and literature in academia. Since their inauguration, the study of literature has been organized on a national, or implicitly nationalist, basis in departmental structure and in practices of selection and analysis. In *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996), Arjun Appadurai argues that there has been a “general rupture in the tenor of intersocietal relations” under conditions of globalization (2). His analysis of the effects of globalization is “explicitly transnational” (9), an approach which has since developed across the humanities and social sciences. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, literary critics and scholars began to realize the limitations of the national perspective and to argue the necessity of reorganizing literary studies on the basis of a specifically transnational perspective. Beginning in Comparative Literature, the transnational turn has resulted in the development of a major interest in the work of migrant writers, who have otherwise been overlooked or marginalized, and in related issues of identity, selfhood, and subject positioning. Many scholars, such as Azade Seyhan, Paul Jay, and Mads Thomsen, are engaged in selecting and analyzing examples of work by migrant writers in order to understand how the transnational literature which is produced by them provides reflections of as well as reflections on multiple differences which include, but are not limited to, age, class, race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality.

Chapter 2 presents ‘minor transnationalism’ as a theoretical framework, based on Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy of nomadism and their related concept of minor literature. A postmodern attitude to issues of identity, selfhood, and subject positioning, nomadism is predicated on ‘becoming’ and on a revaluation of minority. ‘Becoming’ is a type of incorporeal transformation, which consists in ‘deterritorialization’, or proceeding from a condition of being stable, whole, and self-identical to becoming unstable, multiple, and identifying with difference. Minority is conceived not in terms of quantity but as a sub-system of a standard, namely that of the ‘average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language’ (2004/a, 116). Whereas the majority, insofar as it is included in a standard, is “always Nobody”, the minority is the “becoming of everybody, one’s potential becoming” to the extent of its deviation from a standard

which commits all non-conformists to a position of minority (ibid., 117). As promoters of what they consider to be exemplary models of nomadic art, science, and philosophy, Deleuze and Guattari focus their attention on writing in the monograph *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1975). In this, they offer an explicit definition: “A minor literature doesn’t come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language” (16); they also ascribe to minor literature three defining characteristics: language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization; everything in it is political; everything in it assumes a collective value. The versatility of the concept has assured it renewed interest as a theoretical framework in transnational approaches to literature. As such, it provides a means of selection, making visible examples of writing which are considered to be of ‘minor’ value in comparison with the ‘major’ works of state, national, or territorialized literatures. It also provides a means of analysis, which focuses on minoritized identities within the national framework, considers the relativity of intersectional identities in movements between major and minor, and explores alternative politics and communities to those of the ‘imagined political communities’ of nations and nation-states.

## I.1. Critical Methodology: Transnationalism

In September 1947, having been commissioned to produce a travel book, Isherwood sailed with the photographer Bill Caskey from New Jersey to the Caribbean in order to begin a six-month tour of South America. Disembarking in Cartagena, they proceeded through Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina, and concluded their tour in Buenos Aires, before sailing to Europe in March 1948. As well as more general observations of local cultures and conditions, *The Condor and the Cows* (1949) provides some insight into the pervasive influence of nationalism on literary criticism in the first half of the twentieth century. Among Isherwood's concluding thoughts is that much of the art and literature of the region is "so obviously derivative" of foreign models, a deficiency he assigns to a "lack of national cohesion" (213). Although the republics of the region have established their political independence, they are not yet free in the fullest sense, in that they "haven't yet become nations" (212). As De Castro explains, Isherwood's negative assessments assume an analogy between cultural production and the production of the nation on the basis that the "pre-requisite for the development of first rate art and literature is the existence of a homogeneous nation" (331-32). Only the members of such an entity are capable of assimilating all outside influences and producing original material which might bear comparison with the already established national arts and literatures of Europe. Isherwood explains that the transition to independence in the fullest sense will involve a natural process of racial and cultural evolution, "gradually interbreeding Indians with Latins" (213). The end result of this protracted process will be a "new race and a new culture, certainly. Perhaps an entirely different kind of sensibility, an original approach to life, expressed in other terms, another language" (217). In the meantime, the one compensation of the transitional state of the region is that an "excessive preoccupation with alien cultures has produced some extraordinary scholars" (213). This is exemplified by Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986), whom Isherwood has met and been impressed, according to the peculiar biases of his Anglo-American perspective, that he knows "English literature as few Englishmen or Americans know it, and can quote entire paragraphs from the most unexpected authors, with very amusing and subtle comments" (ibid.).

Thirty-five years after the conclusion of Isherwood's tour of South America, Benedict Anderson (1936-2015) published *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983). Although the insights of the late political scientist might appear to be



incommensurate with the brief remarks made by a tourist and travel-writer, a comparison between the two reflects the beginnings of a shift in nationalist assumptions concerning the production of art and literature from the first to the second half of the twentieth century. Like Isherwood, Anderson considers the nation to have emerged through a process of evolution but does not regard this process as either natural or inevitable. On the contrary, nation, “nationality, [...] nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind” (4). Again like Isherwood, he suggests that cultural production and the production of the nation are analogous but argues for an inverse relationship between the two, in that it is not the nation which produces culture but culture which produces the nation. Defining the nation as an “imagined political community” (6), he traces its emergence as an historical effect of ‘print-capitalism’, a convergence between a system of production and a technology of communications which is peculiar to modernity. The convergence of print-capitalism encouraged the circulation of such products as novels and newspapers in regionally differentiated ‘print-languages’, which not only made possible the imagination of the nation but provided a means for its dissemination, so that “fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations” (36). Ironically for Isherwood, Anderson contends that this occurred initially and most successfully in South America, where the new republics which began to emerge from the Spanish Empire were stylized explicitly as nation-states. In this, it was not so much their political leaders as “Creole printmen [who] played the decisive historic role” (65). The circulation of provincial gazettes, which contained social, political, and commercial news of local relevance, created a sense of multiple and mutually exclusive communities among their readers long before the political revolutions of the nineteenth century. This sense was consolidated by the later circulation of the novel, which represented and disseminated in fictional form the very same type of imagined community.

The relationship between cultural production and the production of the nation became more complicated as the century progressed. In Europe, the nationalist revolutions which succeeded the Napoleonic wars proved to be unsuccessful and the emergence of nation-states was generally prevented until the end of the long nineteenth century and the settlement of the Great War. During this time, politics took second place to movements of nationalism encouraged by artists and intellectuals. Anderson notes the wide influence of the conception of “nation-ness as linked to a private-property language”, the origin of which he attributes to the philosopher Johann Gottfried

Herder (1744-1803), who declared that “Denn *jedes* Volk ist Volk; es hat *seine* National Bildung wie *seine* Sprache” (67-68). The implied division of humanity into discrete groups on the basis of the language shared by their members was supported by a “philological-lexicographic revolution” (83). The nineteenth century was an age of national philology, in which international rivalries encouraged the rise of “scholar-heroes”, who labored to create versions of a serviceable past, in “perpetual awareness of the identitarian needs of their state sponsors” (Saussy, 7). Their focus on the historic development of language was inevitably connected to that of literature, as the material available to grammarians, philologists, and lexicographers included the epics, myths, and folklores of the European Middle Ages, which were revalued and investigated for “what they might have to say about the origins of the peoples whose cultural ‘property’ they now had become” (ibid.). In academia, the growth of national, or implicitly nationalist, philology resulted in the decline and obsolescence of departments of classics and rhetoric and the proliferation of departments of national language and literature. Since the inauguration of such departments, the basic structure of literary studies has been “transparently nationalist” in that, in country after country, the designated national language and literature has been at the center of a “curricular world organized along the lines of a political map, the borders of which have neatly duplicated those between modern nation-states” (Jay 2001, 32). Within this curricular world, “national thinking prevails”, with the result that not only the basic structure but the very purpose of literary studies is determined in order to underwrite a “critical narrative of homogenous, continuous traditions within individual literatures” (Cooppan, 25).

In the particular case of English, the consolidation of the discipline as an instrument of national, or implicitly nationalist, thinking is discernible in Isherwood’s brief career at Cambridge in 1923-25. Having earned a prestigious scholarship to read History at Corpus Christi College, he attempted to join his fellow scholar Edward Upward (1903-2009), who had abandoned History and joined the department of English, which had been founded only a few years prior, in 1919. Both men imagined that English would allow them to develop a deeper appreciation of the past than History, which, as presented at Cambridge, was resented by them for its “fact-grubbing passionlessness, its dull indifference to human suffering, its lack of love, generosity, beauty or poetry” (Upward, 168). According to Terry Eagleton, the elevation of English as an academic discipline was intended to provide the “social ‘cement’, affective values and basic mythologies” which were otherwise lacking in academia (21). This was especially important in 1919, when

“English Literature rode to power on the back of wartime nationalism” (26), and provided one solution to an “urgent need for a sense of national mission and identity” in the aftermath of the Great War (24). After the inauguration of the discipline at Cambridge, English quickly rose to prominence among the humanities under the guidance of F. R. Leavis (1895-1978), who had successfully transferred from History to English in 1919, was promoted to faculty in 1927, and served as director of English at Downing College from 1931-64. Eagleton notes that, by the beginning of that period, English was not only a “subject worth studying, but *the* supremely civilizing pursuit, the spiritual essence of the social formation” (27). Unfortunately for Isherwood, his own application to transfer from History was declined and he later deliberately failed his second year examinations and dropped out of Cambridge in order to pursue a career as a writer. It was in the context of Leavis’ canonization of a ‘great tradition’ of select writers that Isherwood’s own reputation was established. In 1938, not coincidentally, the young writer was hailed by the prominent critic Cyril Connolly as a “hope of English fiction” (74) and by his elder contemporary William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) for holding the “future of the English novel in his hands” (*CHK*, 242).

In January of the following year, Isherwood left England, in the company of Auden, to resettle in the United States. His emigration provoked a radical change in his reputation, which began a year later, when Connolly’s acerbic comments in the literary periodical *Horizon* (69), coupled with an anti-Auden and anti-Isherwood campaign in the British media and Parliament (Fryer, 140), suggested that the two men were as culpable of betraying the English nation as they were of betraying its national literature. Although Isherwood’s critics were ignorant of the complexity of his motives, such insinuations might not have been so wide of the mark. In *Kathleen and Frank* (1971), he writes that his emigration to the US was a “final ritual act of breaking free [...] from Mother and Motherland” (362), with the implication that his freedom as a writer was very much involved in his more general freedom from family, class, and nation. This is corroborated by his diary of the time, in which he recalls thinking of himself as a “natural citizen of the go-getters’ homeland”, adding, “Oh, I’d talk faster and louder than any of them. I’d learn the slang and the accent, I’d adapt like an Arctic fox. Before long, I’d be writing the great American novel” (4-5). Despite his confidence, things did not go quite as expected. National thinking was just as prevalent in the US, where literary criticism was informed by a “broadly nationalist ideal” and, in the post-war years, served as a means of advertising prestige and accomplishment in culture

wars with the Soviet Union (Jay 2001, 43). Isherwood's first attempt to produce an American novel, *The World in the Evening* (1954), which included refugees, pacifists, and sexual and religious minorities among its characters, was a resounding failure with the literary establishment. Published almost a decade later, his next novel, *Down There on a Visit* (1962), consists of four loosely related stories set sequentially in Germany, Greece, England, and California from 1928-46, precisely the time between his initial departure from England and his naturalization as a US citizen. If this retrospection marks a retreat from nationalism, it is also an indication of how Isherwood's work can be viewed as transcending nationalism if the critic is properly prepared to do so.

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Although critical interest in Isherwood revived in the 1970s, it was clear that, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, he had become a minor writer, who remains "largely unread, and when read, criticism on his work is for the most part limited in focus" (Carr, 149). In accounting for this neglect, Berg alludes to the prejudices of national thinking, arguing that Isherwood's work in the US, in particular, is regarded as inconsequential by both British and American scholars because it is American, because he was born English, or because a writer "must either be English or American to be taught in the appropriate college courses" (11). Berg concedes that these criteria are "less strict when applied to twentieth-century literature, as the lives and careers of Henry James, T. S. Eliot, and Joseph Conrad attest. Yet the boundaries still have a strong influence" (ibid.). What this seems to suggest is that Isherwood is somehow unlucky not to be counted among the exceptions which prove the rule. A more convincing explanation might be that he is a victim of a combination of national thinking and his undeniable stature as a minor writer. The likes of James, Eliot, and Conrad, to whom can be added Isherwood's companion and collaborator, Auden, are exceptions not because they belong to a particular century but because they are universally regarded as major writers. In order to be selected for reading, minor writers require some general relevance, which is usually related to the national literary or socio-historical context of the core material of any given course. The tendency of minor writers who are lacking in such relevance is to become either of specialist interest or of no interest at all. Scholars of the 1930s continue to refer to the *Berlin Stories*, the 'camera' metaphor of which serves as a convenient shorthand for the documentary style of that decade. Otherwise, Berg notes that, for "scholars of gay culture, Isherwood's national origin is not an issue", and speculates that this may be because "gay culture crosses national

boundaries” (26). If this is indeed the case, such scholars are no longer alone in recognizing the limitations of national thinking, as awareness continues to grow of a turn from national, or implicitly nationalist, methodologies to transnationalism.

In 1996, the social and cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai published *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Picking up on Anderson’s concept of imagined communities, Appadurai makes the same connection between new media and the work of human imagination, but argues that the effects of print-capitalism were greatly limited in comparison with a “general rupture in the tenor of intersocietal relations” which has been brought about by the influence of mass mediation in the age of late capitalism (2). Moreover, whereas print-capitalism was instrumental in the production of the nation, more recent developments in capital flows and media technologies have resulted in an apparent reversal of this effect (21-22). On the basis of these resources, the construction of what Appadurai refers to as ‘imagined worlds’ is now occurring on such a scale that it is possible to announce the emergence of a “postnational political world” (22). Notwithstanding such rhetoric, he does not deny the ongoing currency of the nation-state and indicates that his approach to analyzing the conditions and effects of globalization is “explicitly transnational” (9). A comparable turn in perspective can be observed in other disciplines which have long been organized according to a national, or implicitly nationalist, framework. In *Globalizing Literary Studies* (2001), a special issue of the Modern Language Association’s journal *PMLA*, the late Edward Said (1935-2003), writing as Professor of both English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, notes a growing consensus among scholars that there is “something basically unworkable or at least drastically changed about the traditional frameworks” in which literature is studied. He finds fault, in particular, with the assumptions that literature exists within a “national framework and [...] in some sort of stable or at least consistently identifiable form” (64). In the same issue, Paul Jay, writing as Professor of English at Loyola University, notes that the effects of globalization have “systematically diminished the rationale for mapping literary studies with reference to the old paradigm of homogeneous nation-states” (33). Condemning, as both arbitrary and ultimately inadequate, the organization of literary studies according to the “restrictive and distorting borders of nation-states”, he goes on to argue the necessity of reorganizing the discipline in such ways as would move it beyond national thinking and toward a specifically “transnational perspective” (42-44).

What has been referred to as a ‘transnational turn’ in literary studies began in the field of Comparative Literature (Jay, Lukić). From their foundations in the nineteenth century, continental departments of modern literature were motivated by an ethos of eurocentric internationalism, which survived the emigration of the main theorists of comparison to the United States during the 1930s. In 1960, the American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA) was founded with the lofty goal of a “new internationalism: for broader perspectives on works and authors, for a European grasp of historical movements, for larger contexts in the tracking of motifs, themes, and types” (Greene, 28). Following the conclusion of the Cold War in 1989, the third of the regular ACLA Reports on the State of the Discipline (Bernheimer, 1993) responded to the challenges posed to its ethos in the areas of cultural, minority, post-imperial, and postcolonial studies by recommending a “multicultural recontextualization of Anglo-American and European perspectives” (Bernheimer, 44). By the end of the 1990s, it became clear that another ‘new internationalism’ in the form of an expansive ‘multiculturalism’ was inadequate in the context of accelerating globalization and that it was necessary to pursue an appropriately “different, double, dialectical way of thinking” (Cooppan, 17). More specifically, as Cooppan suggests, the pedagogical injunction of globalization is to think “both locally and globally, both nationally and transnationally, both through the particular and towards the universal” (29). The concept of ‘world literature’ often features in discussions of globalization and transnationalism in literary studies. For John Pizer, this is a model for comparatists to construct “discrete domains of inquiry that acknowledge both the world’s unity and an irreducible variety” (213). For Mads Thomsen, it operates as a ‘supplement’ to national canons, which consists of ‘constellations’ of material brought about through selections made by the comparatist (3-5). Similarly, David Damrosch presents it as an “elliptical refraction of national literatures” (281), by means of which a work might enter a “broader world beyond its linguistic and cultural point of origin” (6). Although there is little consensus on the topic of ‘world literature’, all of these representations are variations of an essential concept, that of a literature which is “detached from its local or national context of production and granted global pretensions” (Forsdick, 478).

The fourth ACLA Report on the State of the Discipline (Saussy, 2004) claimed that the “‘transnational’ dimension of literature and culture is universally recognized even by the specialists who not long ago suspected comparatists of dilettantism” (3). This sets the tone not only for the 2000s but for the 2010s. In *A Companion to Comparative Literature* (2011), Behdad

and Thomas announce that the discipline is now defined by its practitioners as an “*inter-disciplinary, cross-cultural, and trans-national endeavor*”, adding that “even national literature departments are moving away from a nationalist paradigm towards a globalized model of literary studies” (1-2). In *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies* (2010), Jay suggests that the discipline of English, despite being a “latecomer to the field of transnational literary studies”, has been profoundly altered by the effects and consequent discussions of globalization (5). As he had already argued in 2001, the transnational turn does not imply that scholars will no longer study the relationship between nation and literature but that the national, or implicitly nationalist, framework will no longer occupy the center of the discipline in the sense of determining its methodology of selection and analysis (2001, 43). In regard to selection, the colonial expansion and consequent global development of the English language has ensured that ‘English literature’ is now defined less by England, the UK, or any one of the nation-states of the Anglosphere than by language, a circumstance which can easily be reflected in a redefinition of the phenomenon and related discipline as ‘literature in English’ irrespective of its geopolitical origin or location. As Jay argues, writing in English should be considered globally rather than by “dividing off British literature from American, presenting the two in separate historical sequences, and leaving English produced outside these nationalist contexts for other, marginal courses” (ibid., 44). In regard to analysis, Jay suggests that the nation is simply an “object of study among others” and that its relationship to literature ought to be approached in purely functional, historical, and materialist terms (ibid., 43). Moreover, precedence should be given to the history of global intercultural exchange, with the implication that scholars imagine and construct “new, more fluid, historically innovative, and heterogeneous locations in which to situate literary and cultural analysis” (2010, 73).

In *Global Matters*, Jay makes a point of providing reassurance that scholars in English are not attempting to “take over transnational approaches to the study of literature that are better left to comparatists” (4). If both disciplines are wary of trespassing on each other’s territory, they do have much in common, not the least of which is an increasing appreciation of difference. According to Jay, the transnational turn needs to be understood in the context of a “more complicated set of intersecting forces dating back to the late 1960s” (17). Outside of academia, these include various social and political movements for civil rights; within academia, they include the rise of critical practices determined by an attention to difference, namely deconstruction and

postmodernism; feminism and gender studies; minority, multicultural, and postcolonial studies; and related work on class, race, sexuality, and other factors of identity (ibid.). Already, by the mid-1970s, the model of framing literature in English in “wholly national terms as ‘British’ and ‘American’, had become complicated in extraordinarily rich ways” (21). Since the 1990s, this shift in attention from sameness to difference has been “dramatically accelerated by the forces of globalization” (25). Now, scholars of both English and Comparative Literature endeavor to highlight those groups and individuals who were minoritized or marginalized in the processes of selection and analysis mandated by a national, or implicitly nationalist, methodology. The implications for Isherwood scholarship can be readily appreciated. Because of his sexual minority, the writer’s cultural experience is one which already “crosses national boundaries”, not least in the sense that “gay writers [...] almost always had to go somewhere else to live as gay men” (Berg, 26). One of the results of the transnational turn is the development of a major interest in migration and the work of migrant writers such as Isherwood, who lived and worked in London, Berlin, and Los Angeles at pivotal moments in both his own and his adopted cities’ histories. As Fisher-Fishkin suggests, more attention will be paid to such figures, “who have been marginalized precisely because they crossed so many borders that they are hard to categorize” (30); scholars will welcome, moreover, “investigations of the broad array of cultural crossroads shaping the work of border-crossing authors, artists, and cultural forms” (32).

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In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson considers the effects of migration as well as those of mediation on the production of the nation. In the emerging nation-states of South America, a disparity between Spanish administrators, who tended to circulate among provinces, and local functionaries, whose duties permitted them to circulate only within the particular province of their birth, resulted in a “fatal distinction between metropolitans and Creoles” (60). Appadurai argues that the effects of such earlier movements of people were greatly limited in comparison with those of contemporary mass migration, which is occurring not only on an unprecedented scale but is resulting in the production of entirely contrary imagined worlds and communities. Together, mass migration and mass mediation are creating “diasporic public spheres, phenomena that confound theories that depend on the continued salience of the nation-state” (4). Given the prevalence of a “new order of instability in the production of modern subjectivities” (ibid.), issues of identity, selfhood, and subject positioning tend to be foregrounded in theoretical responses to globalization



and to the ensuing trans- or post-national global environment. In the work of the imagination, Appadurai stresses the role of media products which, in both fictional and documentary form, continuously circulate among migrants, potential migrants, and migrant communities (6-7). As one element of the repertoire of what he terms ‘mediascapes’, or global cultural flows which continuously present consumers with “series of elements (such as characters, plots, and textual forms) out of which scripts can be formed of imagined lives” (35), he mentions prose fiction, in particular, as the “exemplary province of the post-Renaissance imagination” (58). Works of literature remain an important resource for those who seek to address the issues of identity which have been inevitably raised by transnationalism, whether they are readers and writers, on the one hand, or critics and scholars, on the other. Indeed, Appadurai maintains that it was among scholars of literature that the idea of the emergence of a trans- or post-national world first occurred (158), and that, in debates concerning culture, which he defines in terms of “differences that either express, or set the groundwork for, the mobilization of group identities” (13), the “high ground has been seized” by literary studies in general and by the discipline of English in particular (51).

Since the beginning of this century, a number of scholars have recognized the relevance of migration and related issues of identity to literary studies. In *Writing Outside the Nation* (2000), Azade Seyhan argues that works of literature which “originate at border crossings cannot be bound by national borders, languages, and literary and critical traditions” (4). Recognizing the inadequacy of existing terms and concepts, she reasons that descriptors such as ‘ethnic’, ‘exilic’, ‘migrant’, or ‘diasporic’ cannot fully capture or substantiate the “nuances of writing between histories, geographies, and cultural practices” (9). In attempting to assemble a vocabulary with which to discuss the products of such writing, she draws on Appadurai’s usage of the term ‘transnational’ in order to coin a related category of ‘transnational literature’. This is applied by her in reference to a “genre of writing that operates outside the national canon, addresses issues facing deterritorialized cultures, and speaks for [communities] that exist within national borders or alongside the citizens of the host country but remain culturally or linguistically distanced from them” (10). Seyhan is interested in textual strategies which operate in the “‘nongeneric’ genre under discussion” (15). Nevertheless, ‘transnational literature’ is perhaps more usefully defined not as a genre, which implies the currency of certain conventions, but as a concept which is available to the critic or scholar who is willing to approach a work of literature from a particular perspective. Appadurai’s opinion that “literary fantasies tell us something about displacement,

disorientation, and agency in the contemporary world” is quoted by Seyhan, who goes on to argue that what she identifies as transnational literature appears at “unexpected junctures and represents new linkages of disparate and distant places and identities” (Appadurai, 58; Seyhan, 8). Selecting examples of writing which span two or more cultures, she commits herself to an analysis of how they communicate with “varying degrees of accents indicating national, ethnic, geographical, and historical origins and the transitions that have shaped the memory of these origins” (9). From her perspective, these are stories, histories, and testimonials which speak of displacement, exile, and loss, which create a link between personal and collective experience, and which maintain continuity between the cultures of the past and the present for those who live in diasporic conditions and communities.

Seyhan favors comparative readings of writing from different cultures, such as Turkish-German and Mexican-American, which she compares as examples of ‘minor’ cultures within the respective ‘national cultures’ of Germany and the United States (17). At the same time, Jay argues that a transnational perspective offers a means to more adequately address a proliferation of writing in English which has otherwise been assigned to a restrictive national or sub-national category such as ‘Anglo-Indian’ or ‘Asian-American’ (2001, 44). The growing importance of such writing is apparent in the thirteenth volume of *The Oxford English Literary History, 1948-2000: The Internationalization of English Literature* (2005), the title of which fails to fully capture the confluences of the colonial, postcolonial, and immigrant writing which is covered by it. This is as substantial as the preceding twelfth volume, *1960-2000: The Last of England?* (2005), and it is fair to claim that the British-born writers of the latter are far surpassed in reputation by such luminaries as Salman Rushdie and the late Doris Lessing (1919-2013) and V. S. Naipaul (1932-2018) (Thomsen, 61). More recently, in *Global Matters* (2010), Jay notes that writers in English are increasingly concerned with exploring the effects of globalization and that the focus of their attention in this regard is on “intersecting and sometimes conflicting identities (personal, cultural, political) grounded in forms of displacement” (91). Reading from a transnational perspective, he selects examples of writing which shift in origin and representation among two or more locations, presenting the reader with a new model of migration which, rather than by unidirectional flows toward assimilation, is characterized by a “back-and-forth movement of people across borders, at once insisting on the importance of location and deterritorializing the spaces in which their characters operate” (11). Jay’s analyses of contemporary literature focus on the construction of

individual and collective identities in the context of a “dialectical relationship between colonialism, decolonization, postcolonialism, and globalization” (9). In these, ethnicity is involved in a broad approach to what constitutes identity, selfhood, and subject positioning. The aim is to understand how transnational literature provides reflections of as well as on multiple differences across a multiplicity of locations, where the “boundary lines between cultures, races, genders, classes, and sexualities are much more porous than were heretofore acknowledged” (91).

Like Seyhan and Jay, Thomsen prefers to use the term ‘transnational literature’ in reference to the writing of migrants, which he defines as “literature by authors whose work does not really belong to a specific national literature” (61). Beyond their individual qualities, the increasing prominence of such authors has made transnational literature visible not only as a category which needs be taken seriously but as evidence in support of an argument that writing by migrants provides a better reflection of the “cultural streams of the age” than that of many other categories of writer (61-62). Thomsen locates transnational literature as a constellation within the broader category of ‘world literature’ (101). As such, it is remarkable for combining elements of more than one culture and for presenting a “double perspective on things by someone who is both at home and away” (99). This perspective is significant not only in regard to content but also in that it encourages experimentation with form and expression, as can be appreciated in the seminal contributions which have already been made by migrant writers to “both the formal-inventive and the historical-descriptive aspects of literature” (61). According to Thomsen, twentieth-century modernist and contemporary migrant writers constitute two important clusters in world literature (97). A condition of the dominance of migrant writers among canonized modernists is that they present, in both their subject matter and in their striving for formal invention, a “profound challenge to the idea of identity”, as a reflection of their own “self-experienced transformations” (84-85). Such a challenge is also evident in the work of contemporary migrant writers, who appear to be “less unhappy about lost essences” and more concerned with the “question of negotiating individuality and collectivity” (97). Having come of age and begun publishing during the modernist 1920s, having expressed his own self-experienced transformations in fiction from the 1930s-60s, and having recalled these transformations in his memoirs of the 1970s-80s, Isherwood bridges these two clusters of migrant writers. Regardless of whether his work can be assigned to a genre of transnational writing or to a constellation of world literature, it can certainly benefit from the application of a transnational

perspective, which is attentive to issues of identity and to how these are reflected in both content and expression.

Since the late 1990s, various discourses of border studies, diaspora studies, multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism have been invoked as theoretical frameworks in support of a transnational perspective in literary studies (Jay 2010, 5). The experience of migration is conditioned by a combination of multiple factors which include, but are not limited to, age, class, race, sex, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality. In order to address this, Jasmina Lukić draws on the concept of intersectionality introduced by feminist scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, who sought to account for how racism and sexism factor into the experiences of African-American women in the 1980s-90s. Lukić argues that, although it was introduced in the social sciences, intersectionality can be applied to the reading of “all kinds of cultural texts, literature included”, and most especially to “those aspects of literary texts in which they inevitably speak to the social” (43). Intersectionality is one option among many, which include several terms and concepts provided by Deleuze and Guattari. In his diagnoses of ‘modernity at large’, Appadurai prescribes a focus on the “cultural dynamics of what is now called deterritorialization” (49), a concept he applies to what he considers to be “one of the central forces of the modern world” (37). In related terms, and in direct reference to Deleuze and Guattari, he claims that the effects of globalization have ensured that the world now seems “rhizomatic [...], even schizophrenic, calling for theories of rootlessness” (29). In more recent work on transnationalism in literary studies, Søren Frank recommends Deleuze for offering a “conceptual toolbox that is particularly suitable for examining the metamorphic processes characteristic of migration literature” (27). Meanwhile, Sten Moslund approaches writing by migrants in light of Deleuze’s poetics, which contains an “entire vocabulary of geographical and migratory terms, such as root-networks, nomads, movement, speed and lines of flight, territories and borders, in-betweennesses and multiplicities” (6-7). This project adopts Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy of nomadism and their related concept of minor literature. On the basis of these, it offers ‘minor transnationalism’ as a theoretical framework suited to a critical methodology of selection and analysis which focuses on migrant writing in regard to issues of identity, selfhood, and subject positioning. How this is relevant to a case study of Isherwood will be described in what follows.

## I.2. Theoretical Framework: Minor Transnationalism

By the time he embarked for the US in January 1939, Isherwood's friends had grown used to thinking of him as a "chronic wanderer" (*CHK*, 246). If, in his diary of the time, he explains that he simply "couldn't stop travelling", he also indicates that there was something more to his continuous wandering than simply that; he was, in effect, "running away from [him]self: that was why [he] never stayed anywhere long" (4). In the 'Afterword' to *Kathleen and Frank* (1971), Isherwood explains that, after the loss of his father in the Great War, he became the "Orphan of a Dead Hero", who was obliged by the 'Others' of family, class, and nation to be worthy of his "Hero-Father" and his "Holy Widow-Mother" (356-59). As he grew to maturity, he soon began to reject this obligation, becoming an "Anti-Son" toward his widow-mother, who epitomized the authority of the 'Others' and whose patriotism, class consciousness, and social conservatism finally turned him completely against "England, the Motherland, thus causing him to be attracted to Germany, the Fatherland which had killed the Hero-Father" (359-61). For a decade, Isherwood wandered from Europe through East Asia to North America, until his final act of independence was to become a citizen of the US, thereby "separating himself from Mother and Motherland at one stroke" (362). Following *Kathleen and Frank*, he intended to write about his life in the US but soon realized that he could explain his decision to move to that country only by beginning with why he had left England in the first place. In an interview conducted in 1973, he explains that *Christopher and His Kind* (1976) would recount his "*Wanderjahren*", or years of wandering, from before he left London for Berlin and until such time as he felt settled in Santa Monica, California, which became "kind of [his] home" (Kaplan 2001, 268). Since the 1970s, critics have tended to regard these years teleologically, as a sequence which leads to a mature sense of self in terms of being queer, Vedantist, and Anglo-American. This project takes a different approach to issues of identity, selfhood and subject positioning in Isherwood's *Wanderjahren*, beginning with a translation of his self-definition as a 'chronic wanderer' into the 'singular nomad' of the title.

Gilles Deleuze (1925-95) and Félix Guattari (1930-92) can be regarded as the main theorists of nomadism, whose proponents "generally find illusory the quest for any fixed identity or homesite" (Peters, 32). As an independent philosopher in the 1960s, Deleuze worked on inverting the conventional relationship between identity and difference in pure metaphysics, so that "identity not be first, that it exist as a principle but as a second principle, as a principle *become*;

that it revolve around the Different” (2004/a, 50). In the 1970s, his metaphysics took an explicitly social, ethical, and political turn in his collaboration with Guattari, an activist and psychotherapist, who was working on a reconceptualization of desire. According to him, desire had been redefined under capitalism and psychoanalysis as a product of law and lack and redirected into a system of infantilizing commodification within the oedipal family triangle of father, mother, and child. From their critique of Marx and Freud, Deleuze and Guattari synthesized a new concept of ‘desiring-production’, which reorganizes desire as a positive and creative energy through which life ‘becomes’. Socially and historically, Deleuze and Guattari encourage the release of desiring-production so that, from the monadic subject limited by existing social standards, the nomadic subject can emerge and begin to realize its potential. Theirs is a social ontology of ‘becoming’, a type of incorporeal transformation, which consists in ‘deterritorialization’, or proceeding from a condition of *being-molar*, or stable, whole, and self-identical to *becoming-molecular*, or unstable, multiple, and identifying with difference, to ultimately *becoming-imperceptible*, or divested of all coded identity. Deleuze and Guattari met in the aftermath of May 1968, when the ‘philosophy of difference’ became a ‘politics of difference’ directed by them toward exposing the historical force relations which produce, police, and preserve identity in all its forms of subjects, objects, discourses, and institutions. To the State and its ‘State philosophy’ of being, identity, and homogeneity, Deleuze and Guattari oppose a nomadic ‘war machine’ of decentered subjects who are invested in becoming, difference, and heterogeneity. This is dedicated, as Foucault suggests in his preface to *L'Anti-Oedipe* (1972), to the “tracking down of all varieties of fascism, from the enormous ones that surround and crush us to the petty ones that constitute the tyrannical bitterness of our everyday lives” (xvi).

Deleuze and Guattari’s nomadic politics is predicated on a revaluation of minority, which they conceive not as a state or quantity but as a sub-system of a standard, namely that of the ‘average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language’, who, “even if he is less numerous than mosquitoes, children, women, blacks, peasants, homosexuals, etc.”, is nonetheless their measure (2004/a, 116). Deleuze and Guattari reiterate this dualism only to strategically reverse it in valuation. Whereas the majority, insofar as it is included in a standard, is “always Nobody”, the minority is the “becoming of everybody, one’s potential becoming” to the extent of its deviation from a standard which commits all non-conformists to a position of minority by nature and regardless of number (ibid., 117). “All becoming is minoritarian” (ibid.); it is,

moreover, necessarily political, and demands a “labor of power (*puissance*), an active micropolitics” (ibid., 322). Because ‘Man’ is the majoritarian identity *par excellence*, such a politics begins with becoming-woman, not in the sense of assuming the female form or the form of the molar entity ‘woman’ but of entering the zone of a ‘microfemininity’, which produces in us a “molecular woman” (ibid., 304). In *Nomadic Subjects* (2011), Deleuze and Guattari’s model is adopted by the feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti in an attempt to develop a vision of “feminist subjectivity in a nomadic mode” (22). From her perspective of sexual difference, the nomad is an ideal ‘performative metaphor’ for moving beyond the “mental habits of phallogocentric thought” (ibid.), in order to explore “political agency while taking as historical evidence the decline of metaphysically fixed stable identities” (26). For Deleuze and Guattari, nomads do not necessarily move about like migrants. On the contrary, “they do not move; nomads, they nevertheless stay in the same place and continually evade the codes of settled people” (1985, 149). Even so, nomadism has inevitably been revised in the context of contemporary globalization. Braidotti, who is Italian-born, Australian-raised, and Dutch-resident, grounds the figuration in her personal experience of migration, so that it reflects the existential situation of a “migrant who turned nomad” (21). Her choice is also a response to an “historical trend toward ‘trans’-national mobility” (23), which demands that generalizations about women be replaced by attention to differences which exist among them (56).

In an attempt to outline “different styles [and] genres” of migration, Braidotti opposes the nomadic to the exilic, which she defines as a “sense of loss or separation from the home country” (59). Isherwood’s sense of dislocation in England was compounded by an attempt to reconcile a growing awareness of his sexual minority with Freudianism, which led to an inevitable impasse by reorganizing his desire within the oedipal triangle. A situation of internal exile might have become one of external exile, had Auden not introduced him to the philosophy of Homer Lane (1875-1925), which justified a line of flight to Berlin, not in exile but as a nomad, defined in Braidotti’s terms by “transitions and passages without predetermined destinations or lost homelands” (60). In his preface to *L’Après-May des faunes* (1974) by queer theorist Guy Hocquenghem (1946-88), Deleuze interests himself in a homosexuality which is open to a loss of identity, rather than to an alternative sexual identity, such that there is “no more homosexual subject, but homosexual productions of desire, and homosexual assemblages that produce utterances, proliferating everywhere” (287-88). Becoming-homosexual enacts a micro-politics of

desire, in this case both by deterritorializing the heterosexual standard and by resisting the molar ‘homosexual’ in favor of a micro- or molecular homosexuality. Like becoming-woman, which opens a path to all other becomings, the becoming-minor of homosexuality renders it possible, and necessary, for it to have “something to say about *what is not* homosexuality” (285). This is something Isherwood himself appears to appreciate when, speaking in retrospect, he claims that his sexuality has never been a question of ‘homosexuality’, but of “otherness, of seeing things from an oblique angle” (Scobie, no pag.). As he moves nomadically, his becoming-homosexual deterritorializes majoritarian identities of class and religion in the directions of atheism and socialism, then pacifism and Vedanta, allowing him to escape becoming a “mother’s boy, a churchgoer, an academic, a conservative, a patriot and a respectable citizen” (*K&F*, 361). Reviewing the trajectory which brought him to America, he explains that, “as long as there’s this majority saying ‘that’s the way, that’s what you ought to do’, [...] I think, ‘No, I won’t, I absolutely won’t’”, adding that he would surely have become heterosexual, had the majority been homosexual (Heilbrun, 256-57).

Notwithstanding his sexual minority, it cannot be denied that Isherwood more than fulfills the criteria of Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language’ in being born and raised an upper-class Englishman during the peak period of British imperialism in the early twentieth century. The pursuit of personal accomplishment was not only a privilege but an expectation of his social class, which provided plentiful resources in the form of passports, allowances, and letters of introduction while he lived and traveled without restriction in many parts of the world. Nomadism may well be a “dream of radical liberty, of roaming at will, beholden to nothing but the winds and the stars”, but it is also one which is “based in privilege – that of race, gender, class, language, nation” (Peters, 33-34). Among its distractors, Caren Kaplan cautions against the fantasy of the nomad, who is seemingly untouched by “nation-state and/or bourgeois organization and mastery”, as well as its selective romanticism, which is ultimately produced and maintained by discourses of imperialism (1996, 66). In response to such criticism, Braidotti grounds her perspective in her own life experiences and in her commitment to a socio-historical position of accountability. Such accountability is contained in the movement from major to minor, which acknowledges privileges of class, ethnicity, citizenship, etc. while allowing one to express at least a sympathy with positions of minority through finding one’s own route to becoming-minor. As Braidotti admits, the nomad stands for a kind of subject who has



relinquished nothing other than “all idea, desire, or nostalgia for fixity” (57). She nonetheless finds it “sober and empirical and [that it] resists romantic temptations” (26). Far from lacking commitment, it possesses a “political density” in proportion to its deterritorialization of majoritarian standards (61), in that it entails a “radical critique of dominant formations from within and the dissolution of the notion of a center and consequently of originary sites or authentic identities of any kind” (26). Likewise, nomadism provides a means to conceptualize Isherwood’s migrations in terms of movements between the major and the minor, while avoiding generalizations by taking into account all of the conditions which apply in his individual case, as is intended in his designation not as a nomad, simply, but as a ‘singular nomad’.

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In his interview with Kaplan in 1973, Isherwood explains that it was when he finally felt settled in the US that the “wandering stopped” (268). *Kathleen and Frank* (1971) and *Christopher and His Kind* (1976) were followed by a third and final memoir, *My Guru and His Disciple* (1980), which, in addressing his relationship with Swami Prabhavananda, presents something of a final subject position on the basis of his successful reconciliation of being queer, Vedantist, and Anglo-American. Bucknell suggests that, with his turn to memoir, Isherwood “stopped writing fiction and instead tried to tell the true story of his own life as a way of explaining and testifying to his beliefs” (2002, 128-29). Although such a ‘true story’ is as much a part of his personal mythology as are the more ostensibly fictional stories of his novels and novellas, there is a qualitative difference between the two. Whereas his work of the 1970s is written from a settled, reterritorialized perspective, his work of the 1920s-60s is written from a nomadic, deterritorializing perspective. In his lectures at UC-Santa Barbara in fall 1960, Isherwood explains that, as far as he is concerned, the writing of fiction begins with his own experience as an ‘Outsider’, which he defines as both the “constitutionally born member of a minority” and “somebody who realizes consciously that he belongs to a minority” (Isherwood & Summers, 48/52). He goes on to argue that the outsider is potentially “one of the most socially valuable people in the whole community” (ibid., 50), in that, precisely because of their minority, they can present “another point of view, and therefore [widen] our appreciation of any given problem” (ibid., 132). On this basis, he maintains that all writers “should strive to be such an outsider, sometimes assenting, sometimes dissenting, but always, one hopes, in some way illuminating the problem” (ibid.). It is in this sense of turning his experience into literature, as Carr argues, that Isherwood’s “biography – political

through and through – should enter into critical discussion of his aesthetics” (21). The question remains, as to how the critic might frame such a discussion of the work of a writer who was more a nomad than a wanderer and who wrote, moreover, from a consciously motivated perspective of minority.

As promoters of what they consider to be exemplary models of nomadic art, science, and philosophy, Deleuze and Guattari focus their attention on writing in the monograph, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1975). In this, they offer an explicit definition of their topic, being “that which a minority constructs within a major language” (16). Their paradigmatic example of a minor writer, Franz Kafka (1883-1924), was born into a generation of Jews in Bohemia whose parents had migrated to the capital, where they adopted ‘Prague German’ as their vehicle of communication and, in so doing, assumed a position of minority in relation to a major language. This position was passed on to the succeeding generation of native speakers, with the consequence that the ‘Jewish literature of Prague’ is something impossible, which is to say, impossible to write in a major language, impossible not to write in a major language, and impossible not to be written at all (ibid.). This example of writing from a specific position of ethnic minority can be extended more generally, as is intended by Deleuze and Guattari. For Kafka, the German of Prague is a ‘paper language’ which refers to both a state bureaucracy and an equally exclusive cultural standard. For Isherwood, the English of London and Cambridge might be regarded in equivalent terms as a language of family, class, and nation, as well as of social propriety, sexual normativity, and socio-sexual respectability. In the 1970s, Isherwood certainly claimed minority status for his writing on the basis of his sexuality. Speaking about work in progress on *Christopher and His Kind*, he explains to Kaplan that his major theme is homosexuality, although “not so much from the point of view of the question of sexual preference as the whole thing of belonging to a rather small minority” (270). Although he claims that this position is “never satisfactorily expressed” in his earlier work (ibid.), his novels and novellas have tended to be read for this as well as for related positions of minority since the revival of critical interest in Isherwood in the 1970s. As recently as 2012, Wade encourages critics to read him as a “minority voice [...] with a perverse strength taken from his *deracine* status and his gay, dissenting voice” (74).

Approaching Isherwood as such a ‘minority voice’ might appear to be compatible with the concept of minor literature as it is initially defined. Deleuze and Guattari certainly recognize the necessity for minoritized groups to reclaim “their own organism, their own history, their own

subjectivity” by organizing themselves in objectively or strategically definable states with their own ghetto territorialities (2004/a, 304). Nevertheless, they give priority not to a state or aggregate of minority but to a form and process of becoming-minor in which, for example, “Even Jews must become Jewish” (ibid., 321). For Kafka, the primacy of writing “signifies only one thing: not a form of literature alone, [but] a unity with desire, beyond laws, states, regimes” (1986, 41-42). Following Deleuze and Guattari’s suggestion that becoming-Jewish provides an entry to Kafka to becoming-minor in his novels and short stories, this project argues that becoming-homosexual provides an equivalent entry to becoming-minor more generally for Isherwood. In the UK novels, his characters are trapped in a Freudian impasse constituted by oedipal relationships; in the *Berlin Stories*, they become minor sexually, socially, ethnically, while his writing is discovering a new means of expression in a form of comedic camp; in the US, his characters become refugees, pacifists, and religious and sexual minorities and the style has become something in the order of Quaker-camp and Vedantist-camp. Like Kafka, the example of Isherwood demonstrates that it is not *being of* a minority but *becoming through* minority which is of importance and which has much wider implications for society as a whole. “Ours is becoming the age of minorities” (2004/a, 518), Deleuze and Guattari declare, in the sense that minorities are “crystals of becoming whose value is to trigger uncontrollable movements and deterritorializations of the mean or majority” (ibid., 117). That “[t]here is nothing that is major or revolutionary except the minor” (1986, 26) indicates paradoxically that their revaluation of minority is not intended as a reterritorialization in the sense of the formulation of another standard. Instead, minority becomes the medium, indeed it is “only a minority which is capable of serving as the active medium of becoming”, and the deterritorialization of standards, so that the example of becoming-Jewish necessarily affects the non-Jew as much as it does the Jew (2004/a, 321).

