

The Poetry That Dare Not Speak Its Name: Modernist Aesthetic in the Case of Lord Alfred Douglas and Marie Carmichael Stopes

Christina Hauck
Kansas State University

An improbable friendship sprang up in 1938 when one “Mrs Carmichael,” representing herself as a young mother, wrote Lord Alfred Douglas to show him a sonnet and ask his advice about publishing it. Little realizing that he was entering into correspondence with the notorious birth control advocate, Marie Carmichael Stopes, the staunchly Catholic Douglas wrote back kindly, calling Mrs. Carmichael a “pleasant poet” and lamenting his own difficulties publishing (Hall 282). If Douglas didn’t understand quite whom he was writing to, Stopes herself, rabidly homophobic and anti-Catholic, must have: Douglas’s claim to fame lay less in his poetry, whose quality critics debated fiercely when they bothered to read it at all, but in his having been a central actor in the events leading up to Oscar Wilde’s trial and imprisonment.¹ By the time the correspondence had begun, Douglas had long converted to Catholicism and was admitting only to limited homosexual activities over a limited period, with Wilde or anyone else; Stopes apparently believed him.² After several months, Stopes revealed her “true” identity. Douglas, understandably, was nervous. In a letter to George Bernard Shaw, he writes:

I am fated to make friends with my enemies. For the last three months I have been corresponding with a lady who wrote about my poetry and poetry in general. She expressed great admiration for me as a poet. She signed herself Marie Carmichael [...] and is coming to see me next Saturday. I have only just discovered that she is *Marie Stopes*, who has always been a sort of *bête noire* of mine. From her letters she must be charming and full of kindness. Do you know her? (Hyde 105)

Shaw responded with some excellent advice and what must be the most succinct and accurate portrait of Stopes ever sketched

As a staunch R.C. you will have to keep off the subject of birth control with its prophetess. She is about fifty, a tremendous sci-

entific swell, as litigious as you used to be, about as soothing as a bombardment and liable to drop into reckless poetry and drama at any moment. I have always got on very well with her (Hyde 105-06).³

From the outset, it seems that Stopes approached Douglas as she had approached Shaw twenty-five years earlier and any number of other prominent and not-so-prominent writers during the intervening decades (the list includes Edward Carpenter, Havelock Ellis, Israel Zangwell, Noël Coward, Walter de la Mare, H.G. Wells, and Thomas Hardy), with the intention of enlisting his mentorship and critical support for her publishing ambitions.⁴ As with many of these other writers, Stopes demanded that her genius be recognized and pointedly refused to accept the sometimes very good advice proffered. She also persisted in trying to instigate collaborations, presumably imagining that linking her name to that of a more famous writer would facilitate wide recognition of her own self-avowed literary genius. Douglas refused more vehemently than anyone else: "Why do you torment and goad me? *No no no no no*, I will not collaborate in a farcical comedy with you or anyone else. [...] Collaboration is an invention of the Devil" (Ad Ms 58495).⁵ Douglas gestures toward an explanation as he laments his collaboration with T. W. H. Crosland on *Oscar Wilde and Myself* (1914), in which Douglas infamously denounces Wilde even as he claims the virtual status of collaborator on all of Wilde's best work (137-38). Thus, Stopes's invitations to Douglas touched on a sore point: Douglas's mostly unsuccessful efforts to control public association of his name with Wilde's. He would like to be remembered as Wilde's collaborator in *belles lettres*, not his boy-lover. Of course, Douglas may also have been leery about linking his name with someone like Stopes, for fear of bringing down his shaky literary reputation or causing the public to question the sincerity of his religious professions. As a point of fact, moreover, despite her success as a scientist, where collaboration is *de rigueur*, Stopes's inability to collaborate seriously hampered her effectiveness as a social reformer, and Douglas was probably wise to steer clear.⁶

However selfish her initial motives in instigating correspondence with writers more famous and better connected than she, the result was often a deep and abiding friendship. This is particularly true of Shaw, Israel Zangwell, Walter de la Mare, Thomas Hardy, and Douglas.⁷ In the case of Douglas, within months of their first face-to-face meeting, Stopes had taken it upon herself to petition the Prime Minister to award Douglas a civil list pension for distinguished service to the empire as a man of letters. The list of signatures gives an idea of Stopes's vast energy and wide circle: James Agate, Edmund Blunden, The Reverend Lord Clonmore, St John Ervine, John Gielgud, Christopher Hassall, Harold Nicholson, Arthur Quiller-Couch, J. C. Squire, Hugh Walpole, Evelyn Waugh, Humbert