In *Kafka*, Deleuze and Guattari ascribe to minor literature three defining characteristics. The first is that language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization and is accordingly appropriate for “strange and minor uses” (16-17). They argue that the German of Prague, which is located at a remove from the mainstream as an island language in Bohemia, is already affected by deterritorialization; it is further affected by deterritorialization in that it is used by a writer who is himself deterritorialized in terms of his relation of minority to the majority users of the language. In either case, Kafka takes the language even further in the direction of deterritorialization with an intensity opposed to “all symbolic or even significant or simply

signifying usages of it” (19). Unlike the German of Prague, the English of London and Cambridge is massively and unequivocally territorialized in the social, cultural, and political centers of the British Empire. Nevertheless, it is affected by deterritorialization in Isherwood’s relation of sexual minority to the majority users of the language. It is further affected by deterritorialization when Isherwood takes it literally to Berlin, a cultural antagonist, and Los Angeles, a cultural alternative, where he can take possession of the language and, like Kafka, take it even further in the direction of deterritorialization by experimenting with it in content and expression. If the problem of writing in a major language is an obvious concern for ethnic minorities in Prague or sexual minorities in London, it is also a “problem for all of us”, who “no longer, or not yet, even know their own and know poorly the major language that they are forced to serve” (ibid.). For these, as much as for Kafka and Isherwood, there is a possibility of becoming a “sort of stranger *within* [their] own language” by way of a minor and “intensive utilization that makes it take flight along creative lines of escape” (26). For the writer who was born in the country of a great literature and must write in its language, there is the opportunity to discover “[their] own *patois*, [their] own third world, [their] own desert” (18), by exploiting points of underdevelopment in the language, activating its polylingual potentialities, or opposing its oppressed to its oppressive qualities (26-27).

The deterritorialization of a major language relates to the second characteristic of minor literature, which is that everything in it is political (17). Disengaging the two terms of their concept, Deleuze and Guattari explain that the term ‘minor’ in itself no longer designates specific literatures, by which is implied the literatures of recognizable minorities, but the “revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature” (18). It is only the setting up of a minor practice from within a major literature which allows one to define a minor literature. The onus for the writer is to “hate all languages of masters” (26), and, through the medium of minority, to “tear a minor literature away from its own language, allowing it to challenge the language and making it follow a sober revolutionary path” (19). This second characteristic is related to the third characteristic of minor literature, which is that everything in it assumes a collective value (ibid.). The political and the collective are interconnected, indeed difficult to dissociate, in that “what each author says individually already constitutes a common action, and what he or she says or does is necessarily political” (ibid.). Minor literature produces an “active solidarity in spite of skepticism” and, if the writer is in the margins or completely outside of their fragile community, this allows them “all the more the possibility to express another

possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility” (17). Ultimately, in becoming ‘Jewish’, Kafka clears a path through the politics of deterritorialization to write on behalf of alternatives to the bourgeoisie of Prague and to the mandating and bureaucratic classes of the Habsburg Empire. Similarly, in becoming ‘homosexual’, Isherwood writes through his sexual minority on behalf of an implied minor community. This connects to other minor communities of women, workers, pacifists, Jews, Quakers, and Vedantists, which converge and proliferate toward becoming imperceptible as pure difference. Through the becoming-minor of his writing, Isherwood offers an alternative not only to the great, state, or established literature in the English of London and Cambridge but to the territorialization of majoritarian identity *par excellence*, being the ‘imagined political community’ of the nation or nation-state which corresponds to such a literature.

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Having appeared in the aftermath of decolonization by European powers and the civil rights movements in the US, the concept of minor literature was addressed in a limited number of studies in the 1980s-90s, which include *‘A White Heron’ and the Question of Minor Literature* (1984) by Louis A. Renza, on provincial writing; *‘Amour bilingue de Khatibi’* (1987) by Réda Bensmaïa, on bilingualism in postcolonial writing; and *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse* (1990), edited by Abdul R. JanMohamed and David Lloyd, which aims to present a “theoretical articulation of the political and cultural structures that connect different minority cultures in their subjugation and opposition to the dominant culture” (ix). In a short article published in 1994, Thomas Yingling notes that the persistent association of same-sex desire with immaturity and arrested development continues to affect critical positions toward certain writers, who are regarded as ‘minor’, in the sense of ‘insignificant’, on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. In response to this, he suggests that they consider themselves as ‘minor’ writers in order to strategically revalue such a designation. A more recent article by David Bergman, ‘Do We Need Gay Literature?’ (2010), proposes ‘minor’ literature as a framework within which to consider writers of sexual minority and as a means to revitalize the concept of ‘gay’ literature. Despite an arguably reductive identification of the minor with provincial, postcolonial, and minority literatures, that each of these publications adopts the concept of minor literature from a different perspective only highlights its versatility. For Seyhan, it is indeed no surprise that such versatility has assured it renewed interest as a “blueprint for many critics in their reading of non[-

]territorial, transnational, diasporic literatures” (27). As such, the concept provides a theoretical framework which allows the critic or scholar to make visible works of literature which, in processes of selection and canonization, have been considered to be of ‘minor’ value in comparison with the ‘major’ works of state, national, or territorialized literatures. Deleuze and Guattari’s concept also resonates with Appadurai’s observation that, as deterritorialization gathers pace under conditions of mass migration and mediation, a variety of imagined communities is being formed which are generating, in turn, “new kinds of politics [and] new kinds of collective expression” (54).

*The Isherwood Century* (2001) by Berg and Freeman includes an article by Stephen da Silva, ‘Strategically Minor: Isherwood’s Revision of Forster’s Mythology’, which develops Yingling’s suggestion that critics consider writers of sexual minority as minor writers. Da Silva argues that, while Forster and Isherwood are often categorized as minor in the double sense of ‘immature’ and ‘insignificant’, their work can reveal “versions of the subversive strategy articulated by Yingling” (189). According to him, Forster challenges the minor designation by reinscribing and inverting it in his short stories through an association of same-sex desire with “youthfulness or its recovery” in movements back in time or to non-Western spaces (ibid.). Isherwood draws on this mythology in his representations of Forster in his memoirs and novels, which depend on a “romantic inversion of developmental logic”, in which the elder writer is associated with eternal youth in spirit and appearance (191). Isherwood also devises his own narrative strategies, for example in the novel *Down There on a Visit* (1962), in which an older and wiser narrator declines to dismiss the identity and experiences of his younger self, in an acknowledgement of the “otherness of immature homosexuality” (191-92). In Forster’s and Isherwood’s respective work, same-sex desire is “often associated with an ironic distance from humanist conceptions of the self” (192). Continuing Yingling’s argument, Da Silva connects the designation of minor to social minority, arguing that its subversive potential lies in the challenge it poses to the “fetishized valuation of identity” and the “arrogant conception of the self” which it is the tendency of the majority to enjoy (ibid.). The importance of Da Silva’s essay is noted in *Queer Times* (2006) by Carr, who develops his argument that “canonical values are informed by certain complacent assumptions about identity” (ibid.), and that the understanding of same-sex desire as ‘immature’ can be related to the “minoritization of queer writers” within literary histories of the twentieth century (18). Reiterating Da Silva’s argument that writers of sexual minority can

identify with the minor position strategically, for “antihomophobic purposes” (Da Silva, 194; Carr, 21), she concludes by calling for a shift in the focus of Isherwood scholarship toward historical readings in which the writer is “credited, rightly, with, at the very least, critiquing identificatory practices” (21).

Despite the appeal of the minor, neither Carr nor Da Silva pursues the full theoretical implications of the concept of minor literature. Noting that “[m]oving from ethnicity and nationality to sexuality poses certain problems”, Da Silva warns that the association of the term with specific minority identities makes it problematic to include Forster and Isherwood within its scope (193). These writers might be regarded as minor in the context of a homophobic culture but, because of their class and nationality, cannot be considered as anything other than major in relation to the objects of their desire, namely colonial men of color and cash-strapped youths in a defeated Germany. As is the case with nomadism generally, the incongruity of privilege and marginality is often noted in critical assessments. Accusing Deleuze and Guattari of a form of “theoretical tourism”, Caren Kaplan claims that their concept fails to appreciate how oppositional consciousness arises out of the lived experience of material oppression, that becoming minor makes sense only to the major, dominant, or powerful, and that deterritorialization is always “reterritorialization, an increase of territory, an imperialization” (1987, 191; 1996, 88-89). A related criticism is that the concept of minor literature conflates at least three distinct categories: minor literature, minority literature, and the type of experimental literature which ‘minorizes’ a major language by means of formal or thematic innovation (Bogue, 105). Because the concept “falls short of offering a satisfactory range of reading strategies”, Seyhan looks to alternative frameworks which do not elide the “specificity of cultures and the heterogeneity of non[-]national literatures” (29). Furthermore, although she commends Deleuze and Guattari for attempting to establish an historical context for works of literature which challenge the limits of genre, language, and nationality, she argues that they “abstract the theory away from a genuine encounter” with the life and work of Kafka (27-28). This claim is reasonable, for it cannot be denied that their representation of the writer depends on a substantial *misrepresentation* of his diary entry of December 25th, 1911, on the subject of *kleiner Literaturen*. It is certainly an exaggeration to discover a “political program” on the basis of this slight text, as well as disingenuous of them to represent Kafka as the exemplar of a “revolutionary machine-to-come” (1986, 17-18).

What the concept of minor literature achieves is to offer a revaluation of the category of ‘minor’. This has a dual application or a potential double effect. Firstly, it offers a means to save certain writers, such as Kafka, from being commandeered as ‘major’ and made to serve majoritarian standards; secondly, it offers a means to save certain other writers, such as Isherwood, from being demeaned as ‘minor’ and confined to the margins of a State literature. Longtime Deleuze and Guattari commentator Ronald Bogue argues that Deleuze’s approach to philosophy is one of ‘constructionism’, or the invention of concepts on the basis that what is important is not whether a statement is true or false, but whether it is relevant, interesting, and innovative (100-01). In engaging with the work of artists, scientists, and other philosophers, Deleuze’s orientation is not to criticize, interpret, or represent their work but to think alongside it through the medium of a philosophical analogue (115). In keeping with this, Deleuze and Guattari undertake what Bensmaïa, in his foreword to *Kafka*, calls an “experimentation of Kafka” (xiii), which might be regarded as a creative construction, the truth value of which is pragmatic rather than essential. As such, it aims to foreground and develop a “*politics* of Kafka” (x), in order to provide a model or ‘rallying point’ for writing practices which are typically marginalized among the categories of what is institutionally regarded as ‘Literature’ (xiv). As their translator Dana Polan argues, it also serves as a heuristic model of reading practices by the ‘deterritorializing critic’ (xxv). In response to criticism that the concept conflates several categories of writing, Bogue argues that its ‘syncretism’ allows a possibility of congruity between minority and experimental literatures which encourages a politicization of the latter while exploding the essentialization and marginalization of the former. In his view, Kaplan’s criticism does not fully acknowledge the presuppositions of the concept, which necessitate the syncretism which she opposes, and has the effect of reinstating the conventional distinction between majority and minority (106). In fact, Kaplan herself concedes that “[t]he issue is positionality”, concluding that the importance of the concept lies precisely in the movement between major and minor and its dismantling of notions of center, canon, and value (1987, 188-89).

The importance of what she refers to as the ‘dynamics of major and minor’ is also recognized by Lukić, who notes that the concept of minor literature is subversive of canonized values, makes possible a relation but not equation of minor and minority literatures, and is not necessarily concerned with ethnic identity, which can be “only one of numerous elements that come into play” (40). In moving toward a concept of minor transnational literature, Lukić refers



to the ‘minor transnationalism’ of Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih (41). Despite borrowing the term ‘minor’ directly from Deleuze and Guattari, Lionnet & Shih oppose ‘minor transnational subjects’, who are committed to their social contexts, and ‘nomadic subjects’, who operate “as if they are free-floating signifiers without [...] investment in one or more given particular geopolitical spaces” (8). The concept of minor literature is dismissed by them for “falling back into a recentered model”, in which the significance of the minor depends on its critical function in a binary and vertical relationship with the major (2). Here, they miss the point of becoming-minor, on the part of both minor and major, and that a dualism of models is strategically employed by Deleuze and Guattari “only in order to arrive at a process that challenges all models” (2004/a, 22). Despite their resistance to dualism, Lionnet & Shih position minority in a conventional relation with majority which, if it is side-stepped in favor of “lateral and non-hierarchical network structures” which are maintained among minoritized cultures both within and across national borders (2), is nonetheless implicit in their model. ‘Minor transnationalism’ remains a useful term and the suggestive title of Lionnet & Shih’s introduction, ‘Thinking through the Minor, Transnationally’ indicates the possibility of a deeper engagement with Deleuze and Guattari which adapts the ‘dynamics of major and minor’ to the particular concerns of transnationalism. In the case of this particular project, ‘minor transnationalism’ is used to designate a critical methodology and theoretical framework, according to which the concept of minor literature is applied from a transnational perspective to the writing of Isherwood’s *Wanderjahren*. This is a body of work which is deterritorialized, politicized, and imaginative of alternative communities within the UK, the US, and Germany during five decades of the twentieth century.

## Conclusion

As a writer whose career can be broadly divided among periods in the UK, the US, and Germany and whose writing is both a reflection and exploration of his senses of identity and selfhood in these various locations, Isherwood can certainly benefit from the application of a transnational perspective. This project considers the writer as a ‘singular nomad’ during his *Wanderjahren*, or years of wandering, between when he moved from London to Berlin and until such time as he felt settled in Santa Monica, California. Nomadism provides a means to conceptualize Isherwood’s movements between major and minor, while avoiding generalizations by taking into account all of the conditions which apply in his individual case. This is one of a native-born, upper-class Englishman, whose entry to becoming minor is ‘becoming-homosexual’, or becoming-minor sexually, which enacts a micro-politics of desire, in this case both by deterritorializing the heterosexual standard and by resisting the molar ‘homosexual’ in favor of a micro- or molecular homosexuality. A theoretical framework of ‘minor transnationalism’ provides a means to address the writing of the *Wanderjahren*, which consists of several novels and novellas set in the UK, the US, and Germany and published from the 1920s-60s. Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of minor literature allows this work to be approached and revalued outside the framework of national literature. In regard to analysis, the concept enables consideration of how the English of London and Cambridge is deterritorialized in Berlin and Los Angeles, where Isherwood takes possession of the language and takes it even further in the direction of deterritorialization by experimenting with it by means of content and expression. The becoming-minor of his writing connects to politics and offers an alternative not only to the great, state, or established literatures in the English language but to the ‘imagined political communities’ of the nations or nation-states which correspond to them. Ultimately, ‘minor transnationalism’ enables a revaluation of Isherwood’s status as a ‘minor’ writer without having recourse to majoritarian standards of what a ‘major’ writer should be.

## Section II: Isherwood in the UK (1920s)

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### Introduction

In the ‘Afterword’ to *Kathleen and Frank* (1971), Isherwood explains that, after his father had been killed in the Great War, he became the “Orphan of a Dead Hero”, who was obliged by the ‘Others’ to be worthy of his “Hero-Father” and his “Holy Widow-Mother” (356-59). As he grew to maturity, he became a “young man of the Freudian Twenties” (359). Having lost all sympathy for his parents, he denied his need for an anti-heroic father-figure and accepted his mother only as an opponent necessary to save him from becoming a “mother’s boy, a churchgoer, an academic, a conservative, a patriot and a respectable citizen” (357-61). Rejecting her ambitions for his career and family life, he determined to become an artist and “defiantly told her he was homosexual” (361). He also rejected her “peculiarly feminine patriotism”, which “disgusted him with England, the Motherland, thus causing him to be attracted to Germany, the Fatherland which had killed the Hero-Father” (ibid.). Isherwood’s ‘Afterword’ recalls a crisis of identity in which he rejected the subject positions prescribed by family, class, and nation. In Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, his rejection signifies a nomadic movement of deterritorialization, motivated by his desire to become an artist and to become ‘homosexual’, in the sense of becoming-minor sexually, which was realized in a literal deterritorialization from his home country to that of the national rival and enemy. This movement is reflected in *All the Conspirators* (1928), his first published novel, and *The Memorial* (1932), which he wrote in two stages, prior and subsequent to his move to Berlin in 1929. It is also reflected in *Lions and Shadows: An Education in the Twenties* (1938), which Isherwood denies the status of ‘true’ autobiography and recommends that it be read “as a novel” (7). Published between the first and second novellas of the *Berlin Stories*, this unique work connects the fiction of the 1920s and the 1930s and provides some background to the motivations of Isherwood, his earlier characters, and his later namesake narrator, Bradshaw-Isherwood.

*All the Conspirators* and *The Memorial* are read rarely and mostly in critical biographies as illustrations of Isherwood’s unresolved relationship with his parents. Section II returns to these early novels as integral parts of his oeuvre, which are worthy of critical attention in regard not only to his biography but to his exploration and resolution of issues of family, class, and nation in connection with his desires to become an artist and to become minor sexually. It also addresses

Isherwood's engagement with Freud, which, despite being reiterated in several of his forewords and lectures and, also perhaps, because of the lack of theoretical substance he gives to his stated claims, is rarely mentioned and has never been adequately addressed in criticism. In *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), Deleuze and Guattari take Freud to task for identifying desire only to repress and channel it in directions which are acceptable to bourgeois society: "once Oedipus entered the picture, [...] a classical theater was substituted for the unconscious as a factory; [...] an unconscious that was capable of nothing but expressing itself – in myth, tragedy, dreams – was substituted for the productive unconscious" (25). *Kafka* (1975) partakes of the same project to critique the collusion of capitalism and psychoanalysis. Before making any attempt to define a minor literature, Deleuze and Guattari begin with an analysis of Kafka's 'Letter to the Father' (1919), which moves from a "classic Oedipus of the neurotic sort, where the beloved father is hated, accused, and declared to be guilty, to a much more perverse Oedipus who falls for the hypothesis of the father's innocence, of a 'distress' shared by father and son alike" (9). What is suggested by them is that Kafka, even as he appears to accept it, exposes the social forces which lie behind the myth, the propagation of which is designed to repress the desires of son and father alike. Following this example, Section II makes a similar anti-oedipal move as the necessary first stage in mapping Isherwood's own motion toward a minor literature.

Chapter 1 reads *Lions and Shadows* as a description of Isherwood's failure to become a successful novelist in the 1920s. This can be attributed to his entanglement of an Oedipus complex with a 'War' complex, which signifies a 'Test' of his courage and maturity and, by implication, of his loyalty to family, class, and nation. Isherwood's novels of the period are read as demonstrations of these complexes and how they are surmounted by him. Deleuze and Guattari argue that Kafka's 'Letter' achieves a "blowup", "comic amplification", or "exaggeration of [Oedipus] to the point of absurdity [...] Deterritorializing Oedipus into the world instead of reterritorializing everything in Oedipus and the family" (10-11). This results in the double discovery behind the family triangle of "other infinitely more active triangles from which the family itself borrows its own power, its own drive to propagate submission", as well as the "possibility of an escape, a line of escape" (11-12). *All the Conspirators* makes similar discoveries in the story of Philip, whose failure to follow such lines and to realize his ambition to become an artist demonstrates the futility of psychoanalysis as a philosophy of inaction and self-defeat. Chapter 2 examines *The Memorial*, which addresses the social effects of the Great War through various members of the Vernon family.

Isherwood gives expression to his personal 'War' complex through the characters of Eric Vernon and Edward Blake, who are introduced as 'Truly Weak Men' in the sense that they constantly repress their desires and anxieties in order to pass the 'Test'. Whereas Eric remains trapped in a cycle of rebellion and reterritorialization, Edward discovers a nomadic line of escape in Berlin, where he abandons psychoanalysis and resolves his complexes by finding a male, working-class, German lover. The novels reflect not only an expression but the resolution of Isherwood's Oedipus and 'War' complexes through an absolute deterritorialization from family, class, and nation, which allow him to realize his ambitions in the conduct of his life and in his life as a writer.

## II.1. Oedipal Maneuvers: *Lions and Shadows* (1938) & *All the Conspirators* (1928)

By 1938, Isherwood had already reached a career peak and was being courted and celebrated as a major contemporary English writer. He was associated with the highly influential Bloomsbury Group, was being published by Leonard and Virginia Woolf's Hogarth Press, and was close friends and collaborators with E. M. Forster and W. H. Auden, the most highly regarded writers of the pre-war and inter-war generations. In his memoirs of the 1930s, Isherwood recalls an invitation to a dinner party at the home of Lady Sibyl Colefax, an eminent society hostess, whose guests included W. Somerset Maugham and Virginia Woolf, then the leading popular and avant-garde writers, respectively. Woolf noted in her journal that Isherwood was a "slip of a wild boy: with quicksilver eyes: nipped: jockeylike" and that, according to Maugham, he "holds the future of the English novel in his hands" (295). As well as among fellow writers, Isherwood had established a solid reputation among prominent critics. In *Enemies of Promise* (1938), Cyril Connolly hails him as a "hope of English fiction" and commends his leadership of a movement of "[r]ealism, simplicity, [and] the colloquial style", which has otherwise fallen to a broader and "more anonymous strata, to the offices, the studios and the novelist's week-end cottages where is produced the great bulk of present-day commercial writing" (73-74). Connolly's distinction of such levels is based on class prejudice as much as it is on any appreciation of talent. From another perspective, Isherwood had avoided such pitfalls more practically, by spending the decade of the 1930s in mainland Europe, where he might well have had other plans than to be defined within the limits of contemporary national literature. Having lived in Berlin from November 1929 until May 1933, he paid only brief visits to his native country as he moved through Greece, France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland, and Denmark before accompanying Auden on a six-month tour of East Asia to report on the Sino-Japanese War. In March 1938, while he was traveling in China, Isherwood effectively drew a line under his period as a writer of 'English fiction' or the 'English novel' with the publication of *Lions and Shadows, An Education in the Twenties*, a unique novel-cum-autobiography he had completed in Brussels the previous year.

As Isherwood explains in his foreword, 'To the Reader', *Lions and Shadows* describes the "first stages in a lifelong education – the education of a novelist" (7). Although it has been read as a "*Künstlerroman*, retracing his journey from apprenticeship to artistic maturity" (Kamel, 163), Wilde argues that its tone is consistently ironic and deflationary, rendering it the "most

unpretentious exhibit in the vast gallery of Romantic and post-Romantic works that chart the development of the artist as a young man” (1971, 13). *Lions and Shadows* shares more with *Enemies of Promise* than its year of publication. Connolly’s book is another unique form of autobiography, combining an assessment of contemporary literature, an examination of factors which adversely affect a writer’s chances of success, and a personal history of his education at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford, among its three parts. What unites these parts is his attempt to understand the reasons for his failure to produce a major work of literature. Isherwood’s book is also a description of failure. The account of his education begins in the early 1920s at public school, where he decides that he “want[s] to be a writer” and finds encouragement from his fellow pupils and aspiring writers, Chalmers and Linsley (46). At Cambridge, he collaborates with Chalmers on the secretive ‘Mortmere’ project but completes his first novel while knowing, “in [his] heart, that it was no good” (118). In 1925, he drops out of college and moves in with his family in London, where he earns some pocket money as a private tutor and casual secretary to Monsieur Cheuret, an Anglo-Belgian violinist. Beginning a new novel on the life of the Cheuret family, he soon comes to realize that this too “wasn’t much good” (173). The following year, a third novel, concerning the “squabbles of a middle-class family” (262), is declined by two well-known publishers. In 1927, he produces a revised version of this novel, then “potter[s] about unhappily, writing nothing” (261) until the New Year, when it is unexpectedly accepted by Jonathan Cape. Although *All the Conspirators* is published in May 1928, Isherwood is disappointed by its poor sales and lackluster reviews, and is finally convinced that his writing is a “flop, a declared failure in the open market” (288).

Like *Enemies of Promise*, *Lions and Shadows* is less a description of the “problems of a would-be writer” in England in the 1920s than a testament of how another ‘hope of English fiction’ failed to live up to his own expectations (7). Whereas Connolly assumes failure and frames his account accordingly, Isherwood concludes with failure and leaves only a general impression that this has had much to do, as he explains in his foreword, with being a “young man living at a certain period in a certain European country, [who] is subjected to a certain kind of environment, certain stimuli, [and] certain influences” (ibid.). That the roots of his failure lie in family, class, and nation is further indicated when Isherwood mentions that he had been “emotionally messed about” by his masters at preparatory school, who subjected him to “every sort of dishonest cant about loyalty, selfishness, patriotism, playing the game and dishonouring the dead” during the Great War (13).

At Cambridge, he admits that he has become obsessed by the idea of ‘War’, which, in a neurotic sense, signifies a ‘Test’, in which he “dreaded failure so much – indeed, [he] was so certain that [he] *should* fail – that, consciously, [he] denied [his] longing to be tested, altogether” (76). This denial results in dropping out, initially from life at college, then from college itself, then from his social class, when he retreats into fantasies of artistic isolation and entertains the idea that he and his circle of friends form a “proudly self-sufficient, consciously declassed minority” (247). Nevertheless, he questions if anyone can feel sincerely comfortable with the prospect of being a “social misfit, for the rest of his life” (ibid.) and comes to the conclusion that, however much he might try to persuade himself to the contrary, what he really wants is to find “some place, no matter how humble, in the scheme of society” (ibid.). Achieving such a goal requires that he confront his ‘War’ complex both in his life and in his writing. Otherwise, this “will never be any good” (ibid.), or, as he explains in the case of his unpublished fiction, might have avoided becoming a “curiosity for the psycho-analyst and become, instead, a genuine, perhaps a valuable, work of art” (75).

In discussing the relations between his neurosis and his writing, Isherwood shifts between speaking for himself and on behalf of his “great army of colleagues” (74), while noting that he has recorded his symptoms as a “modest exhibit in the vast freak museum of our neurotic generation” (217). Although this generalization is evident in his presentation of his friends, who are all personally and vocationally insecure to some extent, it cannot be denied that none of them shares or even recognizes his ‘War’ complex. Isherwood explicitly avoids the topic with Chalmers, who he assumes would regard the idea of the ‘Test’ as “amusingly neurotic or just meaningless” (79). If Linsley “understood perfectly”, the reader is inconsequentially informed that the reason he performs rigorous physical exercises is that he is “terribly concerned at the prospect of becoming fat” (93). Despite their insecurities, each of his friends manages to successfully find his way in life as well as in his writing. Although Chalmers is by temperament a “natural anarchist, a born romantic revolutionary” (18), he graduates successfully from Cambridge, having transferred from History to English, and goes to work as a private tutor while continuing to write in his spare time. Linsley, a social climber whose ambition is to become a “brilliantly successful society novelist and man-about-town”, enters medical school, where he applies himself to his studies while continuing to write novels with “astonishing ease and speed, [...] hardly ever erasing a word” (91-92). Later, during his phase of artistic isolation, Isherwood envies him, that “amazing social amphibian”, for being the one who “truly understood ‘the English’; it was [Linsley], not [him]self,



whom nature had equipped to be their novelist” (248). Toward the conclusion of *Lions and Shadows*, Isherwood has a vision of his friend as both a successful surgeon and a bestselling novelist whose books are displayed in shop windows (310). He also predicts that Chalmers will spend three years trying to relate his fiction to the social problems of the real world before discovering a means to this end in the philosophies of Marx and Lenin (274). Between these two extremes, Isherwood fails to find his feet and soon begins to wonder if he is not a “total misfit, a hundred per cent. incompetent” (288).

What distinguishes him from his friends is surely “Isherwood’s sexuality and its importance for the self-identity he had to put together before finding the freedom to write” (Wade, 20). There are hints of this in *Lions and Shadows*, the very title of which contains a private reference to something buried deep within himself, “something which made [him] feel excited and obscurely ashamed” (75). Although Isherwood attributes this to his ‘War’ complex, it is significant that the associated ‘Test’ is not only one of courage and maturity but also one of “sexual prowess”, which is related by him to a question of gender and sexual identity: “Are you really a Man?” (76). For Isherwood and his friends, an education in the 1920s also involves a discovery of sexuality and its relation to the social. Linsley recounts his failures with women, lamenting that he was “born to be a cuckold” (93); Chalmers, meanwhile, is “sexually unsatisfied and lonely: he wanted a woman with whom he could fall in love” (120). Isherwood is unhappy too, only “less consciously so because, being in a much more complex psychological mess [...], [he] had evolved a fairly efficient system of censorships and compensations” (120). As well as daydreaming of a heroic school career, in which he struggles against “moral rottenness, grimly repressing his own romantic feelings towards a younger boy, and finally [...] passing the test, emerging – a Man”, he develops a taste for pursuits which he ironically brands “homosexual romanticism”, such as reading adventure stories, exercising with a chest-expander, and impressing the college hearties by riding a motor-bicycle (77-78). In 1925, the evolution of this system is compromised by an intellectual discovery of Freud (121). The following year, he befriends Hugh Weston, a former school fellow, who regards sex with “simplicity and utter lack of inhibition” (195), while also being well-versed in “scientific, medical and psycho-analytical jargon” gathered from his readings of Freud, Carl Jung, W. H. R. Rivers, and Ernst Kretschmer (191). As an “analyst-patient relationship” develops between them (217), Isherwood is compelled to confront his secret sexual anxieties and, although

he remains coy about the exact nature of the complexes which his friend manages to reveal, he writes of his “relief to have spoken the words aloud” (195).

Isherwood’s discovery of his sexuality through psychoanalysis was as unfortunate as it was perhaps inevitable in the 1920s. As Deleuze and Guattari argue throughout their writing, Freud identifies desire only to repress it within a modern mythology of the bourgeois family; in Isherwood’s case, this ensured that his ‘War’ complex became only more and more entangled in an Oedipus complex. As Izzo suggests, the dead heroes of the Great War were also martyred fathers and the constant source of a “latent, or not-so-latent, sense of guilt by comparison”, which produced “profound psychological insecurity that was magnified by widowed, possessive mothers who were intent on dominating their sons” (2001, xvii). Isherwood does not tell the full story of his encounter with Freud in *Lions and Shadows*. As Finney notes, the book contains some “glaring omissions, the most obvious of which are the absence of sex and of his relations with his mother and family” (131). Isherwood discusses the affairs of his friends but does not mention any of his own; his father is not at all mentioned; his mother, with whom he lived after dropping out of Cambridge, is referred to only once, in an aside on “my female relative” (179). According to Wade, Isherwood’s more ostensibly fictional work provides “alternative ways of textualizing these issues, and it was a natural and important part of his instinctively-felt themes in the early books” (20). The following examines how Freudian themes play out in the one novel he managed to publish while living in England. According to Bantock, *All the Conspirators* “reveals the sort of world [which is] implicit in the autobiography” (49). If this is a world of neurosis, repression, and failure, it is also one of attempted lines of escape. As Deleuze and Guattari argue in the case of Kafka’s ‘Letter to the Father’ (1919), the novel achieves an “exaggeration of [Oedipus] to the point of absurdity”, resulting in the discovery behind the family triangle of “other infinitely more active triangles from which the family itself borrows its own power”, as well as the “possibility of an escape, a line of escape” (10-12). This is an anti-oedipal work which, despite its fascination with Freud, demonstrates the futility of psychoanalysis as a philosophy of inaction and self-defeat.

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*All the Conspirators* stands the *Künstlerroman* on its head, presenting a protagonist who “neither learns nor develops. Instead, he retrogresses, with decreasing awareness [to] a state of passive and ludicrous defeat” (Wilde 1971, 32). The novel opens on the Isles of Scilly from the alternating perspectives of two young men: Allen Chalmers, a medical student, and his friend, Philip Lindsay,

who has quit his job as a clerk with an insurance firm in the City. Philip might be regarded as a composite of Isherwood's associates, Chalmers and Linsley, whose names, circumstances, and characteristics have been modified. Like Linsley, he is at the lower end of the upper-middle-class spectrum, having missed out on public school and the opportunities of a university career due to ill health. Now, he is "going to write and paint" and is "prepared to run this on strictly commercial lines" by selling his pictures and placing his stories and articles with magazines (39-40). Like Chalmers, he is also idealistic and feels something of an artistic vocation. In exploring "obvious" subjects from the perspective of "so-called uninteresting and ordinary people", he aims to "extract something from *them*" and discover "more *genuine* forms of life" (15-16), while hoping to achieve "something that [he is] some good at, or believe[s he is]. Otherwise, nothing has any meaning" (41). While he explains all of this, Philip speaks with a "self-satirical tone" which is nonetheless strained, making it difficult to decide how seriously to regard his statements of artistic intent (15). His dropout status, *déclassé* attitude, and general lack of direction suggest a semi-satirical, semi-autobiographical portrait of the artist, one which draws toward the same conclusion of failure as Isherwood's. Despite his aspirations, Philip spends his time and energy struggling against becoming the kind of weekend writer which is despised by Connolly and, in the end, continues to live at home with his mother, Dorothy, and her lodger, Mary Durrant, who manage his affairs by having his watercolors sold at local bazaars and his poetry entered in newspaper competitions. As Finney suggests, the novel is an "anti-heroic *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in which a pseudo-artist [...] is outmanoeuvred by his mother's superior use of the modern artist's defences, [i.e.,] silence and cunning" (70).

According to Wade, the focus of *All the Conspirators* is "oppositions in proximity" (25), the main instance of which involves Philip, who is struggling to assert his independence, and Dorothy, who is determined to assert her influence and authority in order to have him securely established in a respectable social position. In his 1939 introduction to the novel, Connolly notes that this is Isherwood's first engagement with a "dominant theme of his work, the Evil Mother, fierce, obstinate, tearful, and conventional, who destroys her son" (qtd. Piazza, 29). Clearly related to Isherwood's absent "female relative" and to his actual mother, Kathleen, who also lost her husband in the Great War, the 'Evil Mother' is a reflection of one party in a fraught relationship which, in Isherwood's case, was at its worst while he was writing the novel, when his mother was disappointed with the end of her son's academic career and concerned about his lack of direction

and failure to pursue a professional career (Schwerdt, 22). Although the relationship between Philip and Dorothy reflects Isherwood's personal circumstances, it is presented by him as representative of the child-parent relationships of the generation which came of age in the 1920s. In his 1958 foreword to the novel, Isherwood refers to their conflict as a "minor engagement in what Shelley calls 'the great war between the old and young'" (92), which is to say, a localized instance of a more general conflict between successive generations. Comparing the generation gap of the 1920s with that of the 1950s, he suggests that, although he was certainly angry as a young man, his anger had a different frame of reference from that of the proverbial 'angry young man' of the later decade. Whereas the generation defined by John Osborne's drama, *Look Back in Anger* (1956), is "angry with Society and its official representatives", Isherwood's generation was "angry with the Family and its official representatives" (91-92). As Wilde notes, *All the Conspirators* is the angriest of his novels, a "gesture of defiance on the part of its younger characters and its author", the chief target of which is Dorothy, as "widow, matriarch, and survivor of a dead (or deadening) Edwardian world[, who...] symbolizes all that is worst in the Family" (1971, 27).

In his Berkeley lectures, Isherwood explains that he was writing in the context of the "Freudian revolution which had just hit England with tremendous force", and the news that their parents were "responsible for absolutely everything" (Isherwood & Summers, 150). Although he does not go into detail on this point, it can be assumed that the 'everything' for which they are responsible refers to the neuroses of their children, which are the consequence of a repression of desire in the course of their psychosexual development. In any case, as Isherwood puts it succinctly, it was "all their fault, and we would never, never forgive" (ibid.). In *All the Conspirators*, when Philip explains to Dorothy that he cannot return to the office, she suspects that there is something more, and presses the point, insisting on the privileges of their relationship: "Is that all? [...] Are you quite sure? [...] There isn't - anything else, is there? I'm your mother, Philip. I think I've a right to know" (44). Puzzled by her eagerness, Philip wonders, "Would she have preferred that to this? The definite to the indefinite? At least, then, the situation would have been plainer" (ibid.). The ambiguity of this and other exchanges has led some critics to discern a reference to homosexuality (Schwerdt, 31; Izzo 2001, 68). More relevant in this case and in Philip's relationship with his mother more generally is the repression and oedipalization of his desire. When Philip returns home from Land's End, he finds that Dorothy is waiting for him on the landing of the stairs. Feeling suddenly exhausted, he regards her "stupidly, intently, confused

by irrelevant memories, associations suggested by the stair-carpet”; “I’m being hypnotized”, he thinks to himself, while experiencing a “queer atrophy of the will” and responding to her presence like a “half-scared insolent school-boy” (43-44). Seduced, smothered, and confined to the family home, he later considers that his only hope of escape is to “shoot [him]self or have a nervous breakdown” (82). Alternatively, while entertaining a fantasy of Mary Durrant as “Mistress of the house; in Dorothy’s chair”, he can think only of substituting one perverse form of repressed desire for another: “A proposal of marriage. What a gesture. Spectacular as incest. [...] It’d kill Mother” (86).

That Philip is not alone in this morbid relationship with his mother is suggested in an arresting image, which follows their confrontation on the stairs: “Pale among Edwardian cretonnes, Mrs Lindsay sat at the inlaid bureau, her husband’s wedding present, reckoning domestic accounts with inflamed eyes, by a failing light” (45). According to Izzo, this contains all the elements of the novel’s thematics: “the son needs to test himself and establish his own identity apart from his mother, his dead father, and the past. The mother resists, wanting the son to cling to her and preserve the past as represented by the husband she has lost” (2001, 68). Dorothy appeals to her late husband as a resource with which to manipulate Philip, reasoning with him that his father “always hoped that [he] would make a position for [him]self in the world” (50). She also resorts to Mr. Langbridge, an old friend of her husband’s, who positions himself “in loco parentis” and represents a far more imminent and formidable threat (53). Philip is not nearly as anxious about his mother’s reaction to his resignation from work as he is about Mr. Langbridge’s, the mere mention of whose name by his mother is a case of her “[d]usting the whip” (104). After Philip’s return home, Dorothy instructs the servants that his room and his person are to be left absolutely alone; this “blockade”, together with her constant surveillance and emotional blackmail, soon renders him quite “passive and rather dazed” (47-49). The trauma of the repression of his desire is evident in Philip’s physical reactions when, with some giddiness and a neuralgic twinge over his eye, he takes a seat beside his mother, kisses her on the cheek at her request, promises to write to Mr. Langbridge, then returns to his room and begins immediately to vomit (50-51). Trapped in an oedipal triangle with these parental figures, Philip cannot succeed in his aim to become an artist. If Dorothy ever discusses the subject, she insists that he can pursue his interests in the evenings and on the weekends (106-07), while Mr. Langbridge advises furthermore that he should join a cricket or tennis club and “get as much fresh air in [his] spare time as [he] possibly can” (52).

A Freudian interpretation of Isherwood's content is supported by his several means of expression, which are determined by the influences of James Joyce and E. M. Forster on narrative voice and structure. In his 1958 foreword, he recalls his "naïve attempts at a James Joyce thought-stream" (92). This is a more accurate term than 'stream of consciousness', for 'thought-stream' refers to both the conscious thoughts of the characters, which constitute their perspectives, and their unconscious thoughts, which spill over into their consciousnesses in unexpected focuses and references, which are often sexual, and disturbing dreams and memories, which suggest repression and consequent neurosis. This thought-stream is also a strategy in the 'great war' between generations, as it is used selectively to exclude older characters, principally Dorothy, Mary Durrant, and Mr. Langbridge. Isherwood admits to a "kind of chauvinism" here (8). Members of the older generation are not only denied the right to their own perspective but their "inward eye, the author seems to imply, is permanently closed" (ibid.), leaving an impression that they are incapable of self-reflection and therefore all the more culpable for their effects on the minds of the younger generation. From Forster, Isherwood borrows a technique of "flashback narration" (92), which involves skipping important scenes and describing them later than they occur, thereby ensuring that each is conveyed through a particular perspective or conditioned by a particular unconscious. He also borrows a technique which he identifies as 'tea-tabling'. In *Lions and Shadows*, this is described as a "completely new kind of accentuation", in which less emphasis is placed on important scenes than on relatively unimportant ones and every scene is toned down in dramatic pitch to the level of "mothers'-meeting gossip" (173-74). In his Berkeley lectures, Isherwood explains that the purpose of this technique is that significant scenes, or scenes which contain passion or violence, "should always take place offstage, and what you should see would be a curiously muted affect [sic] of these people afterwards or before" (Isherwood & Summers, 151-52). This kind of accentuation, which conveys the repression of traumatic events and the consequent neuroses which permeate apparently unremarkable situations, combines with the techniques of flashback and thought-stream to provide an appropriate expressive complement to the Freudian thematics of the narrative.

In *Lions and Shadows*, Isherwood cites a review from *The Sun* which begins chidingly, "If we must have Freudian and psychological novels, dealing with people's insides ...", before coming to a "crushing" conclusion; other journals accuse him of "cleverness" or recommend leniency due to his obvious youth and inexperience (274-75). More telling is a review in *Punch*, which cannot

decide whether he has written his novel in a mood of “portentous solemnity [...] with his tongue in his cheek” (274). Just as the self-satirical tone affects the portrait of the artist, the content and expression combine in such a way as to disrupt the credibility of the Freudian narrative. In his 1958 foreword, Isherwood explains that there is a “great deal of repressed aggression” in the frequent obscurity of the novel (91). In 1957, he warns the reader that his thought-stream technique is “jarringly out of style”, out of step with character, and willfully obscure to the extent of becoming the kind of “secret language” which is often employed by young writers and intelligible only to themselves and to the members of their group (7-8). Of the influence of Forster, he admits that the “narrative trick of [...] jerky flashbacks” has been reduced through over-application to an equal level of absurdity (ibid.). As he explains in his Berkeley lectures, his approach to the ‘tea-tableting’ technique of accentuation was that of an essentially comic writer who, however much he intended to deal with tragic themes, rejected the idea of tragedy in the classical sense and intended instead that there should always be a “sort of farcical flash passing over the stage” (Isherwood & Summers, 151). Such a farcical flash certainly passes over the stage of *All the Conspirators*. The action of the novel is set almost entirely in the Lindsay household, which is the setting of an absurd domestic warfare epitomized in the Chesterfield incident, when it is discovered that both legs have come off one end of the sofa in Philip’s room. The ensuing arguments, insinuations, and recriminations, when he, his mother, the maid, the cook, and Mary Durrant are all “haggling like bloody fishwives over that mange-eaten old sofa” (82), typify the “tactics of their domestic guerrilla warfare reduced almost to a routine” (79).

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Although Isherwood does not explain the purpose of viewing tragedy through the lens of comedy or of making a farce out of tragedy in the classical sense, it is possible to judge the effects of these techniques on the “classical theater” of Oedipus, in which the unconscious is capable of nothing but representing itself reflexively in dreams, myths, and tragedies (D+G 2004/b, 25). As Deleuze and Guattari argue in the case of Kafka’s technique (10-12), the willful absurdity, obscurity, and domestic comedy combine to produce an exaggeration of Oedipus. This creates the double effect of exposing the myth as a diversion and expanding it beyond the bounds of the family to overlap entirely with the wider world and the social forces which are the real cause of the repression of desire. Family and society are not distinct, as Isherwood implies in his Berkeley lectures, when he suggests that his anger as a young man in the 1920s had an entirely different frame of reference

from that of the generation of the 1950s. The oedipal triangle is a specifically bourgeois triangle, the existence of which both depends on and is the condition of the maintenance of a system of class distinction. This is already suggested in the location of the Lindsay household in the neighborhood of Bellingham Gardens, the high ground of which overlooks “low-lying fields and tennis-courts set apart for the employees of a large West End store” (41). The view is marred by a gasworks, which rises “sombrely amidst pavilions and changing-sheds”, and access is possible only by passing through the streets of a slum district, “shrill with the febrile games of sickly children” (ibid.). Sometimes, as Deleuze and Guattari explain, “one of the terms of the familial triangle finds itself replaced by another term that is enough to defamiliarize the whole thing [...] Sometimes, it’s the whole triangle that changes its form and its characters and reveals itself to be judiciary or economic or bureaucratic or political, and so on” (1986, 11-12). The terms of the Lindsay family triangle can be similarly substituted, thereby revealing that it is “really only a conduit for investments of an entirely different sort that the child endlessly discovers underneath his father, inside his mother, in himself” (ibid.).

The substitution of the war-hero father by Mr. Langbridge exposes the oedipal triangle as a bourgeois configuration which is connected to the City, the hub of international capitalism, and alternative avenues of employment such as the Army and University, which are supplied through networks generated by the public school system. That these networks, such as the one shared by Mr. Langbridge and Philip’s employer, Mr. Eliott, through their attendance at Harrow, are composed exclusively of ‘old boys’ is no coincidence. Asymmetries of gender in the family triangle, which are largely ignored by Freud, are readily brought out by substituting the oedipal son with Philip’s sister, Joan. Whereas the male child is secured a position in the City in compensation for his loss of a university career, the female is encouraged to pursue her romantic interests and to attend courses at the School of Cookery. Mr. Langbridge concludes his letter to Philip with a casual question and exclamation, “Is Joan an accomplished cook yet? I must come in and taste one of her dishes!” (53), and, when Dorothy receives Victor for the first time, she makes a point of offering him some of her daughter’s cake and emphasizing that, “Yes, she has lessons. She’s quite wrapped up in it at present. So nice to have something regular to do, isn’t it?” (70). The purpose of this gender distinction is to support heterosexuality as the expected outcome of psychosexual development and the basic requisite for the maintenance of the class system. A substitution of Mary Durrant for the figure of the ‘Evil Mother’ makes it clear that this character



is a negative motivator for Joan in the same way that Mr. Langbridge is a positive motivator for Philip. As an unmarried woman, ‘Currants’ maintains an uncertain and insecure position in the household; although she is an old friend of Dorothy’s, she is wary of using the gas-fire or too much hot water and is obliged to entertain herself outdoors whenever Dorothy wants the house to herself. Given that there are ample equivalent warnings for anyone who is unsure, unable, or unwilling to conform to this heteronormativity, it is hardly surprising that Isherwood might have had some ambivalence toward his class and failed to commit himself either way.

The exaggeration of Oedipus exposes not only the social forces which regulate class, gender, and sexuality but the possibility of lines of escape from them. Another substitution of terms in the triangle, which groups the siblings together with Allen, results in the constitution of an entirely new configuration composed of members of the younger generation. Of the novel’s characters, critics have noted that Allen is “[p]erhaps the sanest” (Finney, 74); his is the “most hopeful case”, as he seems to be the “most clear-sighted both about himself and about others” (Wilde 1971, 33). Allen can be regarded as another composite of Isherwood’s autobiographical associates in that, like Linsley, he is a medical student and ‘social amphibian’, and like Chalmers, is an especially close friend and companion. He is apparently free of any oedipal entanglements; his family is mentioned only once in the novel, by Dorothy, who expects, disapprovingly, that he lives a “very lonely life, living up here in town, away from his parents” (109). On the contrary, Allen mixes easily and appears not to care about distinctions of class, gender, and sexuality. He lives in a lodging house in a disreputable street, which, from Philip’s perspective, “might have been his home from childhood. Equally, he might have arrived there that afternoon” (82). His friendship with Philip supplies a model of what Joan is looking for in a romantic relationship, when, as an example of a “cleaner, saner relationship between the sexes” than that of the older generation, she conceives of “something very like the jolly out-door sort of friendship of a pair of boys” (113). In the opening chapters on the Isles of Scilly, the depth of the relationship between the two men is evident in their great personal intimacy. This is suspicious to the extent that, when it is implied that Philip will undress Allen and put him to bed after he has been drinking, the expression on Victor’s face conveys not only shock but profound disgust (28). In contrast to this, each of them is entirely innocent of the residues of homophobia which, in order to resolve the confusion of desire and identification on the part of the child in regard to its same-sex parent, are structurally necessary to Oedipus (De Kuyper).

According to Wade, the outmoded views of Victor and Mrs. Lindsay give an “impression of a certain kind of English identity, and this was becoming an urgent topic around this date” (26). In *Lions and Shadows*, Isherwood bases his initial conceptions of a ‘New Life’ on the realization that, as long as he remains at home, he can “never expect to escape from [his] familiar, tiresome, despicable self” (197). He plans his departure to be the first in a “series of staggering surprises”, in which he is discovered to be leading a revolution in Albania, wearing the uniform of the Spanish Foreign Legion, and on uncertain business while staying at a Dutch hotel in Shanghai (198). Leaving aside these fantasies of Byronic exile and adventure, one thing, at least, is certain: that he would leave home, “even if it was [to go] no farther than the next street” (ibid.). In *All the Conspirators*, the ‘New Life’ begins somewhere between these extremes of fantasy and pragmatism, as the escape route through personal relationships leads to a literal escape route in national and geographical terms. Philip recalls the excitement of spreading out an ordnance map on the tablecloth in Allen’s lodgings: “Menavawr. Inisvowels. Nornor. Ganilly. Hanjague. Miles and miles out in the Atlantic. Absolutely no question of meeting anyone” (13). Leaving behind a note that he has decided simply to “chuck everything up” (38), he leaves London, the metropolitan center, and flees with Allen westward as far as Land’s End and beyond to the Isles of Scilly. To reach this farthest limit of family, class, and nation is only the first step, which may well lead him to “[c]lear out abroad” and to final freedom (18). The atmosphere on the islands is certainly conducive to such considerations. The thoughts of the friends wander among launches, fishing boats, and foreign timber vessels; staying at the hotel is an Australian who advises them all to emigrate (22); Allen watches a cormorant fly forth and vanish westward, “like an absurd impulse of desperation, towards America” (20). In his 1958 foreword, Isherwood recalls this reference as an “unconscious prophecy” of another departure made a decade later, when the author, with his “queer cry, flapped his [own] way across the Atlantic” (91).

In *Lions and Shadows*, Isherwood’s plans to begin a ‘New Life’ end up being discussed at the “drawing-room hearth as the mildest and most respectable of domestic adventures”, leading only to the rental of a bed-sitting-room with the financial support of his family (198). In *All the Conspirators*, Philip’s escape to Land’s End leads to a similar dead end. Piazza notes that, without the foil of his mother, Philip “merely hangs about – impotent, even paralyzed” and that, when he and Allen tire of each other’s company and begin to quarrel, his “vague gesture of rebellion founders” and he decides to return to London (22-23). Bantock’s claim that this decision renders

the remainder of the action “morally meaningless” is certainly true to an extent (50); Isherwood himself describes it as a “decrecendo of anti-climaxes” which lead to Philip’s ultimate failure (*L&S*, 258). Nevertheless, Isherwood’s Freudian themes continue to be played out in this narrative, the dynamic of which depends on another substitution of terms in the triangle. As well as Allen and Philip, the opening chapters introduce the character of Victor Page, a Cambridge ‘Poshocrat’ whom Isherwood describes, in his Berkeley lectures, as “fundamentally a collaborationist who goes along with the enemy” (Isherwood & Summers, 152). Whereas Philip tends not to mind Victor, who flatters him with talk about his talents, Allen is immediately and unapologetically antagonistic toward him, remarking jealously that he is already turning Philip into a “regular little gentleman” (31). Allen is correct in suspecting that Victor presents a threat to his relationship with Joan and Philip. When Victor keeps his promise to call on the Lindsays in Town, Dorothy welcomes him without hesitation and conspires to maneuver him into taking Allen’s place in his triangular relationship with her son and daughter, thereby bringing the configuration more into alignment with the oedipal triangle. As she reasons to Joan, Allen and Victor belong to “two different worlds” (63). Whereas Allen’s mind is not “at all wholesome” and he uses his influence to fill Philip’s head with “all kinds of absurd, unwholesome ideas” (109), Victor has a “splendidly sane outlook”, which will do her son “all the good in the world”, and it is “tremendously important” that Philip be friends with people like him (65).

Although Dorothy welcomes Victor because he is a good match for her daughter and a worthy role model for her son, there is more to him than being the one who exposes her as a “sponger and a snob” (67). Wilde notes that the character is an “uneasy blend of self-consciousness, priggishness, and superficial heartiness” (1971, 31). This matches Philip’s description of him as a “kind of psychologic mongrel” (68), which begins to make some sense when Victor entertains some college hearties in his rooms at Cambridge. A member of the College Rugby Fifteen is telling the others about *Sex and Character* (1903), by Otto Weininger (1880-1903), explaining that everyone has “some ghastly secret, which [is] mucking up his life”, and that, within ten minutes of reading, he felt “damned if [he] knew whether [he] was a man or a woman” (72-73). Victor, grinning amiably, tells them that he prefers not to think about it. In fact, he is thinking all the while about a school fellow: “Met next Sunday in a lane. Both blushing. Basley talked very fast. After this, encounters in the School Yard, in corridors, on the fields. Other walks” (ibid.). These encounters continue until, one evening, “in the dormitory, they all began.

Oh, yes, we know. His little friend” (ibid.). Victor’s reaction is to think, “My God, I’ve been a fool. [...] I’ll tell him tomorrow. Like two girls”, and he appears to have met his friend one last time: “I know what you wanted, now. And I never want to speak to you again” (ibid.). Later, while alone in his rooms, he considers that “this weakness, which at first seemed so pleasant and even harmless, will, unless you tear it out by the roots, grow and grow, until, at last, like some terrible cancer, it poisons your whole life” (ibid.). Victor’s flashback to public school suggests that he is in denial of same-sex attraction or experiencing homosexual panic at the implication of the same. In either case, he represents the repression of desire, as is characteristic of Oedipus, and the implication of neurosis, as is suggested by his reflexive admonition that the hospitals nowadays are “full of boys, only a few years older than yourself; now hopeless, incurable madmen” (ibid.).

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Finney notes that Victor is left “sexually crippled” by conforming to the norms of his society and that his condition provides, moreover, an indication of that society’s illness: “He and it are suffering from a repression so fundamental that their life has become one gigantic lie” (73). The oedipal ties of the character are evident in the silver-framed photograph he keeps of his late mother (72), and in the exceedingly deferential relationship he maintains with his uncle and guardian, Colonel Page, with whom he stays when not in Town or at Cambridge. That his loyalties to class and family are inseparable from gender conformity comes out in his complaints about the college ‘super-aesthetes’, who wear the “most ghastly clothes [...] and to hear them chattering in the college court you’d think there were a lot of women about” (26). When he courts Joan, he tries to impress her by talking about football and “everything manly” (76). Despite her longings for a heterosexual relationship which is free of such distinctions, she is seduced by the access he provides to high society theaters, tennis clubs, *thés dansants*, and, ultimately, to the prestigious event of the Cambridge Ball. After his proposal of marriage, Joan becomes restless with sexual desire and cannot stay in her room, where the “cries of mating cats [rise] piercingly from the back-gardens” (97). When Victor calls to present the ring, his awkward response to her spontaneous embrace, when he turns “limp [...] scarlet [...] half-asphyxiated”, persuades her to revise her expectations of their relationship (101). After a visit to Colonel Page’s, which seems to her “rather sinister” (112), her vision comes into clearer focus. Whereas, earlier, she could only imagine their marriage in terms of such symbols as slippers or an income-tax form, now she has a vision of herself standing next to her husband, both dressed for tennis, seeing off a party of guests from the

steps of their home (113). Joan accepts a conventional gender role and the repression of her sexual desire in exchange for the security of class, reasoning metaphorically that “[s]uch were the mud-banks. But how ungenerous, captious, to shove on to them; when there is plenty of room in mid-stream and the water sparkles like Cambridge Backs” (115).

Having secured Victor’s engagement to her daughter, Dorothy enjoins him to address her as ‘Mother’ and assures him that he will “soon get to know all [their] jokes, now that [he is] a member of the family” (99). Meanwhile, sensing Philip’s renewed restlessness, she hints to him that he might avail of his contacts to secure her son an alternative to his position in the City. Accordingly, Victor arranges for Philip to dine with Colonel Page and Mr. Wells, a coffee planter who has just returned from Africa and delivers a sort of lecture-cum-advertisement of Kenya, the “most wonderful country in the world” (126-27). Nairobi, with its dances, theaters, Cup Final, and Kenya Derby, is no different from Town, the surrounding area is no wilder than Surrey, and their social life is “one long hum” of overnight guests, neighbors dropping in every day, and all and sundry turning out to play matches of polo, cricket, and tennis (ibid.). When Philip gets home, he feels as though he has been sitting at a fire which, although it is blazing, has rendered him “more and more freezingly cold” (ibid.). Perhaps most alarming, in view of his alienation from his immediate family, is Mr. Wells’ suggestion that the chief advantage of the country is that it is “one big family”, in which everyone knows everything there is to know about everyone else, to the extent of “[a]ll our little faults and fads. Everything. And we just make the whole thing into a huge joke” (ibid.). Even in Africa, it seems, Philip will not be able to escape Oedipus or the social forces the myth is designed to obscure. To the conventions and distinctions of class, gender, and sexuality are added only others of race and ethnicity. In 1920, the British East Africa Protectorate was reconstituted a Crown Colony and Mr. Wells’ property of two hundred and fifty acres, which he manages with an old school fellow from England, pertains to the settlement of the central highlands by European planters. If there is one “[g]reat difficulty” in this enterprise, it is the local Kikuyu, who are being retained as “native labour” but nonetheless “[w]ant watching”, to which end, Mr. Wells and his like are busy “teaching ‘em Soccer” (ibid.).

Phillip’s reaction to this disappointment is to initiate a “second cycle of defiance, escape, and capitulation – a cycle which serves as an ironic parody of the first” (Wilde 1971, 32). In *Lions and Shadows*, Isherwood explains that Victor feels sure that Allen is to blame for Philip’s sudden disappearance and calls around to his lodgings, where a fight takes place between the two men, in

which the medical student kills the Cambridge ‘Poshocrat’ with a poker (175). In the final version of the novel, this event is downgraded to an undignified scuffle in which the two characters effectively cancel each other out. Meanwhile, Philip wanders in a thick fog through the slum district, where he is followed by an alley cat, pays for a printed poem from an unemployed ex-serviceman, and exchanges his wallet for an overcoat in a pawn shop served by a young Jew. Although he continues on to Piccadilly and eats in an expensive restaurant, it is clear that he is opting out of this society of “flash young dagoes, in their Oxfords and high-cut waistcoats”, as he catches a reflection of himself in his oversized overcoat and tries to read the poem, which appeals “directly, naïvely; from the ex-soldier to the civilian. We have nothing. You have everything” (144-45). Outside, in the rain, he is let into a cheap hotel in the streets leading down to the Embankment. As in his earlier escape to Land’s End, his first thought is to flee the metropolis: “He would go down to Sussex tomorrow, to some quiet cheap village inn, where he could live for weeks on his money” (146). Then, there is the possibility of escaping abroad: “Or would France be better? [...] What about passports? Did they ask many questions? [...] Perhaps, after tonight, the ports would be watched” (ibid.). Meanwhile, it occurs to him that he might have an attack of rheumatic fever. As daylight advances slowly, his self-control breaks down entirely and he leaves the hotel in the early morning, contemplating suicide. Suddenly, in a scene which “burlesques the conventions of outrageous melodrama” (Piazza, 27), he passes in and out of consciousness, gives out his address to the people bending over him, and a clergyman volunteers to escort him home.

Allen’s early characterization of Philip as a “Blessed Saint and Martyr” has apparently been fulfilled in the martyrdom of his friend to Oedipus (32). After several relapses of rheumatic fever, Philip reposes in a wheelchair, wearing a dressing-gown over his clothes and a plaid-rug wrapped around his legs, while being looked after by his sister, his mother, and Mary Durrant. Meanwhile, Dorothy is radiant, looks years younger, and no longer has an air of slight apprehension, as she appears to be satisfied with her son’s bazaar sales and newspaper prizes. Nevertheless, Allen’s earlier thought is clearly sarcastic and any foreshadowing it might provide should be regarded as highly ironic. Even as the novel draws to the conclusion of its Freudian thematics, a farcical flash persists in passing over the stage to illuminate an exaggerated Oedipus. The novel ends with a mock ‘Grand Levee’, when Philip receives visitors in his ‘studio’ in the box-room. Victor notes that he is in good spirits and looks pale, “but not noticeably ill” (151); Allen, meanwhile, finds him “holding forth, in the best of humour, waving a mittened hand: ‘You

see, Allen, what I really dislike about your attitude is that it gets you nowhere” (158). The closing words are when Philip chides his friend, “You refuse to venture, that’s what it is. You’re timid. Oh, I grant you, one’s got to have the nerve ...” (ibid.). The irony is that it is not Allen but Philip himself who is clearly lacking in nerve. In the end, as Wade writes, the reader judges the character as “one whose will is insufficient; he becomes a pathetic figure, illustrating the failure of all dreamy and idealistic agendas in weak individuals” (26). What the conclusion suggests is that it is not Oedipus but Philip himself who is responsible for his condition, thereby demonstrating the futility of psychoanalysis as a philosophy of inaction and self-defeat. In his 1958 foreword to the novel, Isherwood asserts that the vanquished in the war between the old and the young inevitably become “love-starved old maids, taciturn bitter bachelors, chronic invalids, harmless lunatics; or they died, if they were lucky” (92). This applies only all the more to those who fight on the side of the so-called ‘Freudian revolution’.

In his Berkeley lectures, Isherwood explains that *All the Conspirators* records the failure of only one “very half-hearted and weak revolt against the family” and that the intergenerational war of the 1920s carried on wherever young people were fighting in a “domestic struggle to the death” (Isherwood & Summers, 151-52). Toward the conclusion of *Lions and Shadows*, it looks as though Isherwood will become another casualty in this war, when, after the failure of his ‘New Life’, he returns home to live, like Philip, in the domain of his “female relative” (179). Instead, the intervention of a *Deus ex machina* saves him from the fulfilment of his own martyrdom to Oedipus. Toward the end of 1928, his friend Weston has finished with his talk of Freud. Having returned from a sojourn in Berlin, he is now an enthusiastic disciple of a certain Mr. Barnard, who has introduced him to the philosophy of Homer Lane (1875-1925), a Connecticut-born reformer, educator, and psychologist. According to Lane’s theories of developmental psychology, incidents of crime and disease are warning symptoms of an inner sickness of the soul, which is caused in childhood by those who abuse their authority by teaching us to limit our desires through conscious control. If Lane’s philosophy appears to provide another rationale for blaming the parents, it differs from psychoanalysis in that it provides a remedy not only for neurosis but for the repression of desire, on the basis that there is “only one sin: disobedience to the inner law of our own nature” (300). Although he is skeptical at first, Isherwood comes to accept Weston’s newest influence and, applying it to his own circumstances, imagines what Lane and Barnard might advise: “You want to commit the unforgivable sin, to shock Mummy and Daddy and Nanny, to smash the nursery

clock, to be a really naughty little boy. Well, why not start? Time's getting on" (306-07). Realizing that behind his failure is simply "plain, cold, uninteresting funk. Funk of getting too deeply involved with other people, sex-funk, funk of the future" (304), he resolves to confront his vague fear that he should "one day be isolated and trapped, far from the safety of the nursery and Nanny's apron, and compelled to face 'The Test'" (305).

In 1928, Isherwood discovers that, in order to realize his potential as a person and as a writer, he will have to relinquish his attempts to find "some place, no matter how humble, in the scheme of society" (*L&S*, 24). Instead, he will have to find an alternative to that society. As Wade notes, *Lions and Shadows* records his attempt to "break free of [...] his native culture [...] and the] stuffy, life-denying smallness of mind in the provincialism and philistinism of the English middle class" (43-44). Accordingly, in January 1929, Isherwood makes the decision to follow the lines of escape which are already mapped out at the beginning of *All the Conspirators*. Thinking no further of the future than that he is a traveler, "given over, mind and body, to the will of the dominant, eastward-speeding train; happy in the mere knowledge that yet another stage of [his] journey had begun" (312), he turns from family to friends and leaves England for Germany. Wilde questions whether this is a genuine escape or yet another example of mere escapism (1971, 23-24), and it is true that Isherwood's departure for Berlin shares the impulsiveness as well as the general lines of Philip's departure for Land's End. In response, Finney notes the ironic detachment of the narrator from the character of his younger self, arguing that it is the "maturity of style and vision that ultimately guarantees that the journey [...] is not the flight of an escapist, but the beginning of a search for greater honesty and self-knowledge" (133-35). Although Isherwood is only a traveler for now, he is aware that he will soon start "worrying again, making plans and patterns, trying to organize [his] life" and makes a promise to himself that, one day soon, he will also "rewrite *The Memorial*, and all those other books [he'd] planned" (312). Before his departure for Berlin, he had already completed a first draft of *The Memorial*, in order to "give expression, at last, to [his] own 'War' complex" (296). The following chapter considers how Isherwood confronts this complex, having disentangled it from Oedipus and deterritorialized it in the context of the national enemy, Germany, before moving on from it further in the direction of a minor transnational literature.



## II.2. War and Peace: *The Memorial* (1932)

In *Kafka* (1975), Deleuze and Guattari begin their outline of minor literature by relating Kafka's writing to the crisis and fragmentation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the aftermath of the Great War. According to them, an acceleration of deterritorialization is reflected in the arts, sciences, and philosophy which, between the periods of Viennese psychoanalysis and Prague School linguistics, included deterritorializations of theoretical physics by Albert Einstein, visual representation by expressionist cinema, and musical representation by the dodecaphonists (24-25). Although the UK ranked among the victors in the conflict, its several parts were subject to comparable conditions of accelerating deterritorialization. The Easter Rising in Dublin in 1916 escalated into a general war of independence in Ireland, which resulted in the partition of the island and set a precedent for the eventual dismemberment of the British Empire. Throughout the 1920s, Great Britain struggled with crises of debt, inflation, and currency collapse, and with class conflict aggravated by industrial disputes, the reintegration of veterans, and the introduction of universal suffrage for men and, in stages, for women. In *Lions and Shadows* (1938), Isherwood recalls that he began work on a new novel in October 1928, which he provisionally titled 'A War Memorial', 'The War Memorial', or, simply, 'The Memorial'. Inspired by his acquaintance with a veteran, whose "quietly told horribly matter-of-fact" anecdotes affected him deeply (256), he decided to write an epic not on the subject of the "War itself, but the effect of the idea of 'War' on [his] generation" (296). In order to avoid what he considered to be the dull beginnings of conventional epics, which regress too far in time or dwell too much on establishing complicated relationships, he decided to present the narrative in self-contained units and to "start in the middle and go backwards, then forwards again" (297). Accordingly, *The Memorial*, as it was eventually published in 1932, is organized in four parts, which are set sequentially in 1928, 1920, 1925, and 1929. Chronologically, the narrative begins in August 1920, when a war memorial is dedicated in the village of Chapel Bridge in Cheshire in the North of England, and ends in December 1929, just before the onset of the Great Depression. It is therefore reflective of an entire decade of accelerating deterritorialization.

In *Lions and Shadows*, Isherwood also reveals that an alternative working title of his was 'War and Peace' and that his intention, like Tolstoy's, was to "tell the story of a family" (296). He reiterates this in his Berkeley lectures, when he explains that he was presenting a "portrait of a

family and using the family as itself a memorial, a war memorial, because this family represented the effects of the War in various aspects” (Isherwood & Summers, 158). Isherwood had already told the story of a family in *All the Conspirators* (1928), but seems to have moved on from his exclusive interest and become more aware of the interdependence of family and society. The full title of the published novel, *The Memorial: Portrait of a Family*, refers to the Vernons of Chapel Bridge, who are represented at the dedication by the incumbent Squire, John Vernon; his widowed daughter, Mary Scriven, and widowed daughter-in-law, Lily Vernon; and their respective children, cousins Anne and Eric. As Finney notes, each of these succeeding generations represents a “phase in the history of British civilization” (95). Represented in the Squire is the senescence and obsolescence of Victorian England; in Lily and Mary, the disruption of Edwardian England by the cataclysm of the Great War; in Anne and Eric, the neuroses and insecurities of the aftermath. The novel also differs from *All the Conspirators* in eschewing Isherwood’s chauvinism toward the older generations. Although intergenerational conflict persists, it is not quite on the scale of a “struggle to the death” and all of the parties involved are granted their own perspective (Isherwood & Summers, 152). If what unites the characters, as Finney claims, is the “harmful effect which the war has had on [...] all the survivors” (96), what distinguishes them does not depend on their generation so much as on their personal responses and the choices they make as individuals. As Wilde suggests, the focus is once again on the “goal of independence”, the achievement of which is a matter of choosing between opposite ways of life: “an allegiance to the dead forms of the past [or] a liberation from them by means which are never made completely clear and toward a goal which remains tenuous at best” (1971, 37-38).

In Book Two, the dedication of the war memorial unfolds in a series of elaborate stages, beginning with a service of commemoration in the village church. This is followed by a procession into the churchyard, where the bishop dedicates the Memorial Cross to the honor of the dead and, turning to address the crowd, suggests that it serve as an inspiration for future generations. Following the benediction and the sounding of the ‘Last Post’, the ceremony is concluded with a rendition of the royal and national anthem, ‘God Save the King’. With its orchestrated focus on God, King, and Country, the dedication anticipates the unveiling of the Cenotaph on Whitehall in London by King George V, which was followed by the interment of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey, on Armistice Day, 1920. Likewise demonstrating the interpenetration of nationalism with the longer established cultures of monarchy and religion, it is, in Benedict

Anderson's terms, a "transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning, [...] and chance into destiny" (11-12). In Deleuze and Guattari's terms, it is an attempted reterritorialization of society along majoritarian lines of identity, most obviously of class, nation, and empire, in the aftermath of the Great War. All is not quite as it seems though. The ceremony has a remarkable epilogue when, after the rendition of the anthem, the Squire lays a wreath at the base of the Memorial Cross. Although the hierarchical unity of society under God, King, and Squirearchy appears to be affirmed by the spontaneous support he receives as chief mourner among the assembled villagers, it is clear from the conflicting perspectives of the characters that this is illusory. From Lily's point of view, the local mill owner, Mr. Ramsbotham, had "taken control of Papa" by directing him toward the memorial and handing him the wreath (71), and "the fact was, the village was no longer a village, but a suburb", taken over by Manchester businessmen who had made their money in the War (69). Mary, too, realizes that, despite the apparent vindication of the social position of the Squire, "Landowners were becoming obsolete. Father was obsolete. [...] His present claim on their attention was chiefly that, by a sort of accident, he happened to be not yet dead" (92).

In 'Some Preliminary Notes about My Novel', Isherwood writes of an "Old-New Life contrast" as lived by the two younger generations of the Vernon family (1). In the case of the first generation, the widows represent two "opposed types – the sisters Karamazov – Lily (the Old Life) and Mary (the New Life)" (ibid.). Before the dedication, Lily contemplates the "remains of her life", which consist of a silver-framed photograph of her husband, Richard, the hairbrushes she received as a wedding present, and the "black silk cloak – part of her uniform as a widow, laid out across the foot of her single bed" (51). Her response to the effects of the War is to reterritorialize as a war widow, reasoning that, as long as she never forgets what life used to be like, she will be quite contented (55). Mary reacts to widowhood very differently. When her husband, Desmond, was killed, she "cried all day, but she wouldn't put on black" (82); instead, she rejects the "cult of dead people" as being "not only false but, yes, actually wicked", arguing that "[l]iving people are better than dead ones. And we've got to get on with life" (84). Whereas Lily chooses to preserve her identity in continuous reference to the past as she imagines it, Mary uses her widowhood as an opportunity to further the deterritorialization of her class, gender, and sexuality and to begin a new life among the artistic communities of Chelsea, where she spends her evenings at clubs, concerts, and studio parties, being "[n]ever tired, always ready to dance, drink, [and] sing" (8). Even so, it

is not easy to decide which of the sisters-in-law has made the correct choice. Despite her flaws, Lily is sympathetically portrayed, is capable of self-criticism, and her dedication to the past is not without its positive aspects. Mary, on the other hand, is a “victim of her need to rebel” (Finney, 98). As Piazza notes, she simply resorts to the opposite extreme, “crowding her life with noisy excitement”, in an effort to disregard any “memory, emotion, or person that would trench upon her false tranquility” (38-39). The ambiguity of their respective positions makes equivalent choices between the past and the future all the more difficult for the succeeding generation.

As in *All the Conspirators*, there is a profound generation gap and, although neither Lily nor Mary is an ‘Evil Mother’ in the mold of Dorothy Lindsay, their children are trapped with them in relationships which compare with the oedipal triangles of the earlier novel. After the death of her husband, Lily is advised that she must try to live for her son. In her private thoughts, she encourages him to emulate his father as closely as possible and to “fulfil what Richard would have wished” (67), so that he can be the “greatest joy to her always and the greatest comfort” (51). Although he has grown up with a “semi-superstitious fear, perhaps exaggerated from the teaching of his mother, of meddling with the Past” (116), Eric begins to rebel as soon as he comes of age. Before selling the Hall to Mr. Ramsbotham, he threatens to have it demolished and to turn the land over to the Corporation for restructuring as a model village. At the time of the General Strike, he drops out of Cambridge to take up social work, reporting on mining conditions in South Wales, looking after disadvantaged youths at the Boys’ Club, and spending his inheritance on various other clubs, funds, and societies. Meanwhile, Mary’s plans for her children are surprisingly conventional; because she cannot afford to educate both, Maurice is sent to public school and eventually up to Cambridge, while Anne is removed early and trained to assist her mother with domestic arrangements. Over the years, Anne begins to feel out of touch with Mary and the Chelsea set: “The truth is, thought Anne, I don’t belong here. I’m not one of the Gang. [...] I shall never be a tenth of what Mother is [...] And I don’t want to be” (9). Instead of involving herself in the arts, she intends to become a nurse; rather than resolving to be independent of a husband, she unconsciously shares her mother’s ambitions that “[s]he’ll make some man a good wife” (81). In due course, she is “plunging into a simple but very smart frock, touching her lips with red, powdering, slipping on her new shoes – the complete box of tricks” in order to court Mr. Ramsbotham’s second son, Tommy (11).

As these relationships are established in Book One, the reader might wonder if they will not simply reinstate the cross-purposes of those of the Lindsays. A critical consensus maintains that the message of the novel is that “war changes nothing” and that, by Book Four, the memorial of the title symbolizes “the past still impinging on the present and inspiring in those who do not simply feel nostalgia for its authority a sense of restlessness, guilt, and fear or, at best, of revolt” (Wilde 1971, 38-39). Nevertheless, Anne’s imminent marriage to Tommy, who is now heir to the Hall, ensures not only some measure of continuity of the family but the unification of the pre-war squirearchy and the post-war plutocracy. Ultimately, the Old and New Lives are reconciled when Mary calls on Lily in order to thank her for her wedding present to Anne, a Jacobean dish given to her by her own aunt on the occasion of her wedding to Richard. Curiously, no critic mentions the marriage except Wilde, who blames his inability to explain its significance on Isherwood’s equivocation, which he attributes to a “failure of imagination, of a mind caught between faith and doubt and resolved in skepticism” (ibid., 46). Any equivocation is surely Isherwood’s intention. Even if, as Wilde contends, one is prepared to accept the marriage and its “simple fact of connection” (ibid., 45), the reader is nonetheless aware that Anne, upon hearing that Tommy’s elder brother has been killed in a car crash, experiences a “new joy, growing up swiftly and secretly in the darkness of her heart” and, within a week of the funeral, confides to Tommy that she loves him, dismissing the thought that people were bound to say that she was marrying him for his money (177-78). As Izzo suggests, *The Memorial* registers some degree of progress from *All the Conspirators*, in that its author is willing to acknowledge that the ‘Others’ are “conditioned by forces beyond their control” and to make them more sympathetic as “victims of their own world” (2001, 89-90). If the persistence of this world is an unexpected conclusion to Isherwood’s novel on the effects of the War, it is not necessarily his main concern, as will become clear in what follows.

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A happy ending in heterosexual marriage, which signifies a dissolution, reconciliation, or complementarity of difference in class, gender, ethnicity, or any number of variables through the medium of sexuality, is a perennial trope used to signal reterritorializations of identity in favor of a majoritarian standard. If the deployment of such a trope suggests a motion toward a major literature, this is blocked by Isherwood’s equivocation and reversed in the direction of a minor literature by a shift in attention from the conditioning of the majority to the conditions of the

author's personal minority. In his preliminary notes, Isherwood writes that the ultimate fate of the Hall and the Vernon family is quite insignificant and should be consigned to the background as a "sort of sociological shadow counterpart of the real Old-New Life contrast" (1). An indication of what this 'real' or more relevant contrast might reflect is provided in *Lions and Shadows*, when he explains that he intended not only to consider the "effect of the idea of 'War' on [his] generation" but to "give expression, at last, to [his] own 'War' complex" (296). Isherwood also explains that he made a promise to himself that he would one day rewrite *The Memorial*, once he had the experience of living and working abroad in a new context and under different conditions and circumstances. As Izzo notes, even if the novel was "not about the currently new England, but of the recently old England, this old England was influenced by Isherwood's view of the new Berlin" (2001, 89). This view was conditioned theoretically by his understanding of the philosophy of Homer Lane (1875-1925), that there is "only one sin: disobedience to the inner law of our own nature" (*L&S*, 300), and in practice by the fulfillment of an expectation that "Berlin meant Boys" (*CHK*, 10). Accordingly, the influence of his view of Berlin is apparent not only in the addition of two chapters to the novel which are set in the German capital and incorporated into its first and final parts, but in a "thick undercurrent of homosexuality" (Izzo 2001, 90). This runs throughout the narrative as well as counter to the surface current of heteronormativity and its inexorable flow toward a happy ending in heterosexual marriage.

In his Berkeley lectures, Isherwood confirms that, besides the War and his 'War' complex, the "other theme which is referred to a little in this novel is the theme of homosexuality" (Isherwood & Summers, 159). He discusses these themes separately and critics have generally followed his lead in overlooking a connection between the two. Kelley explicitly draws a categorical line between them, suggesting that "underneath that cover story [of the effect of the idea of 'War'], one might trace a more subversive tale: an account of the formation of a young man's homosexual identity" (142). Nevertheless, it is clear that the two themes can be connected. In *Lions and Shadows*, Isherwood characterizes the 'Test' as one of courage and maturity, but also one of "sexual prowess", which he relates to a question of gender and sexual identity: "Are you really a Man?" (76). He represses his "War' complex behind daydreams of a heroic school career and an outward enthusiasm for adventure stories, chest-expanders, and motor-bicycles, the ironic branding of which as "homosexual romanticism" suggests that his feeling of inadequacy stems as much from doubts about his sexuality as about his courage and maturity (77-78). A connection of

these themes makes it clear that Isherwood's personal 'War' complex cannot be resolved through the deployment of tropes of heterosexual marriage and family reconciliation. Consequently, the stories of Lily, Mary, and Anne become of mere background interest in comparison with the stories of Eric, who is conspicuous by his absence in Book Four, and Edward Blake, a close friend of the Vernon's, who has no family connections of his own. In giving expression to his 'War' complex through these characters, Isherwood incorporated some new concepts he had developed in regard to the 'Test'. As he explains in *Lions and Shadows* and later reiterates in his lectures, the 'Truly Strong Man' is an anti-hero who simply performs his duty, whereas the 'Truly Weak Man' is exemplified by the type of hero which is lauded by society for valor and bravado but which, in Isherwood's terms, is actually driven by shame and neurosis. Effectively, the Test exists only for the latter, who invests in it an "infinitely greater expenditure of nervous energy, money, time, [and] physical and mental resources" (208).

According to Wilde, Eric and Edward are literary 'doubles' of Isherwood, in the sense of being character expressions of his 'War' complex (1971, 49). In Book One, each is introduced as a 'Truly Weak Man' and, although Eric would appear to double Isherwood more obviously, in belonging to the same generation and having also lost his father in the Great War, his character is "only one embodiment of the theme, which [...] receives its most crucial investigation in Edward Blake" (48-49). Before his appearance, Edward is foreshadowed as a vital personality who enjoys easy relations with both generations among Mary's set in London. Anne recalls how, at a recent game of charades, he "literally stood on his ear for about fifteen seconds" (9); in the concert-room, Maurice jokes that he is "easily the best fish-pie maker we've got" (24); at Lady Klein's party, when Mary is encouraged to perform her famous imitation of Queen Victoria, other guests recall "how *screamingly* funny" he was in his accompanying role of Lord Tennyson (30). These references to outward vitality are followed by ominous signs, when it is suggested that he is out of town and when Margaret Lanwin abruptly exclaims, "Why the hell doesn't he write, or something? [...] Mary, what do you think has happened? [...] Anything. Everything. In the state he's in" (30). Margaret's fears are legitimate. The concluding chapter of Book One opens without warning in Berlin, where Edward has been drinking and wandering for hours through the streets before returning to his room in a cheap hotel. Here, there are indications that his presence in the city is a last resort after a decade of attempting to come to terms with his experience of the War: "On the dressing-table lay the card of the man he'd been to see yesterday. The psycho-analyst. [...]"

best man in Europe. Had had great success with cases of shell-shock” (41). Disappointed with the doctor’s reassurances that his is a “perfectly plain case” (42), Edward takes an automatic pistol and shoots himself in the mouth. Regaining consciousness, he stumbles outside and takes a taxi to the offices of the psychoanalyst, where he is laid out on a couch until an ambulance arrives to remove him for emergency surgery.

In Book Two, the narrative regresses eight years to the dedication of the war memorial at Chapel Bridge. At first, this is witnessed from the perspective of Lily, who takes the opportunity to renew the meaning of her grief, which she feels no longer counts for a post-war generation, by transferring it from the personal loss of a husband to the public commemoration of a fallen hero. During the church service, she is moved to a state of ecstasy as the last verse of the hymn proclaims “their triumph – all theirs” (72). These feelings are disturbed in the churchyard, where Lily notices the presence of “Richard’s great friend”, who looks “so tired and ill [...] But poor Edward Blake, she told herself, forcing down her dislike of his presence, how terribly he must have suffered” (74). As Lily’s attention turns to the dedication of the Memorial Cross, Edward is “withdrawn somewhere into the background” (75). Nevertheless, the reader is aware of the vanity of the ceremony due to their foreknowledge of Edward’s presence eight years later in Berlin. The juxtaposition demonstrates that the war hero of the establishment is a false one and that to try to live up to its image of valor and self-sacrifice leads only to neurosis and, in this case, to a lonely, sordid, and suicidal end in a defeated city. In his Berkeley lectures, Isherwood notes that Edward and Richard respectively represent the ‘Truly Weak Man’, “who had been a tremendous hero in the War and had emerged from it but was living a very wild and desperate kind of life”, and the ‘Truly Strong Man’, “who had gotten killed in the War incidentally” (Isherwood & Summers, 158-59). After the dedication, Edward’s perspective replaces Lily’s with an alternative memory of Richard, who was sitting on a wheelbarrow, “puffing his pipe, speaking with such calm certainty, as though he meant to live for ever” (95), when he arranged to visit his friend near Armentières. Richard offered Edward a pair of mittens he had knitted; these he later lost, leaving him with “nothing, absolutely nothing to remind him of Richard as he used to be, as he was when he died” (105), which is to say, an anti-hero and ‘Truly Strong Man’.

As Edward reminisces about Richard, it seems to be that their relationship originated in a homosocial attraction of opposites, which developed during their years at school, when Richard felt a kind of practical sympathy for Edward and the difficulties he kept creating for himself, while



Edward was impressed by the equanimity of Richard, who had “no need to give proofs of his courage, to assert the strength of his will” (99). Despite these differences in temperament, their friendship became ever deeper when Edward was invited to spend the holidays with Richard and his sister, Mary, at the Hall, which he discovered to be a “perfect background for Richard [and...] the only place where he could have lived for ever, untormented by his restlessness and his ambitions” (ibid.). The relations among these three are notable for a lack of heterosexual interest in Mary on the part of Edward as a counterpart to his homosocial interest in Richard: “Mary, he had to admit, was all, or nearly all, that Richard’s sister should be. It was only a pity that she’d been born a girl” (ibid.). Their triangular relationship was eventually disrupted by the entrance of Lily. As unaware of her thoughts as she is of his, Edward evidently harbors some reciprocal animosity toward the widow, despite the common source of their grief: “Richard is dead. And this is what remains, said Edward to himself, seeing the doll in her black [...] This is what we’ve got left of Richard” (105). Edward’s animosity seems excessive in comparison with Lily’s, which is qualified by the thought that she had “tried so hard, in the old days, to like him” and that her failure was due to the possibility that “she’d just been jealous” (74). The excess of his animosity matches the excesses of his admiration of her husband, whom everyone else considered “colourless and unexciting” (99), and of his perspective of their marriage, which nobody else regarded, as he did, as “either monstrous or absurd” (101). If all of these circumstances, which blur the lines between desire and identification, are certainly striking, if not suspicious, any doubts as to their tendency are removed in Isherwood’s preliminary notes, in which he states unambiguously that “Edward is a sublimated homosexual” (2).

Noting that the “secret of Edward’s terrific vitality ought [...] to be quite definitely shown as being that of sublimated homosexuality”, Isherwood strikes an unambiguous parallel between his character’s shell-shock and same-sex desire (6). Edward struggles to repress his desire behind a thin veneer of bravado; “[w]hen it breaks out, [he] is weakened”, in the sense that it prevents him from living up to his public image as a war hero (ibid.). This repression comes through in his frustration at losing the friends of his youth to heterosexual marriage, which he still recalls, now years later, in exaggerated terms. From his perspective, Richard’s love for Lily was a “comic disease, like mumps” and the prospect that he would presently get married, settle down, and have a family with a “wax doll [...] that opens its eyes very wide and says Papa and Mamma” was unconscionable (100). As best man at their wedding, Edward carried out his duties in a mood of

“slightly hysterical humour”, during the several hours in which everyone was transported into a “comic picture post card [...] of hired horses, bad eggs, curates, mothers-in-law and accidents to bathing-machines” (101). Shortly after the wedding, Mary eloped and married Desmond, an Irish musician and ne’er-do-well, and was ostracized by her extended family. Edward stayed on in London, regardless, paying visits “from the untidy little house in Chelsea to the tidy little house in Earl’s Court” (102). His memories of the domestic lives of the estranged couples are consistent in style with the comedic and parodic impressions he maintains of their respective marriages. At the Scriven’s, Desmond lazes about, smoking cheap cigars, while his wife contents herself with sewing or preparing food in the kitchen; at the Vernon’s, Lily plays the part of a conscientious hostess, while her husband is simply “absurd as everything to do with the new Richard, absurd as his cosy little smoking-room with its washy pictures, absurd as his embroidered slippers” (ibid.). In the end, Edward’s way to cope was to dramatically quit the country: “To escape from those two houses, he had travelled. China. South Africa. Brazil. Twice round the world. Had shot big game, climbed in the Alps, been round the coasts of Europe in a small sailing-boat” (104).

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In an echo of *All the Conspirators*, Edward’s attempt to escape the pressures of heteronormativity recalls Philip’s decision to “chuck everything up” and to leave London for Land’s End and the farthest limits of family, class, and nation (38). His literal escape leads to a similar dead end because there is nothing more to it than this. Edward continues to try to live up to his image as a war hero and to repress his sexuality, with the result that he spends his time oscillating between a kind of internal exile in England and an external exile abroad. A crisis occurs in Book Three, five years after the dedication of the memorial, when Edward has developed an infatuation for Richard’s nephew, Maurice, who, according to Isherwood’s preliminary notes, is being “talked of as a catamite” in connection with Edward’s constant visits to him at Cambridge (9). Eric, who has already warned Maurice about his behavior, calls to his rooms and finds him in the company of Edward, who appears to him to be “very ill, iller than ever. [...] His big pale eyes were mocking and full of light. His sallow nicotine-stained fingers were mere bones. The signet ring was quite loose on his hand, and [...] shook as he lifted his glass” (157). Edward mixes ‘Satan’s Kiss’ cocktails for his friend and performs balancing tricks for him with a knife, which he holds “aloft like a snake-charmer” (158). From Eric’s perspective, their decadent and flirtatious behavior has crossed a line between homosociality and homosexuality. Next day, he asks for the number of

Edward's room and, finding him alone and in bed, accuses him of exercising an influence over Maurice which is "about as rotten as it could possibly be" and suggests that he might imagine what the College is saying about him and his relations with the younger man (164-65). Eric tells him that he does not blame Edward for his preferences but insists that he is doing Maurice harm and that he ought to leave him alone. Unable to continue arguing, Edward promises to stay clear of Maurice and gives his word of honor, adding that he is aware that he cannot have any, at least as far as Eric is concerned (167).

That Eric's treatment of Edward is rooted in a visceral and irredeemable homophobia might be supposed from his perspective, which conveys multiple stereotypes of the homosexual as decadent, dissolute, and diseased; as a purveyor of unspeakable sins and crimes; as a rotten influence and a danger to the morals, in particular, of the young; as being willfully wicked, incapable of reform, and bereft of honor, decency, and respectability. There appears, however, to be more to it than this. Eric's memories of his adolescence reveal that his relationship with his cousin Maurice is reminiscent of the relationship between Edward and his school fellow Richard, except for a reversal in character and identification. Whereas Edward admired Richard for his calm and equanimity, Eric admires Maurice for his vitality and recklessness. For Edward, Chapel Bridge was a sanctuary, where he could have lived and rested forever; for Eric, it is his aunt Mary's house at Gatesley where, "if he could live always with his cousins, he would expand like a flower, breaking out of his own clumsy identity, gaining strength and confidence" (127-28). At the dedication of the memorial, Eric recalls his wartime fantasies of running away with Maurice in order to join up and become "war heroes, old soldiers, as good as grown-up men, respected by everybody" (108), and imagines that his name has been inscribed on the Memorial Cross, alongside that of his father, for saving Maurice's life through his own valor and self-sacrifice. Outside of these fantasies, he regards it as true that he is, in fact, a coward, who is held back by "pure fear – nothing else" (ibid.). After the dedication, he considers how much he hates Edward Blake: "Maurice was particularly enthusiastic about him, because, it seemed, he'd done marvels in the War, in the Air Force. He'd got the D.S.O. and the Military Cross. He'd even been once recommended for the V.C."; in short, "He was a hero" (117). Five years later, it would appear to be the case that Eric's treatment of Edward is grounded in a jealousy of longstanding, which he himself acknowledges after their interview: "The whole thing was nothing but jealousy. I'm ten

thousand times worse than Edward, Eric thought. Ten million times worse. Jealous; jealous; jealous!” (169).