Wolfe, and Virginia Woolf. When the petition failed in June 1940, Stopes joined a “syndicate” of people who jointly paid the rent on Douglas’s flat.⁸ In addition to providing financial support, Stopes also corresponded with him regularly, wrote letters on his behalf and in his defense, invited him for weekends to her country estate, visited him when he was too ill to travel, and kept him supplied with reams of medical advice, not to mention large bottles of Syrup of Hypophosphites, an over-the-counter palliative Stopes swore by (Hall 283)

As differently as these two people thought about the two *bête noirs* of the modernist era, birth control and homosexuality, they were temperamentally very similar: extraordinarily narcissistic, outspoken to the point of belligerence, relentless in their pursuit of enemies real and imagined. Notably, both came to wide public attention via libel suits, Douglas becoming well known as a pivotal figure in the Oscar Wilde suit against the Marquess of Queensbury and the subsequent trial (1895) and Stopes becoming well-known when, in 1923, she sued Haliday Sutherland, a Roman Catholic physician, after he accused her of using her “Mothers’ Clinic” to experiment on the poor.⁹ Although suing for libel seems to have been a special British pastime, these two individuals were particularly eager to do battle in the courts and in person. Unsurprisingly, their bellicosity erupted at times into their correspondence as they exchanged salvos on matters directly and indirectly relevant to the writing of poetry. The friendship survived, nonetheless, because in the main they agreed that the tradition-smashing tendencies in modern poetry were lamentable if not outright dangerous.

But what can the correspondence between this eccentric pair tell us about the condition of poetry in the years between the wars? Can these two anti-modernist minor poets, better remembered in relation to twentieth-century histories of sexuality, inform our understanding of the modernist aesthetic? Whether we approach the question of modernist aesthetic through conventional literary categories such as form and content or through the slightly broader and ultimately extra-literary categories of influence and identity, I argue that these two extremely beleaguered poets help to define modernism first by their opposition and second by the identities they and their poetry embody, particularly the sexual identities bodied forth in poems such as “Two Loves” (Douglas, 1892) or *Married Love* (1918). My discussion of their opposition to modernism, to one another, and of their oppositional if not perverse poetical practices contributes to the growing sense that the seeming monolithism of “modernism” is a critical fiction designed to smoothe over multiple ruptures within twentieth century society and literature.

Anti-Modernist Avowal

Douglas was perhaps the more outspoken of the two on the dangers inherent in modern poetry. In a “Note” appended to his *Collected Poems* of 1919 and in his September 1943 address to the Royal Society of Literature, *The Principles of Poetry*, he outlines his “case” against the modernists (whom he identifies as “Realists” for their “insistence on the sordid” and to distinguish them from the “Romantics” (*Principles* 12)). According to Douglas, the modern poets have fallen victim to two related “heresies,” “the anti-formal heresy” and the “‘Art for Art’s sake’ heresy” (*Principles* 7). In eschewing rhyme and meter, the anti-formalists betray a lack of skill and besmirch “the true tradition of English verse represented by Chaucer and Shakespeare and Milton” (*Principles* 12). Similarly, the “hideous obscur[ity]” of so much modern verse conceals a lack of anything to say and effaces the great and timeless themes of poetry, which Douglas identifies as “the noblest emotions of man, and above all Beauty—the beauty of visible and invisible things” (*Principles* 15). In place of either “Romanticism” or “Realism” in poetry, Douglas offers “[t]rue classicism,” which he defines as the “true tradition of English verse.” At various moments in this essay Douglas suggests that his use of the term “heresy” should be read quite literally. In his mind, the anti-formal heresy results from a lack of appropriate Christian faith, a point he supports by comparing the “pagan” poets to the moderns (*Principles* 13-4) and by quoting Christopher Hollis, a contemporary and zealous Catholic convert (*Principles* 24). By casting anti-formalism as a literal heresy, Douglas betrays his own self-interest, for Douglas, an adherent of the “one true faith” since his conversion in 1911, is shaping himself as the authentic, if not great, voice of twentieth-century British poetry.¹⁰ His redefinition of “classicism,” moreover, as a matter of English rather than, say, Greek, poetry contributes to the sense in *The Principles of Poetry* that Douglas is also using his poetics to fashion the record of his relationship to Wilde.