In his preliminary notes, Isherwood offers a further explanation of Eric’s behavior: “couldn’t Eric himself also feel something of this infatuation for Maurice – working up to a climax on the night of the accident[?]” (6). Like Edward’s animosity toward Lily, Eric’s animosity toward Edward is strikingly and suspiciously excessive, to the extent that he departs from their interview “[t]rembling, furious with himself, [knowing] that in a moment he would burst into tears” (167). That there is an even deeper level of rivalry on his part is also suggested by the triangular congruence of his relationship with Maurice and his sister Anne and Edward’s relationship with Richard and his sister Mary, by the equivalent lack of heterosexual interest in the relationship, and by the extremity of its homosocial attraction: “He had been shy longer with Maurice, whom he admired so painfully, [...and who] never seemed to resent the claims Eric’s admiration made upon him” (123-24). In his preliminary notes, Isherwood intended to bring Eric’s jealousy to a dramatic ‘Dostoyevsky’-style climax, when he and Maurice are out in a car and Eric grabs the wheel, “trying to kill them both [in] a fearful smash” (9). After recovering from this catastrophe, in which he himself is almost killed, Eric realizes “what madness the whole thing was [and] is cured of worrying about Maurice” (ibid.). The idea of cure in this context is significant. It strikes a parallel between Eric’s “slightly queer” infatuation (6), and his “painfully uncouth” stammer (55), as signs of weakness which must be suppressed in order to conform to social norms and expectations. During his adolescence, Lily assures her son that “[e]verything can be cured” and that he can cure himself of his impediment if he will only fight against it (ibid.). Through persistence with pacing himself before speaking, Eric succeeds in overcoming his underlying shyness and in fulfilling his ambition to go up to Cambridge. That his conjectured infatuation with Maurice is another matter might be discerned in his confrontation with Edward, when his stammer reemerges as a further symptom of his underlying weakness: “‘There’s s-something’ – Eric made a desperate effort to control his voice, but it was loud, hoarse, abrupt, and the stammer seized him – ‘s-something I must t-talk to you about’” (163).

Although Isherwood decides not to pursue this particular line, writing that he is “still puzzled by the Eric problem [and does not] want him to be altogether homosexual, if at all” (6), the parallel between Eric and Edward persists in the published novel. Edward’s infatuation with Maurice is a symptom that he is surrendering to his same-sex desire, as is evident in its

accompanying signs of weakness. In the company of Maurice, his mouth presents a “nervous sideways twitch and he spoke deliberately, as though he had to concentrate on pronouncing the words” (157). When Eric discovers him in his room, he has the impression of “an invalid – pale, unshaven, staring passively at the daylight” (162-63), and tells him that he does not think him wicked as much as considers him weak (166). Whereas Eric’s ambition to be a don requires him to cure his stammer and infatuation as symptoms of underlying shyness and a ‘slightly queer’ sexuality, Edward’s need to uphold his image as a war hero requires him to repress his nerves as a symptom of shell-shock and his infatuation as a symptom of sublimated same-sex desire. Eric cures his stammer by pacing his speech, while Edward drinks his nerves into a ‘terrific vitality’. In the case of their infatuations with Maurice, Isherwood speculates that Eric cures his by impulsively crashing his car and that Edward “train[s] himself physically to like women” in his efforts to cure himself of his own (2). The character of Mrs. Laurence, who has known of this tendency in Edward all along and whom he respects and loves physically but not romantically, has become Margaret Lanwin in the published novel. After his interview with Eric, Edward retreats to her studio, where it is obvious that his weaknesses have finally overwhelmed him, as he sinks into a divan with a groan, telling her that he is “all done in” (168). Pleading for Margaret’s help, he asks her “quite distinctly, but half to himself, [...] ‘I wonder if you can bring it off[?]’” (169). She tells him that she will try, while thinking to herself that “he had said it. At last”, with the implication that she has been anticipating such a circumstance as an opportunity of her own (*ibid.*).

Begging her to take him “away from here [...] Anywhere. Out of this damned town. Out of this cursed country” (168), Edward resorts to the same solution as he did in the crisis of his relationship with Richard, when, in order to escape the heteronormative lifestyles of his newly married friends, he impulsively quit England and traveled twice around the world. From the South of France, he sends a postcard of a picturesque bay: “The tinting of sea and sky overlapped a little at the edge, staining the horizon puce. All it said was: ‘Please accept this as an alibi. EDWARD’” (169-70). Addressed to Eric, the picture-postcard is an ‘alibi’ in the literal sense that it is proof that he is in another place, in a metaphorical sense that it signifies that he has relinquished Maurice, and in an ironic sense that, behind the saccharine image of sun, sea, and sand, it conveys an implication of exile. In this case, it is representative of a common trope in cultural and literary history. This is the male homosexual who, although he is exposed and disowned at home, can avail of the resources of his class, sex, and nationality in order to live a life of discretion abroad, in

certain jurisdictions where same-sex relations are less subject to social or criminal sanction. Edward and Margaret take a villa near St. Tropez, where she works on her painting while he spends his evenings at the port, mixing with the “delicate, staccato Frenchmen”, the “small, untidy, worried-looking Spaniards”, and the “large, lazy Russians with many wives”, among whom there is “[s]carcely a single Englishman” (198). If his feeling of relief is typical of the exile, so too is his feeling of ennui, which becomes a “nostalgia for the whole world” (ibid.), and his passive hope of revolutionary change at home. In their second year at St. Tropez, Edward and Margaret receive news of the General Strike. Although the political crisis passes quickly and he is not even sure which side to support, Edward feels that “[s]omething important is happening”, that there “may be a revolution”, and that his rightful place is to be “mixed up in this” somehow rather than to “sit here, hiding in this damned country” (201-02).

During this exile, what Margaret contributes to ‘bringing off’ is an outward performance of heteronormativity. To begin with, she treats Edward like a “pet cat”, preferring him to spend his afternoons lying near her, on the verandah or under a tree (197). Next, she instructs him in basic gender roles by forbidding him to share in the housework even though he wants to (198). Then, she initiates him into domesticity, of the kind practiced by the Scrivens and the Vernons, when they spend their evenings at the villa, sitting together on the verandah, reading to each other aloud, or playing poker-patience until midnight, when they kiss and tell each other “Good-night, my dear” (ibid.). Graduating beyond these stages, he and Margaret spend the winter of 1925-26 in London, where they step out everywhere together and accustom their hosts to always invite them as a “married pair” (201). In public, they begin “playing up to each other like trained actors”, and, in private, engage in a one-off performance of what Edward describes as their “duty to [their] neighbours” (ibid.). Afterwards, although they both consider the experience to have been “very funny and not in the least disgusting – but quite hopeless”, Edward begins to feel uneasy with Margaret’s strained humor, which comes across in such comments as ‘Ah! Edward – if they but knew you as you are’, and, “To think, Edward – I might cure you’ (ibid.). In his preliminary notes, Isherwood writes that Margaret “never dreamed of bringing it up against him or even condemning it in her own mind until she was specifically jealous” (11). Edward soon has an impression of being ironically watched (202), and a tension enters and grows in their mutual teasing in connection with Edward’s friends, Mimi, the son of a lighthouse keeper, and Olivier, a young ballet dancer in Paris. When Edward accuses Margaret of regarding him as her husband, she

concedes that she can sometimes be possessive and admits that she sometimes wonders if their current arrangement is at all workable (204). The truth, as Isherwood suggests in his notes, is that Edward cannot give her what she most wants, which is romantic as well as companionable love, and, “of course, there’s the hell of a bust-up over this” (2).

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Book Three closes with Eric and Maurice receiving their respective versions of Edward’s picture-postcard from the South of France, leaving the reader to wait until the middle chapter of the next book to discover these details of his continental exile. In the meantime, Book Four opens four years later, in 1929, when a party, composed of Mary and Maurice, Edward and Margaret, Anne and Tommy, and three young musician friends of Mary’s, arrives at the Hall in the early morning from London. Critics who claim that nothing has changed overlook not only the imminent marriage between Anne and Tommy but also an apparent reversal in the positions of Eric and Edward. Whereas Eric is conspicuous by his absence, it is Edward who proposed the idea of the excursion, Edward who pushes open the gates for the vehicles to enter, and Edward who ushers everyone inside the main building, exclaiming, “Welcome to the Hall!” (180). He appears to have resumed his close relationship with Maurice and to be on excellent terms with Mary and Margaret. Moreover, when Maurice regretfully notes the absence of Eric, Mary mentions that the only person who sees his cousin nowadays is Edward, who confirms that he has been helping out with the Boys’ Club (183). Maurice suggests that Edward lead the party upstairs for a tour of the house, then spars with him until they both come crashing down the stairs and into the garden. Whereas Maurice returns slowly, panting, toward the house, Edward is “scarcely winded at all. He vaulted the fence [...] and bounded across the garden[...] his face radiant with energy” (187). Considering what the reader has discovered in Edward’s story so far, it comes as quite a surprise that everything seems to have turned out just fine. Like Mary, he appears to be reconciled with the past and unconcerned about the future. His vitality has entirely lost the terrific quality which connects it to underlying weakness and the suppression of his shell-shock and same-sex desire. Nevertheless, Mary notes the “small hollow in the skull where he had had the operation after his motor accident, last winter, in Berlin” (*ibid.*), reminding the reader of his suicide attempt and raising inevitable questions about what has happened in the meantime.

In the remainder of Book Four, it becomes evident how the Old-New Life contrast between Lily and Mary takes second place to the ‘real’ Old-New Life contrast between Eric and Edward;

whereas it is unclear which of the women has done so, it is entirely certain which of the men has failed and which has succeeded in making the correct choice between the two. There is a gap of a full year in the narrative between the end of Book One, when Eric visits Lily in London and Edward attempts suicide in Berlin, and the beginning of Book Four, when the party arrives at the Hall toward the end of 1929. The last the reader hears of Eric is Lily's thought that he "isn't going to marry" (213), and his own news, in a letter addressed by him to Edward, that he will presently be received into the Roman Catholic Church (217). Eric presents this conversion as a kind of final redemption but, because he does not explain what has led him to it from his membership of the communist party, it is not at all convincing that it is anything other than another attempt to reterritorialize his identity in oppositional terms. As Wilde suggests, Eric continues to make "wild stabs at finding an authentic existence, all the while moving relentlessly back to his starting point" (1971, 47). This is his position as a 'Truly Weak Man', who makes increasingly ironic and desperate attempts to pass the 'Test'. Wilde argues that, with this latest gesture of rebellion and commitment, Eric is in "full flight back to authority, to exactly the force, now in intensified form, from which he has been fleeing and against which he has been revolting" (ibid., 48). Finney suggests that his conversion is actually a "reversion to the mother-child relationship" and that the Church is a "substitute for his mother who was the source of most of his neuroses" (97). As Summers notes, his conversion is "analogous to Philip Lindsay's reversion to childhood in *All the Conspirators*, a retreat into the arms of maternal authority" (1980, 61). Wilde goes even further, suggesting that Eric's absence from Book Four signifies a "retreat, to all intents and purposes, from the human scene" (1971, 48).

In contrast to Eric, Edward is constantly present in the remainder of the novel and involved in a reverse process, as he discovers a nomadic line of escape from a comparable cycle of reterritorialization. In the middle chapter of Book Four, Edward is traveling by train across northern Germany and recalling the three years which followed his interview with Eric in Cambridge, when he made increasingly desperate attempts to come to terms with his shell-shock and same-sex desire through continuous reterritorialization. In 1925, after their altercation over Mimi, Margaret left St. Tropez for Paris, while Edward extended his exile to the extreme edge of the continent by taking a ship from Marseilles to Constantinople. In 1926, following an aviation experiment which resulted in the death of the pilot and his own hospitalization for two months, Edward decided to quit Europe for Damascus but, finding that he could "rest nowhere", continued



into the mountains, where he became mysteriously involved with Sheikh Mahmoud, a self-declared ‘King of Kurdistan’ then in rebellion against the British Mandate in Iraq (206). In 1927, Edward began to find some stability in a relationship with Mitka, with whom he shared a studio in Paris. After numerous reconciliations and renewed separations over the years, Margaret accepted his invitation to visit, but tormented him with a “faintly amused smile” and mocking questions in the vein of “Who mends your socks?” and “Which of you gets the breakfast?” (ibid.). When Edward accused her of visiting them only to be certain that “the exception really did prove the rule” and that “this kind of thing is always a failure”, she replied to him that, in this particular case, it was simply not his style (207-08). One evening, nearly seven months later, Mitka casually left the studio and did not come back. Within a week, Edward returned to London and resumed his frantic lifestyle with Margaret, going to “rabbit parties and play[ing] at being a rabbit – the biggest rabbit of them all” (209). His reminiscences end with the thought that things could not go on as they were and, ominously, that “he knew how it would end. [...] But not here. Not in Paris. Someone mentioned Berlin. [...] In forty-eight hours he was on his way” (ibid.).

At this point, as Isherwood suggests in *Lions and Shadows*, the reader is encouraged to return to Book One, in which every detail now seems “charged with meaning, with reference to things past, with presage of things to come” (298). In the final chapter of Book One, Edward removes two letters from his suitcase. The first, which is addressed to Margaret, he tears up and burns; the second, which leaves Eric some cash for his charities and asks him to ensure that all of his personal papers are destroyed, he replaces in the suitcase. From this, Edward turns his attention to the dressing-table and to the card of the psychoanalyst, recommended by someone at one of Mary’s parties, whom he has visited only the day before. It is already clear to the reader of Book One that Edward gave himself two choices before arriving in Berlin: suicide or psychoanalysis. An attentive reader of the subsequent books might recall the close of his interview with Eric in Cambridge. When Eric grants that he had a “very bad time in the War” but that he could make an effort to pull himself together, Edward smiles and agrees that, “Yes, the War’s getting a bit old as an excuse now, isn’t it?” (166). While it can be assumed by the reader of Book One that Edward has been overwhelmed by shell-shock, to the reader of Book Four, it is evident that his shell-shock is, by this time, partly an excuse for avoiding the related issue of his sexuality. That this latest therapist is specifically a psychoanalyst suggests that this is now also a conscious concern, as does the fact that his suicide notes are addressed to the only two people who have discussed that issue

with him. Edward removes an automatic pistol from a drawer of the dressing-table. As he does so, he is representative of another trope in cultural and literary history, which is that of the homosexual who commits suicide out of a sense of social duty and personal self-loathing. This is exemplified in the contemporary scandal involving Lord Beauchamp, who was ‘outed’ and exiled from England in 1931, when King George V is rumored to have remarked, “I thought men like that shot themselves” (Cooke).

The final chapter of Book Four corresponds to the final chapter of Book One. A year later, Edward is once again in Berlin but, instead of suicide notes to Eric and Margaret, he is reading letters he has received from each of them in the afternoon post. Margaret writes that she could think of no excuse for his departure other than to explain “all without disguise”, telling Mary, “[y]ou know what Edward is, and she agreed that we all knew what you were” (216). This indicates not only that his sexuality is an open secret but that he is sufficiently comfortable with it for it to be mentioned among their friends. Margaret adds that he may be thankful that “we don’t [know what he is]” and concludes her letter by wishing that “we both enjoy ourselves according to our own tastes and in our own ways” (ibid.). Although he is reconciled to ‘what’ he is, no-one can be sure what this is; for now, it is simply a ‘taste’ or a ‘way’, which does not assume the kind of identity he was attempting to project in his ‘married’ relationship with Margaret. This compares with Eric’s news that he is to become a Roman Catholic, which betrays a need for something namable and definable with which he can identify and which brings him an “extraordinary feeling of peace” as a result (217). After Edward finishes reading these letters, the reader discovers what it is that has brought about his reformation. A whistle sounds from outside and he tosses the key to a young man who is waiting below. Once Franz is inside, he is clearly at ease in the apartment and on familiar terms with Edward, who performs some balancing tricks with a paper-knife in response to the handsprings he performs on the back of the sofa. This subtle parallelism, whose reference to Maurice emphasizes that the relationship is mutual this time, extends to the scars which he and Franz compare and to the jokes they share about the War. As both men become serious, agreeing that it was both awful and terrible, the final words of the novel are spoken: “‘You know’, said Franz, [...] ‘that War ... it ought never to have happened’” (220).

Critics consistently miss the point of the final scene and words of the novel, claiming that Edward has failed to find a resting place or that he just happens to be in Berlin with his “latest homosexual pick-up” (Finney, 100). Wilde contends that the prominence of the character

demonstrates the “despair Isherwood feels in giving expression to his ‘War complex’”, and that there is little to choose between him and Eric, who both represent “the neurotic hero, The Truly Weak Man’ [...] and both in their different ways fail” (1971, 51/49). On the contrary, the contrast between Isherwood’s literary ‘doubles’ reflects not only an expression but the final resolution of his ‘War’ complex. In *Lions and Shadows*, Isherwood’s decision to leave London for Berlin has, at first, “nothing to do with Germany or the Germans at all” (299). Having abandoned psychoanalysis, he travels to Berlin simply to prove an alternative philosophy by meeting Mr. Barnard, a disciple of the Connecticut-born reformer, educator, and psychologist Homer Lane. At the same time, in *The Memorial*, Edward travels to Berlin to give psychoanalysis a try, but discovers an alternative to it in his relationship with Franz, which enables him to effectively fulfil Lane’s philosophy of accepting the “inner law of our own nature” and to desist from attempting to cure himself through drink and heteronormativity (300). As Isherwood later explains in *Christopher and His Kind* (1976), it was the opportunity to take a specifically male, German, and working-class lover which allowed him to begin to realize himself in the conduct of his life and in his life as a writer. As though the War had never happened at all, both he and Edward have taken advantage not only of a literal deterritorialization but a deterritorialization in class, nationality, and sexuality. Both men have stopped trying to pass the ‘Test’. Both have given up the life of the ‘Truly Weak Man’, which is fit for only suicide or psychoanalysis. In so doing, neither has become a ‘Truly Strong Man’, which is still related to the ‘Test’, but what Isherwood refers to as the ‘Pure-in-Heart Man’, who is “essentially free and easy [...] entirely without fear [...] And without sexual guilt [...] Above all, he [is] profoundly, fundamentally happy” (304).

## Conclusion

In the 1920s, Isherwood's rejection of the subject positions prescribed by family, class, and nation was realized in a nomadic movement of deterritorialization from his home country to that of the national rival, Germany. Section II considered how this movement is reflected in *All the Conspirators* (1928), *The Memorial* (1932), and *Lions and Shadows* (1938). Chapter 1 read *Lions and Shadows* as a description of Isherwood's failure to become a successful novelist due to his entanglement of an Oedipus complex with a 'War' complex. *All the Conspirators* provides both a demonstration and exaggeration of Oedipus, which results in the double discovery of the social forces which operate behind the family triangle and the possibility of a line of escape from them. Philip's failure to follow such lines and to realize his ambition to become an artist demonstrates the futility of psychoanalysis as a philosophy of inaction and self-defeat. Chapter 2 read *The Memorial* as an expression of Isherwood's 'War' complex through the characters of Eric and Edward, who are 'Truly Weak Men' in the sense that they constantly repress their desires and anxieties in order to pass the 'Test'. Whereas Eric remains trapped in a cycle of rebellion and reterritorialization, Edward discovers a nomadic line of escape through relocation in Berlin, where he abandons psychoanalysis and resolves his complexes by finding a male, working-class, German lover. In *Kafka*, Deleuze and Guattari summarize the twin effects of the expansion of Oedipus: "The discovery *a contrario* of other triangles that operate beneath and, indeed, in the familial triangle, and the *a posteriori* outlining of paths of escape of the orphaned becoming-animal" (14). If 'becoming-animal' is the form taken by Kafka as he moves further toward a minor literature in his short stories, an equivalent route is taken by Isherwood through emigration and minor sexuality in his early novels. These provide an insight into the motivations not only of the author but of the namesake narrator of the *Berlin Stories* (1935-39), which are the subject of Section III.

### Section III: Isherwood in Germany (1930s)

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#### Introduction

In March 1929, Isherwood visited Berlin and returned to live in the city from November 1929 through May 1933. In becoming an expatriate, he was enabled to realize his sexual and vocational desires by pursuing both a literal line of escape and a nomadic movement of deterritorialization from the subject positions prescribed for him by family, class, and nation. As he recalled in an interview conducted fifty years later, the most immediate effect of his move was simply “[g]etting away, shedding to some extent the whole British persona” (qtd. Marsh, 106). Isherwood decided to one day write about his experiences and, with this objective in mind, kept a detailed diary, which was to provide the material for the *Berlin Stories* (1935-39). After his departure from Germany, his first idea was to transform this material into “one huge tightly constructed melodramatic novel” (1963, v). His working title, ‘The Lost’, was intended to convey a double meaning, “referring tragically to the political events” of the epoch and, “in quotation marks”, “referring satirically to those individuals whom respectable society shuns in horror” (ibid.). Among such individuals are Arthur Norris and Sally Bowles, two of his most memorable characters, who were to perform a “butterfly dance against the approaching thunderstorm of violence which was the coming of the Nazi Party into power” (Isherwood & Summers, 164). As his material proved to be too unwieldy for such a project, Isherwood decided to concentrate instead on vignettes of certain outstanding characters, incidents, and situations (ibid.). A resulting novella, *Mr. Norris Changes Trains* (1935), was followed by several shorter pieces. ‘The Nowaks’, ‘The Landauers’, and ‘A Berlin Diary (Autumn 1930)’ were published in early issues of John Lehmann’s literary periodical, *New Writing* (1936-37); ‘Sally Bowles’ was published in a separate volume in late 1937; two further pieces, ‘On Ruegen Island (Summer 1931)’ and ‘A Berlin Diary (Winter 1932-3)’, were published along with these as the novella *Goodbye to Berlin* (1939). In 1945, the two novellas were published together as the *Berlin Stories*.

In his foreword to *New Writing in Europe* (1940), John Lehmann champions Isherwood as “one of the first prose writers of his generation to receive the full impact of Europe as the Fascist tidal wave began to roll over it, and one of the very few who neither turned their backs on the catastrophe [...] nor were deflected by it” (50). The *Berlin Stories* have been read as a vision of

contemporary moral, social, and political changes and, on the basis of its ‘camera’ and namesake narrators, as exemplary of tendencies toward reportage and socially-conscious autobiography in the writing of the 1930s. The stories are often read biographically but, in the case of Isherwood’s explorations of personal identity, critics generally defer to the later memoir of his time in Berlin, *Christopher and His Kind* (1976). Section III returns to the *Berlin Stories* to examine how Isherwood addresses issues of identity directly in his writing of the 1930s. As well as reading the novellas in relation to his earlier novels, it reexamines the significance of the ‘camera’ and namesake narrators and reassesses Isherwood’s responses to contemporary social and political developments. In *Kafka*, Deleuze and Guattari ask: “How to become a nomad and an immigrant and a gypsy in relation to one’s own language? Kafka answers: steal the baby from its crib, walk the tightrope” (19). What is suggested by them is that Kafka takes the deterritorialized German of Prague further in the direction of deterritorialization by becoming animal in his short stories. Following this example, Section III argues that Isherwood takes the English of London and Cambridge, which is already deterritorialized in Berlin, further in the same direction and toward a minor literature by becoming minor sexually. As Deleuze and Guattari argue in the case of Kafka, a minor literature is evident on the levels of both content and expression and is a concern not only of the individual artist but of one who is engaged in a politics and in the articulation of a community.

Chapter 1 reads the *Berlin Stories* intertextually, alongside *All the Conspirators* (1928) and *The Memorial* (1932), in order to present Isherwood’s narrative techniques as an attempt not to represent minority as a state of being but to communicate becoming-minor in both content and expression. Selecting from the perspective of a ‘camera’ and namesake narrator, whose identity is reflected in a variety of local and expatriate characters, Isherwood combines the influences of Wildean aestheticism, Forsterian tragi-comedy, and the performative excesses of Berlin clubland to create what is considered in this chapter to be a minor transnational style of camp. On the basis of Isherwood’s own ideas, as well as those of Sontag (1964), Thomas (1976), and Denisoff (2001), the chapter demonstrates how his writing camps the oedipal structures which support the bourgeoisie, engages in a political subversion of majoritarian standards, and provides an alternative to the communities of family, class, and nation. Chapter 2 considers how Isherwood becomes engaged as a political writer in regard to contemporary conditions in Germany as well as in the UK. It argues that his political consciousness evolved during the 1930s to a queer, pacifist,

and transnational position, which repudiates the party politics of fascism and socialism in favor of a personally motivated politics of minority. Developing Denisoff's concept of the 'sympathetic impulse of camp' (1998), the chapter examines how Isherwood extends his own sense of minority to include a variety of characters who are vulnerable because of their minoritization, such as women, sexual minorities, the Jewish ethnic minority, and the working-class social minority. Following Christie's reading (2001) of 'On Ruegen Island (Summer 1931)' as a 'queer rewriting' of Forster's pastoral novel *Maurice* (1913-14), the chapter goes on to consider how, in this and in other episodes of the *Berlin Stories*, Isherwood reflects on the challenges posed to minor politics and community by historical reality in the 1930s. Although minor camp is not enough to defeat fascism, it does represent a conscious political response in support of a broader minor community.

### III.1. Expatriate Minority: The *Berlin Stories* (1935-39)

Chronologically, the *Berlin Stories* begin with ‘A Berlin Diary (Autumn 1930)’, the opening passage of which might be considered an introduction to the collection as a whole. Beginning, “From my window, the deep solemn massive street. Cellar-shops where the lamps burn all day, under the shadow of top-heavy balconied façades...” (1), it shares many points of contact with the final chapter of *The Memorial*, which begins, “Edward sat at the table by the window of his room, overlooking the trees and the black canal...” (216). In his Berkeley lectures, Isherwood mentions his need for a “whole other kind of existence” in connection with the “great importance of changing [his] surroundings and [his] language” (Isherwood & Summers, 162). The realization of such a double deterritorialization is already reflected in the earlier novel, in which Edward is living in a new country and communicating in a new language. Consisting almost entirely of direct speech between him and Franz, the final chapter demonstrates Edward’s fluency in the local dialect of German, in contrast to the obvious difficulties he experiences in his native country, where he speaks his native language “deliberately, as though he had to concentrate on pronouncing the words[, producing] the effect of something said in a foreign language” (157). In Berlin, English has literally become a foreign language, which Edward can now control, manage, and repossess in other respects, as is evident when Franz examines his letters: “‘And these are both written in English? [...] Read some of this one. I want to hear how it sounds’. Edward, faintly smiling, read aloud [...] He paused, asked: ‘Well, did you understand it?’” (219). At Berkeley, Isherwood recalls how “living in Germany was entirely different from living in England” (Isherwood & Summers, 162). The routine of communicating in German provided a “most marvelous kind of protection” for that part of himself which was then “only thinking in English, rather than speaking in English, and was almost entirely concerned with writing and the translation of experience” (ibid.). This is reflected in ‘A Berlin Diary (Autumn 1930)’, in which the narrator is also living a new life, in a “foreign city, alone, far from home” (1), and, as the reader shortly discovers, shares his name and circumstances with the author.

In his lectures, Isherwood explains that an initial irresolution prompted him to use his two middle names, ‘William Bradshaw’, in the first novella of the *Berlin Stories* before he felt confident enough to use ‘Christopher Isherwood’ in each of the installments of the second (Isherwood & Summers, 165). Among his reasons for lending his name to the narrator was a



realization that the integrity of his characters was inevitably compromised by his own particular perspective. Concluding that he must not pretend to know anything other than “what I see, nothing else”, he decided to write entirely and transparently from the “point of view of how I see events, how I see people, how I see characters” (ibid., 167). Nevertheless, in his introduction to the first edition of *Goodbye to Berlin* (1939), Isherwood serves notice that, even though he has given his own name to the ‘I’ of the narrative, the reader is “certainly not entitled to assume that its pages are purely autobiographical” or that the narrator which shares his name is anything other than a “convenient ventriloquist’s dummy” (9). In addressing the paradox of this disclaimer, Wilde notes that Isherwood’s resort to autobiography was typical of writers of his generation as a means of “discovering rather than simply of expressing value” (1971, 54). Although the namesake narrator is a reflection of such reflexivity, it is also a projection of his own uncertainties in this regard as well as a product of his attempts to process such uncertainties through an “interaction of life and fiction”, or a “partnership between the raw materials of the one and the tentative normative explorations of the other” (ibid., 55-56). For Bucknell, the namesake narrator functions as a “barrier between author and reader and does not reveal or express the author’s true self” (2001, 24). Indeed, that Bradshaw-Isherwood makes a habit of introducing himself at the beginning of almost every episode of the *Berlin Stories*, and that he is variously hailed Bill, Willi, William, Mr. Bradshaw, Chris, Christoph, Christopher, Mr. Isherwood, and Herr Issyvoo in the course of his encounters, suggests that the character does not have a ‘true’ self at all but is the vehicle of an exploration of selfhood through a combination of biographical fact and imaginative fiction.

The correspondences between the final chapter of *The Memorial* and the opening passage of ‘A Berlin Diary (Autumn 1930)’ suggest that Isherwood will take the English language further in the direction of deterritorialization by exploring his minority sexuality through the character of Bradshaw-Isherwood. In this, he might be expected to take a cue from Margaret’s enigmatic remark in her letter to Edward that, although they all know ‘what’ he is, “You may be thankful, my dear, that we don’t” (216). This, however, is not the case. Bradshaw-Isherwood considers that “soon the whistling will begin”, when the young men of the district send signals to be let in from the cold, which “echo down the deep hollow street, lascivious and private and sad” (1). This is in echo of Edward, who is alerted by a “long whistle sound[ing] from the darkness of the trees by the canal bank” (218). Whereas Edward rises from his chair and calls down to Franz, who is waiting for him below, Bradshaw-Isherwood is in the habit of ignoring the interruption or of getting up only to

make quite certain that “it is not – as I know very well it could not possibly be – for me” (2). In an interview with the *Gay Sunshine* literary journal in 1973, Isherwood explains that he avoided the issue of Bradshaw-Isherwood’s sexuality in order to make him seem not too odd, eccentric, or remarkable in comparison with the other characters; he also admits that he would have been “embarrassed, then, to create a homosexual character and give him my own name” (Leyland, 100). The omission effectively neuters the narrator, rendering him “bland and anonymous” (Connolly 1938, 74), a “sexless nitwit” (Isherwood & Summers, 167), or a “wet fish, sexless, gullible and terribly English” (Fryer, 100). In an earlier interview, Isherwood expressed some regret that he had avoided the issue and thereby missed an opportunity to make him “more human and, insofar as somebody is more human, he is less heartless. What one means by heartlessness is indifference, a characteristic of robots” (Geherin, 76). Although the omission had certain undesirable consequences in characterization, it nonetheless encouraged him to convey his minority sexuality by more subtle means than through direct reference to the sexuality of his namesake narrator.

If Bradshaw-Isherwood comes across as heartless, inhuman, and robotic, the character is provided with a perfect analogue in the self-referential metaphor, “I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking” (1). Due to its appearance in the second paragraph of ‘A Berlin Diary (Autumn 1930)’, this metaphor is often regarded as a statement of artistic intent. As such, it is generally interpreted to imply the conventionally objective methods of reportage and documentary and continues to be regularly cited as exemplary of social realism in the writing of the 1930s. As other critics have pointed out, this interpretation is belied by the preceding and subsequent paragraphs of the text, which opens with a lyrical description of the narrator’s surroundings, continues with reflection, introspection, and philosophical speculation, and introduces other characters in his own very intimate and highly subjective terms. Thomas argues that the camera should be seen for what it is. Far from referring to a “self-effacing onlooker”, this is a “defensive mask, the pseudo-impersonality of a young man, ‘alone, far from home’, attempting to protect a vulnerable personality” (1972, 44/48). In similar terms, Wilde argues that the camera is a “mask and a shield” (1971, 19), and suggests, moreover, that to refuse to take the statement at face value, to see in its claims of detachment and transparency the fears and insecurities of the narrator, “to become aware, in short, of Christopher as the cynosure of the novel and of his buried life as its principal subject – is to come to know Isherwood’s strategy” (68). Like the ‘dummy’ narrator, the ‘camera’ narrator is another kind of barrier which is positioned between author and

reader. As a projection of his own uncertainties in regard to selfhood, it allows Isherwood the opportunity to claim as well as to safely disown any involvement in the experiences of Bradshaw-Isherwood. According to Bristow, the ‘I’ of the narrator and the ‘eye’ of the camera are combined by him to create a “complex dual perspective: distanced and passive, on the one hand, while intimate and active, on the other” (148). This “doubled consciousness [...] provides an ingenious device for concealing and revealing Christopher’s and (by extension) Isherwood’s sexual inclinations”, in particular, among their more general tendencies (ibid.).

Precisely how this device is concealing as well as revealing of their sexualities can be understood by returning to the metaphor of the camera as a statement of artistic intent and interpreting it quite differently from critics who do so in terms of social realism. Noting that Bradshaw-Isherwood reveals very little directly about himself, Wilde suggests that, “as the most complex [...] the one least certain of his own identity, Christopher *cannot* reveal more” and argues that his involvement in the lives of other characters is his “means to self-understanding, just as they are, more concretely, the reader’s means to understanding him” (1971, 72). In analogous terms, the photographer might project the camera away from themselves, but their choices of selection become a means to understanding the self, both by themselves and by their viewers. The first images recorded by Bradshaw-Isherwood are already revealing: “I am a camera with its shutter open, quite passive, recording, not thinking. Recording the man shaving at the window opposite and the woman in the kimono washing her hair” (1). Significantly, these are human figures which are distinguished according to sex and noteworthy because of their engagement in private activities of hygiene, grooming, and appearance which are, in turn, distinguished according to gender. Extending the metaphor of the camera, these still images anticipate more developed short features of his neighbors and full-length features of his friends and associates, whose genders and sexualities are all highlighted for being unconventional in one way or another. Piazza reflects on how the idea now seems preposterous that Bradshaw-Isherwood can “stagger through Berlin’s bacchanalia; hobnob with homosexuals, heterosexuals, and pansexuals; fend off countless propositions; [...] and still retain his neuter innocence” (179). On the contrary, as Bristow notes, the character is “central to a sexually perverse culture” and, even if he is “not openly identified as queer [...], his experience of Berlin assuredly is” (147). To this, it can be added that his representation of this experience is also assuredly queer. If choices of selection by the writer and the photographer are analogous in providing the content of their respective work, what remains is

the expression of this content, as Bradshaw-Isherwood implies: “Some day, all this will have to be developed, carefully printed, fixed” (1).

The style of the *Berlin Stories* is anticipated in the final chapter of *The Memorial*, which is very different in tone and structure from the preceding chapters of that novel. In a movement away from mainstream modernism, it abandons the Joycean thought-stream and Forsterian flashback techniques which have otherwise defined the structure of the narrative in favor of unmediated dialogue and a foregrounding of the comedic approach of Forster. As he explains in his Berkeley lectures, Isherwood regarded himself as an essentially comic writer who, however much he intended to deal with tragic themes, rejected the idea of tragedy in the classical sense and intended instead that there should always be a “sort of farcical flash passing over the stage” (Isherwood & Summers, 151). An element of farce is certainly evident in the exchanges between Edward and Franz, whose verbal and physical interaction combines gallows and slapstick humor with allusions to the hardships of the Great War and its repercussions in the politically motivated violence of contemporary Berlin. This juxtaposition of comedy and tragedy is maintained in Isherwood’s plans for ‘The Lost’, the characters of which were to figure against a background of “the world going astray into the paths of violence and destruction” but were nonetheless intended to be “amusing rather than somber and satiric rather than tragic” (ibid., 164). In the *Berlin Stories*, this Forsterian tragi-comic style is distinguished by a particular type of humor which is already anticipated in the final chapter of *The Memorial*. Franz boasts to Edward that he has understood a little of the English in Margaret’s letter, conjecturing that there is a reference to “something being expensive, isn’t there? Doesn’t ‘dear’ mean expensive? [...] You see? I can understand English” (219). This awkward pun, which suggestively confuses commerce and affection, might easily pass for one of the *double entendres* of camp. “As a general starting point”, as Denisoff explains, “camp can be viewed as an amorphous collection of styles, themes, personae, and attitudes which have been associated, in recent history, primarily with homosexuals but also more broadly with people who define themselves by unconventional gender configurations or sexual desires” (1998, 83). In this case, it might also be viewed as the starting point of Isherwood’s minor transnational style.

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The style of the *Berlin Stories* is described by Isherwood as a “sort of seriocomic melodrama” (Isherwood & Summers, 57). This is echoed by many critics, who describe it in related terms as a “mixture of comedy and pathos” (Dewsnap, 31), a “series of contrasts, humorous and violent,

comic and tragic” (Finney, 117), or a “comic style [which makes] a serious point” (Mendelson, 2). Few critics refer to the style explicitly as camp. Of these, Thomas (1976) and Denisoff (2001) argue that Isherwood’s representation of a doomed and decadent urban underworld is influenced by the aestheticism of Joris-Karl Huysmans’s novel *À Rebours* (1884) and the late romanticism of Baudelaire’s posthumous *Intimate Journals* (1887), which were translated by Isherwood and published with an introduction by T. S. Eliot in 1930. Thomas argues, furthermore, that his “debt to this tradition, [was] transformed by a contemporary homosexual sensibility” (118). Although he does not mention Forster in this connection, it must surely include his influence, which can be discerned in shifts in tone from a “tragic dimension [...] to comic ambiguity” (ibid.), and from “stylish comedy to high moral seriousness” (123). It must also include Isherwood’s practical experiences of life in Berlin. Freeman mentions that camp flourished among the “demimonde of the queer city”, as can be appreciated throughout the *Berlin Stories* and, one might add, *Christopher and His Kind* (1976) (14). By combining the decadence of late romanticism and aestheticism, the farcical seriousness of Forsterian tragi-comedy, and the performative excesses and ambiguities of Berlin clubland, Isherwood created a unique literary style. As Kermode argues, perhaps the “best way to put this is in terms of Isherwood’s theory of High Camp”; accordingly, the *Berlin Stories* are “High Camp about civilisation; [...] establishing recondite harmonies between the absurd and the desperate, between private posture and public disaster” (72). What Kermode refers to as Isherwood’s ‘theory of High Camp’ appears in a discussion between two characters in his later novel, *The World in the Evening* (1954). Although it was not until the 1950s that Isherwood named and attempted to define the style he had developed, “[i]f these statements are not pressed too hard”, as Thomas suggests, “they do yield something” of relevance to an analysis of the earlier *Berlin Stories* (122).

In her pioneering ‘Notes on Camp’ (1964), Susan Sontag identifies camp as a mode of sensibility, which evolved from an aristocratic penchant for surface and artifice, through the stylization and sophistication of dandyism and aestheticism, to a contemporary delight in regarding everything through the lenses of irony and exaggeration. Recognizing that there exists a “peculiar relation” between camp and homosexuality, she suggests that, while it is not the case that camp taste *is* homosexual taste, “homosexuals, by and large, constitute the vanguard – and the most articulate audience – of Camp” (290). In *The World in the Evening*, camp is explained by Charles, a homosexual doctor, to Stephen, a patient he assumes is heterosexual. According to him, ‘camp’

is a term used in “queer circles” to distinguish a style, or “how to do things with an air” (125-26). Whereas ‘Low Camp’ is exemplified by a “swishy little boy with peroxided hair, dressed in a picture hat and a feather boa”, ‘High Camp’ is associated with serious art, as indicated by his examples of ballet, baroque, Mozart, El Greco, and Dostoevsky (ibid.). Both varieties of camp evidently have an object but, unlike ‘Low Camp’, ‘High Camp’ “always has an underlying seriousness. You can’t camp about something you don’t take seriously. You’re not making fun of it; you’re making fun out of it. You’re expressing what’s basically serious to you in terms of fun and artifice” (ibid.). Sontag acknowledges Isherwood for providing what is probably the first discussion of camp to have appeared in print (275). Despite her skepticism, she broadly concurs with his outline of the phenomenon, arguing that its principal aim and effect is to “dethrone the serious” (288). Among the most controversial aspects of ‘Notes on Camp’ is her claim that camp is “disengaged, depoliticized - or at least apolitical”, on the basis that to emphasize style is “to slight content, or to introduce an attitude which is neutral with respect to content” (277). In this, Sontag misses Isherwood’s points that camp has both an object and an underlying seriousness. Camp is necessarily political when, as Denisoff suggests, its practitioners “bring attention to what they see as incongruencies and double standards within conventional notions of the natural, the normal, the sincere, and the moral” (1998, 83).

A clue as to what Isherwood might be camping in the *Berlin Stories* is provided in the opening paragraph of ‘A Berlin Diary (Autumn 1930)’, which describes a neighborhood of “top-heavy balconied façades, dirty plaster frontages embossed with scrollwork and heraldic devices. The whole district is like this: street leading into street of houses like shabby monumental safes crammed with the tarnished valuables and second-hand furniture of a bankrupt middle class” (1). As Sontag explains, many of the objects which are appreciated by camp are *démodé*, or outmoded; whereas, in its prime, an object might signify certain added values, with the passage of time and circumstances, it is “liberat[ed] from moral relevance, deliver[ed] over to the Camp sensibility” (285). Turning from the window and the street below to consider the interior of his lodgings, Bradshaw-Isherwood describes the contents of his room. These consist of a chair which might double as a bishop’s throne; a washstand which resembles a Gothic shrine; a tiled stove, “gorgeously coloured”, which stands as tall as an altar; and a cupboard with carved, cathedral-like, Gothic windows in which “Bismarck faces the King of Prussia in stained glass” (2). From these, he turns to describe the “phalanx of metal objects” which confront him on his writing-desk (ibid.).

These consist of a clock, an ashtray, and a pair of candlesticks in the preposterous forms of serpents, dolphins, and crocodiles, which, every morning, his landlady arranges “very carefully in certain unvarying positions: there they stand, like an uncompromising statement of her views on Capital and Society, Religion and Sex” (ibid.). If these bourgeois objects and the values they represent are now tarnished and second-hand, their custodian is also in a state of comic deterioration. Whereas before the Great War, Frl. Schroeder was relatively well-off, now she sleeps in the living-room on a small sofa with broken springs and is so accustomed to doing all of the housework that emptying a chamber pot is “no more to [her] than pouring out a cup of tea” (4). As Wilde notes, everywhere in the room and in the streets outside is the “decaying inheritance of the past, [now] heavy, old, shabby and dirty; everywhere there are reminders of an earlier Germany, Prussian, Gothic, and belligerent” (1971, 66).

As a microcosm of society, the lodging house in which Bradshaw-Isherwood is staying is symptomatic of the collapse of the pre-war German Empire. Its owner, Frl. Schroeder, spends her spare moments reminiscing about her former lodgers, ‘guests’ she used to keep solely for the benefit of company and if they were “really well connected and well educated – proper gentlefolk” (3). Now, the *Freiherr*, *Rittmeister*, and University Professor she once entertained have all been replaced by the likes of Bobby, a local bartender; Frl. Mayr, a music-hall *Jodlerin*; Frl. Kost, a servant and “common prostitute” (8); and a nameless commercial traveler who spends all day and most of the night outdoors (6). Her household has become an open house with all sorts of comings and goings, no boundaries between public and private, and no clear distinctions of social or professional class. Below, the street corner is occupied by three sex workers of her own generation, who make no attempt to conceal their age, and, in a drag of the bourgeois matron, wear long skirts, old fur coats, and outsize picture hats in response to a demand for the “comfortable type of woman” (11). After supper with Frl. Schroeder and his fellow lodgers, Bradshaw-Isherwood attends a New Year’s Eve party at Bobby’s bar, the Troika, which, in *Mr. Norris Changes Trains*, continues on to a party at the tenement apartment of Madame Olga, which, being further removed from Frl. Schroeder’s erstwhile views on “Capital and Society, Religion and Sex” (2), is the location of a pansexual bacchanalia of boys and girls, old and young, queer and straight, and an assortment of barons, pickpockets, pimps, and whores. Now reeling with the effects of alcohol, Bradshaw-Isherwood takes note of several solid objects amidst the chaos, which include a bust of Bismarck on top of a Gothic dressing table (26). Later still, he notices that an oversized wig has been

“perched rakishly” on its helmet, in “graceful tribute [...] to the Iron Chancellor” (27). With the passage of time and circumstances, the bust has been liberated from moral relevance and delivered over to the camp sensibility; so too has its model, as well as the society he so systematically established in the *Gründerzeit*, or Founders’ Period, of the German Empire.

Isherwood’s camping of the bourgeoisie in the *Berlin Stories* assumes further significance in the context of his earlier writing. In *All the Conspirators*, when Philip returns home from his first attempt to escape family, class, and nation, his immediate impulse is to glance around the familiar sitting-room of the house, “appraising its humorous possibilities” (42). A collection of elaborate furnishings includes a suite of sofas and armchairs covered in frilled cretonne; a bookcase containing leather-bound volumes; an inlaid bureau, mahogany tables, and shagreen leather work boxes; mother-of-pearl ashtrays, ivory paper-knives and stork-scissors; assorted silver-framed photographs, gilt-mounted watercolors of Sussex and Venice, a lamp in the form of a Corinthian column, and a Broadwood cottage upright pianoforte (ibid.). Having noted these items, Philip crosses to the Broadwood and strikes “half-a-dozen minor chords” (ibid.). Unlike the room described by Bradshaw-Isherwood in the *Berlin Stories*, this is not a camp scene. Philip is unable to convert the serious into the frivolous because the objects he surveys have lost nothing of their moral relevance. The comparison also applies to the custodians of these respective rooms, when Philip climbs the stairs and comes face-to-face with his mother, who has been waiting for him on the landing. Whereas Frl. Schroeder is depicted by Bradshaw-Isherwood in clearly sympathetic terms, having “bright, inquisitive eyes and pretty waved brown hair” (3), Mrs. Lindsay is presented from Philip’s perspective as an ‘Evil Mother’, who, “once pretty, [is] now small, pale, grey-haired” (43). Philip notes that she has powdered her nose without skill, leaving “visible grains and streaks of rawness” (ibid.). Far from anticipating a moment of camp, this observation realizes the very opposite: “The lines of her face suggested pathos, boredom and nervous irritability. She screwed them now into an expression intended to be scornful, actually merely ugly” (ibid.). Whereas Bradshaw-Isherwood has succeeded in following a line of escape to Berlin, where he can realize the possibilities of humor in the bankrupt bourgeoisie of Germany, the unhappy artist of *All the Conspirators* is capable neither of camping nor of escaping the bourgeoisie in England. When he is obliged by the Landauers to explain his earlier novel, Bradshaw-Isherwood summarizes its plot succinctly: “The artist has a mother and a sister. They are all very unhappy” (152).



Isherwood's camping of the ruined bourgeoisie in Germany is somewhat suspicious in an Englishman, who might be accused of making spiteful fun of rather than out of the collapse of a national enemy. On the contrary, the intertextual relationship between the two novels allows him to camp the English as well as the German in a kind of retroactive revenge camping which is doubly effective for the treasonous flavor of its connections. The image of Frl. Schroeder, who, all day long, goes "padding about the large dingy flat [...] in carpet slippers and a flowered dressing-gown pinned ingeniously together, [...] flicking with her duster, peeping, spying, poking" (2), camps an earlier image of bourgeois propriety and resilience: "Pale among Edwardian cretonnes, Mrs Lindsay sat at the inlaid bureau, her husband's wedding present, reckoning domestic accounts with inflamed eyes, by a failing light" (45). This intertextual and transnational camping of the bourgeois household is taken further in a camping of the Freudian structures which support it, namely the family triangle of mother, father, and child which has its basis in the myth of Oedipus. In *All the Conspirators*, Mrs. Lindsay is supported by her late husband's associate, Mr. Langbridge, in triangular relationships with her son, Philip, and her daughter, Joan; in the *Berlin Stories*, equivalent triangular relationships are formed by Frl. Schroeder, when she takes in Bradshaw-Isherwood and two other English expatriates, Mr. Norris and Sally Bowles. Having moved to Berlin to look for work with the UFA, Sally is in a similar situation to Bradshaw-Isherwood and becomes a "kind of bossy elder sister" to him (164). Meanwhile, Norris becomes something of a father figure, who addresses him continuously as his "dear boy" and repeats the turn of phrase Mr. Langbridge uses toward Philip, when he confesses to sometimes feeling "*in loco parentis*" in relation to him (126). Bradshaw-Isherwood jokingly responds, "I beg your pardon, Daddy", while commending his "admirable performance as the fond parent" (ibid.). In *All the Conspirators*, the family triangle is defamiliarized by a substitution of its terms, which exposes social forces and the possibility of lines of escape from them. In the *Berlin Stories*, a camp version of the same triangle proceeds to disrupt its national conventions of class, gender, and sexuality.

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Isherwood's literary 'High Camp' style is exemplified by the character of Mr. Norris, who, as he is depicted in the first of the *Berlin Stories*, is not unlike an exaggerated Oscar Wilde (1854-1900). Bradshaw-Isherwood's first impression is of a "character in a pre-war drawing-room comedy" of the kind made famous by Wilde. His red cheeks, white marble forehead, and delicate white hands are complemented by a voice which rings "high-pitched in archly forced gaiety" and a posture of

dandyism which is taken to a comparable extreme (7). He alternates three wigs which, at great expense, are replaced every eighteen months at a personal fitting in Cologne (19), and keeps a suit for every day of the week so that he might be dressed “exactly in accordance with [his] mood” (18). Norris makes a show of all the refinement and exquisite taste of pre-war aestheticism, claiming that his generation was raised to “regard luxury from an aesthetic standpoint” (11) and that, in order to be appreciated fully, he must be seen in his proper setting, which consists of “Art. Music. Beautiful things. Charming and witty society” (46). As he explains to Bradshaw-Isherwood, it was in London in the 1890s that he first learnt the meaning of the word ‘luxury’ (40), when he spent his inheritance on horses, servants, ballerinas, suits of clothes, oriental knickknacks, and impressionist paintings (41). Before the Great War, he maintained an apartment in Paris, which, in the mold of Wilde’s showcase ‘House Beautiful’ in Chelsea, was “one of the show places of its kind” (46). Now in more straitened circumstances, Norris wanders mysteriously from country to country and is more a figure of fun than of fashion. His extravagance is regularly offset by visits from the bailiff and the intrusions of debt-collectors. In conversation, he maintains a whole repertoire of stale and unoriginal jokes, epigrams, and witticisms. Although he speaks with authority on the unpublished works of the Wilde group (35), pride of his collection is a set of soft pornographic novellas, which Bradshaw-Isherwood discovers to have a “curiously prudish, snobby, lower-middle-class tone” (37). There is about him, as Alan Wilde suggests, a “comic, almost grotesque quality, of incongruity”, of an attempt to “disguise reality with an elaborately contrived appearance” (1971, 57).

The character of Mr. Norris camps the class pretensions of the English gentleman. When he and Bradshaw-Isherwood first meet on an international train through the Netherlands, their encounter is mediated by an “exaggerated politeness [...which] the least incautious gesture or word would have destroyed” (2) At an appropriate stage in their interaction, Norris formally introduces himself as “Arthur Norris, Gent. Or shall we say: Of independent means?” and correctly identifies his interlocutor as being one of the ‘Suffolk Bradshaws’ (4). Knowing from habit the “exact tone to adopt”, Bradshaw-Isherwood resigns himself to playing the “relationships game” of comparing the aunts, uncles, and cousins, the marriages, mortgages, and properties, and the schools, universities, and appointments of the members of their intersecting social circles (5). To his surprise, Norris does not play this game after all, explaining that his affairs have taken him so much abroad that he has lost touch with his connections in England. Instead, he delivers a lecture

on the advantages and disadvantages of the chief cities of mainland Europe and invites Bradshaw-Isherwood to the dining-car, where he makes a show of his epicurean tastes, favorably comparing their buffet lunch with the meal he has lately shared with the Swedish Ambassador in Vienna. Norris's performance of the cosmopolitan gentleman of leisure is offset by an equally comical, exaggerated, and entirely contradictory performance, which gives the impression of a "schoolboy surprised in the act of breaking one of the rules" (1). Much later, he will lament that, in former times, "[a]n English gentleman was welcome everywhere, especially with a first-class ticket" (171). Now, he is traveling third-class and has such a fit of nervousness during the routine passport control that Bradshaw-Isherwood suspects him of petty smuggling. In Berlin, where he is warned that some "queer things" have been heard about him (35), Bradshaw-Isherwood prompts Norris to confess that he has spent eighteen months in prison after losing one of numerous libel actions, in which it was insinuated that he had been involved in a form of blackmail (39). In fact, as Isherwood explains, behind his elaborate performance of the English gentleman abroad, Norris turns out to be nothing more than a "curious elderly crook who makes his living in various countries" (Isherwood & Summers, 164).

The character of Mr. Norris also camps conventions of gender and sexuality which are essential to the class pretensions of the English gentleman. Although Bradshaw-Isherwood becomes used to the unusual habits of his new acquaintance, he is still surprised at the extent to which he transforms the daily routine at Frl. Schroeder's. Norris is "astonishingly fastidious" in the preparations he makes for his every appearance in public (98). After an elaborate bath and a visit from the barber's boy to shave his face and comb his wig, he establishes himself at the dressing-table and sends for Bradshaw-Isherwood to attend his toilet (*ibid.*). This consists of a massage, manicure, and pedicure; an application of face cream; some powdering or a full make-up of his face; an ablution of his hands with depilatory lotion; a thinning of his eyebrows, which Norris insists is not a plucking, this being a "piece of effeminacy" which he abhors (*ibid.*). Ironically, Frl. Schroeder's impression is that he is so particular as to be "[m]ore like a lady than a gentleman", and that his ties, shirts, and silk underwear ought to be given to her to wear because they are "too fine for a man" (95). Norris's contraventions are not limited to his wardrobe or personal grooming. Three nights a week, Frl. Anni keeps an appointment to indulge his "singular pleasures", which are perfectly audible in the living-room, where Frl. Schroeder sits sewing and worrying aloud that he might injure himself (99). Bradshaw-Isherwood is already familiar with

Norris's sexual tastes from Olga's New Year's Eve party, when he comes upon Norris in an unlocked room, cringing on the floor at Anni's feet, while Olga towers behind him with a heavy leather whip, compelling him to brush and polish the boots of her companion (30). Bradshaw-Isherwood's presence does not cause the least disturbance; on the contrary, he is encouraged to participate, as it appears to add spice to Norris's enjoyment (ibid.). In this camp encounter, in which the "brothel scene becomes farce" (Thomas 1976, 124), there is an underlying seriousness. Norris's public display of masochism, which is complicated by inversions in the relationships of class, gender, and, in the post-war climate, of nationality among the participants, confounds all conventions of the English gentleman.

Isherwood's literary 'High Camp' style is further exemplified by the character of Sally Bowles, whose features likewise convey allusions to Oscar Wilde. A "would-be demi-mondaine" (26), Sally is a stage performer at the Lady Windermere, an informal arts bar which shares its name with *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), the first of Wilde's phenomenally successful social comedies of the 1890s. When she and Bradshaw-Isherwood meet, he takes especial note of her finger-nails, which resemble "hard, bright, ugly little beetles" (29) and highlight the condition of her hands, which are stained by tobacco and as dirty as a little girl's (22). She has a habit of painting them emerald green, a color associated with artifice and decadence at least since the premiere of Wilde's play, when he encouraged his entourage to wear unnaturally colored green carnations in their buttonholes (Beckson). In this case, the color is equally lacking in obvious meaning but succeeds in drawing attention and eliciting such intended responses as "fascinated horror" (163). Like Norris, Sally cultivates an ensemble appearance which is at once dandyish and androgynous. At their first meeting, Bradshaw-Isherwood notes that she has powdered her face dead white, applied a dark pencil to her eyebrows, and matched a black silk dress with a small cape and a little cap like a page-boy's (22). For their subsequent meeting, she combines the same black dress with a white collar and matching white cuffs to produce a "theatrically chaste effect, like a nun in grand opera" (27). In fact, everything about Sally's appearance, demeanor, and behavior tends toward the theatrical. Quite certain that she is going to become the "greatest actress in the world" (44), she already creates an impression of a "performance at the theatre" (23). Her laugh is a "stage-laugh" (ibid.), she pronounces every word of her German in a "mincing, specially 'foreign' manner" (27), and she is given to striking poses, whether cooing down the line of a telephone (22), or curling herself up on a sofa like a cat (27). There is also something "so extraordinarily comic" in Sally's

appearance (ibid.), which extends to her behavior and to the farcical progress of her adventures, rendering her, like Norris, an outrageously camp character or, as Freeman puts it, a “camp goddess” (14).

If Mr. Norris camps the English gentleman, Sally Bowles camps his female counterpart, the English lady. Bradshaw-Isherwood first encounters her at the Lady Windermere, where she performs ‘Exactly Like You’, a popular romantic song which ends with the lyrics, “Now I know why Mother told me to be true; She meant me for someone exactly like you” (25). Although she sings “badly, without any expression, her hands hanging down at her sides” (ibid.), Sally’s performance is well received. It is possible that the clientele appreciates it for its irony, for it is clear afterwards that she is on familiar terms with its members and that they are well aware of the unlikelihood of her promising fidelity to a lover approved by her mother. The irony of Sally’s lackluster performance is reflected in an outsized fan which is prominently displayed above the bar and, as in the play by Wilde, signifies both modesty and infidelity. Even so, it can be appreciated fully only offstage, when she is committed to an energetic performance of the very opposite of what her mother and society might expect of her. When Bradshaw-Isherwood is told that she is “hot stuff”, his response is incredulous: “That doesn’t sound much like an English girl, I must say” (22). When he meets Sally in person, she boasts about the man she slept with the night before and announces that she is already an hour late to meet another man who is likely to engage her as a mistress (23-24). In a letter to his publisher, John Lehmann, Isherwood described the story as an “attempt to satirise the romance-of-prostitution racket”, adding that it is “Good heter stuff”, with the implication that it is also an attempt to satirize the double standards of heteronormativity (qtd. Fryer, 111-12). As its events unfold, Bradshaw-Isherwood eventually tires of her “endless silly pornographic talk” and wonders if she has “*any* small-talk except adultery” (162-63). Meanwhile, Sally chides him not to “start being English” when he warns her that, even if she sleeps with every man in Berlin and comes to report it each time, she will never convince him that she is *La Dame aux Camélias*, when all she is, really, is the “daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jackson-Bowles” (33).

It is true, as she herself explains, that Sally is the daughter of Mr. Jackson, a mill-owner, and Miss Bowles, an heiress to an estate in Lancashire (30). Rebelling against this heritage, she has become a camp explosion of female sexuality, which she is conventionally expected to channel toward ends more suited to her class, such as marriage to an appropriate partner. Unlike Joan,

Philip's sister in *All the Conspirators*, who decides to suppress her desires and accept a less than satisfactory marriage with Victor, Sally has followed a line of escape from England to pursue an alternative lifestyle in Germany, which Bradshaw-Isherwood commends, as he tells her, "[a]s long as you're sure you're really enjoying yourself" (33). However, the problem with *La Dame aux Camélias*, as Shuttleworth suggests, is that, although the role can be "parodic, transformative, liberatory[...]" it does not remain at a transgressively self-conscious level but rather falls into delusion" (158-59). Sally's lover, Klaus, breaks up with her not long after moving to London, explaining that he has met a "very beautiful and intelligent [and, presumably, more conventional] young English girl", who understands him like nobody has before (41). Soon afterwards, Sally becomes involved with Clive, a wealthy American playboy, who fills her mind with all sorts of hopes and ambitions until he leaves her with nothing more than an envelope of banknotes. Sally regrets her choices, lamenting that she has mistakenly presented herself as a "sort of Ideal Woman [...] who can take men away from their wives" (50). Despite her short-term successes and satisfactions, she is never likely to keep anybody for long, because this is the type of woman which "every man imagines he wants, until he gets [her]; and then he finds he doesn't really, after all" (ibid.). Freely admitting to being a 'whore' and a 'gold-digger', who would be "absolutely faithful to the man who kept her" (44), Sally has also become a camp exaggeration of the 'sham' which women must endure in order to achieve social and financial security through dependency on a male partner. The vicissitudes of her adventures demonstrate the precariousness of this dependency as well as the consequences of her flouting of the conventions of gender and sexuality which pertain to her class.

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In his autobiography, *World within World* (1951), Stephen Spender recalls his time spent abroad during the 1930s and writes of his friend, Isherwood, that he maintained a "hatred [...] for English middle-class life", that the "whole system was to him one which denied affection: and which was based largely on fear of sex", and that he spoke of Germany as the place where "all the obstructions and complexities of this life were cut through" (104). Isherwood had already addressed issues of minority sexuality in *All the Conspirators* and *The Memorial*, but his decision to switch from a third- to a first-person style of narration made it problematic to do so in relation to his own personal experience. In the *Berlin Stories*, his resort to camping the characters of Frl. Schroeder, Mr. Norris, and Sally Bowles is the basis of a micropolitics which, intertextually and transnationally,

challenges conventions of class, gender, and sexuality. Isherwood is also engaged in the articulation of a community. In his first novels, minority sexuality is represented as very much an individual problem until the final chapter of *The Memorial*, when Edward has quit England and Freudianism in order to explore a relationship with Franz in Germany. In the *Berlin Stories*, Frl. Schroeder, Mr. Norris, and Sally Bowles provide an alternative to the bourgeois family and, through their connections to the club and party scenes, the basis of an alternative to bourgeois society. As Sontag acknowledges, camp can function as “a private code, a badge of identity even, among small urban cliques” and, most especially, among sexual and gendered minorities (275). A sense of such community is conveyed explicitly in the final installment of the *Berlin Stories*, ‘A Berlin Diary (Winter 1932-3)’, when Fritz escorts Bradshaw-Isherwood on a farewell tour of the local ‘dives’ before an anticipated clean-up operation by the police. After leaving the Salomé, they run into a party of drunken American youths, whose leader demands to know what is going on inside. “Men dressed as women”, Fritz tells him, and is challenged to explain, “Do you mean they’re queer?”. “Eventually we’re all queer”, Fritz replies, solemnly. The young men look them over and suddenly turn on Bradshaw-Isherwood, demanding, “You queer, too, hey?”. “Yes”, he replies, “very queer indeed” (192-93).

Although this scene sets up an ‘us and them’ confrontation which might well exemplify the turn in Bradshaw-Isherwood’s loyalties from a hostile English-speaking majority to a sympathetic German-speaking minority, it is one which is highly ambiguous. Before beginning their farewell tour, Fritz is contemptuous of his companion’s choice of venue, which he warns him is not a genuine ‘dive’ but a tourist magnet which caters exclusively to sightseers from the provinces (192). Sure enough, once they are inside the Salomé, they discover a “few stage lesbians and some young men with plucked eyebrows” lounging at the bar, and a clientele which consists chiefly of “respectable middle-aged tradesmen and their families, exclaiming in good-humoured amazement: ‘Do they really?’ and ‘Well, I never!’” (ibid.). Finding it depressing and expensive, they leave half-way through a highly contrived drag performance. Although the Salomé is an extreme example, more ‘genuine’ clubs are not much different behind the camp signs which, in this case, do seem to block, slight, or neutralize, content. This becomes clear on a quiet night at the Troika, when the entrance of two elderly Dutch couples indicates that, “[h]ere, unmistakably, was Money” (13-14). In an instant, the bar is transformed, as the manager, the cigarette boy, and the lavatory attendant all rise; the three-man orchestra strikes up; and the resident bargirls and

‘gigolos’ perform a dance, while betraying, in their every movement, a “consciousness of the part they [are] playing” (ibid.). Meanwhile, the saxophonist begins to sing, with a “knowing leer, including us all in the conspiracy” (ibid.). A comparable situation obtains at the Alexander Casino, a working-class *Lokal*, which fills up on Saturday and Sunday evenings, when visitors from the West End arrive, “like ambassadors from another country” (126). Among these are some Englishmen, who talk loudly and indifferently about art, communism, and the best restaurants. Meanwhile, Pieps and Gerhardt, regulars who survive from day to day on thievery and prostitution, join them and mimic their accents, while cadging free drinks and cigarettes (ibid.). Although Bradshaw-Isherwood feels an understandable sympathy with the Englishmen, he also feels older and saddened to know that, within a fortnight, they will probably boast about their adventures in the Berlin ‘dives’ while sitting comfortably at a gentlemen’s club in London (ibid.).

In any confrontation of ‘us and them’, it cannot be entirely taken for granted with which side Bradshaw-Isherwood stands. As an expatriate in Berlin, he is possibly not so different from the provincial sightseers and American hooligans who frequent the *Salomé* or the more sophisticated Dutch couples and English gentlemen who patronize the more ‘genuine’ clubs. Because of his avowed detachment, Bradshaw-Isherwood is more difficult to position than his fellow expatriates, Sally and Norris, who could well be charged with taking advantage of the bankruptcy of the German bourgeoisie in order to indulge a fantasy of class, gender, and sexual freedom. When Bradshaw-Isherwood first meets Norris, the elder gentleman expresses some reservations about his lifestyle: “At times, one feels guilty, oneself, with so much unemployment and distress everywhere. The conditions in Berlin are very bad. [...] And here we are, riding in the lap of luxury. The social reformers would condemn us, no doubt” (11). All the same, he finds an excuse to avoid this dilemma, reasoning that, if he did not use the dining-car, then all of its staff would be on the dole, and resigning himself to the fact that things are simply “so very complex, nowadays” (ibid.). In paying, as he presumably does, for the sexual services of Anni and Olga, Norris avails of sexual opportunism with a sense of expatriate entitlement and exceptionalism. Less obviously, Sally also exploits the locals sexually, as a means not only to express her rebellion but to support herself and to advance her career prospects. Despite his detachment, Bradshaw-Isherwood is tempted into her attitude of ultimate indifference toward the locals when they become involved with Clive and his plans to leave Berlin and travel the world together. While he is considering this proposal, Clive calls their attention to a state funeral which has been passing by,



unnoticed by them, for at least an hour, wondering whose it is. “‘God knows’, Sally answer[s], yawning. ‘Look, Clive darling, isn’t it a marvellous sunset?’” (49). Despite her poor taste, Bradshaw-Isherwood considers that Sally’s response is quite right. From now, he and she have “nothing to do with those Germans down there” and will, moreover, soon forfeit “all kinship with ninety-nine per cent. of the population of the world” (ibid.).

As Wilde points out, the funeral is that of Hermann Müller, twice post-war Chancellor of Germany, who died on March 20th, 1931 (1971, 73). Its description captures a sense of the passing of the Weimar Republic, as the “whole drab weary pageant of Prussian Social Democracy” trudges toward the arches of the Brandenburg Gate, which stands silhouetted in the rays of a declining sun (48). The shift in Sally’s attention from the funeral to the sunset is not only suggestive of expatriate detachment but is a classic example of the camp conversion of the moral into the aesthetic and the serious into the frivolous. Indeed, both her story and Norris’s exemplify this conversion. Piazza notes, furthermore, that the attention of the reader is focused more on Bradshaw-Isherwood’s “amused toleration” of the antics of his friends than on the unfolding tragedy in Germany (91). Argyle apportions such disregard to Isherwood himself, suggesting that his enthusiasm for Berlin’s social scene encouraged him to ignore the tendencies of its politics and to limit himself in his writing to a “private therapeutic prescription for his rebellion against English life” (178-79). In his introduction to the New Directions edition of the *Berlin Stories* (1954), Isherwood admits that only a “very young and frivolous foreigner [...] could have lived in such a place and found it amusing” (x). Again, in his introduction to Gerald Hamilton’s memoir, *Mr Norris and I* (1956), he writes that the novella is a “heartless fairy-story about a real city in which human beings were suffering the miseries of political violence and near-starvation”, adding that its “only genuine monster was the young foreigner who passed gaily through these scenes of desolation, misinterpreting them to suit his childish fantasy” (86-87). Nevertheless, in his Berkeley lectures, Isherwood claims that, in the context of civil and political conflict in Berlin, he became “aware of the outside world in quite a new way” and that this inevitably influenced his writing (Isherwood & Summers, 162). Noting his “increasing awareness of contemporary events and his grasp of the individual’s responsibility for them”, Schwerdt discerns a progression from *Mr. Norris* to *Goodbye to Berlin*, whereby Isherwood “moves away from his concerns with self and family to wrestle with his place in the world” (86).

In his Berkeley lectures, Isherwood alludes to the problem of how Bradshaw-Isherwood could be both observant and engaged, in the specifically post-war sense of being *engagé*, or socially and politically responsible (Isherwood & Summers, 167). That he means to become engaged as a particular kind of political writer comes out in his criticisms of other expatriate writers who appear in *Mr. Norris*. Marcel Janin is a popular novelist who produces a “brand of pornography” in a range of international settings and in a “fashionable French manner, half romance, half reportage”, for which, as he himself explains, “one glance is sufficient. I do not believe in the second impression” (147-48). Bradshaw-Isherwood notes caustically that a few days ashore from a cruising liner is generally enough time for him to research his material and that he is currently scouting the Nazi movement with a “stranger’s cynical, unconcealed inspection” (144). Janin’s indifference contrasts with the nerve and involvement of Helen Pratt, Berlin correspondent for one of the London weeklies, who is overtly political and dedicated to a collection of facts and objectivity. A conflict between camp and journalism is conveyed in the bad chemistry between her and Norris, who are diametrically opposed in sensibility and in all aspects of class, gender, and sexuality. When Bradshaw-Isherwood introduces the pair, Pratt, who deals in “statistics and psycho-analytical terms”, regards Norris in puzzled disapproval and brushes aside his giggles, arch references, and polished politeness with the “matter-of-fact tone of a schoolmistress” (34). Afterwards, she chastises Bradshaw-Isherwood for being “soft, like most men” and for making up romances about people such as Norris, “instead of seeing them as they are” (ibid.). After the National Socialists gain power, Bradshaw-Isherwood chastises Pratt for deciding to investigate Nazi atrocities by locating and cross-examining the victims, in the process of which she proves herself to be “as relentless as their torturers” and to have no concern about the risk involved to them or any interest in what will become of them after she has completed her assignment (180). If Pratt is simply “out to get facts” (ibid.), she is also out to advance her career and, on the strength of her work in Berlin, is offered an opportunity to move on and “attack New York” (186).

Whereas in *Mr. Norris*, Bradshaw-Isherwood is implicitly compared with other expatriate writers, in *Goodbye to Berlin*, there is an implicit comparison between his writing and the representations of local media. The press is full of alarmist “death-bed photographs of rival martyrs” and murder reports by “jazz-writers”, whose excessive vocabulary consists of terms such as “traitor, Versailles-lackey, murder-swine, Marx-crook, Hitler-swamp, Red-pest” (86-87). “Spring, moonlight, youth, roses, girl, darling, heart, May”, meanwhile, are examples of the terms

favored by the authors of popular songs and dances, which encourage escapism into the private and the personal (ibid.). In his capacity as owner of the UFA, Alfred Hugenberg, who is otherwise leader of the German National People's party (DNVP), serves up "nationalism to suit all tastes" in the form of battlefield epics, barrack-room farces, and operettas in the style of the pre-war military aristocracy, while his directors and technicians expend their talents on "cynically beautiful shots of the bubbles in champagne and the sheen of lamplight on silk" (ibid.). It is evident from these criticisms that Isherwood intends to offer an alternative political style. Wilde suggests that his use of simple diction, incongruous imagery, syntactic discontinuity, and unobtrusive ironies implies a need for "linguistic deflation and for a revaluation of the events betrayed by the empty vocabulary of politics, propaganda, and escape" (1975, 482). Thomas also recognizes in Isherwood's "flat, unmetaphorical prose [... a] *politicized* style" (1976, 126). He nonetheless argues that it is his use of camp motifs which, in the context of the rise of the Nazis, is of "immediate political reference", providing a "mode of specific political truth" which makes Isherwood a "brilliant chronicler of Berlin in the early Thirties because of literary and not strictly political loyalties" (ibid., 118). More recently, Freeman also recognizes the politics of Isherwood's camp style but, comparing it to the "harsh reality, the new world order, of Nazi seriousness", concludes that there is a "sobering lesson here: camp is a fabulous and powerful tool, but against some adversaries, it is ineffectual at best" (16-17). Following on from these considerations, the next chapter looks at how Isherwood uses camp beyond a politics of England and whether or not it serves as an adequate and appropriate response to political events in Germany.

### III.2. Minor Sympathies: The *Berlin Stories* (1935-39)

In his posthumously published *Lost Years, A Memoir, 1945-1951* (1971-77), Isherwood reflects that “Christopher was certainly more a socialist than he was a fascist; and more a pacifist than he was a socialist. But he was a queer first and foremost” (190). Although he made this observation in the context of US Cold War politics, his evolution is already evident in the context of European politics a decade prior, from 1929-39. At the beginning of this period, the political consciousness of his circle began to acquire a “sort of left-wing tinge” (Isherwood & Summers, 163); by the end of the decade, he and Auden confided to each other that neither of them any longer believed in the party line, the united front, or the antifascist struggle (*Diaries*, 6). Convinced that a contemporary lapse of belief in moral absolutes had facilitated atrocities committed by both the Left and the Right, Auden soon rejoined the Anglican Communion of his childhood (Yezzi, 12). Meanwhile, as he recalls in *My Guru and His Disciple* (1980), Isherwood was influenced by an increasing “awareness of [him]self as a homosexual and by a newly made discovery that [he] was a pacifist. Both these individualistic minority-attitudes kept bringing [him] into conflict with leftist majority-ideology” (4). The conjunction of these ‘minority-attitudes’ accompanied a reorientation of his political commitments in a more immediately personal direction. Supposing that, by pressing a button, he might instantly destroy a Nazi army of six million men, Isherwood decided that he could not possibly exercise such a power, if the six-millionth man were his lately conscripted romantic partner, Heinz Neddermeyer (*Diaries*, 7). This queer, pacifist, and transnational commitment, which trumps the party politics of fascism and socialism, also signals a reorientation in his politics as a writer. In the Berkeley lectures, Isherwood explains that he and his circle were consistently misrepresented as activists who joined political parties, which was not only untrue but impossible, because their idea of commitment was to promote an “individualistic poet’s revolution” (Isherwood & Summers, 163). If, from 1929-39, he and Auden had deviated from their vocation by allowing themselves to be associated with party politics, they would now be “artists again, with [their] own values, [their] own integrity, and not amateur socialist agitators” (*Diaries*, 6).

Coinciding precisely with the time he spent planning, producing, and publishing the *Berlin Stories*, Isherwood’s political evolution is reflected in the experiences of his namesake narrator. In September 1931, Bradshaw-Isherwood is obliged by a sudden devaluation of the pound to move out of Frl. Schroeder’s, where he has lived comfortably in the company of his fellow expatriates,

Mr. Norris and Sally Bowles, and to move in with the Nowaks, a local family of five in a tenement apartment in one of the poorer districts of the city. In *Goodbye to Berlin*, his move between the middle-class Nollendorfplatz and the working-class Wassertorplatz involves exchanging a “deep solemn massive street [...] of top-heavy balconied façades” (1) for a “deep shabby cobbled street, littered with sprawling children in tears” (100). “Daubed with hammers and sickles and Nazi crosses” (ibid.), the archway entrance to this street is symbolic of Bradshaw-Isherwood’s coming into direct contact with local politics and what has been referred to as the “dialectic of fascism and socialism that dominates events” in the *Berlin Stories* (Dewsnap, 32). Frau Nowak claims not to understand the competing claims of these political rivals, reasoning only for a return to the conditions which were familiar to her before the Great War: “why can’t we have the Kaiser back? Those were the good times, say what you like” (109). For the post-war generation, the collapse of the Monarchy is taken for granted and the failure of its bourgeois successor, the Weimar Republic, is already assumed, as can be understood from Otto’s response to his mother: “Ach, to hell with your old Kaiser [...] What we want is a communist revolution” (ibid.). The brothers Otto and Lothar, who are both unemployed, exemplify the opposing tendencies of contemporary working-class politics. Frau Nowak is not impressed with her younger son’s inclination toward the communists, whom she dismisses as “all good-for-nothing lazybones like [him], who’ve never done an honest day’s work in their lives” (ibid.). If Lothar, on the other hand, is a “model son” (106), who is selfless, disciplined, and never too proud for any kind of work, she is nonetheless concerned that he has become a “different boy altogether” since joining the Nazis, who put “all kinds of silly ideas into his head” (109).

The constituent novellas of the *Berlin Stories* differ in their representations of the political inclinations of Bradshaw-Isherwood. In *Goodbye to Berlin*, Otto twice makes the claim that his friend is a communist. This occurs once, during an exchange with a Nazi enthusiast on Ruegen Island (86), and again, when politics are mentioned during his first evening meal with the Nowaks (110). In the second case, Bradshaw-Isherwood corrects him and excuses himself for not being a “proper one” (ibid.); in the first case, he neither confirms nor denies Otto’s claim and remains non-committal when the Nazi tries to convince him that communism is the symptom of a “mental disease” (87). No other mention of this topic is made in the episodes of the novella, except when he wonders, during a moment of insecurity shortly before he moves out of Frl. Schroeder’s, if he is not a “bit of a sham [...] with [his] arty talk to lady pupils and [his] newly-acquired parlour-

socialism” (65). In *Mr. Norris*, on the contrary, Bradshaw-Isherwood becomes directly involved with the communists when he is invited to a meeting of theirs by Norris, who has infiltrated the party as a spy in the pay of the French government and plans to make a “Confessio Fidei” by delivering a speech on British imperialism in East Asia (45). At the meeting, he is struck by the fixed attention of the audience and by their passionate response to a speech made by Ludwig Bayer, who demonstrates his capacity for leadership by articulating the thoughts of these simple working-class people. Although he is elated by their strength of purpose, Bradshaw-Isherwood feels that he is a “half-hearted renegade from [his] own class”, an outsider to the workers’ movement, who might find himself “with it, but never of it” (49). This line of thought recurs when he is personally introduced to Bayer and imagines being measured by the older man as a “young bourgeois intellectual”, who might be capable of response, “if appealed to in terms of his own class-language” (64). When he suggests that he would like to help out, Bayer recommends that he read the *Communist Manifesto* and offers him a trifling document to translate, “no doubt, to be rid of [his] tiresome, useless enthusiasm” (66).

Bradshaw-Isherwood’s involvement with the party remains casual and his impressions tend toward a relativization of the dialectic between fascism and communism. Bayer is portrayed by him as a charismatic figure regardless of his political affiliation. During the delivery of his speech, he maintains a “militant, triumphant smile”; his gestures are slight but “astonishingly forceful”; at certain moments, it looks as though his pent-up energy might propel him from the platform, “like an over-powerful motor-bicycle” (47-48). Although Bradshaw-Isherwood is impressed by Bayer’s appeal to the audience, he is equally impressed by how easily its members are swayed and how vulnerable they are to deception when he considers their reception of Norris’s speech. From his perspective, the performance of his friend is so patently absurd that he cannot understand why everybody in the hall does not burst out laughing; on the contrary, they appear to accept him “without question” simply because he is introduced and vouched for by their leader (50). The relativism of the party politics of fascism and communism is comically conveyed when, after an interview with the police, Norris hails a taxi to the Wilhelmstrasse, in the federal government district of Berlin. Explaining that he is making a diversion in order to allay suspicions of his movements, he conducts Bradshaw-Isherwood into the Hotel Kaiserhof, where Hitler maintains a suite and will presently occupy the top floor as provisional headquarters of the Nazi party. After taking coffee in the lounge and spending ten minutes glancing through the morning newspapers,

Norris conducts him back outside and to the headquarters of the communist party, which is located on the top floor of one of the lesser buildings on the same street. In striking contrast to the “padded, sombre, [and] luxurious” hotel, the party occupies an untidy flat, where its members wander in and out or sit chatting on upturned sugar-boxes and, in the midst of its “informal, cheerful activity, [they find] Bayer himself, in a tiny shabby room” (61). There is a contrast here, certainly, but it is one which is comically exaggerated and rendered absurd and relative by Norris’s easy patronage of both establishments and by his deception of all of the parties involved, be they Nazis, communists, or the state police of the Weimar Republic.

Although the evolution of Bradshaw-Isherwood’s political position beyond the dialectic of fascism and socialism remains unclear, it might be supposed that he tends toward the same insight as Isherwood, that he has been queer, pacifist, and transnational in orientation all along. This is suggested in the final episode of the *Berlin Stories*, ‘A Berlin Diary (Winter 1932-3)’, when he and Fritz respond to the transphobia of a party of drunken American tourists by peaceably identifying with the drag artists at the Salomé. In response to their echoing assertions, “Eventually we’re all queer” and “Yes, [...] very queer indeed”, the leader tenses up, utters a “wild college battle-cry and, followed by the others, rushe[s] headlong into the building” (193). Bristow finds a “delightfully perverse piece of logic” in this scene, arguing that the tourist’s fascination with the club is “just as queer as what he imagines its performers and audience to be” and that the responses by Fritz and Bradshaw-Isherwood make “perfect sense”, which is to say, that “people who are drawn to gay culture but identify as straight are nonetheless part of its all-embracing queerness” (149). This interpretation goes much too far. Firstly, it evacuates the term ‘queer’ of meaning by conflating it with queer-hostile as well as with queer-friendly. Secondly, it misses the ongoing aggression of the tourists and Bristow’s own point that they are entering the building not to join the drag artists but to join the tradesmen and their families of the audience (ibid.). Thirdly, Bristow confuses ‘gay’ and ‘queer’, missing his further point that Isherwood’s understanding of the latter term is pre-Stonewall (146), and therefore closer to its original meaning of odd, unsettling, or outside the norms of society. ‘Queer’ relates to his experience of being an ‘Outsider’, which he defines as both a “constitutionally born member of a minority” and “somebody who realizes consciously that he belongs to a minority” (Isherwood & Summers, 48/52). What is represented in the scene is not universal queerness but an opposition of minor and major, of those who become minor through identification with minority, being the drag artists and Fritz and Bradshaw-

Isherwood, and those who identify with an indifferent or openly hostile majority, being the bourgeois audience and the transphobic tourists who join them.

The scene at the Salomé can also be interpreted as an indication of how Isherwood, in attempting to express this becoming-minor through the vocation of writing, is motioning toward a minor literature, in which everything is connected to politics and community. Beginning with the drag artists, he extends his own sense of minority to include a variety of characters who are vulnerable because of their minoritized identities, such as women, sexual minorities, the Jewish ethnic minority, and the working-class social minority, so that, “Eventually we’re all queer” (193). As Thomas notes, his writing is “*engagé* in the sense that it is committed to [a] discovery of the ‘human’ among those Isherwood termed ‘the Lost’ [...] indeed, the true theme of this most famous of Isherwood’s works of fiction is a search for contact, for participation in the lives of others” (1972, 51). Bradshaw-Isherwood’s queer identification with the drag artists also signals Isherwood’s association with a particular expression of minority. In his later novel *The World in the Evening* (1954), camp is described as a style of “fun and artifice” associated with “queer circles”, which can be divided into categories of ‘Low Camp’ and ‘High Camp’ on the basis of a respective absence or presence of an “underlying seriousness” (125). Although both are recognizably camp, the two scenes which take place at the Salomé differ significantly in tone. Inside the club, the drag artists are exemplary exponents of ‘Low Camp’, whose lack of underlying seriousness prompts Fritz and Bradshaw-Isherwood to leave half-way through a disappointing performance. Outside the club, their encounter with the drunken tourists is played as farce, but they express themselves “solemnly, in lugubrious tones”, in a serious confrontation which has serious implications (193). The juxtaposition of the two scenes demonstrates a conversion of ‘Low Camp’, which Isherwood discovered in Berlin clubland, into ‘High Camp’, a literary style he develops by combining this discovery with the influences of Wildean aestheticism and Forsterian tragi-comedy. It is through this style, in combination with the content of his characters, that Isherwood pursues his “poet’s revolution” (Isherwood & Summers, 163), which is individualistic only in the sense that it repudiates the party politics of fascism and socialism in favor of a personally motivated politics and community of minority.

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In the opening of ‘Camp, Aestheticism, and Cultural Inclusiveness in Isherwood’s *Berlin Stories*’, Denisoff presents a list of persecutions of ethnic, religious, and sexual minorities sponsored by the



Nazis during their first three years of government in Germany. During this time, Isherwood prepared and published *Mr. Norris*, a “camp comedic romp through contemporary Berlin” (81). Asking how he could have produced such a work under such circumstances or as a means of response to them, Denisoff discovers an answer in the “sympathetic impulse of camp” (82). According to him, the camp style of the *Berlin Stories* succeeds through its association with the “politics of marginality” (85), and its realization through “gestures of inclusion that unite and empower people who have frequently been isolated and disempowered” (84). In *Mr. Norris*, Bradshaw-Isherwood is complemented several times on his sympathetic nature (58/72/162), while, in *Goodbye to Berlin*, he becomes the trusted confidant of a succession of locals and expatriates. Although Isherwood does not acknowledge his own marginality in him, he uses this namesake narrator to connect with other characters who are clearly marginalized in the current political climate. As Denisoff also argues, “audience reception is crucial to the success of a camp gesture” (84). Isherwood positions his narrator as a neutral intermediary between his characters and his readers, extending camp sympathy “beyond the realm of representation to include the readers’ act of appreciating the camp humor, encouraging them to accept a broader diversity of identities” (82). His characters are presented as “not only diverse, but also at times flawed” (88), moreover, their often contradictory motives being reflective of an effort to “appreciate diversity without risking homogenization or an unrealistically blissful sense of social harmony” (91). As Denisoff suggests, Isherwood was aware of more ‘direct’ options available to him in the struggle against fascism but concluded that the “most effective tool is his writing, and his strongest means of attack is through a campy Aestheticist revival” (89). The camp of the *Berlin Stories* offers an alternative to the exclusion and destruction of difference by fascism. As a queer, pacifist, and transnational response, it also offers a micropolitical alternative to socialism, the equally exclusionary tendencies of which were demonstrated in the recriminalization of homosexuality in the Soviet Union in 1934.

In rejecting party politics, Isherwood does not entirely repudiate the aesthetics of socialism. As Carr notes, he was typical of his time in documenting working-class conditions in the Wassertorplatz but “certainly did not toe the leftist party line, for the inhabitants of this district were as much an object of his irony as were their exploiters” (58). Thomas attributes the success of ‘The Nowaks’, which he contends is the “finest sustained passage in Berlin fiction”, to an “implicit contrast between Camp motifs and social realism” (1976, 126). Personalizing the anonymous rows of faces he observed at the communist party meeting, Bradshaw-Isherwood

portrays the family in a very camp and sympathetic style, which becomes all the more poignant in the context of the decline of the household owing to the hardships of its members. Thomas highlights Otto as “another Camp figure, self-consciously playing the role of the boyish charmer, whose posing quickly degenerates into shallow narcissism” (ibid., 127). In the evenings, Bradshaw-Isherwood usually finds him preparing to go dancing, changing into his best suit, with its “shoulders padded out to points, small tight double-breasted waistcoat and bell-bottomed trousers”, and admiring himself in front of a cracked looking-glass in the kitchen (117). On one occasion, he discovers him in the back room, holding a safety razor-blade and staring at a bleeding gash in his left wrist. After bandaging the wound, Bradshaw-Isherwood offers him a handkerchief, which catches his attention: ““Why, Christoph’, he exclaim[s] indignantly, ‘this is one of mine!’” (129). This tonal contrast persists throughout the decline and eventual breakup of the Nowak household. Thomas is perhaps not entirely accurate when he describes it as one between camp motifs and social realism; it might more accurately be described as camp made sober by a sense of social reality. Overall, Isherwood uses camp as a means of eliciting sympathy for such characters as Otto, while adding an element of realism in order to render it all the more affecting. This characteristic contrast, which is evident in each of the episodes of the *Berlin Stories*, is congruent with his original plans for ‘The Lost’, which envisioned a “butterfly dance against the approaching thunderstorm of violence which was the coming of the Nazi Party into power” (Isherwood & Summers, 164).

In ‘The Nowaks’, Isherwood’s narrator demonstrates that, although he might be neither with nor of the workers’ movement, he is at least with the workers themselves, when he reciprocates Herr Nowak’s hearty egalitarian welcome by describing an unlikely transnational meeting of the English upper and Berlin working classes. Although Bradshaw-Isherwood does not necessarily share his sexual orientation, there is a certain homoeroticism in his relationship with Otto, with whom he shares the back room and listens to his stories about casual attachments to local girls and older foreign men. ‘On Ruegen Island (Summer 1931)’ recounts Bradshaw-Isherwood’s stay at a boarding house on the eponymous resort island, where he meets Otto for the first time, in the company of an Englishman, Peter Wilkinson. As a couple, Otto and Peter are directly comparable to Franz and Edward in the novel *The Memorial* (1932), which Bradshaw-Isherwood is then writing and which Isherwood himself was attempting to have published during the same year. Like Edward, Peter is privileged by class and lives aimlessly but comfortably on

inherited wealth. Again like Edward, he is of nervous disposition and, having suffered several breakdowns, consulted with a number of psychoanalysts before being recommended a “good man in Berlin” (82). Within a day or two of arriving in the city, Peter made the acquaintance of Otto, a young working-class Berliner, whose company provides a more practical solution to his problems, as does the company of Franz in the case of Edward’s. Bradshaw-Isherwood notes that Peter might be sitting awkwardly, hunched up like a “perfect case-picture of his twisted, expensive upbringing”, but, as soon as Otto enters the room, he begins to sit naturally and is so transformed that, “[a]s long as the spell lasts, he is just like an ordinary person” (83). Every day, Otto and Peter engage in vigorous physical activities, such as digging, wrestling, running races, or playing football together in the sands, which serve suggestively as proxy for the sexual contact they might well be having in their shared room at the boarding house. Acting as neutral, familiar, and reassuring intermediary between writer and reader, Bradshaw-Isherwood describes their interactions humorously and sympathetically, as a much less ambiguous meeting of English upper and Berlin working class through the medium of sexuality.