Wilde makes no appearance in *The Principles of Poetry*. He figures prominently in the 1919 “Note,” however, where Douglas explicitly identifies him as the unacknowledged father of the legions of modernist scribblers (*Collected Poems* 118). The force of Douglas’s hatred of Wilde during the years leading up to the publication of his note can be gauged by courtroom testimony Douglas had given the previous year, when he called Wilde “the greatest force for evil in Europe for the last three hundred and fifty years” (qtd. in Hyde xxxv). The omission of any direct reference to Wilde in the 1943 *Principles* and Douglas’s fierce denunciation of the “anti-formal heresy” as a danger far greater than the “Art for art’s sake heresy” may reflect the mellowing of his attitude. But in his attack on the “anti-formal heresy” we may read yet another line of defense against his reputation as a homosexual. As suggested by his correspondence with Stopes, by the end

of his life Douglas had identified strict form in poetry as a guarantee of the poet's heterosexuality.

Stopes had no difficulty affirming Douglas's belief in himself as a great and authentic English poet, referring to him, in fact, as "our greatest poet" (*Love Songs* 69). And she shared his dislike of modernist innovation, viewing it as "decadent" and a real threat to British hegemony. For Stopes as for Douglas, T. S. Eliot stood as the arch-boogie-man of the modernist project.¹¹ Yet her own poetics swung more often between the poles of "Romanticism" and "Realism" than it pointed toward the lodestar of Douglas's own "Classicism." In the "Preface" to her first volume of poetry, *Man, Other Poems, and a Preface* (1914), Stopes offers an account of spontaneous creation deeply indebted to Romantic grandiosity: "Each poem is a flashing message—a communication between humanity and something vast—whose language is incommensurable with common speech; and to my mind and in my experience each poem is instantaneous, or it is marred" (*Man* x). She seems hardly to have budged from this position twenty-five years later when she published *Love Songs for Young Lovers*, a volume whose style and content provided plenty of fodder for quarrel between her and Douglas: "Nearly all of [these poems] sang a first line in my head, and then that special, indescribable excitement swept me up, and I had to seize my writing pad and put them on paper with no inkling as to what the poem was to be about" (*Love Songs* 68).

The correspondence about her method of composition points to the more modernistic aspect of Stopes's poetics. Affirming that "each poem has its own organic form, resulting [from] its conception at the moment of feeling," Stopes justifies her use of the very thing, *vers libre*, that Douglas refuses to admit is "real poetry" (Ad Ms 58494). In her defense of the Shakespearean sonnet, which Douglas believed to be a form inferior to the Petrarchan sonnet he favored, Stopes reveals both her intended audience and hints at her political ambitions for her poetry: "Were I wishing to speak of hidden mysteries to an erudite posterity I should use the Petrarchan form: were I (as I do) wishing to sing in the hearts of many and to [of?] the beautifully infectious, I should use the Shakespearean form *because* that last couplet should stand apart, a distillate of the whole and easily memorable to the hearer" (Ad Ms 58494). Stopes thus links her populist poetical intentions to her almost exclusive focus on writing erotic love poems during this period, an impulse Douglas found to be less than admirable: "All your poetry is about physical passion. The best poetry is not about that. When S[hakespeare] wrote about love he sublimated and spiritualised it, the same applies to all the great poets" (Ad Ms 58494). Stopes answered by imputing a degree of sexual abnormality to Douglas.

Your attitude toward physical love is not quite the same as that of a normal *young* couple—to them it is and should be the high-

est mystery and [source of?] poetry. [. . .] [M]y position is that, as we human beings evolve so does the art and meaning of human love till its expression in physical union becomes the medium of understanding and union with God which is much more really noble and fruitful than the [human?] “brain” can comprehend. You’ll find the deeper mysteries in your church discard the intellect when it comes to the *highest* understanding. The highest poetry must too. [. . .] My individual poems may fail to do what they should and carry illumination but I’m sure the theme is right. (Ad Ms 58494)

It is worth noting here that Stopes’s conception of human sexual union as “the medium of understanding and union with God” draws directly on the work of Edwardian sexologist Edward Carpenter, who was himself openly homosexual.¹²

Throughout this correspondence, Douglas is clearly attempting to struggle out from such imputations of sexual abnormality—that is, of homosexuality. Douglas himself first raises that topic when he confides to Stopes that he’s writing a book on Wilde (*Oscar Wilde: A Summing Up* (1940)) in which he “shall be *forced* to go at length into the whole question of homosexuality.” Fairness to Wilde and to the entire question would put him, he writes, in the position of appearing to defend acts of homosexuality, which he opposes to the “instinct—which no one can help if he or she happens to be built that way” (Ad Ms 58494). Stopes writes back imploring him to let her vet anything he writes on the “[horrid] homosex. problem,” which she calls “a v[ery] terrible scourge of modern society” (Ad Ms 58494). But what she apparently means by “the homosex. problem” is some form of pedophilia: “2 adult men, congenitally abnormal in this way living together commit no *social* crime, ‘only’ ‘sin’: *but* an adult who corrupts and uses young normal boys commits a social crime of a revolting nature & may most probably destroy soul & body of those boys rendering them useless as adult husbands & fathers” (Ad Ms 58494). Douglas responds mildly that “corrupting boys is a terrible [thing?],” but questions whether it’s really no worse than “for the same man to seduce an innocent girl & put her in the family way” (Ad Ms 58494). Within a week or so of having written this letter, Douglas returns to his preoccupation with Shakespeare who “was in love with ‘WH’ but [whose] passion was in his brain & was not physical, and that is just what produces the finest poetry” (Ad Ms 58494). Surely this reflects Douglas the sonneteer’s identification with Shakespeare and provides the reader with a lens through which to read Douglas’s own homoerotic poetry—“Two Loves,” for example—as pure sublimation. But it may also reflect Douglas’s eleventh hour re-figuration of his relationship with Wilde, with Douglas taking the role of the beautiful boy actor Will Hughes and Wilde the role of Shakespeare.

Douglas commonly wrote that, of all the comedies written in the English language, only a few of Shakespeare's rivaled Wilde's. And herein lies yet another of Douglas's identifications with Shakespeare, insofar as he claims the role of Wilde's collaborator while denying the role of lover.

The more telling discussion, however, has to do with Douglas's conviction that his stringent use of the most stringent form distinguishes him from Wilde, the convicted sodomite, thereby guaranteeing Douglas's own sexual normalcy—or at least laying to rest rumors of his homosexuality. In particular, Douglas cites Shaw's 1938 assessment of him as “an authentic poet, making language lyrical with a born mastery which shewed up the artificiality of Wilde's metrical manufactures when the two were placed in contrast” (Ad Ms 58494). Still later he would write (and, it would seem, directly in response to Stopes's imputation that his attitude toward sex was not entirely “normal”) “Other things being equal the more difficult the form the sublimer the effect” (Ad Ms 58494), thereby sealing his claim to poetical greatness, religious goodness, and appropriately sublimated sexual impulses, if not heterosexuality.

Modernist Instigation

The actual poetic practices engaged by Douglas and Stopes suggest a more complicated relationship to modernism than espoused in their correspondence and critical writings. Considered exclusively on the question of form, Douglas's own preferred criteria, it would seem that of the two, only Stopes's poetry contains any concessions to a modernist impulse. For Douglas's mature works, his elegant sonnets, do participate in, as he insists, a “classical” English tradition, one marked by the use of rhyme and meter, especially iambic pentameter, and further qualified by a more or less Anglo-Saxon diction, refined syntax, and unity of figuration, all of which contrast to the modernist(ic) use of free verse, a polyglot diction, fractured syntax, and a strategy of figuration characterized more by montage than by unity. The increasingly public content of his verse, moreover, further distinguishes Douglas, and the “English tradition,” from modernism. Douglas's post-Wildean poetry tends to invoke recognizable persons and events in language that seems incontrovertibly “English” and “poetic.” (Even Douglas's staunchest critics never doubted that what he wrote was, in fact, poetry.) Stopes too was a dauntless writer of traditional poetic forms, especially sonnets and odes. But she was also a keen experimenter, producing not only free verse but also creating new forms, such as the returning rhyme stanza,¹³ and importing scientific language and concepts into her lyrics.¹⁴ It's true that her poetic experiments seem tame, even flat, when set against the radical formal discontinuities that characterize eponymous modernist poems such as *The Waste Land*, but often this seems a deliberate decision, one that reflects her sense of audience and mission;

throughout her large and heterogeneric *oeuvre* Stopes strives to develop forms and a vernacular that will appeal to the “masses.” Stopes’s poetry thus poses a challenge to the divide between the “public” (and hence accessible) poetry advocated by Douglas and the “private” (and hence obscure) poetry published as “modern.” The challenge issues loudest in those very poems Douglas found so alarming, poems which speak directly and explicitly of sexual encounter. Stopes’s insistence on publishing graphically sexual material, which in other contexts might be termed pornographic, and her success at doing so without inciting censorship, particularly when compared to writers such as D. H. Lawrence, put her at odds with both the “classic” and the “modern” English traditions and suggests the extent to which the modernist/anti-modernist struggles were turf-wars staged between men over territories defined by men.¹⁵