‘On Ruegen Island (Summer 1931)’ is exemplary of Isherwood’s focus on minor characters and use of a contrast between camp and a sense of social reality. Piazza refers to the episode as a “pastoral interlude before the collapse” (93), an idea which is echoed and developed by Christie, who suggests that it represents a “comic reappropriation of pastoral elements in the service of an emboldened narrative realism” (820). According to Bradshaw-Isherwood’s introductory description of the island, the vacation village is hidden by the woods and possible to avoid by a zig-zag path, which emerges on the edge of some cliffs above a stretch of beach on the other side of the headland (77). In contrast to this deserted area, the village consists of a mishmash of “seaside architecture – sham Moorish, old Bavarian, Taj Mahal, and the rococo doll’s house, with white fretwork balconies” (ibid.). Christie argues that, as well as serving to parody the bourgeois resort, this catalogue presents a “cacophonous assortment of historical differences”, as opposed to the ahistorical idyll of the pastoral, which provides a refuge for Otto and Peter from the ‘real’ and primary world (818). There is certainly evidence that the village is engaged with history, as its ‘official’ bathing-beach fills with vacationing families, each of whom marks its presence with an enormous hooded beach-chair, which indicates their particular affiliation by flying a flag with city, regional, national, or political colors, and is surrounded like a ‘fort’ by a low sand bulwark set with inscriptions in fir-cones: “Waldesruh. Familie Walter. Stahlhelm. Heil Hitler!” (86). As Christie

suggests, these “furious semiotic contestations [...] read as a list of different imaginings of the German nation” (818). Although the absence of any equivalent index of affiliation on the part of Otto and Peter only highlights their lack of symbolic association with the social order of the inter-war years, the relentless unilateral build-up suggests that their pastoral will soon come into conflict with the ‘real’ world. As Bradshaw-Isherwood observes, the ‘official’ bathing-beach is beginning to resemble a “medieval [military] camp” (85); meanwhile, Peter has begun to build a large ‘fort’ in the sand, all the while “digging away savagely with his child’s spade, like a chain-gang convict under the eyes of an armed warder” (78).

According to Christie, Otto and Peter’s interpersonal conflicts occur against a background of “fierce efforts to integrate their supposedly unaffiliated masculinity [...] within a nationalist project” (819). There is already an ominous air in Bradshaw-Isherwood’s introductory description, in which the woods cast long shadows over the fields and birds call out with “sudden uncanny violence, like alarm-clocks going off” (76). Many of the ‘forts’ on the ‘official’ beach are decorated with swastikas, and a small child can be seen holding one, while marching and singing ‘*Deutschland über alles*’ (86). One morning, while the three men are lying out in their own ‘fort’ on the deserted stretch of beach, there occurs an incursion from the village in the form of a ‘ferrety’ little doctor and Nazi enthusiast, who asks that they join him in a game and at once takes command, assigning them places to stand and pointedly correcting Peter’s posture (85). As Bradshaw-Isherwood notes, the Nazi doctor continues to arrive nearly every morning on a “missionary visit, to [their] fort” (86). He encourages them to come round to the ‘official’ beach, where he can introduce them to “some nice girls”, assuring them that it is a “pleasure to get back here and see real Nordic types” (ibid.). There is also a more sinister side to his interest, as becomes clear when he begins to enquire about Otto and explains that his clinical work has taught him the futility of trying to help this type of boy, a “bad degenerate type”, who ought to be committed to a labor camp (89-90). As though in reaction to this incursion, Peter and Bradshaw-Isherwood retreat farther from the village to Baabe, which again evokes the conventions of pastoral, being like a “lost settlement somewhere in the backwoods, where people come to look for a non-existent gold mine and remain, stranded, for the rest of their lives” (95). Nevertheless, that this idyll is also spoiled by the intrusion of history is curtly announced: “Most of the Baabe boys are Nazis” (ibid.). At the local restaurant, two of these boys join them regularly to engage in political discussions and

talk about their field-exercises and military games, which, one might assume, are alternatives to the labor camps for such ‘real Nordic types’.

As Christie suggests, the pastoral provides “no safety from history at all; rather, the force of this truth [...] effects a powerful criticism of the entire pastoral construct” (821). Otto and Peter’s ‘second world’ is undermined by additional causes, which become clear when there occurs another incursion from the village. Among its vacationers, Otto has made the acquaintance of a young female teacher, who goes dancing with him almost every night and, during the day, comes marching past the boarding house with her troop of children and “shoots one glance at Otto from under her eyelashes” (91). Bradshaw-Isherwood’s martial description suggests the beginnings of a campaign, which escalates when she and her troop begin bathing on the men’s beach, in close proximity to their fort, leading Otto to jump over the rampart and run along the beach in her direction. Meanwhile, Peter clenches his teeth, muttering, “Bitch ... bitch ... bitch ...” (92). He and Otto quarrel until peace is restored at the cost of a new suit, in return for which Otto aggressively spurns the teacher, who walks slowly away, a “rather pathetic figure, into the gathering darkness” (94). The pastoral of Ruegen Island is a fantasy which collapses not only under the weight of historical reality; it is also a vain attempt by an upper-class Englishman to appropriate the unaffiliated masculinity of a working-class Berlin boy. Much like the attempts by the ‘ferrety’ little doctor to appropriate Otto for his own nefarious purposes, it also has a rival and victim which, in this case, is a woman. Peter soon admits that there is nothing between him and Otto but his cash (96). He and Bradshaw-Isherwood return one evening to discover that Otto has left for Berlin, having taken some of Peter’s ties and shirts and a stash of two hundred marks (98). Summarizing the failure of his pastoral in disappointed terms, “It seems funny to think of now – when I first met Otto, I thought we should live together for the rest of our lives” (97), Peter leaves that same night for London, where he supposes that he will look around for another psychoanalyst (99). As Christie observes, Isherwood “expels his social and sexual unaffiliates from the island with a realist vehemence” (823).

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‘On Ruegen Island (Summer 1931)’ is, according to Christie, a “queer rewriting of Forster’s pastoral” (816). In the conclusion of his novel *Maurice* (1971), which circulated in manuscript form among close friends from the time it was composed in 1913-14, Forster’s same-sex lovers withdraw to the ‘greenwood’, a ‘second world’ in which they can live together as outlaws from

mainstream society. The concept would certainly have appealed to Isherwood, who was personally introduced to Forster in the fall of 1932 and, as soon as he left Berlin, began to collaborate with the elder writer, convincing him that his characters, Alec and Maurice, should establish a sustainable relationship (Zeikowitz, 4). Isherwood adapts the pastoral mode of *Maurice*, extending its national romance of a gentleman and a gamekeeper in the ‘greenwood’ of England to a transnational romance of an upper-class Englishman and a working-class German boy in an equivalent time and space on Ruegen Island. In a spirit of contestation, he also rewrites this mode by presenting a critique of its inherent classism and ahistoricism. Christie argues that Forster’s pastoral implies an “uneasy, if titillating, encounter with alterity on the nether margins of cultural and class difference” (802). Isherwood’s queer pastoral debunks the elision of class difference, making it obvious that Otto is with Peter only because of his cash, and acknowledges the intrusion of history, offering a “heteroglossic text that marks the entry of violent social, sexual, and political histories onto the pastoral scene” (816). Moreover, this rewriting serves as a basis for a renunciation of fascism, which, despite its fundamental differences, Isherwood acknowledges as a competing discourse in its attempts to appropriate the male body and its unaffiliated masculinity (ibid.). Christie concedes that Isherwood recognizes and sympathizes with Forster’s attempt to imagine a compensatory ‘second world’ for same-sex outlaws in the context of the repercussions of the trials of Oscar Wilde (ibid.). Accordingly, ‘On Ruegen Island (Summer 1931)’ conveys an “investment in pastoral fantasy, if a wary one” (824). What Isherwood manages to achieve with this investment is to provide a more nuanced version of Forster’s pastoral, which employs dialectics of “history and timelessness, individual pleasures and social obligations, the ‘real’ and the fictive [...] in imagining a better and more justly represented world” (825).

In *Mr. Norris*, the same approach is evident in Isherwood’s representation of Baron von Pregnitz, who is introduced at Madame Olga’s house party on New Year’s Eve, 1930-31. Described as “fishy and suave, [...] like a cod swimming up through water” (22), the Baron is a camp character, whose laugh is “aristocratic, manly and sham, scarcely to be heard nowadays except on the legitimate stage” (107). An ardent anglophile, he bonds with Bradshaw-Isherwood through his admiration of Winnie the Pooh (24), the Royal Horse Guards (107), and the resolute character of the English upper class (25). Although he fails in two attempts to gently seduce his new companion, he is compensated with the sympathy of Bradshaw-Isherwood, who, in becoming his confidant, once again acts as intermediary between an eccentric character and the reader of the

*Berlin Stories*. In June 1931, he spends a long weekend with the Baron at his country villa in Mecklenburg, where he encounters a retinue of “handsome young men with superbly developed brown bodies which they smeared in oil and baked for hours in the sun” (43). Subsequently, the Baron accepts a position of public responsibility with the government, which obliges him to forsake the society of these men and to accept as consolation a set of photographs of each of them, which he keeps bound in a “sumptuous album which he kept locked away in an obscure cupboard” (116). He shows the album to Bradshaw-Isherwood, confiding in him that he likes to imagine that he and the men are all living together on a deserted island in the Pacific Ocean. This fantasy develops by degrees into a “private cult”, under the influence of which the Baron acquires a small library of storybooks for boys, most of which are published in English (ibid.). His favorite is *The Seven Who Got Lost*, which recounts the adventures of seven teenage boys who are washed ashore on an uninhabited island and have to work together in order to survive. With the “simplicity of complete conviction”, he describes the characteristics of his imaginary companions and how he finds counterparts among them to the young men in his album of photographs, culminating in Jimmy, their heroic leader, who is the counterpart of the Baron himself (118).

When, in the course of several conversations on the subject, Bradshaw-Isherwood asks the Baron why he does not clear out to the Pacific and find an island like the one described in his book, he is told that, no, it is not possible, in a tone “so final and so sad” that it silences him (ibid.). In fact, for all his sympathy, Bradshaw-Isherwood succeeds in exploding the Baron’s desert island fantasy in much the same way he does the pastoral of Otto and Peter on Ruegen Island. Both fantasies depend on class difference and patronage, as is clear in the description of the young men in Mecklenburg, who “ate like wolves and had [no] table manners [...] most of them spoke with the broadest Berlin accents” (43). Moreover, an intrusion of history and violence is suggested when, with “good-humoured brutality”, they play practical jokes on the Baron, which cause him minor injuries and might easily break his neck (ibid.). During Christmas 1932, the Baron is engrossed in another of his books, *Billy the Castaway*, and still “dreaming about his island of the seven boys” (139), when Bradshaw-Isherwood accompanies him to a winter resort in Switzerland. While there, they meet Piet van Hoorn, a young Dutchman who excites the Baron’s interest to the extent that Bradshaw-Isherwood finds him to be altogether a “bit crude in his advances” (143). Later, the Baron confides in him that he finds Piet to be more like the character Tony in his book than Heinz, his erstwhile favorite in Mecklenburg. As becomes clear, however, when he takes his

own turn to confide in Bradshaw-Isherwood, Piet has already been appropriated by a familiar competitor for his male body and unaffiliated masculinity: Nazism. When he is asked for his opinion of the resort and its guests, Bradshaw-Isherwood is astonished by the vehemence of Piet's response: "Had they no national pride, to mix with a lot of Jews who were ruining their countries? [...] What my country needs is a man like Hitler. A real leader. A people without ambition is unworthy to exist" (150). As it turns out, a spell of three semesters at Hamburg University has transformed him into an "ardent Fascist [...] The young man was browner than the Browns" (ibid.).

Bradshaw-Isherwood's sympathetic but nonetheless realistic explosion of pastoral is not limited to the same-sex and different-class fantasies of Peter and the Baron. In 'The Landauers', he is prompted by the anti-Semitism of his neighbor, Frl. Mayr, to make use of a letter of introduction to a wealthy Jewish family, whose business interests include ownership of one of the city's department stores. During the winter of 1930-31, Bradshaw-Isherwood becomes acquainted with the Landauers. Acting as intermediary for the reader, he counteracts the toxic vitriol of Frl. Mayr, who screams out against them and other Jewish business owners that "[t]hey're poisoning the very water we drink! They're strangling us, they're robbing us, they're sucking our life-blood[!]" (140). As he did in the case of the working-class Nowaks, he portrays the family in a very camp and sympathetic style, which becomes all the more poignant in the context of the decline of their fortunes owing to political developments. Among the members of the family, he meets Natalia, a schoolgirl of eighteen, who begins talking eagerly at once, in stumbling English, and asks him to explain everything about his published novel, taking pleasure in the mere fact that he is talking to her about something so intimate (143). When she invites him to lunch with her parents, he is presented to her cousin, Bernhard, who is his senior by a few years. As Wilde notes, Natalia can be regarded "not only as her cousin's counterpart but, structurally, as a way of introducing his more extreme and complex story" (1971, 76). Bradshaw-Isherwood takes up an invitation to call at Bernhard's townhouse, where he is let in by the caretaker and passes through a courtyard and up five flights of stairs to discover his host dressed in a "beautifully embroidered kimono [...] His over-civilized, prim, finely drawn, beaky profile gave him something of the air of a bird in a piece of Chinese embroidery" (154). Like Natalia, Bernhard is impressed by Bradshaw-Isherwood's sympathetic manner, which encourages him to speak frankly during their conversations in town and at his villa on the Wannsee. He confesses that he has never spoken to anyone so intimately, explaining that, in telling him his story, it is possible that "one can lay ghosts [to rest]" (172).



The Landauers are depicted as cosmopolitan people, who are perfectly at home in Germany and with European culture. At lunch, Herr Landauer discusses Byron, Wilde, and Shakespeare, and explains that he wrote his doctoral dissertation on the conditions of Jewish workers in the East End of London. Natalia is also at home in her tastes; when she meets Bradshaw-Isherwood, she praises Heine and Mozart and puts aside four books for him to borrow, by Goethe, Stefan George, Thomas Mann, and a Danish writer, Jens Peter Jacobsen (140-41). Bernhard is more conflicted in his identity, due to a much more complicated relationship with his parents. To Bradshaw-Isherwood, he gives something of an exotic impression, conveying in his gestures the “arrogant humility of the East” and outwardly presenting a “soft expansive Oriental smile” (158/166). Although he explains that there is “something characteristically Semitic in [his] attitude” (169), Bernhard also relates a story of how he once offended the religious sensibilities of some strictly observant Jews and reminds Bradshaw-Isherwood that he is a “cross-breed”, whose veins may well contain at least one drop of pure Prussian blood (160). Natalia and Bernhard respond very differently to political events in Germany. Aware of historical precedent and realistic about her future in the country, Natalia “await[s] always that the worst will come” and, inspired by her father, plans to study “something useful, that [she] can win [her] bread” (145). Bernhard takes more after his mother, who, after his elder brother was killed in action during the Great War, began to concentrate on studying Hebrew and ancient Jewish history and literature (170). He explains that this “turning away from European culture” is something he is aware of, sometimes, in himself (*ibid.*). Bernhard increasingly divides his time between his townhouse, where there are “[f]our doors to protect [him] from the outer world” (154), and his villa on the Wannsee, which his father had built for his mother, who scarcely ever left it as she “tried to forget that such a land as Germany existed” and went about like a sleep-walker before killing herself after being diagnosed with cancer (170). Not coincidentally, Bradshaw-Isherwood finds that Bernhard’s face is “masked with exhaustion” and other signs that he is “perhaps suffering from a fatal disease” (155).

Toward the end of winter 1930-31, Bradshaw-Isherwood becomes estranged from both Natalia and Bernhard. Natalia’s respect for him is compromised by Sally’s casual anti-Semitism (161), while a hostile atmosphere develops between him and Bernhard, who insinuates that his own displays of “Jewish emotionalism” must surely disgust his English public-school training (171). Bradshaw-Isherwood meets them both once again in August 1931, when Bernhard unexpectedly sends the car to escort him to the villa, where he receives a shock to discover that a

slap-up garden party is in progress (174). Watching Bernhard bathing in the lake and then chasing some other young men among the trees, Bradshaw-Isherwood notes how he “laughed and splashed and shouted louder than anybody” and that, whenever he catches his eye, he makes even more noise, apparently with a certain defiance (176). Nevertheless, as in the cases of Peter and the Baron, history still intrudes on the ‘second world’ of this pastoral scene. In spite of Bernhard’s enthusiasm, the party does not really ‘go’. In the city, votes are being counted in a referendum to decide the future of the government and many of the guests are “talking politics in low, serious voices” (ibid.). When Bradshaw-Isherwood encounters Natalia, who has been studying art in Paris and is due to return there next day, he considers that she has escaped, “none too soon”, and that, however often the moment might be delayed, “all these people are ultimately doomed” (177). Eight months later, in April 1932, he calls one last time to see Bernhard, who tells him that Natalia is happily married to a young doctor in France. Her cousin, meanwhile, appears to be living in a fantasy world, as is evident in his casual dismissal of an anti-Semitic letter which arrived that morning giving him twenty-four hours to leave the country (178). Although he laughs and explains that events in Germany seem to him to be “a little unreal, a little [...] trivial”, he admits that he is becoming “out of touch with existence” and that there are times, when he sits alone among his books and figurines, that he has a “strange sensation of unreality [...] an unpleasant feeling, such as one has in a dream, that I myself do not exist” (180).

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While history is “sneaking up on the innocent bystanders who inhabited Isherwood’s Berlin world”, the author is the “outsider, a witness to overwhelming desperation” (Izzo 2005, 142). In the *Berlin Stories*, Isherwood extends his sense of being an outsider to include a variety of marginalized others, such as women, sexual minorities, the Jewish ethnic minority, and the working-class social minority, who are represented through such figures as the Baron, the Nowaks, and the Landauers. His narrator functions as a neutral and sympathetic intermediary between these characters and his readers, who might legitimately ask if Bradshaw-Isherwood is not himself an outsider in another sense, given that his life in Berlin might also be regarded in terms of pastoral, as the refuge of an expatriate from the ‘real’ world of Germany as much as from that of his native country, England. In his Berkeley lectures, Isherwood claims that he became “aware of the outside world in quite a new way” while living in Berlin, where numerous political factions began to engage in random violence and more orchestrated gang warfare (Isherwood & Summers, 162). In

*Mr. Norris*, the city is already in a “state of civil war” by Christmas 1931, when hate and violence have begun to explode everywhere, “without warning, out of nowhere” (86). Wilde asks, “And what then of Christopher?” (1971, 76). Finding fault with the narrator for his “emotionally short-circuited” response, he contends that, although the book can be read as a “progressive exploration of the temporal degeneration of Germany [...] its underlying pattern is finally that of a circle: events change, but Christopher does not” (ibid., 76-77). This assessment is belied by the evidence of the text. Toward the conclusion of *Mr. Norris*, Bradshaw-Isherwood is so rattled by events that he suffers sleeplessness in anticipation of a nighttime disturbance: “A minute. Five minutes. Ten. One morning, as I stared, half asleep, at the wallpaper above my bed, the pattern suddenly formed itself into a chain of little hooked crosses” (181). If Isherwood’s narrator appears to be otherwise unaffected by events, it is principally because, instead of taking sides in the civil conflict and in his personal dealings, he maintains a position which is reflective of the queer, pacifist, and transnational position of the author.

Isherwood’s political position is exemplified in Bradshaw-Isherwood’s response to the collapse of the Darmstädter und Nationalbank, an actual event, which took place on July 13th, 1931, and is recalled in ‘Sally Bowles’. Noting that a volatile crowd has gathered at his local branch, he improbably, yet characteristically, enters an outfitter’s shop to purchase a pair of ready-made flannel trousers, as a “gesture of confidence by England” (58). This camp gesture, which converts the serious into the frivolous and is at once queer, pacifist, and transnational in its references, is echoed in his representation of the gathering on the Nollendorfplatz. On the edge of the crowd, he notices that a little boy is playing with a hoop. He watches as it runs against the legs of one of the bystanders, who shouts at the boy to get away; another woman joins in, “attacking the scared boy: ‘Get out! You can’t understand it, can you?’”. And another asked, in furious sarcasm, ‘Have you got your money in the bank too, perhaps?’ The boy fled before their pent-up, exploding rage” (57). In his hostile assessment of Isherwood’s work, Bantock cites this scene in order to illustrate the alleged faults of the writer, complaining that such details betray a lack of moral reaction and convey “nothing beyond themselves, open up no new vistas, communicate no insight” (51). Piazza notes, on the contrary, that, “as the extreme selectivity of detail suggests, Isherwood’s method is to catch the unrest and shabby chaos of the larger life around him in the microcosm of the individual” (89). Within this microcosm, Isherwood’s tendency is to become minor, in this case, by focusing on a literal minor, a young child, in order to convey the hostility

and volatility of the majority. His method contrasts with responses to the same event by rival media, which encourage either indifference or belligerence. When Bradshaw-Isherwood reports the news to Sally, she is much more interested in a new magazine, which contains “lots of marvellous modern photographs, ink-pots and girls’ heads upside down” (61). Among the newspapers, one runs an alarmist headline in blood-red ink: “Everything Collapses!”, while another inflames international tensions by reminding its readers that the following day, Bastille Day, is one of national celebration in France (58).

In *Mr. Norris*, as political events accelerate and the economy lurches toward collapse, the unemployed young men of the city spend their time “begging, [...] lounging, stealing, [...] singing folk-songs for groschen in courtyards and between stations in the carriages of the Underground Railway” (87). In ‘The Nowaks’, Bradshaw-Isherwood provides further insight into working-class conditions by focusing on the boys at the Alexander Casino, a *Lokal* at the end of the Wassertorstrasse. Among its regulars are Pieps, a runaway who is nonetheless of an “extraordinarily cheerful and happy nature”; Gerhardt, who has a “vague, silly, unhappy smile” and supports himself and his elderly aunt by shoplifting from the department stores; and Kurt, who has a “fatal streak in his character, a capacity for pure sudden flashes of rage against the hopelessness of his life” (119-20). Most of these boys spend their afternoons thieving and pickpocketing, while their girls work the streets for possible pickups. Their camp jokes, tales, and antics, which include incidents of shoplifting from Landauers and sliding down a coal-chute while escaping from the police, have the effect of endearing them to a sympathetic reader. They also render the fate to which the boys succumb all the more shocking and disturbing. Like the brothers Otto and Lothar, they are faced with a choice between fascist and socialist gangs, which, as each is represented in the narrative, amounts to no choice at all but to become involved in a cycle of random, repetitive, and often ridiculous physical violence. In *Mr. Norris*, Otto proves himself to be a dedicated member of the communist party and goes out on nightly expeditions to put up party posters (87-88). When Anni walks out on him and is later seen with Werner at a Nazi *Lokal*, Otto calls around to the bar and causes a scene before being dragged out by two policemen; meanwhile, Werner hides out with Anni in the back room. In *Goodbye to Berlin*, this Werner reappears on the side of the communists and becomes a ‘hero’ for violently resisting arrest during another senseless street brawl. When Bradshaw-Isherwood visits him in hospital, he finds him surrounded by

“admiring friends [...] his press-cuttings. Somebody had carefully underlined each mention of Werner’s name with a red pencil” (201-02).

Bradshaw-Isherwood meets Werner when he is introduced to a “communist dive”, which is, in fact, “like a school dining-hall [and] all thoroughly sham and gay and jolly” (193). Among the student clientele, he also meets Inge, whose hat lends her a farcical resemblance to Henry VIII; Martin, who claims to spend most of his time making bombs; and Rudi, a handsome teenager, who dresses in a Russian blouse, leather shorts, and a pair of dispatch-rider’s boots (194). As Finney suggests, such locals are “playing at living”, while the political parties with which they are involved “indulge in their own form of charade” (147-48). Bradshaw-Isherwood takes up Rudi’s invitation to visit his club-house. While there, he is shown their magazine, which is written in “super-enthusiastic style, with a curious underlying note of hysteria, as though the actions described were part of a religious or erotic ritual” (198). There is certainly a cultish atmosphere at the club-house. The leader, ‘Uncle Peter’, is “Rudi’s idol” (ibid.). In the meeting-room, the walls are hung with banners embroidered with “mysterious totem devices”; at one end, a “kind of altar”, covered with a crimson embroidered cloth, stands below a “sort of icon [...] of a young pathfinder of unearthly beauty, gazing sternly into the far distance” (ibid.). Bradshaw-Isherwood notes that there are boys standing about in a “state of heroic semi-nudity”, in shorts and singlets, while he is shown dozens of photographs of other boys taken from beneath, “so that they look like epic giants” (ibid.). The scene strikes disturbing parallels with the cultish sportiness and militarism of the Nazi boys on Ruegen Island, as well as with the patronage of vigorous working-class boys in the same-sex pastorals of Peter and the Baron. As in these cases, such competition for the male body and its unaffiliated masculinity produces a familiar rival and victim. When Bradshaw-Isherwood asks if there are any girls in his group, Rudi explains, with a tone of bitter resentment, that women are “no good” and that ‘Uncle Peter’ has instructed them that “women should stay at home and mend socks. That’s all they’re fit for!” (195). Finding that the whole atmosphere makes him feel “profoundly uncomfortable”, Bradshaw-Isherwood excuses himself and gets away as soon as he can (198-99).

Bradshaw-Isherwood excuses himself from the club-house because this is a pastoral he cannot camp; it is already unintentionally camp, but entirely lacking in any sense of irony. He returns to a ‘real’ world which is being quickly displaced by Nazism, as political events accelerate through Hitler’s formation of a cabinet in January, the burning of the Reichstag building in

February, and the consequent suppression of all political opponents of the National Socialists in March, 1933. Toward the conclusion of *Mr. Norris*, following what will prove to be the final ‘mock’ elections in Germany, the weather turns suddenly mild and warm. This is “Hitler’s weather”, as the porter’s wife at Frl. Schroeder’s points out (179). On a corner of the Nollendorfplatz, Göring’s voice can be heard from a radio horn, while uniformed Nazis stride by on errands, and the patrons of cafés listen and watch and smile and seem pleased: “They smiled approvingly at these youngsters in their big, swaggering boots who were going to upset the Treaty of Versailles” (ibid.). Like the club-house, this is a scene which Bradshaw-Isherwood cannot camp. As Thomas notes, the ascendancy of the Nazis makes its appearance as a “grim parody of parody”, as camp is “overtaken by an evil parody of itself” (1976, 124-25). “The Nazi reality is Camp without comedy” (ibid., 130); it is an intentionally staged and stylized pastoral, behind which Berlin is “full of whispers”, of midnight arrests and tortures in barracks-rooms, and its inhabitants are beset by an “epidemic of discreet, infectious fear” (180-81). At the conclusion of *Goodbye to Berlin*, as he takes a final morning stroll before leaving the city for London, Bradshaw-Isherwood catches sight of his face in the mirror of a shop and is shocked to see that he is smiling. He cannot help smiling, in such beautiful weather. The street scene, with its trams and pedestrians, has an “air of curious familiarity, of striking resemblance to something one remembers as normal and pleasant in the past – like a very good photograph” (207). This valedictory image only highlights the new reality of life in Berlin: “The sun shines, and Hitler is master of this city. [...] The sun shines, and dozens of my friends [...] are in prison, possibly dead” (ibid.).

When Bradshaw-Isherwood returns to Berlin in April in order to finalize his affairs, he maintains a queer, pacifist, and transnational position. This is exemplified in his response to the Nazi boycott of Landauers’ department store, where SA troopers are posted at each of the entrances and admonish approaching shoppers to “[r]emember [that] this is a Jewish business!” (183). Regardless of the consequences, he joins the customers inside: “I went in myself, bought the first thing I saw – it happened to be a nutmeg-grater – and strolled out again, twirling my small parcel” (ibid.). If this gesture is characteristically camp, so too is his reference to the uniformed youths who stand about outside, grinning and joking among themselves. As one of them winks at him and whispers to his companion, he recognizes that these are some of the regulars of the Alexander Casino, who used to tell him tales about shoplifting from the very same department store. Although Bradshaw-Isherwood succeeds in briefly camping Hitler’s brown-shirts by making fun of their

seriousness, the sensibility fails him when he discovers the fates of his other companions. Otto goes on the run and is never seen or heard of again (185-86). Helen Pratt reveals that the Baron has died after shooting himself in the closet of a public lavatory (188). In Prague, Bradshaw-Isherwood overhears two businessmen discussing Bernhard's reported death of heart failure. "There's a lot of heart failure [...] in Germany these days", remarks one, before the other begins to crack a crude joke: "Did you ever hear the story about the Jew and the Goy girl with the wooden leg?" (184-85). Freeman goes perhaps too far when he claims that, in the "harsh reality, the new world order, of Nazi seriousness", camp is "ineffectual at best" (16-17). At its best, Isherwood's queer, pacifist, and transnational position is not enough to defeat fascism or the petty prejudices on which it depends; it is nonetheless a "fabulous and powerful tool" (ibid.), which can be directed against these inimical forces on a tactical and micropolitical level. If the *Berlin Stories* represent the best that could be achieved from a position of minority during the 1930s, they were and remain, as an example of minor literature, a testament to the anti-fascist struggle.

## Conclusion

In becoming an expatriate, Isherwood realized his sexual and vocational desires by pursuing both a literal line of escape and a nomadic movement of deterritorialization from the subject positions prescribed by his family, class, and nation. Section III examined how this is reflected in the *Berlin Stories* (1935-39). Chapter 1 considered Isherwood's narrative techniques as part of an attempt to communicate not being but becoming-minor in both content and expression. From the perspective of a 'camera' and namesake narrator, whose identity is reflected in a variety of local and expatriate characters, Isherwood combines the influences of Wildean aestheticism, Forsterian tragi-comedy, and the performativity of Berlin clubland to create a minor transnational style of camp. As well as subverting majoritarian standards and offering an alternative to family, class, and nation, he is also concerned with how to become engaged as a political writer in response to developments in Germany. In connection with this, Chapter 2 argued that Isherwood's political consciousness evolved to a queer, pacifist, and transnational position. Through the 'sympathetic impulse of camp', he extends his own sense of minority to include a variety of characters who are vulnerable because of their minoritization and whose stories are presented as camp pastorals in which fantasy and historical reality collide. Although the camp of the *Berlin Stories* is not enough to defeat fascism, it is perhaps the best that can be achieved from the writer's position of minority in the 1930s. At the end of that decade, Isherwood brought the English of London and Cambridge to the US, where he took it further in the direction of deterritorialization and the creation of a minor transnational literature. In *Kafka*, Deleuze and Guattari ask: "How to become a nomad and an immigrant and a gypsy in relation to one's own language?" (19). As in Europe, a minor literature is evident in both content and expression and is a concern not only of the individual artist but of one who is engaged politically and in the articulation of a community.



## Section IV: Isherwood in the US (1940s-60s)

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### Introduction

In the New Directions edition of the *Berlin Stories* (1963), Isherwood is quoted as claiming that “Hitler’s coming to power made [him] an honorary refugee” (iv). In May 1933, Magnus Hirschfeld’s Institute of Sexual Research was ransacked by members of the SA and the Nazi German Student Union, who had the contents of its library removed and publically burnt on the Opernplatz. Days later, Isherwood abandoned Berlin with his partner, Heinz Neddermeyer, and stayed for several months on a Greek island rented by Francis Turville-Petre. After Neddermeyer was denied asylum in the UK, they moved through France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Spain, Portugal, and the Canary Islands until May 1937, when Neddermeyer was arrested in Trier, convicted of sex crimes and draft evasion, and sentenced to several years of prison, state labor, and military service. Isherwood remained in Brussels, then spent six months traveling with Auden in East Asia before returning to Europe across the US. In January 1939, Auden and Isherwood moved to New York. Like Berlin, the city offered the possibility of a nomadic line of escape from family, class, and nation, which Isherwood held collectively responsible for the fate of Neddermeyer. He soon pursued this line to Los Angeles, where he renounced his inheritance in favor of his younger brother, Richard, underwent initiation as a disciple of Swami Prabhavananda, and moved into the Hollywood Vedanta Center with the intention of taking vows as a monk. In 1946, as he recalls in *Kathleen and Frank* (1971), his “final ritual act of breaking free [...] was to become a citizen of the United States, thus separating himself from Mother and Motherland at one stroke” (362). Beforehand, he decided to return to a secular life and a career of writing. Accordingly, he worked on three novels concerning his experiences with refugees: *Prater Violet* (1945), *The World in the Evening* (1954), and *Down There in a Visit* (1962); these were followed by *A Single Man* (1964) and by his final novel, *A Meeting by the River* (1967).

In his diaries of the 1940s, Isherwood recalls that he saw himself as a “natural citizen of the go-getters’ homeland”, adding, “Oh, I’d talk faster and louder than any of them. I’d learn the slang and the accent, I’d adapt like an Arctic fox. Before long, I’d be writing the great American novel” (*Diaries*, 4-5). Despite such ambition, his work in the US was generally ignored by scholars until the second and third waves of interest in his work in the 1970s and 2000s. The tendency of

contemporary scholarship is to focus on the late novels and memoirs and to read them as evidence of an ‘American Isherwood’, who is linked to a ‘Vedantist Isherwood’ and to an increasingly outspoken ‘gay Isherwood’. The writer also recorded in his diary that he loved the US precisely because “I *don’t* belong. Because I’m not involved in its traditions, not born under the curse of its history. I feel free here. I’m on my own. My life will be what I make of it” (ibid., 94). Accordingly, Section IV does not divide Isherwood’s work in the US from his previous work in the UK and Germany. Following the example of Deleuze and Guattari’s *Kafka*, it argues that he takes the English of London and Cambridge further in the direction of deterritorialization along the same lines he followed in mainland Europe. In illustration of this, it examines the notes, drafts, and published versions of his two novels which are set entirely in the US. In *The World in the Evening*, widely considered to be his least successful work, he moves further toward the creation of a minor literature, which is evident in its content and expression and in its engagement in politics and the articulation of community. In *A Single Man*, widely considered to be his masterpiece, this movement is checked by a contrary movement toward reterritorialization, in the form of fixed identity categories, which was both regretted and resisted by Isherwood in the cultural climate of the 1960s.

Chapter 1 considers the representation of minor politics and community in the notes, drafts, and published version of *The World in the Evening* as a development of Isherwood’s queer, pacifist, and transnational political position. A successor to the ‘greenwood’ of Forster’s *Maurice* (1913-14) and the pastorals of *Goodbye to Berlin* (1939), Dolgelly is a village setting of pacifists, refugees, religious minorities, and sexual minorities, who work together to build a durable minor community. Developing contributions by Carr (2006) and Harker (2013), the chapter argues that camp is key to an understanding not only of the expression of the novel but of Isherwood’s attempts to define himself as a writer in the US. He combines the camp of the *Berlin Stories*, the politics of queer protest fiction, and the model of community provided by the Quakers of Haverford to produce what is referred to by his characters as ‘Quaker Camp’ and is considered here to signify a minor transnational style. Chapter 2 examines the notes, drafts and published version of *A Single Man* for their reflections, both positive and negative, of the experiences of a seasoned immigrant in the US. Isherwood’s intention was to bring out the varied factors in the constitution of his protagonist, George, an Englishman who has integrated successfully in a multicultural city but begins to feel increasingly marginalized on account of his advancing age and minority sexuality.

Developing contributions by Bristow (1999), Harker (2013), and Gonzalez (2013), the chapter argues that the novel reflects a resistance by Isherwood to the reterritorialization of minority according to identity categories which are defined and tolerated by the majority. A transnational genealogy can be traced from Forster's 'greenwood' through Isherwood's representations of politics and community in Berlin and Dolgelly. The sense of minority realized by George and his late partner, Jim, in Santa Monica, California, has substantially failed and survives only in a nostalgia for an earlier decade, when it was possible to become minor on one's own terms, or on those of a nomadic becoming-minor.

#### IV.1. Minority Report: *The World in the Evening* (1954)

Isherwood took almost a decade to complete *The World in the Evening* (1954), the first of his novels to be set in the US, but did not entirely resolve the difficulties he experienced while working on the project. As he wrote to Edward Upward soon after its publication, “*The World in the Evening* is a failure. But an interesting one, I hope, and a necessary one, I’m *sure* for me” (qtd. Harker, 25). Contemporary criticism generally agreed with this mixed evaluation. Wilson, for example, grants it worthwhile to examine the “central failure in his work, where with a lesser writer one could merely expatiate on the incidental merits [...] and disregard the total intention” (62). Subsequent critics have echoed this sentiment. For Wilde, the novel represents an attempt by its author to explore and to develop a formal means of expressing his personal concerns; “[t]hat the attempt fails does not diminish [its] value or interest” (1971, 102). Finney suggests that, because there is “so much to criticize”, it is helpful to begin by considering what it is attempting to achieve (215), not as a work of art in its own right but as a stage in the development of the writer’s craft (222). More recently, Izzo contends that Isherwood’s idea of ‘necessary failure’ represents the “crux of the novel’s importance for his own evolving consciousness” (2001, 196). Likewise, Harker suggests that his idea of ‘interesting failure’ provides a useful basis to reassess the novel, “particularly through analyzing its evolution, which may be more interesting than the final product” (25). As curator of manuscripts at the Huntington Library, Hodson recommends that scholars reconstruct the writer’s progress by comparing the published version with the notes, outlines, and drafts which are available in the Isherwood Archive (257). As she suggests, the importance of *The World in the Evening* lies in its status as a “transitional work” (256); as such, it is perhaps most interesting as a record of Isherwood’s transition from being a European writer to becoming an American writer. The following examines his early notes, outlines, and drafts before turning to an analysis of the published version of the novel, in order to appreciate his intentions when he began work on the project in the late 1940s.

In 1949, Isherwood reflected that he was “more a socialist than he was a fascist; and more a pacifist than he was a socialist. But he was a queer first and foremost” (*Lost Years*, 190). His understanding of the term ‘queer’ relates not only to sexual identity but to the experience of becoming an ‘Outsider’, which he defines as both a “constitutionally born member of a minority” and “somebody who realizes consciously that he belongs to a minority” (Isherwood & Summers,

48/52). The evolution of his position, which occurred in the context of European politics from 1929-39, is reflected in the *Berlin Stories*. His arrival at such a position is reflected in *The World in the Evening*, which is likewise a work of minor literature, in which everything connects to politics and community, in a new context in the US. Its action takes place from fall 1941 through spring 1942, in the months surrounding the entry of the US into the war in Europe, which coincide with the time spent by Isherwood in voluntary service at an American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) refugee hostel in Haverford, Pennsylvania. An early outline of the narrative sets all of the action in Dolgelly, a fictional village in the vicinity of Haverford, which is the site of a similar hostel being managed by the local community of Quakers (CI 1153, a). Isherwood's first working title was 'The School of Tragedy'. The metaphor alludes to the refugee hostel itself and, more generally, to the "whole experience of persecution, imprisonment, flight and emigration under the Hitler terror" (ibid.). Despite its title, the projected novel is a "very optimistic book", which features five main characters who are "all strong, admirable people. Each one of them, in his or her different way, is a hero" (ibid.). In bringing together two refugees and three of their sponsors, Isherwood does not divide America and Europe as respective areas of freedom and persecution any more than he did Germany and England in the *Berlin Stories*. In his initial outlines, he writes that this is a "novel of ideas" (ibid., d); as such, it addresses similar issues to those of the earlier novellas, most especially in regard to the "problem of minorities in general" (CI 1154, 5).

Not unlike the several versions of the city which is described in the *Berlin Stories*, Dolgelly is the setting of a minor transnational community. Consisting of lawyers, schoolteachers, and university professors, the refugees are "mostly professional people, [...] some Jewish, some not; some political, some racial" (CI 1153, a). Among them are Dr. Traube, a Jewish-Austrian poet, who has escaped with his wife from a concentration camp in France, and Gerda Manheim, a political activist from Hamburg, who became involved in the anti-fascist resistance and managed to escape abroad after her husband was discovered and incarcerated (ibid., c-d). There are clear parallels of minority between these refugees and the members of the local community at Dolgelly. Among their sponsors, Sarah Pennington is the Quaker-American manager of the hostel, whose character is described, in the published novel, as being "very *Early American*" to the extent that she might have come ashore from the Mayflower and knelt down at once "to give thanks for having been led safely 'through the watery maze'" (81). Another of their sponsors is Dr. Kennedy, who attends the refugees in his capacity as village doctor and has, for several years, been living with a

same-sex partner (CI 1153, e). Although their neighbors are quite accustomed to their domestic arrangement, Dr. Kennedy is inclined to be somewhat “aggressive; especially about his own homosexuality”, which is represented by him as a “minority problem, comparable to the problem of the refugees”, as much as to say: “You talk about the Jews being persecuted – what about us?” (ibid.). By including this character, Isherwood’s aim is to strike a “parallel [...] between the Jewish and the homosexual minority” (CI 1154, 5). Another parallel is struck between these and Stephen Monk, Sarah’s chief assistant at the hostel, who has to decide whether to register as a conscientious objector in the event of the US becoming involved in the war in Europe. A decision to do so would result in being assigned to an isolated C.O. camp, where his presence might nonetheless be useful in “helping keep up the morale of his particular minority”, who are likely to be prevented from contributing meaningfully to the war effort by being hidden away “like a slightly disreputable secret” (CI 1154, 6).

As Isherwood worked on his ideas, Stephen Monk became the focalizer and main protagonist of the narrative, which is “to some extent the story of his uncertainties and the manner in which they are resolved” (CI 1153, a). In developing this character, Isherwood qualified his presentation of minority in that it is not simply being but becoming minor, or identifying with minority, which is significant to him. In addition to being Quaker-American by birth, Stephen was raised in England and spent much of his life in mainland Europe, with the consequence that he is, psychologically, “an Anglo-American and a wanderer, not really at home anywhere” (ibid.). Having left England after the outbreak of war, he has been working as a screenwriter in Hollywood but, feeling restless and remorseful, decides to inform his childhood nanny, ‘aunt’ Sarah, that he has changed his mind about helping out at the refugee hostel opened by her at his ancestral estate near Dolgelly. In returning Stephen to Tawelfan as a proverbial “Prodigal Nephew” (CI 1164, 35), Isherwood introduced a significant contrast between the status of this character and that of the refugees. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, refugees in the US remained in a precarious position due to the system of national quotas introduced under the Immigration Act of 1924, which continued to be enforced regardless of the humanitarian crisis in Europe. In early drafts of the novel, Stephen’s arrival as proprietor of the estate produces a “violent disturbance” (ibid., 18-20). In the dining-room, everyone rises as in response to the “unexpected appearance of a commanding officer in a mess hall” and renders a “small stiff bow, or tense[s] slightly, lowering the eyes”, during a roll-call of names and introductions (ibid.). Asked by one of them if he has had a pleasant

trip, Stephen confirms that he arrived by airplane, with free meals and no obligation to tip for services on board (ibid.). One of the refugees laughs loudly at this, and understandably so. In striking contrast, all of them have spent “long weary months” waiting for visas in various ports in Europe, where they had “nothing, literally nothing, but the clothes they stood up in” and many among them “fell by the wayside – just broken, mentally and physically” (ibid.).

Stephen’s privilege consists not only in the unrestricted freedom he enjoys by virtue of birthright citizenship but in his being able to maintain, indeed being encouraged to do so, a mixed Anglo-American identity. The refugees, in comparison, are expected to “learn ‘our ways’, and, in due course, qualify for jobs and become absorbed into the population [...] to become American citizens and spend the rest of their lives in the United States” (CI 1162, 13). Although he is aware of the good intentions behind these expectations, Stephen observes that the refugees are “like prisoners” at the hostel, where he imagines them walking “back and forth, back and forth, across the yard of a concentration camp” (CI 1164, 24). This analogy is excessive but not entirely inappropriate, as the people who were forced to abandon Europe because of their minority identities are now expected to surrender those same identities in exchange for asylum and eventual citizenship in America. Mindful of the apparent lengths to which they are willing to go in order to be accepted, Stephen notes how Mr. Berlauer laughs in “imitation of a musical comedy Englishman”, a role he has probably learned to perform “along with his florid vocabulary and thick but recognizably Oxford accent” (ibid., 19). Stephen’s reaction to the incongruity is highly cynical, and he takes a sarcastic delight in the comedy of the situation when the refugees are driven into Philadelphia, where some members of the Quaker community are to give the hostel their blessing by hosting a large party. When, with his foreign accent and manners, Stephen is mistaken for a refugee and asked with “patronizing heartiness” how he likes America (ibid., 28-29), he plays the same exaggerated role conversely, imitating the Central European stereotype which is expected by his interlocutor: “I? Oh, vairy much! Vairy, vairy much! Is voonderful! [...] I like – how you call? – ze Amairican way. Is vairy nize, I find” (ibid.). He takes this kind of roleplay to a further extreme when the hosts become “brightly ruthless in their insistence” that everyone take part in some games, in one of which they are “herded into four teams – each team to make noises like a designated animal; a sheep, a cow, a donkey or a dog” (ibid.).