The question of “divide” is very much at issue when we turn from questions of form and content to questions of influence. As Stan Smith argues, “modernism” in English literature is largely a matter of genealogy, of writers retrospectively tracing their influences, working to situate themselves in relation to their contemporaries and their immediate and not-so-immediate predecessors (Smith). Applied to Douglas, this definition complicates our sense of Douglas’s relationship to “modernism.” On the one hand, he doesn’t want to be associated with the modernist “gang,” and so he goes out of his way to construct a genealogy of English classicism stretching from Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley, and Swineburne to Douglas himself. But the very act of creating a lineage is inseparable from the modernist impulse. Douglas betrays his own modernist leanings most clearly in his obsessive working and re-working of his relationship to Wilde, whom he sometimes identifies as the corrupt and corrupting father of modernism in England and sometimes as the genuine heir of Shakespeare himself. His occasionally rabid denunciations of Wilde put him in bed (so to speak) with modernists such as Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis who were all too keen to attack the very writer who, arguably, made their own art possible.¹⁶

It would be difficult to count Stopes, as a poet, in any genealogy of English poetry, no matter how eager she was to seem a part, if not the veritable flower, of the great English tradition. At best her poetry represents a very small twig on a very large limb. However, her work as a birth control advocate helps to make sense of the modernist (male) obsession with genealogy—and may even have influenced it. By the time of her friendship with Douglas, her name was virtually synonymous with the crisis in sexual reproduction which I have elsewhere described as constituent not only of twentieth-century life but of modernism itself: in “Abortion and the Individual Talent” I read *The Waste Land*—that most modernist of modernist poems—as alternately fascinated and obsessed by the effects of (failed)

procreativity on “normal” male identity. Male modernist obsessions with their own literary origins and their own originality can thus be understood in relation to wider questions about the role of sexual reproduction in the formation of human culture, questions brought to bear in the figure of Stopes herself.¹⁷

When we approach the question of modernist aesthetic through the lens of identity production, we find that no matter how stridently they talked back to the modernists, Douglas and Stopes were instrumental in the production of two twentieth-century identities essential to the modernist era and thus were no less entangled in the production of modernism than any of the so-called “modernist gang.” In early poems such as “Two Loves” or “Shame,” Douglas offers a liberatory vision of homosexual male identity in the figure of the beautiful, sexually promiscuous and self-celebratory boy/man. In her monumental sex manual, *Married Love*, Stopes almost single-handedly invents the twentieth-century ideal of the sexually liberated, fully orgasmic, selectively procreative heterosexual woman. And arguably, the “gay” man invented in the poems like “Two Loves,” and the “new” new woman invented a generation later by Stopes in *Married Love*, were crucial, at least as oppositional subjects, to the production of the modernist male.¹⁸

Making Modernism: A “Gay” Man

Douglas carefully elaborates a particular male sexual identity in a series of explicitly and implicitly homoerotic poems published in his first collection, *Poems/Poèmes* (1896). Facing enormous public hostility, he never republished any of the unequivocally homoerotic poems, although he republished many that invite homoerotic readings in their original context.¹⁹ Two of the explicitly homoerotic poems remained in circulation, however, at least in part because they were read out loud during the Wilde trials, “Two Loves” and “Shame.” “Two Loves,” in particular, deserves close attention for a number of reasons, not only because it is a fine poem, but also because it so clearly demonstrates Douglas’s efforts to construct a male homosexual identity over and against prevailing theories about and practices of male homosexuality. In “Two Loves,” Douglas toys with several contemporary theories of homosexuality, including inversion, originated by Havelock Ellis and positing male homosexuals as female spirits contained in male bodies, and pederasty, which has its origins in classical Greek culture and involves a sexual relationship between an older and a younger man. The poem finally settles on a model of male homosexuality that seems both celebratory and narcissistic. The dominant character in all of Douglas’s homoerotic poetry is a version of Douglas himself, a beautiful and flamboyant boy/man who finds pleasure in the company of other equally beautiful and flamboyant boy/men. This identity, it seems to me,

is a direct precursor of the considerably more urban and urbane gay male characters who inhabit Noël Coward's plays of the 1920s and 1930s. According to Alan Sinfeld, Coward was probably responsible for introducing the term "gay" to mean homosexual decades before it gained general usage (55-56). For these reasons, and because one of the poem's final phrases, "the love that dare not speak its name," was taken up throughout the twentieth century by men who adopted the word "gay," I refer to the beautiful male characters in Douglas's poems as "gay."