These games are presented by the hosts as “one of those pleasures of a free democracy for which [the refugees have] been pining throughout their years of persecution” (ibid.). Whereas one

of them looks “terrified and bewildered”, another is proficient in her particular role: “They had ordered her to be a cow, and so she was a cow, totally, without a trace of humor or the least ironical reservation” (ibid.). If Miss Schneiderhaus is a model of assured assimilation, Dr. Rheinlander, who carries a notebook half-full with “all kinds of facts about America”, projects the “harassed air of a conscientious student [...] as if he expected that one day, without warning, we should put him through a severe examination” (CI 1159, 17). Another kind of test occurs on Sunday, when the refugees are invited to attend a Quaker service. Although Sarah assures them that there is no obligation, she suggests nonetheless that they do so, creating an awkward situation which Mr. Zincke saves by declaring that “America is Heaven” and that “[t]hat is our new religion” (CI 1164, 34). While sitting among the congregation, Stephen wonders if Mr. Berlauer envies their being “so settled and cosy and safe”, or despises them because they have never heard “fists banging on their doors in the dead of night” (ibid., 35). He wonders if the service is just another example of the “nonsense [he has] to put up with, in exchange for [his] room and board”, if any of this is real for him or “just a comic dream which began as a nightmare”, or if he worries that he will “suddenly be back in that S.A. barracks, kicked awake to be told that [he’s] next” (ibid.). Following the service, Mr. Berlauer bows tactfully from the hips and murmurs, “Most interesting!” (ibid., 38). Dr. Traube arrives shortly afterwards to pronounce that “we refugees have no secrets. The little birds in the air – they know very well who we are. They know what we say, what we do, [and] why we are here’ (ibid., 40). His words provide a gloss on the situation and consequent behavior of the refugees, whose experience of minority in the US differs significantly from that of Isherwood’s protagonist as well as from Isherwood himself.

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The earliest drafts and outlines of *The World in the Evening* provide evidence of a project which aims to address aspects of the “minority problem” from a transnational perspective in the US. The final published version of the novel departs radically from these beginnings, abandoning the ‘school of tragedy’, with its setting in a refugee hostel and its multiple centers of interest in an assembly of characters who represent a variety of minority positions. Hodson notes that, as he struggled with the novel, Isherwood came to realize that it was lacking in focus and that the refugee story, “even though it was a tale he wanted to tell, needed to be dropped in order for the novel to concentrate on its protagonist” (254). Accordingly, it now focuses very much on Stephen, who, by his own admission, is not in the least “tragic or pitiable; no, merely squalid and ridiculous” (16).



The narrative is divided into three parts. The action of ‘Part One: An End’ opens at a party in the Hollywood hills, where Stephen is no longer a writer but a mere hanger-on to the minor celebrity of his wife, Jane. Having discovered her in an apparent casual sexual encounter with a young actor, Stephen flees Los Angeles, that “antiseptic, heartless, hateful neon-mirage of a city” (ibid.), and takes refuge in Tawelfan, which, in the Welsh language of eighteenth-century settlers to the area, means ‘The Quiet Place’ (40). ‘Part Two: Letters and Life’ departs most radically from early versions of the novel in containing an entirely new and relatively autonomous narrative. Following a self-inflicted accident, Stephen is confined to his quarters for several weeks and takes the opportunity to review his past, using the correspondence of his first wife, Elizabeth, as a stimulus to memory. Dating from the time of their first meeting in 1926 to her premature death in 1935, her letters alternate with Stephen’s perspective of events in Dolgelly from 1941-42. In ‘Part Three: A Beginning’, he has moved on from the past and enlisted with a civilian ambulance unit which is due to depart for North Africa. Having reconciled with Jane, he announces, in the final words of the novel: “I really do forgive myself, from the bottom of my heart” (333).

The title of *The World in the Evening* belongs to the first stanza of John Donne’s poem, ‘Of the Progress of the Soul’ (1612): “And the great world to his aged evening; From infant morn, through manly noon I draw” (189). In accordance with this and Isherwood’s focus on the protagonist, critics have interpreted the novel as a reflection of the author’s personal progress in spiritual or psychological terms. Wilde suggests that it is “less a novel than a fable of redemption” (1971, 110). Schwerdt considers it in view of the “psychological factors involved” (132), whereas Summers regards it as an illustration of the Vedantist belief that “happiness lies in escape from the ego and in discovery of the *Atman*, the God in man, the universal consciousness” (1980, 85). Certain correspondences between Isherwood and his protagonist certainly suggest some kind of reassessment of the relative privilege he enjoyed as an expatriate in Hollywood in comparison with the refugees he encountered in Haverford. In Part One, Mr. Berlauer’s imitation of a ‘musical comedy Englishman’ is echoed in Stephen’s “masquerade as a musical-comedy-Hollywood character” (12). His combination of a moiré cummerbund, white tuxedo jacket, crimson bowtie, and matching carnation is also an attempt to blend in, as if he were trying to “melt into the scenery” (ibid.), but he is aware of coming across nonetheless as a “snooty, half-Europeanized playboy with a Limey accent and a Riviera background” (15). Stephen is also vaguely disturbed by snatches of conversation about the London *Blitz* and the fighting in North Africa (13). He is increasingly

remorseful of what is, in effect, a masquerade of “irresponsible, unmanly freedom”, supported by his birthrights of unearned wealth and US citizenship (16). His flight ‘home’ to Tawelfan, which lies at the end of a lane, “like the lanes of southern England, with high-banked hedgerows and overarching trees” (30), resonates with the symbolism of a return to the roots of his transnational Anglo- and Quaker-American identities. Following his accident, he remains “at the beginning of [a] convalescence”, which, as critics of the novel suggest, is not only physical but also spiritual and psychological, in the sense of assuaging his guilt of “having dared to indulge in private misery in an exclusive Beverly Hills home” (28-29).

In *The World in the Evening*, the number of refugees has been reduced to only one but a contrast of privilege still obtains between Stephen and Gerda, who have arrived at Tawelfan within days of each other. This contrast is conveyed, rather obviously, when he explains to her that he happens to be “filthily rich” and that, after graduating from Cambridge, he started to “travel around [...] all over the place”, making only occasional visits to England and one short trip to America, so that “now, [he doesn’t] really belong anywhere” (46-47). His reminiscences of Elizabeth constitute an often bewildering travelogue, recounting months and years spent in various countries in Europe and celebrating the “poetry of departure” to such exotic locations as “Tahiti, New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines, Japan, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Saigon, Bangkok, Singapore, [and] Bali” (187). That this “wandering bohemian kind of life was actually quite expensive” is of no consequence to these self-styled “Invisible Rich” (185), who are unencumbered by material concerns or any “fuss about tickets and passports and Customs declarations” (189). In contrast to this, Gerda was crowded onto a “leaky old freighter” from Portugal to New York, where she and her fellow asylum seekers were informed that “We have no right to be here. We do not legally exist”, and were detained by the authorities until Sarah arrived and “saves our lives” (45). Sarah’s intervention is otherwise unexplained in the novel, but it can be understood from her assumption that “now she comes to us, asking for a new life” that her expectations are the same as in the drafts (38). Nevertheless, Gerda is quite unlike the refugees of ‘The School of Tragedy’. Although she is aware that Stephen indirectly provides her with everything she possesses in the US, she informs him quite frankly that she is a non-believer and will attend Sunday service only out of respect for Sarah (43). When she draws in a “deep breath of pleasure and exclaim[s]: ‘Oh, it is so good to be here!’”, Stephen echoes the patronizing host of the party in Philadelphia by asking her how she

likes America, only to be quickly corrected: “I did not mean America. I mean the green trees. To be in the country again” (44).

Gerda nurses Stephen back to health, both by tending to his physical injuries and by helping him recognize his privilege and respect the dignity of others in less fortunate circumstances. In this, she is joined by another care-giver, Dr. Kennedy, who performs a similar function in the company of his same-sex partner, Bob Wood. Whereas the refugee minorities of the drafts are reduced to Gerda, the American minorities are represented for the most part by these two characters. Stephen’s first impression of Bob is of a disgruntled youth, who is open and candid about his sexuality and accuses Stephen of saying “what you heterosexuals always say. We’ll run you out of town. We’ll send you to jail. We’ll stop you ever getting another job. But please don’t you be stuffy about it” (120). Because of his difficulties in reconciling the politics of his sexual identity with the pacifist and religious values of his Quaker heritage, he regards Stephen with a certain “sympathetic curiosity” (117). Although Stephen only tells him that he “guess[es]” he believes in God and is “kind of” a pacifist, he meets Bob halfway by revealing that he once had a same-sex experience and succeeds in convincing him that he is “all right” (117-121). Stephen takes a different line on minority with Charles, turning the issue into an insider joke: “I belong to a minority, myself. One of the most unpopular. [...] I’m rich. [...] You think that’s nothing? [...] Till you’ve had a lot of money, you just don’t know what guilt is” (128). Charles is happy to go along with this joke, as he and Bob articulate opposite positions in regard to their particular ‘minority problem’. Whereas Bob argues that “we’re too damned tactful”, with the consequence that issues of sexual minority are never addressed and discriminatory laws remain unchanged (120), Charles complains that he is “sick of belonging to these whining militant minorities” (128). As Bristow notes, the couple demonstrate the complexity of minority consciousness and the question of survival of minority identity. Rather than support either position, the novel attempts to offer insights as to why these men have reached “such different conclusions about how best to maintain their queer relationship in straight society during the early 1940s” (153).

Recently, Adair has called for a transformation in critical attitudes toward the novel, in order to give it “both its proper due and its place within the tradition of gay fiction” (328). Successive critics have already noted Isherwood’s representation of a successful same-sex couple, the significance of which is raised by its implicit contrast with a failed opposite-sex couple, whose relationship would conventionally be ascribed greater value due to its heterosexuality. Whereas

Jane and Stephen are selfish, apolitical, and promiscuous, Bob and Charles are committed not only to each other but to several socially conscious and politically engaged communities. As frequenters of “queer circles” (125), both men identify with a minor community on account of its style or the struggle of its members for equal rights under the law. At Dolgelly, these circles intersect with those of other minor communities of Quakers, pacifists, refugees, and conscientious objectors, who discover that they have much in common despite their conflicts of interest and often contradictory motives. As Adair notes, the isolation of Dolgelly’s residents from war preparations in nearby Philadelphia reflects the tendency of such minorities to be “lumped together and treated as unpatriotic, effeminate troublemakers” (308). By aligning these distinct groups of outsiders, Isherwood makes an “important statement about the necessity of minorities finding expression and power by uniting” (ibid.). Contrary to stereotype, each of the characters is committed to service and works with the others toward returning to mainstream society on their own terms. In the third and final part of the novel, the most significant among them leave Dolgelly for Philadelphia. Gerda plans to return presently to Europe in order to rejoin Peter, who has escaped from a concentration camp. Bob has decided to reenlist and is preparing to be deployed overseas, while Charles will stay behind and continue to provide service to the public in his capacity as village doctor. Even Stephen, a prodigal now reformed by their example, is due to depart for North Africa with his civilian ambulance unit. These people will all contribute to the struggle against fascism, while representing, in their various ways, both “diversity in an unlikely place and the necessity for greater social awareness and acceptance of individuals who do not conform to patriarchal, hegemonic standards” (317).

Adair proposes that critics read *The World in the Evening* as a “text apart from Isherwood’s oeuvre: as a unique narrative exploring the possibility of forming spaces within society amenable to gay men” (303). On the contrary, the novel is reflective of an evolution in his understanding and expression of minor politics and community. As Adair acknowledges, Isherwood’s appreciation of the importance of community developed during his time in Berlin, when he experienced the vitality of the city’s queer social network, as well as its vulnerability and ultimate destruction during the fall of the Weimar Republic (316). On the basis of this experience and, following his emigration to the US, Isherwood began to “envision what a successful, durable gay community might look like” (ibid.). Adair argues that the novel offers a critical response to other narratives which address this issue, most especially Forster’s *Maurice* (1971), which became familiar to

Isherwood in manuscript form and “created a dialogue between the two men about the creation and depiction of gay community” (311). In the conclusion of the novel, Forster’s same-sex lovers withdraw to the ‘greenwood’, a ‘second world’ in which they can live together as outlaws from mainstream society. Although Isherwood sympathized with this pastoral mode and extended it to the characters of ‘On Ruegen Island (Summer 1931)’, he also approached it in a spirit of contestation and presented a critique of its inherent classism and ahistoricism. In the US, in the 1940s and 1950s, he returns to the question of queer community. In its rural isolation, Dolgelly is a successor to Forster’s ‘greenwood’ and the pastoral of Ruegen Island; unlike these, it is a setting of diverse groups and individuals who are working together to build a durable minor community which can engage with the majority on its own terms. Adair argues that Isherwood’s familiarity with *Maurice* allowed him to “write back to Forster’s text, thus altering the depiction of gay communities in British fiction and creating another link in the tradition of gay fiction” (330). This is as true of the *Berlin Stories* as it is of *The World in the Evening* and as much a reflection of Isherwood’s transnational perspective as it is of any effect his writing might have had on national literatures.

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In his 1973 interview with Kaplan, Isherwood admits that there is “something deeply wrong” with *The World in the Evening* (267). Its undeniable failure might be attributed to his late insertion of the memory narrative, which not only lacks credibility but leaves the reader with more questions than answers in regard to Stephen’s final words of forgiveness. According to Wilde, the main problem is neither what Stephen is nor what he becomes, but “how Isherwood effects the transition from one to the other” (1971, 110). King notes that the whole process of his reformation is “curiously artificial and unconvincing” (15), while Schwerdt adds that his concluding insight seems false, forced, and “‘tacked on’ rather than well-integrated” (126/133). What is missing is a significant outcome of the encounters between Stephen, a birthright citizen in a failed relationship, with Gerda, a refugee in an exemplary opposite-sex relationship, and with Bob and Charles, minority citizens in an exemplary same-sex relationship, who have all come to Dolgelly in some kind of temporary retreat from the war. It is clear from Bob’s remark that they “never talked any more about any of that” that each of the characters’ decisions to return to Philadelphia has had nothing to do with their conversations (310). The reduction of the main narrative renders it a truncated vehicle for Isherwood’s ‘novel of ideas’. The ‘problem of minorities’ is inadequately

addressed through flat, didactic, and moralistically obvious characters, who “most often appear declaiming their philosophies rather than exemplifying them” (Schwerdt, 127). Critics have also attributed the failure of the novel to its style and design. Wilde finds it to be humorless, tendentious, and “curiously stiff and theoretical” in structure (1971, 103). Although Schwerdt regards it as Isherwood’s most humorous, she finds that its puns and epigrams are too studied and that its humor sometimes “stands apart from the context instead of emerging from the interaction of character, thus moving the novel away from comedy and toward farce” (120). More recently, Harker notes that its “sentimentality and slickness”, its “mix of seriousness and facetiousness”, and its “merger of camp and middlebrow” were at odds with contemporary aesthetics, according to which great works of literature were defined by seriousness, moral complexity, and a judicious application of form (37-38).

Harker’s choice of terms recalls Isherwood’s unique transnational style of the 1930s, which enabled him to express both his minority and his evolving political position by combining the performativity of Berlin clubland with the aestheticism of Wilde and the tragi-comedic approach of Forster. In the 1940s-50s, despite the incongruity of camp and prevailing aesthetics, he perseveres with the style to the extent of addressing it explicitly as one aspect of his ‘novel of ideas’. In an exchange with Stephen, Charles introduces ‘camp’ as a term used in “queer circles” to distinguish a style, or how to do things with an air. Whereas ‘Low Camp’ is exemplified by popular drag performance, ‘High Camp’ expresses “something much more fundamental” in the arts, as can be appreciated in the practices of ballet and baroque and in works by Mozart, El Greco, and Dostoevsky (125-26). Although both varieties have an object, ‘High Camp’ “always has an underlying seriousness. You can’t camp about something you don’t take seriously. You’re not making fun of it; you’re making fun out of it. You’re expressing what’s basically serious to you in terms of fun and artifice” (ibid.). In a later passage, Stephen recalls his first marriage as a “kind of game [...] as if the Monsieur-Madame front which [he and his wife] presented to the outside world were just a protective device (perhaps what Charles Kennedy would call ‘a camp’) to prevent anyone from suspecting that [they] had discovered a new, unnamed kind of relationship” (144). Taken together, these passages suggest that camp undermines heteronormative standards through facetious exaggeration, in such a way as can be safely disowned if challenged. Critics have failed to connect them and, until very recently, have generally dismissed Charles’ disquisition as inadequate, or merely reiterated it without relating it to the novel in which it appears. This is

unfortunate, because the passages represent Isherwood's attempt to express theoretically what he had applied in practice in the *Berlin Stories* and continued to apply in *The World in the Evening*. They are therefore key to an understanding not only of his development as a European writer in his work of the 1930s, but of his conscious attempts to define himself as an American writer in his work of the 1940s-50s.

The queer, pacifist, and transnational position which Isherwood had developed in response to political developments in Germany and which he consciously adopted in the context of Cold War politics in the US was soon put to another test. In 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy made the infamous allegation that the US State Department had been infiltrated by members of the communist party. This resulted in the setting up of a congressional subcommittee, whose investigation quickly extended to the security threat posed by alleged 'sexual perverts'. In 1953, the ensuing mass expulsions of public employees culminated in the signing by President Eisenhower of Executive Order 10450, which effectively barred sexual minorities from employment by the federal government. In Germany, Isherwood had learnt that camp was not enough in itself to counter fascism. His awareness of pressure to respond to fascism in the US in a more direct way comes out in the context of Charles' discussion of camp, which concerns a source of dissonance between himself and his partner. Bob is by temperament "quite a crusader", who "ought to be involved in some political movement, or storming barricades" (127). Given to making direct political statements, he explains to Stephen how his minority is singled out for legal persecution: "You probably don't feel quite the same way about the Law as I do. [...] After all, [...] *you're* not a professional criminal" (119); how it is excluded from public service: "All you have to do is to tell [the psychiatrist] you're queer, and you're out" (311); and how it is disregarded and marginalized by the general public, "for fear it'd trouble their tender consciences" (120). Unlike Bob, Charles is "no crusader" (128). As he explains to Stephen, his father changed their surname from Klatnik to Kennedy in order to disguise their ethnic minority and, although he wanted to do so, he simply "didn't have the guts" to change it back (*ibid.*). His hesitation to assert an analogous identity of sexual minority causes tension with Bob: "All this respectability of mine drives him frantic. Medical etiquette. The bedside manner. Horse and buggy humour. [...] He'd like for us to march down the street with a banner, singing 'we're queer because we're queer because we're queer because we're queer'" (127).

From Charles' perspective, this tension is especially regrettable, because his partner is "actually on his side, and he knows it" (ibid.). Whereas Bob's 'queer' attitude is an extension of his wish to take his neighbors and "rub their noses in it" through the means of protest (120), Charles' "horse and buggy humour" might be related in the context of his entire exchange with Stephen to what he subsequently refers to as 'camp' (127). Isherwood was motivated to reconcile these contrary styles, which are as expressive of different politics as much as they are of a shared sense of community. As one of the few recent critics to address the topic of camp in his novel, Harker argues that it is precisely through such a reconciliation of styles that he attempted to establish his identity as an independent writer in the US. After 1945, when he abandoned the namesake narrator of the *Berlin Stories*, Isherwood discovered a "phenomenon that would give him a model for an American idiom" (12). This was the 'gay protest novel', a genre Harker identifies with a prolific and now largely forgotten number of post-war novels which pursued same-sex themes and advocated for public acceptance of sexual minorities. At the same time as these began to receive some critical attention, more established types of protest writing, in the tradition of Harriet Beecher Stowe's anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), were beginning to become objects of critical disdain on account of their obvious emotionalism, production of consumable stereotypes, and oversimplification of complex issues of identity politics (13). Isherwood's own reservations come through in the apparent incongruity of style and content in *The World in the Evening*. On the one hand, as Harker remarks, he "pushes the earnest pleas of [...] protest novels to their logical conclusion" (32). This is evident toward the close of the narrative, when Bob and Charles' relationship is belatedly acknowledged by Sarah, who concedes that "we're all of us apt to be very cruel and stupid, in the presence of what we're not accustomed to" (320). On the other hand, if these characters are exemplary of mutual respect and toleration, they are also persistently camped in correction of the protest novel's unfashionable earnestness and tendency toward reductive identity politics.

If one of the most impenetrable aspects of Isherwood's 'novel of ideas' is his notion of 'Quaker Camp', it nonetheless provides a further key to understanding his attempts to redefine himself as a writer. Charles introduces the topic of camp during a discussion of the Dolgelly Quakers, whose example of politics and community has earned his admiration: "They don't sit nursing guilty consciences; [...] They've got the courage of their convictions, [...] and they've found their own answers to everything without resorting to any trick theology" (125). This is



qualified by a distaste for their style: “They don’t know how to do things with an air. They’re hopelessly tacky. They’ve no notion of elegance” (ibid.). Charles’ qualified admiration is a reflection of Isherwood’s own estimation of the Quakers of Haverford. Suggesting that their fictional counterparts “stand in for the genre of protest” as well as its need to be camped, Harker argues that “New York camp inserted into Quaker protest” is central to his vision of the novel, and that this unlikely combination is, moreover, his solution to the problem of his “American authorial identity” (32-35). Although Harker makes a case for the influence of Isherwood’s New York contacts on his understanding of camp, a more convincing possibility is that he retained the camp style he had applied in the *Berlin Stories* and combined it with the examples of politics and community he discovered in queer fiction and among the Quakers in the US. In that case, ‘Quaker Camp’ combines the aestheticism of Wilde, the tragi-comedy of Forster, the performativity of Berlin clubland, the protest culture of US queer fiction, and the model of politics and community of Quaker-Americans. This minor transnational style allows him to confront injustices against his minority while adhering to his queer, pacifist, and transnational political position; it also serves as a protective device for a writer who continued to be very much concerned with his public standing and critical reputation. That the cultivation of this style is Isherwood’s mission as a writer is suggested in Charles’ expressed regret that “Quaker Camp doesn’t exist, yet. Some tremendous genius will have to arise and create it. Until that happens, it’s as unimaginable as Rimbaud’s prose poems would have been to Keats” (126).

Isherwood was not destined to be that genius, nor *The World in the Evening* to be another suite of ‘Illuminations’. Nevertheless, a comparison with the Isherwood Archive can make some sense of his intentions behind highlighting the style. Bob and Charles are, respectively, a hobby painter and writer *manqué*. In a discarded scene in one of the drafts (CI 1163), Charles assumes the role of a “Demon Doctor” and proceeds to blindfold Stephen, “like the heroine of a horror movie”, so that Bob, the “Hound of the Baskervilles”, can set up his “first one-dog show, [or w]hat you European sophisticates would call a vernissage” (114-16). If camp is Charles’ intended style, it is expressed in his management of the exhibition and in his interpretation of the content of its abstract compositions. When Bob maintains that a prominent yellow shape “isn’t meant to look like anything”, Charles corrects him: ‘Of course it’s a banana leaf [...] The emblem of the Homintern. A fig leaf would be too small. A leaf of grass is too obvious. So we chose the banana, because it isn’t straight” (ibid.). At Headquarters, as he explains, they are working on the “Womb”,

a technology designed to manufacture a thousand babies an hour, which will enable them to usurp power: “Think what that means! A monosexual dictatorship!” (ibid.). The ‘vernissage’ demonstrates Charles’ point that camp humor and queer protest are on the same side. His interpretation of Bob’s painting exposes and ridicules the homosexual panic which lies behind McCarthyism, demonstrating how a political point can be made through the facetious “double-talk” of camp, even though no-one can ever be quite sure that it is not “strictly for laughs” (ibid.). In that case, camp functions as a protective device for the artist while allowing like-minded others to recognize their style and to empathize with their message. As Harker argues in a similar interpretation of the scene, Isherwood’s “challenge in writing paralleled Bob Wood’s challenge in his painting” (35). In the published novel, Stephen remarks that he could see in it the “conflict between Bob’s birthright Quakerism and Charles’s ‘High Camp’. Perhaps the creation of ‘Quaker Camp’ would be the only possible solution to Bob’s problems, both as a human being and a painter” (131).

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‘Quaker Camp’ is the key to Isherwood’s ‘novel of ideas’ and to his goal of redefining himself as a minor transnational writer in a new context in the US. Its composite form signifies a merger of two perspectives, those of a sexual minority and an ethnic, pacifist, and religious minority, which, in spite of their often contradictory motives and mutual conflicts of interest, share in the experience of minoritization. Rather than reflecting a state of minority exclusively, the term suggests a more general movement of becoming-minor inclusively in order to establish alliances in opposition to the standards of the majority. Applying Charles’ definition of camp to a reading of the *Berlin Stories*, Denisoff argues that the style succeeds through its association with the “politics of marginality”, and its realization through “gestures of inclusion that unite and empower people who have frequently been isolated and disempowered” (84-85). Using the “sympathetic impulse of camp” (82), Isherwood extends his own sense of minority to include a variety of others, such as women, sexual minorities, the Jewish ethnic minority, and the working-class social minority of the city, in an “attempt both to celebrate diversity and to draw on strength found in numbers” (87). Denisoff does not apply Charles’ definition of camp to a reading of *The World in the Evening*, but it is possible to appreciate how Isherwood continues to apply the style and to adapt it to conditions in the US. There, he establishes alliances among the inhabitants of Dolgelly, who include Sarah, a Quaker-American; Gerda, a German political refugee; and Bob and Charles, a same-sex couple at

odds with the ethnic, pacifist, and religious heritage of local society. A development is discernible between Isherwood's European and American writing. Whereas his characters in *Berlin* remain mutually isolated, their only link being the neutral and sympathetic narrator, Bradshaw-Isherwood, the inhabitants of Dolgelly are engaged in each other's lives, during Stephen's convalescence, and in the life of the nation, when they each return to Philadelphia. Unlike the segregated settings of the individual episodes of the *Berlin Stories*, Dolgelly is not a pastoral fantasy which is ultimately doomed by historical reality; on the contrary, it provides a model of minor politics and community which might endure and prosper in the future.

Adair suggests that Carr's observations, coupled with those of Denisoff, present a "compelling case for re-examining Isherwood's least successful novel and approaching its reading in a new way" (306). Asking how different conceptions of the 'minor' are contingent, Carr argues that the presence of minoritized figures in *The World in the Evening* can be related to the presence of such figures in "literary history more broadly" (76). She makes this case by considering how Isherwood relates the characters of the main narrative to the major character of the memory narrative, Stephen's late wife, Elizabeth. In the novel, Elizabeth is anticipated by Stephen in "loose garments, with coils of unhealthy dull grey hair and arty beads" (82); this stereotypical representation of a woman writer echoes Stephen's perception of Charles, a would-be queer writer, who emerges from the kitchen to welcome him to his home, while "wearing a woman's apron over his trousers" (303). As Carr notes (92), it is not only Charles who educates Stephen in the nature of camp, but also Elizabeth, when she assigns them the respective roles of 'wife' and 'husband' in a kind of game-playing, which is both a camp of gendered conventions and, it can be added, a cover or protective device for the actual kind of relationship they have discovered for themselves. Implied correspondences between Charles and Elizabeth are also apparent in the "*textual* relationships Isherwood constructs [...] between a woman and a queer man and between letters and camp" (85). An equivalence can be struck between Charles' camp performativity and Elizabeth's overblown epistolary style, which is recognizable as a pastiche of women's writing, and her focus on conventionally feminine themes, concerns, and domestic settings. As Carr argues, Isherwood presents such stereotypes in order to camp them (77). In doing so, he does not simply demonstrate that writing practices by women and queer men are "similarly marginalized as [minor and] apolitical" (75), but, on the contrary, aligns and accords these two groups a "privileged status as critics of gender, sexual, literary, and historical politics" (85). In this way, *The World in the*

*Evening* represents an intervention in literary history and the politics of sexual difference by a writer who is “self-consciously composing a new reader of modern political art” (76).

Isherwood’s intentions can be discerned in Stephen’s attempt to formalize Elizabeth’s philosophy of writing, in the course of which, as Carr suggests, he “reconceptualizes ‘the political’” (81). This occurs when Stephen first meets Gerda and recommends that she read *The World in the Evening*, which has become the most celebrated of all of Elizabeth’s works. When Gerda immediately associates its title with *Die Welt am Abend*, a communist newspaper suppressed by the Nazis in 1933, he warns her that the novel does not have “anything to do with politics” but is simply about “some people spending a weekend at an old house in the country” (48). Later, Gerda concedes that it is well written but, noting that it was published in 1934 and that Elizabeth was based in Austria and Germany throughout its setting in the late 1920s, cannot understand why the novel does not address the rise of the Nazis (134-35). Stephen responds paradoxically that it is not about the Nazis but that it is “all there in the book” (ibid.). He goes on to explain that Elizabeth “never dealt directly with world-situations or big-scale tragedies” but tried to reproduce the essence of them in miniature, in “her own kind of microcosm”, by telling a story about two children killing an animal, for example, in order to express “all the pain and disgust and horror she felt about the things the Nazis do” (ibid.). In this way, *The World in the Evening* is a characteristically novelistic response to events, as opposed to the journalism of *Die Welt am Abend* and, arguably, of Elizabeth’s more obviously political contemporaries in the literary world. Earlier in the novel, Stephen considers that newspapers present a world “without any meaning whatsoever” and that the meaning they pretend to impose is “just a bunch of heartless, tinny phrases about democracy, freedom, fascism, patriotism and so forth” (15). Instinctively protesting against this and against the importance which newspapers give to “numbers and size”, Elizabeth applies meaning by keeping to the “miniature, subtle effects she knew she could handle” (135). In this way, as Carr suggests, Stephen distinguishes between “propaganda, ‘politicized art,’ and art that is both aesthetically and politically invested and motivated, that is, what Deleuze calls modern political art” (83).

This ‘modern political art’ is not just an interpretation of Stephen’s but a position Elizabeth arrived at through her own reflections. As reported in her correspondence, her decision to begin work on what would become *The World in the Evening* coincides with the rise of the Nazis. In Austria, she and Stephen sense much covert sympathy for the party and, on a hillside on

Midsummer's Eve, witness a "huge swastika built of brushwood, blazing away all by itself" (192). In the fall of 1933, they decide to leave the country and travel through Spain to the Canary Islands, where the news is not "any less depressing, [n]or Hitler any less frightening" (194). German Nazi youths have planted a swastika on the summit of a nearby peak, while the German hotel owner keeps a large photograph of Hitler on display, arguing apologetically that he "has to be careful. The Party has ways of keeping discipline, even here" (220). Writing in May 1933, when the Nazis sponsored a series of public book burnings throughout Germany, Elizabeth apologizes for complaining about her slow progress: "One's private aches and woes are nothing – less than nothing – nowadays" (190). Her feelings of solidarity with politically persecuted writers are qualified by doubts: "At a period like this, it's hard to believe that art has any value, at all. My pen wavers in the middle of a sentence and I think: Oh, what's the *use*?" (191). These doubts are compounded by pressure to make some kind of practical stand: "Oughtn't I to be *doing* something to try to stop the spread of this hate-disease? Oughtn't I to be attacking it directly?" (ibid.). Elizabeth's quandary is highlighted by the reappearance of Michael Drummond, now a freelance news-photographer, who has been covering the Reichstag fire, Nazi concentration-camps, the activities of the Sudeten Nazi party, and the bombardment of the Karl-Marx-Hof in Vienna (197). Michael is clearly fighting fascism in very practical ways. When Elizabeth asks to see some of his photographs, he explains that he is a "rotten photographer" and that the magazines he sells to "don't seem to mind that, as long as there's plenty of action. So all I do is to get right into the middle of things and blaze away" (197-98).

As Carr suggests, Elizabeth's reflections rehearse the tensions among "the art one *ought* to have produced in the 1930s, the criticism against one for not 'doing something', and the artist's ethical obligation as [s]he conceives it" (83). Elizabeth decides that her feelings of guilt and inadequacy are really a symptom of the "hate-disease", which is trying to paralyze its opponents into complete inaction by making them "drop [their] own work, and attempt to fight it in some apparently practical way, which is unpractical for you because you aren't equipped for it" (191). With this realization, she decides that the only way she can fight the disease is to "go on with the work [she] understand[s]" (ibid.). An inevitable reference to Isherwood's own craft in this regard is suggested by the trope of the novel-within-the-novel. Gerda's criticism of Elizabeth is consistent with the criticism Isherwood himself received for his supposed retreat from politics during the 1930s, while Stephen's explanation of Elizabeth's position provides an indirect justification of the

political value of Isherwood's own work during that decade. As Carr argues, Isherwood responds "not only to literary history but also to the socio-historical moment in which he is writing"; indeed, his return in the novel to the 1930s suggests a "genealogy from this earlier moment of conformity, oppression, and persecution to the present moment of the early 1950s" (91-92). He achieves this by recounting Bob's struggle with the "business of being queer, and the laws against us, and the way we're pushed around even in peacetime" (311). In the end, despite his pacifist misgivings, he decides to reenlist, reasoning that he cannot possibly register as a conscientious objector because, "if they declared war on the queers – tried to round us up and liquidate us, or something – I'd fight" (310). Meanwhile, Charles remains as village doctor in Dolgelly, where Stephen discovers that the would-be writer has been a longstanding fan of Elizabeth's and possesses a collection of all of her published works. As a couple, the men represent a justification of Isherwood's queer, pacifist, and transnational political position, demonstrating that artistry and activism are not mutually exclusive but work together through different means toward a common end of vindicating their minority, in general as well as in particular.

As Harker remarks, *The World in the Evening* represents a "significant moment in [Isherwood's] evolution as an American gay novelist" (25). During the 1930s, he combined the 'Low Camp' of Berlin clubland with the 'High Camp' of Wildean aestheticism and Forsterian tragi-comedy to produce a unique queer, pacifist, and transnational literary style. In the 1940s-50s, he combined this with the influences of queer protest fiction and the example of politics and community of the Quakers of Haverford to produce 'Quaker Camp', as a development of his style in a new context in the US. Despite this achievement, Isherwood has at least one thing more in common with Elizabeth: a certain nobility and compensation in failure. As the guardian of the reputation of his late wife, Stephen has had to talk as if everything she wrote was perfect even though this is far from being the case. Now, he can no longer be sure if she managed to say what it was she wanted to say, most especially in her novel *The World in the Evening*, even though "[b]its of it are wonderful, of course" (309-10). It is probable that Elizabeth realized this too, but she knew that "she'd always done her best. [...] She may not have been first-class, but she was a real writer: a serious writer. It's something to know you're that" (ibid.). At the Hollywood party he attends before his escape to Tawelfan, Stephen is approached by a film producer who raves about *The World in the Evening*, calling it "[o]ne of the truly great books written in our time" and indicating that, somewhere in it, "there's a great movie" (14). If Elizabeth might have enjoyed a

second life as a popular writer translated into an even more popular medium, much the same can be said of Isherwood in regard to responses to his own *The World in the Evening*. Although its publication by Random House damaged his reputation in the literary world, when the novel was taken up by Popular Library, as Harker explains, he was provided “two unexpected boons” (44): access to the much wider and more lucrative market of paperback reprints and, through this, to a new audience of queer American readers, who would eagerly anticipate his future publications.

## IV.2. Minor Regrets: *A Single Man* (1964)

In 1947, one year after becoming a naturalized citizen of the US, Isherwood contributed the autobiographical ‘Los Angeles’ to *Horizon*, Cyril Connolly’s UK-based literary magazine. This short piece conveys some sense of the wonder still felt by the Englishman in the midst of the Hollywood Hills: “At dusk, or in the first light of dawn, the coyotes can be mistaken for dogs as they come trotting along the trail in single file, and it is strange and disconcerting to see them suddenly turn and plunge into the undergrowth with the long, easy leap of the wild animal” (158). Nearly two decades later, Isherwood returned to this description in *A Single Man* (1964), when the protagonist recalls his first impressions of the same hills: “It was the wildness of this range, largely uninhabited yet rising right up out of the city, that fascinated him. He felt the thrill of being a foreigner, a trespasser there, of venturing into the midst of a primitive, alien nature” (110). Notwithstanding these memories, his impressions have changed considerably in the intervening years. Now, he feels “nothing of that long-ago excitement and awe [...] The area is getting suburban [...] he is oppressed by awareness of the city below” (111). Whereas, in the 1940s, Isherwood feels that “emigrants to Eldorado have really no right to grumble” (159), in the 1960s, his protagonist is conscious of having every right and plenty of cause to do so. In ‘Working through Grief in the Drafts of *A Single Man*’, Kaplan notes that Isherwood experienced a period of strain in his relationship with Don Bachardy and considered the possibility of losing his partner while he was working on the novel. In connection with this, he addresses multiple other losses, such as “loss of innocence, of homeland, of youth [and] the ultimate loss, that of life itself” (37). He also addresses several questions contained in his notebook: “Do you regret having come to America? Is life in America tolerable? Do you want to go back to England to die? How are you going to bear the rest of your life?” (46). Taken together, the drafts and final version of *A Single Man* capture the reflections, both positive and negative, of a seasoned immigrant in the US.

Isherwood’s first working title for *A Single Man* was ‘The Englishwoman’. In his planning notes of March 1962, he writes that his objective is to “show America through British eyes” and that his intention is to achieve this “bifocally – showing how America seems to the Englishwoman and how it seems to me” (CI 1158, 131-34). The Englishwoman in question is Charlotte, who emigrated to the US in the aftermath of the Second World War, when she met and married the proverbial “slipshod improvident slaphappy American boy”, a G.I. who was stationed in England



and was “drifting through the war somehow and army life” (ibid.). Although she experienced a “great romance” when she arrived in the country, everything changed when she had a child with her husband, who suddenly believed in “Security” and honoring the social expectation that he settle down and “Get a Job and Support His Loved Ones” (ibid.). Isherwood’s projected “Study in Exile”, with its female protagonist and general theme of “Loneliness in the midst of a cozy social environment”, echoes the tropes of early second-wave feminism in effect if not necessarily in intention (ibid.). Charlotte continues to live in Santa Monica Canyon, the epitome of “prosperous suburban America”, in which the common goals of the ‘Good Life’ have been more or less achieved but which is nonetheless poised on the edge of a “tremendous precipice [where] you stand, on the edge, in doubt and dismay and finally despair” (ibid.). She is estranged and separated from her husband, who has become something of a “zombie” (ibid.). Meanwhile, her son is turning into a juvenile delinquent, unconsciously protesting against the effects of social pressure on his father, as well as “resisting the British half of his parentage because of the way it is presented to him by his Mother” (ibid.). Compromised by a “terrible nostalgia” (ibid.), Charlotte is “entirely fixated on the Past” (ibid.). When she is eventually deserted by her son, her reaction is to “go back even farther into the Past, i.e. to England”, where she imagines she can make life more bearable for herself by returning to a society in which “The Good Life hasn’t yet been achieved and in which, therefore, there is still a goal to work toward” (ibid.).

Isherwood’s own perspective is presented through Charlotte’s neighbor and fellow immigrant, Christopher. In the first draft of the novel, he remarks that she has remained “quite the South Kensington lady” (CI 1062, 32), and is irritated by her choice of words when she asks if he has been back ‘home’ or ever feels ‘homesick’ (ibid., 37-38). When he is in England, he tells her, he feels “homesick for this place; not the other way around” (ibid.). Home is “where things happen to you – good things and bad things”; in his case, this happens to be the Canyon, “although it isn’t, altogether”, in that no place feels quite like home (ibid.). Christopher also argues that, far from being a repository of the Past, England is nowadays peopled with “everything from Jamaican Negroes and Chinese to Italians and Scandinavians and Indonesians [who] all seem to get along together” (ibid.). This impression remains in the published novel, when George attempts to disabuse Charlotte of her romantic attachments by recalling the “marvelous mixup” he discovered on a recent tour of the Cotswolds. At a village which was “right out of a Tennyson poem” (131), he noticed a pair of station porters dressed in traditional uniform, only they were “Negroes from

Trinidad. And the ticket collector at the gate was Chinese”; together, they added the “one touch that had been lacking”, to finally make the whole place perfect (132). Charlotte’s romanticism receives a “jolt, as he knew it would” (132). Nonetheless, he is blinded by his own equally romantic vision of rootlessness, which is as oblivious to the flows of migrant labor in a reterritorializing post-imperial UK as it is to gender and sexual difference in the experience of migration to the US. That the success of Charlotte’s immigration is conditional upon her marriage and the attitudes of her husband does not occur to him even when she says “something strange: ‘I suppose for a man it’s different’” (CI 1061, 67). He makes no response to her explanation that women “can be transplanted, yes – but it has to be done by a man, and when he’s done it, he has to stay with us, and water and water the new roots, until they take hold. Otherwise, we can’t survive” (ibid.).

In September 1962, Isherwood recorded that he had not made any progress until he realized that the novel was not “about the Englishwoman but about the Englishman” (CI 1158, 133). Understanding that all of his objectives were “better approached through me than through Charlotte” (ibid.), he changed his working title to ‘The Englishman’ and reduced the timescale to a single day, in which the protagonist, now named William, spends the morning at work, the afternoon at the hospital, fitness center, and supermarket, and the evening at Charlotte’s, where he enjoys supper before visiting a local bar and meeting her son, with whom he later returns home. Except for one further change of the protagonist’s name and an exchange of Charlotte’s son for a student of his, this outline remained unto the final version. As something of a “Virginia Woolf poem about life” (ibid., 136), the novel has much in common with Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), which represents a day in the life of a high-society hostess in London, a key difference being the transnational status of Isherwood’s protagonist, who is employed as an English professor at a state college in Los Angeles. In the first complete draft of ‘The Englishman’, William is conscious of “all the Americans around him, with their American children and their American dogs, their American food and their American cars and newspapers and gadgets and hopes and fears – all, all American, right down to the water’s edge” (CI 1061, 6-7). This is not a feeling of being set apart and surrounded; on the contrary, he feels himself to be in the “very midst of them” and regards his position, moreover, as being that of a “missionary, self-doomed and self-dedicated to work amongst them for the rest of his life” (ibid.). Far from feeling under any obligation to adapt himself to his surroundings, he will fight, until the last, against “television commercials, billboards, presidential addresses to the nation, gossip columns, books of the month, radio sermons and

professional sincerity in all its forms” (ibid.). Unlike the Englishwoman of the earliest outlines of the novel, the Englishman has been successfully transplanted to America and considers that “[t]his is his life, now. He accepts it. [...] He is even prepared to enjoy himself” (ibid.).

Appropriately, the final version of the novel sent to the publishers on October 21st, 1963, opens: “Waking up begins with saying [...] *I am now. Here* comes next, and is at least negatively reassuring; because *here*, this morning, is where it has expected to find itself: what’s called *at home*” (9). Earlier drafts open with the protagonist’s ride to work, in a passage which is substantially unaltered in the published version, when George feels a “kind of patriotism for the freeways” which, perhaps not coincidentally, feed into the National Interstate Highway System authorized by President Eisenhower in 1956 as a means of connecting and defending the nation in case of invasion (33). As a patriotic symbol or metaphor, the freeway might be added to a list of such objects as “the mosaic, the rainbow, the quilt, and other tropes of complexity-in-diversity” which, as Appadurai maintains, are devised to contain the “tension between the centripetal pull of Americanness and the centrifugal pull of diasporic diversity in American life” (173). The merging traffic of this particular freeway consists, among others, of the “beat-up, not-so-white Ford coupe belonging to Tom Kugelman [...] the Chinese-Hawaiian boy’s grime-gray Pontiac [...] and] the well-waxed, spotless scarlet MG driven by Buddy Sorensen”, each of which sports its distinguishing prints, buttons, and novelty stickers (43-44). The “conveyer belts” of the freeway lead to the college campus, which is still under construction and where all around George, crossing his path from every direction, are the various “Negroes, Mexicans, Jews, Japanese, Chinese, Latins, Slavs, Nordics” who provide the “raw material which is fed daily into this factory [...] to be processed, packaged and placed on the market” (47). It is tempting to read the description of George’s arrival at campus as an illustration of Appadurai’s thesis that the “formula of hyphenation (as in Italian-Americans, Asian-Americans, and African-Americans) is reaching the point of saturation, and the right-hand side of the hyphen can barely contain the unruliness of the left-hand side” (172). From George’s perspective, however, what might appear to observers to be a “mad chariot race” resembles more the flow of a river, which “sweep[s] in full flood toward its outlet” and contains “nothing to fear, as long as you let yourself go with it” (35).