The locus of "Two Loves," "a ground, that seemed/Like a waste garden, flowering at its will/With buds and blossoms" (2-3) introduces an important leitmotiv: all of Douglas's erotic poems are set out of doors, frequently in gardens. On the one hand, this naturalizes homosexuality (and does indeed support Douglas's lifelong claim of literary independence from Wilde, whose aesthetic celebrates cultural over natural production). On the other hand, and somewhat paradoxically, the garden settings also tend to de-naturalize sexuality generally by pointing out its constructedness: these poems invoke the garden of Eden, that fabulinary origin of heterosexuality, sexual reproductivity, and conventional gender relations, only to invert it. The setting of "Two Loves" is a thriving wilderness of undifferentiated sexuality which Douglas emblemizes through his lavish descriptions of flowers, including lilies, crocuses, violets, "snake-like fillillaries" peryenche and, above all, "curious flowers, before unknown" (10). Rather than condemning sexuality as "original sin," Douglas imputes a high moral significance to it by depicting the garden as "Heaven" itself (20).

But the poem's fullest and most significant inversion of conventional meanings assigned to the Garden of Eden motif arises because of the complete exclusion of women from its setting. Two very queer male couples dominate the scene. First is the speaker and the "youth" who appears in line 25 to kiss the speaker's mouth, offer grapes, and call forth the poem's central vision. The second couple—"shadows of the world/And images of life" (34-37)—consists of a contrasting pair, "one [who] did joyous seem" (41) and one "full sad and sweet" (52). The joyous man celebrates heterosexual love, singing "of pretty maids/And joyous love of comely girl and boy" (43-44). The sad man only "sighed with many sighs" (54). The speaker is quite taken by the sad man and asks his name. When he answers that his "name is Love" (66), his happier companion reproves him, giving him the name of "Shame" and claiming for himself dominion over the garden:

I am Love, and I was wont to be
Alone in this fair garden, till he came
Unasked by night; I am true love, I fill
The hearts of boy and girl with mutual flame. (69-72).

This is a fairly complex moment. On the one hand, it registers a sense

both of historical change, that homosexuality as a relatively new development exists as a perversion of the heterosexual norm. But the tone here may be ironic: in “Hymne to Physical Beauty,” Douglas gives historical and moral precedence to homosexuality: “the sweet unfruitful love./In Hellas counted more than half divine” (39-40). Douglas also anticipates by nearly a century Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s discovery that heterosexuality depends on, and thus inverts, homosexuality: the personification of heterosexual love may well jaunt about singing of “joyous love of comely girl and boy,” but he travels exclusively in the company of a gay man! That is to say, the sexual identity of the heterosexual man doesn’t depend on the presence of a woman, but rather on the presence of a homosexual man.

The poem’s setting thus recalls the inversion theory of homosexuality, and intimates, via the reference to Hellas, the pederastic model, which the relationships between the poem’s speaker and its two personifications of gay male sexuality develops. Pederasty was arguably the central obsession of the Wilde trial. Queensbury justified libeling Wilde in the interests of saving his son from Wilde’s allegedly corrupting influence.²⁰ Queensbury’s concern to protect innocent “youth” was widely shared: writing about “Two Loves” and “Shame,” a contemporary court reporter asked rhetorically, “Was it not a terrible thing that a young man on the threshold of life, who had been for several years dominated by Oscar Wilde, and who had been ‘loved and adored’ by Oscar Wilde as his letters proved, should thus show the tendency of his mind upon this frightful subject?” (qtd. in Cohen, E. 167-68) When asked directly, “What is the ‘Love that dare not speak its name’?”, Wilde, like Douglas decades later, stressed the intellectual and spiritual aspects of the pederastic relationship:

The ‘Love that dare not speak its name’ in this century is such a great affection of an elder for a younger man as there was between David and Jonathan, such as Plato made the very basis of his philosophy, and such as you find in the sonnets of Michaelangelo and Shakespeare. It is that deep, spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect. It dictates and pervades great works of art like those of Shakespeare and Michaelangelo, and those two letters of mine, such as they are. It is in this century misunderstood, so much misunderstood that it may be described as the ‘Love that dare not speak its name,’ and on account of it I am placed where I am now. It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection. There is nothing unnatural about it. It is intellectual, and it repeatedly exists between an elder and a younger man, when the elder man has intellect, and the younger man has all the joy, hope and glamour of life before him. That it should be so the world does not understand. The world mocks at it and sometimes puts one in the pillory for it. (qtd. in Ellman 463)