Like the ‘melting pot’ of earlier decades, this mixed metaphor of river and processing plant appears to imply an assimilation and elimination of diversity. This is suggested again as George navigates the lots, where a standardized parking card offers “circumstantial evidence that he *is*

George” (43), and when he checks into the office, where another card, “slotted and slitted and ciphered by an IBM machine, express[es] some poor bastard of a student’s academic identity. Indeed, this card *is* his identity” (45). That the contrary is the case is implied by yet another image, which is introduced during an argument between George and Cynthia Leach at the faculty restaurant. In earlier drafts of the novel, Cynthia is another immigrant from England, who complains of Southern California that all “the families are exactly alike, the houses are identical, the meals are out of the deep freeze, the conversation is out of the national magazines” and jokes sarcastically that “there must be men who’ve been living with the wrong family for months and don’t know it” (CI 1061, 34). When, in the published novel, she complains of the lack of character of tourist accommodations, George immediately comes to the defense of “our motels”, arguing that they are not in the business of providing *a* room but *the* room, “definitively, period” (90-91). This room is based on a specific building code, which provides “certain measurements, certain utilities and the use of certain apt materials; no more and no less”, with the expectation that “[e]verything else you’ve got to supply for yourself” (ibid.). George’s point is that the room is a “symbol – an advertisement in three dimensions, if you like – for our way of life” (ibid.). As such, it can be understood to stand not only for convenience, as George proposes, nor for utility and pragmatism, as might be implied, but for the basis of citizenship which is provided by the state and which newcomers are expected to supplement with their own cultural identities. Like the freeway and college campus, this is a symbol not of monotony, but of diversity. According to George, the “stupidest American” understands this intuitively, whereas Europeans “call us inhuman”, simply because, from their perspective, Americans appear to have renounced “individual differences and romantic inefficiency” (ibid.).

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Appadurai cautions that such images are less than adequate where there are contradictions between group identities and individual identities, which remain the “non[-]negotiable principle behind American ideas of achievement, mobility, and justice” (173). National origin is not necessarily the most significant indicator in the case of each individual; indeed, never once has George had his passport stamped without thinking to himself: “*Idiots – fooled them again!*” (33). An autograph note to the final draft records that ‘The Englishman’ was ultimately unsuitable as a title, “because the fact that George is English is not the most important thing about him” (CI 1133). Isherwood’s intention was to bring out the “varied and to some extent paradoxical factors” in the constitution

of his character and the change of title to *A Single Man* anticipates a sense of his being ‘assembled’ or ‘put together’ and “made into a recognizable person” (CI 1158, 135). In the opening sequence of the published novel, the body which awakens contains “many faces within its face – the face of the child, the boy, the young man, the not-so-young man – all present still, preserved like fossils on superimposed layers” (10). This single male, able-bodied, and middle-aged body must be dressed, in order to go “outside, into the world of the other people; and these others must be able to identify it” (11). This body is cisgender, for, in the process of getting dressed, “it has become *he*; has become already more or less George” (ibid.). This is not yet the “whole George” which the others are prepared to recognize (ibid.). To the identities already indicated are added signs of class and national origin in the memory of a nursery rhyme taught him by his nanny in England (14); signs of social and professional status in his books, which he misuses “quite ruthlessly – despite the respectful way he has to talk about them in public” (16); and, in the volume he takes from the shelf, “old Ruskin, always absolutely in the right, and crazy, and so cross, with his whiskers, scolding the English” (17), signs of race, ethnicity, and diasporic identification. As Wilde suggests, the novel begins with a “meditation on identity”, which describes a “movement, never quite complete, from human animal to social being” (1971, 129-30).

For Finney, George is “stuck together as a recognisable personality (or set of personalities) at the beginning of the novel. But the package is always in danger of coming undone” (252). The person who reads Ruskin on the toilet may well be a single, white, middle-class, able-bodied male of English ethnicity and British nationality, whose presence in the US depends on the privileges accorded each of these identities until the Immigration Reform of 1965. The change of title to *A Single Man* reflects another change of focus, however, for it is at this point that George “stops short and knows, with a sick newness, almost as though it were for the first time: Jim is dead” (13). The death of his same-sex partner has exposed him to a sense of vulnerability on account of his age and sexuality. Whereas George’s property, which is surrounded by cliffs and accessible only by a bridge, might as well be on its “own island” (20), the houses of his neighbors face the street “frontally, wide-openly, in apt contrast to the sidewise privacy of George’s lair” (24). In the “breeding-ground” which surrounds him, everything is directed toward procreation and the maintenance of a system of binary gender roles (18). A typical day is divided into morning, when the mothers supervise their younger children; afternoon, when the older children return from school, the boys to take part in the “masculine hour of the ball-playing”, the girls to “sit out on the

porches, giggling”; and evening, when the fathers return to recuperate before the following working day (24-25). On weekends, there are parties for the adults, when the wives prepare salads and the husbands prepare the barbecue. Later, while the ‘girls’ tend to the washing-up in the kitchen, the men can be heard laughing on the porch, where they are “proud and glad. For even the least among them is a co-owner of the American utopia, the kingdom of the good life upon earth” (25-26). Jim’s death has exposed George to the suspicion that he is not a co-owner of this peculiarly heteronormative utopia, which extends from the suburbs to the college campus, where his students are preparing for life in order to likewise “raise children to prepare themselves for life” (47).

As Carr notes, *A Single Man* follows a “queer middle-aged Englishman, George, through a day of his life in 1960s America. Though George is an English professor living in the Los Angeles suburbs, he is nevertheless marginalized” (4). If Isherwood’s protagonist is worried that he will soon be dispatched to an “ordered nursery-community where Senior Citizens [...] are eased into senility” (34), he imagines that he is already an outcast in the form of the beast, the Gorgon, the vampire, or the “fiend that won’t fit into their statistics, [...] the unspeakable that insists, despite all their shushing, on speaking its name” (27). George is a victim of suspected homophobia and gerontophobia. He assumes that Mr. Strunk tries to “nail him down with a word. *Queer*, he doubtless growls” (ibid.), while, to his own mind, the signifier ‘old’ has become almost “as dirty a word as ‘kike’ or ‘nigger’” (34). The issue of such phobias in the form of prejudice and discrimination is restrained from escalating into persecution by a “new tolerance, the technique of annihilation by blandness” (27). While the Senior Citizen is encouraged into modes of “passive recreation” by being retaught their childhood games (34), the male homosexual might expect Mr. Strunk not to give a damn “just as long as he stays away” or Mrs. Strunk to be sufficiently trained in contemporary sexology to accept that it is a combination of glands, heredity, and early environment which have produced a “misfit, [who is] debarred forever from the best things of life, [and is] to be pitied, not blamed” (27-28). This alternative to the sanctions of canon and criminal law is regarded by George as just another attempt to “exorcise the unspeakable” from him (27). Whichever the case, as Carr suggests, the male homosexual is regarded as an “aberration or unhealthy and is thus relegated to a marginalized social position” (5). George chafes at his assimilation to heteronormativity, condemning Mrs. Strunk’s book for implying that Jim is a substitute for a real son, a real spouse, or a real sibling: “Jim wasn’t a substitute for anything. And

there is no substitute for Jim [...] Your exorcism has failed, dear Mrs. Strunk, [...] The unspeakable is still here – right in your very midst” (29).

In an interview conducted soon after the publication of *A Single Man*, Isherwood explains that he wanted to write “about minorities” and that, on the basis of this objective, “homosexuals are used as a sort of metaphor for minorities in general” (Wickes, 44). He does not go into greater detail in this regard and his intentions may well have been very different from those of his critics, who have read and interpreted this aspect of his work subsequent to political developments in the 1970s. This is exemplified by Summers, who writes that the novel “anticipates the gay-liberation perspective that would flower in the aftermath of the 1969 Stonewall riots” (1993, 214), and that Isherwood makes a political point by “presenting homosexuals as simply another tribe in a nation composed of many different tribes [and] as a legitimate minority group with legitimate grievances against the oppressive majority” (Isherwood & Summers, xiii). In the 1990s, there emerged one voice of dissent amid a growing critical consensus. Finding it a “little odd” that critics should interpret Isherwood’s career as a “developmental chronicle of homosexual emancipation that ultimately found its truest voice in 1964”, Bristow warns that such an interpretation can distort its historical significance, “since it erroneously implies that his novels fixated their gaze upon an emancipating future, one filled with the spirit of queer revolution” (146). In the 2010s, Bristow’s dissent has been noted and resumed by at least two other readers of *A Single Man*. Gonzalez contends that successive critics have fallen for the notion, critiqued by Foucault, that “the truth of the self is a *sexual* truth” and prefers not to read the novel for its alleged “incontrovertible identity politics”, whether on its own or as a precursor of Isherwood’s autobiographical work of the 1970s (758-60). Similarly, Harker argues against such retrospective readings and takes critics to task for neglecting to consider how Isherwood framed and produced the novel both “within and against the cultural mores of the 1960s” (111). In the context of the earlier decade’s interest in cultural and collectively marginalized minorities, Isherwood had considerable reservations about the emergence of a “notion of gay identity”, which threatened a reification of minority as much as a new ideology of toleration threatened its annihilation (75).

Throughout *A Single Man*, as Wilde notes, George is “minority conscious [...] but not in any simple or even consistent way” (1971, 132). The ‘Uncle George’ persona, in which he responds to his environment by entertaining private fantasies of revenge against society, is implicitly a shadow of the ‘Uncle Sam’ who favors “three quarters of the population of America”,

every one of whom is accountable for Jim's death, in that "their words, their thoughts, their whole way of life willed it, even though they never knew he existed" (40). Among the remaining quarter, George includes the African- and Mexican-Americans who live in the "tacky sleepy slowpoke" of Downtown and East L.A. (41). These people are not "The Enemy"; consequently, they never figure in his 'Uncle George' fantasies and, were they ever to accept George for who and what he is, "might even be allies" (42). Nevertheless, in the context of contemporary marches for civil rights by these same minority communities, George's thoughts are remarkable for their iterations of stereotypes and prejudices: "Mexicans live here, so there are lots of flowers. Negroes live here, so it is cheerful. George would not care to live here, because they all blast all day long with their radios and television sets" (41). Likewise unexpected in its rhetoric is the extempore speech he delivers in class, when he defines a "minority" as becoming such only insofar as it constitutes "some kind of a threat to the majority" (70-71). George dismisses the "liberal hysteria" of the new tolerance and its suggestion that minorities are "just people, like us" (ibid.). "Sure, they're like us – but not *exactly* like us", he argues, maintaining that minorities are composed of people who "look and act and think differently from us and have faults we don't have" (ibid.). Admitting that "[w]e may dislike the way they look and act, and we may hate their faults", he offers an alternative and defiantly unfashionable solution to the problem of persecution: "it's *better* if we admit to disliking and hating them than if we try to smear our feelings over with pseudo-liberal sentimentality. If we're frank about our feelings, we have a safety valve; and if we have a safety valve, we're actually less likely to start persecuting" (ibid.).

Whether they make "sense or nonsense", George has meant every one of these words and delivered them like "strokes of a lash, to whip Wally awake, and Estelle too, and Myron, and all of them" (73). His speech is aimed in particular at Wally Bryant, whom he assumes shares his same-sex orientation and directs a "deep shining look that says, I am with you, little minority-sister" (70). Critics have generally missed the irony of his identification, which is nonetheless clear in the barbed stereotypical terms he uses to characterize this 'sister' of his: "Wally is plump and sallow-faced, and the care he takes to comb his wavy hair and keep his nails filed and polished and his eyebrows discreetly plucked only makes him that much less appetizing" (ibid.). Myron Hirsch and Estelle Oxford represent two of the more obviously 'tolerated' minorities of the civil rights era: Jewish- and African-Americans. If George expects them to admit to their faults and to accept prejudice and discrimination in lieu of persecution, he goes even further: "A minority has its own



kind of aggression. [...] It even hates the other minorities, because all minorities are in competition: each one proclaims that its sufferings are the worst and its wrongs are the blackest. And the more they all hate, and the more they're all persecuted, the nastier they become!" (72). George's own performance is exemplary of this logic. He dismisses Myron, that "indefatigable heckler of the *goyim*", with an impatience to "leave the Jews out of this" (69-70). Estelle, he finds to be exceptionally conscious, to the point of hypersensitivity, of "being a Negro"; he suspects her of suspecting him of "all kinds of subtle discrimination" and not only feels intimidated but also resentful of how she makes him feel (62-63). By the end of his speech, George is no longer sure what he has proved or disproved, or "whose side, if any, he is arguing on" (72-73). Indeed, it is difficult to see how Wally can possibly have recognized his look of solidarity, when, all the while, George has been speaking from the position of The Enemy, in terms of the 'we', 'us', and 'our' of the majority as opposed to the 'they', 'them', and 'their' of the minority.

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Whichever side George represents, Harker contends that it is certainly not that of an "out and proud" post-gay liberation ethos" (126), but more a reflection of Isherwood's evolving sense of authorial identity in the US, in which a "typical American might just be a queer, middle-aged foreigner living in Los Angeles" (72). For Gonzalez, the character reflects what he considers to be a "misfit minority consciousness", or a "queer ideal in a non-identitarian sense", which is in "direct tension with the novel's representation of gay identity as a minority consciousness" (760-62). Bristow implicitly agrees with both of these positions that Isherwood expresses same-sex desire in a very different set of terms from the cultural politics of the 1960s, but suggests that the writer's vision is "more jaded than celebratory, for *A Single Man*, despite its unforgettable moments of comedy, remains largely an elegiac novel of loss" (146). Understanding the nature of such a loss in literary terms, Cucullu suggests that Isherwood's novel is partly a response to Forster's novel *Maurice* (1913-14), which exposes the limits of its resolution of the problem of representing sustainable same-sex relationships by depicting "how shrunken the greenwood and how impoverished and menacing its environs have become in this American Babylon" (18-19). As this is not Isherwood's first response to Forster's considerations of politics and community, a literary genealogy can be traced from the 1930s in the *Berlin Stories* (1935-39), through the 1940s-50s in *The World in the Evening* (1954), and into the 1950s-60s in *A Single Man* (1964). Whereas in Berlin Isherwood depicted a series of mutually isolated and historically doomed pastorals, in

Dolgelly he depicted a viable minor community, in which diverse individuals support each other in establishing a safe and durable space for themselves aside from the majority. In the Canyon, George and Jim took such a project further by setting up house together on their own terms in the midst of the majority. Now, without the support of his partner, George imagines that his understanding of politics and community has failed. Finding himself alone and trapped in a hostile identitarian and heteronormative environment, he retreats into a private and individualistic world which is as isolated from the majority as it is from his own and other minorities.

In the first draft of ‘The Englishwoman’, Christopher acknowledges his desire to “function as an Average Man, a Taxpayer, A Gallup Poll voter, a member of The Enemy” (CI 1062, 2). The implication of ‘passing’ among the majority is suggested in two striking images in the published novel: at home, George sits in the bathroom in such a way that his neighbors might see his head and shoulders, but “not what he is doing” (28); at work, he imagines that his colleagues have no interest in “anything below [his] neck” and that his students would be unsurprised if a “severed head [were] carried into the classroom to lecture to them from a dish” (51). In practical terms, George has decided that “George will have to be George – the George they have named and will recognize” (41). The consequence of this is that he is “on-stage every second” (54), conducting himself with a “subtly contrived, outrageously theatrical effect” (56). The stress involved in this constant need to perform is mitigated by his ability to rely on the relative privileges of his class and national origins. George speaks “boldly, clearly, with the subtly modulated British intonation which his public demands of him” (44). After class, he regards with “extra benevolence” the student who stays behind to compliment him on his accent and, in the office, notes how the thought of Oxford, “towering up in all its majesty [...] utterly overawes” one of his colleagues, who was born in one of the wrong parts of Chicago (74-75). This preference to ‘pass’ among the Enemy is all the more pronounced in the context of his exchange with Grant Lefanu, who treats George as a fellow subverter, even though he regularly declines his colleague’s invitations to join him in his contacts with the minority countercultures of L.A. (86). With his “license to play the British eccentric, and, in the last resort, his little private income, he can afford to say pretty much anything he likes on campus” (ibid.). Despite this fact, George chooses to remain “all actor” (44). As Dewsnap notes, “His public presence is that of the cultured, literate British émigré. His private response includes the fantasies, the intonation, and the occasional lyrical enthusiasm of the closet homosexual” (34).

George is much more comfortable in the professional “quasi-military relationship” he enjoys with Russ Dreyer, a top scholar and ex-marine, whose charming stories of manly bravado remind him of Ancient Greece (50). He favors such “man-to-man stuff” to the extent that, during the course of the day, his movements constitute something of an androcentric progress, in the course of which he derives secretive sustenance from a homoerotic appreciation of virile youths (ibid.). George maintains his performance of a ‘talking head’ by discussing literary theory while on a walk with Russ; meanwhile, he is stirred into sensual excitement by the sight of two young male players at the campus tennis courts. Feeling a “thrill of pleasure to find the senses so eager in their response”, he thanks the “young animals” from his heart, even though they cannot possibly know what they have done to raise his spirits and to make “life itself less hateful” (52-54). Later, while driving along the Boulevard, George claims a kinship with the young hustlers loitering on the corners, any one of whom he might persuade to take part in the “wrestling bout of his pleasure” (104). Inspired by them to “rejoice in his own body – the tough triumphant old body of a survivor” (ibid.), he decides to stop by the gym, where he takes the opportunity to compare himself favorably with the “fatalistic acceptance of middle age” of his age-mates (105). Buoyed by the confidence that he is “still a contender” (106), he is joined by the adolescent Webster, whose youth seems to take possession of him and instill in him the renewed energy to go far beyond his regular tally of sit-ups (108). George overstays his usual time at the gym, wishing that he could spend his entire life in this “state of easygoing physical democracy”, where both old and young sit naked and innocent together and “[s]urely everyone is nicer in this place than he is outside it” (109). Understandably slow to forsake what Bristow refers to as this “vaguely Whitmanian paradise” (159), the gentle seclusion of which contrasts with the vulnerable desert island-like isolation of his home in the Canyon, George has discovered in the gym an alternative ‘American utopia’ to that of the suburbs and college campus.

After class, George is disappointed to discover that the tennis court is now occupied by a middle-aged faculty member and a “girl with hair on her legs” (80). This petty observation is tellingly characteristic, for George’s appreciation of young men is offset by a denigration of mature women to the extent that his androcentric progress alternates with something of a misogynistic one. This begins in the Canyon, which, as George recalls, was transformed when war veterans came westwards with their new wives, in search of “new and better breeding grounds” (18). To his mind, the veterans themselves would have adjusted well to the original character of the Canyon

had their wives not insisted that “breeding and bohemianism do not mix” (19). In the first draft of ‘The Englishman’, the protagonist explicitly qualifies his misogyny and misopedia: “As a matter of fact, he does not really dislike children – or even mothers, for that matter – only their symbolic status in our culture” (CI 1061, 5). In the published novel, from George’s perspective, women and children are implicitly symbolic of heteronormativity. He does not care to consider how the lives of women might have been adversely affected by social changes after the war, or how Mrs. Strunk might herself be frustrated in the suburbs, having grown “wearily gentle from toiling around the house at her chores” (21). In keeping with the symbolic status he attributes to her, he assumes that her attitude toward him is one of condescension. This impression is contradicted when the focalization of the narrative switches briefly to indicate that her actual status as a wife and a mother is not incompatible with a sympathy for George’s difference: “Mrs. Strunk [...] watches him back his car out across the bridge. (It is sagging badly nowadays. She hopes he will have it fixed; one of the children might get hurt.) As he makes the half-turn onto the street, she waves to him. He waves to her. Poor man, she thinks, living there all alone” (32). Mrs. Strunk’s wave is an obvious invitation to connect but, when she calls on him later, he immediately assumes the worst: “Obviously she’s nervous, self-conscious; very much aware, no doubt, of having crossed the frontier-bridge and being on enemy territory” (116).

Between George’s morning on campus and his afternoon at the gym, he calls to the hospital to visit Doris, an old rival for the sexual attention of Jim. Unlike in the youthful, healthful settings of his encounters with men, his body “recoils with its every nerve from the sight, the smell, the feel of this place”, and the crisscrossing paths of his day’s progress are almost too conveniently evident as he encounters a young male nurse wheeling with his “very sexy muscular arms” an aged female patient lying prone and ready for surgery (94). Doris is reduced in his memory to “that body which sprawled stark naked” under Jim, and, furthermore, to a competitively youthful and more specifically female body part: “Gross insucking vulva, sly ruthless greedy flesh, in all the bloom and gloss and arrogant resilience of youth” (95-96). Symbolically, Doris is “infinitely more than Doris, [she is] Woman the Enemy” (ibid.). Invoking the dominion of heteronormativity in order to claim her “biological rights”, she declares, “I am Woman. I am Bitch-Mother Nature. The Church and the Law and the State exist to support me”, and demands that George “step aside, bow down and yield to the female prerogative, [and] hide his unnatural head in shame” (ibid.). That the only bond which exists between George and Doris is precisely his resentment of Woman the

Enemy suggests that he experiences little sympathy for the actual woman who is now dying before him. Although Doris clearly wants his hand and grips it with “astonishing strength”, George finds “no affection in it, no communication” (100). Implicitly, he attributes another symbolic status to his former rival. As Isherwood suggests in his notes (CI 1158, 135), she is now also a *memento mori*, a shriveled female body (part) which refers to age, mortality and Death. Once he is outside, George is “almost indecently gleeful” to be counted in “the ranks of that marvelous minority, The Living” (103). Having ‘passed’ among the “icy presence of The Majority, which Doris is about to join”, he feels a “life-energy surg[ing] hotly through him” which, not unexpectedly, is peculiarly male: “How good to be in a body [...] that still has warm blood and live semen and rich marrow and wholesome flesh!” (104).

On his way home, George is unable to sustain his mood and decides to return the call of his old friend, Charlotte. Although he quickly regrets his decision to accept her invitation to supper, he anticipates compensation in the form of a kind of domestic ease and contentment, which, according to Spanish usage, he terms *felicidad*, since it is “usually feminine, that’s to say, woman-created” (123). Freely acknowledging the “sublimely selfish” character of this *felicidad* (ibid.), George enjoys the evening unperturbed by his friend’s obvious distress over the estrangement of her son and husband and his own recollections of the unstinting support he was provided by her following the news of Jim’s death. From George’s perspective, Charlotte is presented as a somewhat ridiculous figure, with a particular focus on the signs of an aging, female body. She also gives an impression of being a doubled woman. There is a certain catty jealousy in her explanation that Fred is now with “that girl” in Palo Alto (124); at the same time, she admits to smothering him in a “mother and son thing” (125). In this doubling lies a hint that Fred has escaped the simultaneously seductive and smothering femininity of Oedipus. Now, “slowly, thoughtfully, as though this were a mere bit of irrelevant feminine musing” (129), Charlotte hints that she would like George to move into the room vacated by her son and tries, furthermore, to persuade him to return with her to England. By now, the convenient and innocuous femininity of *felicidad* has evaporated. Pressing him with a “teasing, coquettish reproachfulness”, Charlotte seizes on his story of the pub on the moors, which Jim wanted them to buy and run together; invoking Jim’s blessing as his substitute or successor, she attempts to drag George with her into the oedipal past of the Bitch-Mother Country (143). George responds with indifference, even when she kisses him “full on the mouth [and] suddenly sticks her tongue right in” (145). As he did Doris, he defeats Woman

the Enemy by yielding strategically, wondering only if actual women “ever stop trying” (ibid.). Despite this slight victory and the dual duplicities of his day’s progress, George remains, as Piazza suggests, the “most lonely human being imaginable: the bereaved, middle-aged homosexual” (186).

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In *The American Isherwood* (2014), Kaplan argues that George succeeds in resolving his most immediate complaints through the encounters he has with various others and, in so doing, manages to “embrace the larger grievances – and thus the community – he shares with the minority to which he is happiest to belong, the minority of the living” (45). Other critics have come to contrary conclusions. In an accompanying chapter of the same publication, Handley argues that *A Single Man* is relentless in its depiction of “separation and alienation, especially as effects of identity, politics, and war” (70), and that the “kind of radical connection in the ‘real world’ of Woolf’s novel does not occur in Isherwood’s novel of missed connections” (72). The truth is that George passes through a series of missed opportunities. Instead of confronting representatives of the majority, he chooses to retreat to the closet; he connects with male characters only in the role of an actor who regards them, moreover, as objects of a secretive homoerotic fixation; he also fails to connect with female characters, whom he regards as mere symbols of heteronormativity, despite clearly having much in common with Mrs. Strunk’s weariness of the suburbs, Doris’ confrontation with aging and mortality, and Charlotte’s sense of isolation following the loss of a loved one. George’s withdrawal from society is also marked by a withdrawal from the present tense of the 1960s. As Bristow argues, he “mourns the past, specifically the mid-1940s in Santa Monica, California – the heyday of the queer life that he and his deceased lover Jim had once shared” (146-47). Bristow argues, furthermore, that the novel itself “works out from a present moment to resuscitate a mesmerizing, if ever-receding, past” (ibid.), and that, in connection with this movement, the “question of queerness similarly adopts a retrospective stance” (152). Through George, Isherwood mourns the loss of his own queer past and the possibility of losing the queer present he has managed to sustain in his relationship with Bachardy. Consequently, Bristow advises caution in critical assessments of his politics during the time he worked on the novel, “for his ‘*Queer*’ sixties depends not so much on political prophecy as obsessive memory: an unerring backward look that characterizes the larger part of his oeuvre” (147).

As Bristow argues, *A Single Man* “turns its back on the crisis-ridden present and [...] locates homosexual desire in a consoling past” (158). George’s misogynistic progress records a catalogue of appropriations by Woman the Enemy. Mrs. Strunk has claimed the veterans for the breeding grounds of the suburbs; Doris has claimed his lover for Law, Church, State, and Bitch-Mother Nature; Charlotte has attempted to claim him for the Bitch-Mother Country. Freeing himself from her seductive and smothering oedipal embrace, like a “child wriggling free of a grownup” (146), he runs off, laughing, and pays a visit to his old haunt, The Starboard Side. Ironically, like Charlotte before him, George indulges in romantic memories of ‘home’, as he returns to his early years in the Canyon, when the war was almost over and the blackout “no more than an excuse for keeping the lights out at a gangbang” (147). Nostalgically, he reclaims the veterans from Mrs. Stunk, recalling the hitch-hiking servicemen who were delayed here for hours, days, and nights before proceeding with “black eyes, crab-lice, clap, and only the dimmest memory of their hostess or host” (148). He reclaims his lover from Doris, remembering the moment he set eyes for the first time on Jim, “looking stunning beyond words in his Navy uniform” (185). He reclaims his own freedom, recollecting months on the beach in 1946, when the length of the shore was alive with the “watchfires of a vast naked barbarian tribe – each group or pair to itself and bothering no one, yet all a part of the life of the tribal encampment” (148). Although he and Jim were out there evening after evening, it was not enough to satisfy the “sad fierce appetite of memory” (ibid.). George is reminded that the servicemen are “few now and mostly domesticated” (ibid.). The glory has faded even from The Starboard Side, which is all that remains of the early years of the Canyon, where “only a true devotee like George can still detect even a last faint gleam of it” (149). Reluctantly, he realizes that, as he earlier reasoned with Charlotte, the past is “just something that’s over” and, just as it cannot be found anymore in England, nor can it be found “anywhere else” (141).

George is compensated for his loss of the past with an unexpected opportunity to resume his androcentric progress in the present by joining his young student, Kenny, at the bar. Shrugging off the coincidence with a teasing smile, Kenny explains that his girlfriend, Lois, had driven him to the Canyon and that he had heard that his professor was regularly to be found there. Together, they resume the doubletalk of their earlier encounter on campus, when George felt flattered by the attention and interpreted their “readiness to remain at cross-purposes [to be] in itself a kind of intimacy” (82). After several drinks, George imagines that they are engaged in a kind of Platonic

dialogue, the point of which is not so much the topic as their “being together in this particular relationship”; this is, by its nature, impersonal, in that the partners are somehow opposite and symbolic figures, being, in this case, “Youth and Age” (154). George wants to believe that Kenny understands this too and is delighted when the young man recalls his speech on minorities, arguing that “[w]hat’s so phony nowadays is all this familiarity. Pretending there isn’t any difference between people” and reasoning that if they are no different, “what do we have to give each other?” (158). When Kenny challenges George to a swim in the ocean, they are able to escape their suburban surroundings. Taking the place of memory, this escape provides George with an illusion of rebirth, a chance to start over, as he receives the “stunning baptism of the surf” and, giving himself to it wholly, “washes away thought, speech, mood, desire, whole selves, entire lifetimes” (162-63). Meanwhile, their relationship has taken on a symbolism all of its own. At The Starboard Side, Kenny tells George that he likes to call him ‘sir’, and that he would like to have lived in a time “when you could call your father sir” (159). Now, back at George’s place and from George’s perspective, this relationship of surrogate son and father is becoming “positively flirty, on both sides” (169). Having disdained Charlotte’s attempt to seduce him into returning to an oedipal past in England, George is now only too ironically willing to be seduced into a homoeroticized oedipal present in America.

Ultimately disappointed by Kenny, who repeatedly declines his invitation to spend the night, George is conscious of entering a new phase of communication, in which he assumes a formidable and inquisitorial guise (173). He insists that Kenny came to the Canyon that evening to see him, whether he realizes it or not, and that, instead of trying to get to know and understand him on his terms, has committed the “inexcusable triviality” of thinking him a “dirty old man” and turning their encounter into a meaningless flirtation (176). Although George has accused Kenny of a failure to connect, it is he who has failed in this respect. Having attributed to Kenny the symbolic status of ‘Youth’, he has chosen to ignore his simple explanation of his motive to visit the bar, which is to ask George about the value of experience (160), and turned the conversation to the subject of their romantic relationships even though Kenny is “absolutely not curious about any of this” (167). Earlier in the day, in George’s encounter with Kenny and Lois after class, there is a suggestion of the possibility of a real connection. At that moment, Lois could well be the one who “seems to know what he is, for she waves gaily to him” (76); in an earlier draft of the novel, her gesture conveys “such a charming intimation of friendship – not of aliqueness but of the



recognition of difference – that the whole day seemed to brighten” (CI 1063, 12). Kenny also waves, “but it is doubtful if *he* knows; he is only following Lois’s example” (76). Nevertheless, their waving charms George, who waves back to them, buoyed by the thought that they have “exchanged signals” (ibid.). Kenny catches up to him on campus and seeks him out again later that evening, but it is probably Lois who has prompted him to do so, for it is she who suggests that George is “cagey”, with the implication that he should not be (79). As has been evident throughout the day, however, George is willing to attribute only a non-dialogic symbolic status to women and he cannot imagine having such a dialogue with a woman, in any case, because “women can only talk in terms of the personal” (154).

If George’s androcentric progress culminates in his flirtation with Kenny, his misogynistic progress terminates in his failure to recognize Lois’ signals. This repeats his failure to recognize and connect with Mrs. Strunk’s wave, Doris’s hand grasp, and Charlotte’s desperate attempts to communicate in the face of his indifference. Ironically, George takes Kenny to task for relapsing into “dreary categories” according to which people waste their lives “identifying each other with catalogues, like tourists in an art gallery”, instead of taking the opportunity to “exchange *some* kind of a signal, however garbled, before it’s too late” (174). His misogyny prevents him from making further connections. In his diary, Isherwood writes that the character of Lois had acquired “symbolic status as another Foreigner, stuck midway between being a [N]isei in an America she despises and [...] a Japanese[-American] in a Japan she doesn’t know” (186). George expresses little interest in Kenny’s account of how she and her family were interned during the war and their business sold off to opportunists “talking big about avenging Pearl Harbor” (168). He empathizes neither with the consequence of her experience of minority that she cannot “take people in this country seriously” nor with Kenny’s understanding from his experience of majority that she “certainly has the right to hate our guts” (ibid.). Neither does he appreciate the contradiction of his idea of mutually hostile minorities by the fact that, apart from a few pacifists, the “Negroes were the only ones who acted decently to them” (ibid.). Lois’s wave remains an unspoken invitation to George to connect with her as a potential ally. Blinded by his misogyny, he fails to perceive this and, as is the case with the African- and Mexican-Americans of Downtown and East L.A., he registers her presence in stereotypical terms, wondering “who can be sure of anything with these enigmatic Asians?” (61). Later, in the evening, he dismisses Lois as a feeble rival: “you can’t fool a dirty old man; he isn’t sentimental about Young Love; he knows just how much it’s worth – a

great deal, but not everything” (175). Alternatively, his offer of the spare room to Kenny can be interpreted as yet another attempt to defeat an incarnation of Woman the Enemy by strategically yielding the field.

George’s new phase of communication has driven Kenny “farther away, not closer” (173), and he wakes from sleep a little later to find that the young man has led him to bed and departed. Returning to where he started at the beginning of the day, he remains an ‘old’ and ‘queer’ man whom Kenny and Lois might be forgiven for dismissing as a ‘dirty old man’ as he imagines them together for the purposes of masturbation and begins to fall back to sleep (180). His unconscious decisions to remain in the US and to search for another Jim are known only through the intervention of an omniscient narrator, who proceeds to present a vision of some rock pools located a few miles up the coast, each of which is “separate and different, and you can, if you are fanciful, give them names, such as George, Charlotte, Kenny, Mrs. Strunk” (183). Wondering how such a variety of creatures can possibly co-exist, the narrator suggests that it is the rocks of the pool which “hold their world together” (184). Like the freeway, with its merging traffic, or the motel, with its multiple occupancy of *the* room, the rock pools suggest another of Appadurai’s tropes of diversity in American life. This is more of a mystic vision, however, for, just as the ocean comes flooding over the rock pools in high tide, “so over George and the others in sleep come the waters of that other ocean – that consciousness which is no one in particular but which contains everyone and everything” (ibid.). There is, therefore, at least one way for his protagonist to connect with the other characters. The narrator goes even further, enjoining the reader to suppose that this is when George experiences the instant, terminal shock of cardiac arrest (186). As Bristow remarks, he is “quietly put to sleep” and, as *A Single Man* draws to its conclusion, it is clear that, in “Isherwood’s queer sixties, there is not much of a future to be had” (161). With a touch of irony, nonetheless, and perhaps a moral to be read, George no longer needs to ‘pass’ among the Minority of the Living, for he has at last joined the ranks of the Majority of the Dead.

## Conclusion

At the end of the 1930s, Isherwood pursued another line of escape to the US, where he took the English of London and Cambridge in the same direction of deterritorialization as in mainland Europe. Section IV considered how this is reflected in the notes, drafts, and published versions of his two novels which are set entirely in the US, *The World in the Evening* (1954) and *A Single Man* (1964). Chapter 1 considered the representation of minor politics and community in *The World in the Evening* as a development of Isherwood's queer, pacifist, and transnational political position. 'Quaker Camp', a minor transnational style which combines the camp of the *Berlin Stories*, the politics of queer protest fiction, and the model of community provided by the Quakers of Haverford, is key to an understanding not only of the expression of the novel but of Isherwood's attempts to define himself as a writer in the US. Chapter 2 read *A Single Man* as a reflection of the experiences of a seasoned immigrant in the US. In its representation of George, who feels marginalized on account of his advancing age and minority sexuality, the novel conveys both a resistance to the reterritorialization of minority in the 1960s and a nostalgia for an earlier decade when becoming-minor was possible outside of identity categories tolerated by the majority. As Dana Polan explains in the 'Translator's Introduction' to *Kafka*, Deleuze and Guattari illustrate aspects of their philosophy by taking examples of figures who all "share in desire, in expression, in the razor's edge confrontation of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization" (xxv). These conditions are also shared by Isherwood, whose migrations through the UK, the US, and mainland Europe represent moves against territorializations of family, class, and nation, involve deterritorializations, both literal and nomadic, and end in reterritorialization, which he resisted in the cultural climate of the 1960s. Although his writing thereafter entered a new phase of memoir, the minor transnationalism of Christopher Isherwood remains in the novels and novellas of the *Wanderjahren*.



## General Conclusion

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This project has brought a transnational perspective to the work of Christopher Isherwood (1904-86), a writer who began his career in the UK, established his reputation in mainland Europe, and published most of his writing in the US. In Section I, transnationalism in literary studies was presented as a critical methodology of selection and analysis. As such, it calls attention to writing which cannot be conveniently contained within the limited boundaries of ‘national’ literatures and involves a sophisticated approach to issues of identity, selfhood, and subject positioning in regard to migration and to the work of migrant writers. ‘Minor transnationalism’ was presented as a theoretical framework suited to an analysis of such writing. Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy of nomadism, which is based on concepts of becoming, minority, and deterritorialization, provides a means to address issues of identity in the context of the literal deterritorializations of transnational migration. Their related concept of minor literature provides a model of writing which assumes political and collective significance on the basis of its deterritorialization of a major language. As a specifically literary theoretical framework, the concept provides a means to revalue examples of writing which are considered to be of ‘minor’ significance in comparison with the ‘major’ works of state, national, or territorialized literatures. It also enables an approach to issues of identity in terms of movements between major and minor and a focus on alternative politics and communities to those of the ‘imagined political communities’ of nations and nation-states. Section I was followed by three sections of analysis of Isherwood’s work, which were divided according to the three main periods of his career: Section II, on Isherwood in the UK; Section III, on Isherwood in Germany; Section IV, on Isherwood in the US. A selection of works from these periods was made on the basis of Isherwood’s concept of *Wanderjahren*, or years of wandering, from before he left London for Berlin in 1929 and until such time as he felt settled in Santa Monica, California, in the 1960s.

Section II argued that Isherwood’s early novels reflect the crisis of identity he endured as a young man in England in the 1920s. In *Lions and Shadows* (1938), his failure to become a successful novelist can be attributed to his entanglement of an Oedipus complex, which implies the repression of his desires, with a ‘War’ complex, which signifies a ‘Test’ of his courage and his loyalty to family, class, and nation. Both complexes are reflected and ultimately resolved in the novels *All the Conspirators* (1928) and *The Memorial* (1932). *All the Conspirators* demonstrates

the futility of psychoanalysis as a philosophy of inaction and self-defeat through an exaggeration of Oedipus, which exposes the social forces operating behind the family triangle and the possibility of a line of escape from them. *The Memorial* provides an expression of Isherwood's 'War' complex through the character of Edward, who represses his desires in deference to the 'Test' until he discovers a line of escape in Berlin, where he resolves his complexes by finding a male, working-class, German lover. This discovery reflects the final resolution of Isherwood's own 'War' complex, when he realized a similar nomadic movement of deterritorialization from his home country to that of the national rival, Germany. Section III argued that Isherwood took the English of London and Cambridge with him to Berlin, where he was motivated by his sexual and vocational desires to create what can be recognized as a minor transnational literature. In the *Berlin Stories* (1935-39), Isherwood's minority is reflected in his selection and representation of a variety of local and expatriate characters and the situations in which they are involved. In expression, he combines the aestheticism of Wilde, the tragi-comedic approach of Forster, and the performativity of Berlin clubland to create a minor transnational style of camp. A further reflection of his minority, this style is also the basis of a minor politics, which subverts bourgeois standards, and a minor community, which offers an alternative to the majoritarian structures of family, class, and nation.

Section III also argued that Isherwood was concerned with how to become engaged as a writer in response to developments in Germany. His political consciousness evolved during the 1930s to a queer, pacifist, and transnational position, which repudiates the party politics of fascism and socialism in favor of a personally motivated politics of minority. In the *Berlin Stories*, Isherwood extends his own sense of minority to include a variety of local characters who are minoritized because of their class, ethnicity, and sexuality. In response to the 'greenwood' of Forster's *Maurice* (1913-14), their stories are presented as camp pastorals in which fantasy and historical reality collide, demonstrating the challenge to minor politics and community in the 1930s. At the end of that decade, Isherwood pursued another line of escape. Section IV argued that he took the English of London and Cambridge to the US, where he pursued his creation of a minor transnational literature. In *The World in the Evening* (1954), his queer, pacifist, and transnational position is reflected in the representation of Dolgelly, a more viable minor community, and in the expression of 'Quaker Camp', which further develops his minor transnational style by combining the camp of the *Berlin Stories*, the politics of queer protest fiction, and the model of politics and community provided by the Quakers of Haverford. In *A Single Man* (1964), a transnational

genealogy can be traced from Forster's 'greenwood' through Isherwood's Berlin pastorals and Dolgelly to his representation of California, where minor politics and community have substantially failed. The novel reflects a resistance to the reterritorialization of minority in the 1960s according to identity categories tolerated by the majority, and a nostalgia for an earlier decade when becoming-minor was possible on one's own terms. Considered together, Isherwood's *Wanderjahren* begin with struggles against territorializations of family, class, and nation in the UK, pass through deterritorializations in Germany and the US, and end in reterritorialization in California, which he resisted at first but would embrace with his turn to memoir in the 1970s.

This project has a general aim of advancing research in transnational literary studies. The presentation of transnationalism as a critical methodology of selection and analysis is in no way intended to imply a limitation of its scope but simply to suggest that it might be productively considered as such, as one potentiality of a turn, approach, or perspective which challenges the principle of 'national' literatures and related practices of criticism and scholarship. The project responds to a perceived gap in methodology by applying a theoretical framework of 'minor transnationalism' on the basis of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of nomadism and their related concept of minor literature. Nomadism applies usefully to Isherwood, as a means to approach his migrations in terms of deterritorializations of majoritarian standards through processes of becoming-minor. The concept of minor literature is consistent with his explanation that his writing begins with the experience of being an 'Outsider', which he defines as both the "constitutionally born member of a minority" and "somebody who realizes consciously that he belongs to a minority" (Isherwood & Summers, 48/52). It is also consistent with his history of literally deterritorializing a major language, his consciousness of political engagement, and his support of alternative communities to those of family, class, and nation. Regarding its broader application, it is difficult to counter arguments that nomadism depends on privilege and that it might not be ideal in the case of writers whose migrations have been less conveniently facilitated than Isherwood's. Furthermore, the defining characteristics of minor literature are arguably too peculiar to the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. Because of the idiosyncrasies of their methods of analysis, their concept is difficult to appreciate apart from their Anti-Oedipus project and it is perhaps too involved in their critique of capitalism and psychoanalysis to be of more general application. As their representation of Kafka demonstrates, the application of the concept is contingent and the

critic or scholar must judge for themselves whether or not it is compatible with their own choice of subject.

As well as applying a methodological framework of ‘minor transnationalism’, this project aims to advance transnational literary studies by providing a worthy case study. Isherwood’s work is significant because of the timescale and variety of locations of his migrations, which include the UK, the US, and Germany at pivotal moments in their national histories and in the history of the twentieth century. His work is also significant for its reflections of various aspects of identity and their relativity in terms of social privilege and marginalization. These include not only ethnicity, which has been the focus of much important research, but class, sex, gender, and sexuality, which have received comparatively less attention. Isherwood’s work offers much more research potential than has been indicated within the limitations of this project. There are the other novels not covered here: *Prater Violet* (1945), a sequel to the *Berlin Stories*, which returns the namesake narrator, Bradshaw-Isherwood, to London, where he collaborates with the exiled Jewish-Austrian director, Friedrich Bergmann; *Down There on a Visit* (1962), which, in substantial early drafts contained in the Isherwood Archive, chronicles the misadventures of some visitors from the US to Mexico and, in its published version, revives the namesake narrator to retrospectively consider his first visit to Germany (1928), his time spent in Greece after leaving Berlin (1933), his time spent in England during the series of crises leading to World War II (1938), and his experience of the war years in California, from 1940-46; Isherwood’s final novel, *A Meeting by the River* (1967) concerns two brothers, one a successful publisher, the other an ascetic Hindu monk, who meet in India after a period of mutual estrangement. There is also his travel writing: *Journey to a War* (1939), written in collaboration with Auden, and *The Condor and the Cows* (1949), which records his trip through South America with the photographer Bill Caskey. There are also Isherwood’s memoirs and, for researchers of biography, his maintenance of a model minor transnational relationship with his life partner, Don Bachardy.

As well as advancing research in transnational literary studies, this project makes a timely contribution to Isherwood scholarship during a time of renewed popular and academic interest in the writer. In presenting Isherwood from a perspective of ‘minor transnationalism’, it adds to a steadily growing body of work, while offering an alternative to it. Since the beginning of this century, there has been a tendency to focus on an ‘American Isherwood’, who is linked to a ‘Vedantist Isherwood’ and to an increasingly outspoken ‘gay Isherwood’, whose life writing,



history, and example, particularly in regard to his relationship with Bachardy, are as important as his novels and novellas. Rather than reterritorializing Isherwood as a national writer, this project implies that all periods of his career are worthy of attention and that it is important both to recognize and to account for his development as a transnational writer. Such a focus highlights his relevance in an era of minority, migration, and globalization, when the increasing diversity of users of the English language is reflected in the choices of selection and analysis being made in departments of literature. Rather than reterritorializing Isherwood as a gay and/or spiritual writer, the project considers his religious and sexual minority among several factors of identity, such as age, class, race, gender, ethnicity, and political affiliation, which fall within a range of major to minor and can be adequately addressed only in the context of his transnational migrations. Rather than focusing on Isherwood's life, this project refocuses on the novels and novellas which were his life's work before his turn to memoir and autobiography in the 1970s. Finally, this project does not attempt to reterritorialize Isherwood as a 'major' writer. Following the example of *Kafka*, in which Deleuze and Guattari endeavor to rescue their subject from previous interpretations of his life and work, it attempts to make something of his 'minor' status, in the sense of their paradoxical claim that "[t]here is nothing that is major or revolutionary except the minor" (1986, 26).



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