Naturally, given the circumstances, Wilde would strip the relationship of its sexual aspects. But Douglas, writing from the relative safety of the continent, refused to do so. In an article published in *La Revue Blanch* in June 1896, Douglas boasted, “‘Today I am proud that I have been loved by a great poet who perhaps esteemd [sic] me because he recognized that, besides a beautiful body, I possessed a beautiful soul.’ [and] ‘Oscar Wilde is now suffering for being a uranian, a Greek, a sexual man’” (qtd. in Ellman 502). Such injudicious pronouncements undoubtedly further damaged Wilde’s reputation and stand as one source of the venomous disparagement directed at Douglas from all quarters for much of the rest of his life.

Wilde’s definition and defense of the “Love that dare not speak its name” is eloquent and moving, but no reader of “Two Loves” could fail to observe the transparent celebration of sexual love between men: even before he speaks, the figure of the guide kisses the speaker’s mouth (34-35). At the same time, however, the poem deeply undercuts the pederastic model of homosexual love because the “guide,” the initiating male, is himself a “youth,” not an older man. The encounter between the speaker and the second personification of gay male sexuality similarly invokes and undercuts the pederastic model: the speaker puts himself in the position of student when he turns to “the love that dare not speak its name” for information. But the man he asks to teach him is himself young, presumably close in age to the speaker. Douglas thus works against a scandalous popular stereotype, implying that gay male culture does not arise solely or even primarily through the vertical and partially authoritative pederastic relationship, but rather through the considerably more horizontal and egalitarian relationships between young men.

Given the widespread homosexual activities of the all-male British public schools, and given Douglas’s own enrollment in those schools, it isn’t surprising the “Two Loves” favors a narcissistic model of male homosexuality. The poem’s first personification of gay male sexuality, the poet’s guide, is noteworthy as much for his beauty as for his direct and unselfconscious expression of sexuality:

his eyes
 Were clear as crystal, naked all was he,
 White as the snow on pathless mountains frore,
 Red were his lips as red wine-spilith that dyes
 A marble floor, his brow chalcedony (32).

The poem’s second personification of gay male sexuality, Shame, “the love that dare not speak its name,” is of the nearly identical physical type, from his complexion (“wan and white/ Like pallid lilies”) to his lips (“red like poppies”). This type occurs over and over in Douglas’s early poems. It includes the unnamed “lad” whose presence dominates “Hymne to Physical Beauty” (“So fair he was I thought on young Narcisse” (18)) as well as the

less overtly queer “Perkin Warbeck”²¹ and the lads, “Jonquil and Fleur-de-lys.”²² It seems likely, moreover, that this type is a narcissistic self-representation. Douglas’s physical beauty was legendary: “Your sonnet is quite lovely,” wrote Wilde, “and it is a marvel that those red rose-leaf lips of yours should be made no less for the music of song that the madness of kissing” (qtd. in Cohen, E. 203), and “He is quite like a narcissus— so white and gold. [...] he lies like a hyacinth on the sofa and I worship him” (Wilde 314). But, however much these and similar personifications may partake of self-portraiture, in “Two Loves,” Douglas is also intent on distinguishing between the two personifications of gay male sexuality, thereby underscoring awareness of the difference between his fantasy of gay life and the actual condition of gay men in the world of the 1890s. The first personification carries grapes and is naked, emblematic of the open expression of sexuality. The second wears a wreath of moon-flowers and “a purple robe [...] o’erwrought in gold/ With the device of a great snake.” The robe would signify the necessity of self-concealment; the snake, perhaps, its impossibility.

Douglas positions the sympathetic and even celebratory portrait of male homosexuality against a devastating critique of male heterosexuality, which I discover by comparing the vivid personifications of gay boys/men to the lackluster personification of heterosexual love, whose body is scarcely described and only with the most abstract of adjectives: he seems “joyous [...] / And fair and blooming” (41-2); “His eyes were bright” (45); his “voice was tuneful as a flute” (49). Indeed, the liveliest description is of the man’s “ivory lute/with strings of gold that were as maidens’ hair” (47-48). All of this suggests, perhaps, that while the poetry rendered in the name of heterosexual love may be gorgeous, heterosexuality itself is a blandly cheerful, yet chillingly predatory activity, completely disadvantageous to women. Some of Douglas’s disparaging attitude toward heterosexual men may stem from having witnessed his father’s ill-treatment of his mother (*My Friendship* 101-02). It may also reflect discomfort or even fear of sexual reproductivity. In “Hymne to Physical Beauty” he calls homosexuality “the sweet unfruitful love” (39); in “The Garden of Death” “no child-bearing/Vexes desire” (19-20).

Making Modernism: A Queer Woman

In Stopes’s view, excessive child-bearing did too often “vex desire” for many of her contemporaries, and she was intent throughout the twenties and thirties on making “Constructive Birth Control” available to as many women as possible.²³ As other scholars have discussed, her advocacy of contraception rested on her assertion that sexual pleasure had a value distinct from sexual reproduction. However, she also placed reproductive desire at the center of female sexual desire. *Married Love* offers

the fullest and best-known of Stopes's theory of female heterosexuality. I would like here to focus on two poems, "Man" (1914), which offers an earlier, if not the earliest, expression of Stopes's vision,²⁴ and "Your Moonlit Face" (1939), which reveals the utter fragility of the "normal" heterosexual identity she tirelessly promulgated.

In "Two Loves," Douglas embeds a critique of normative heterosexuality within a complex description and celebration of a particular male homosexual identity. In "Man," Stopes embeds a critique of normative heterosexuality within a developmental narrative of "woman's" relationship to "man." Unlike Douglas, her aim is not so much to establish historical precedence for any particular form of sexuality. Rather she attempts to completely reformulate normative heterosexuality by centering it on women's desire for children. Indeed, there's a sense in which she's rejecting the primacy of history in favor of evolution. Historically speaking, Stopes suggests, heterosexual relations have been based on male lust and have been frightening and degrading to women. Human evolution demands that a new order of heterosexual relations come into being. Ironically enough, Stopes's view of sexuality as the basis for a new evolutionary development was deeply influenced by Edward Carpenter, himself a homosexual of Oscar Wilde's generation.

Like "Two Loves," "Man" is set out of doors. The poet lies "Upon a sun-kissed knoll, dreaming" (12). She encounters no guide, but rather concocts a series of fantasies that dramatize her development from schoolgirl to woman, with special emphasis on the slow awakening of her sexuality. The narrative proceeds via a series of episodes in which the speaker encounters "Man" in several historical guises. Thus, as a seventeen-year-old schoolgirl, the speaker dreams of being rescued by a Knight errant. For his efforts he receives "one white rose." No kiss transpires (33-48). At eighteen she learns to take delight in her own beauty, but flees the troubadour's advances (49-64). At nineteen, she begins to experience the advent of sexual desire, as a series of "cavaliers" appear to pay court (65-76). At twenty, she arrives at the late Victorian era, personifying herself and man as modern university students, more comrades than lovers (77-90). Stopes names each of these male characters "Man," suggesting that at the same time that she is struggling to understand and recount her personal history, she is also casting herself in the role of "Woman." This is entirely characteristic of Stopes who tended to view herself both as an entirely exceptional and perfectly normal, if highly evolved, woman. The careful tracing of "Woman's" psycho-sexuality against the backdrop of English history signals, moreover, Stopes's large political aims, the complete transformation of the masculinist/liberal hegemony.

At the heart of Stopes's project and the heart of the poem lies a critique of conventional gender relations. As the speaker's thoughts turn

from education to marriage, she reveals that men and women both are under the pernicious sway of some not very flattering delusions. The speaker thinks of her prospective groom as “Captive-Man” and delights in him as “the source of carriages and gems,/The force that rows my boat upon the Thames” (95, 97-98). To her naive eyes, he is “as tame/As a devoted dog, answering his name” (99-100). But the wedding-night sweeps away her delusion: man “unclothed” harkens back to an earlier, far more barbaric age and condition: he is “A satyr [...] wild and free” (109). After her sexual initiation

Every bedroom seems a wild-beast’s lair,
And every bride a creature in a snare
And every laugh an echo of despair.
The pregnant women’s heavy-shackled feet;
The painted faces leering on the street;
The nursing mother gaunt with ill-paid toil
All make my soul with searing gasps recoil
From Man and his gross bestiality (112-19).

This nightmarish parade of suffering women seems almost to march directly from the pages of some late-nineteenth- or early-twentieth-century purity feminist tract targeting unrestrained male lust as the source of every human ill. The poet’s response, to “cloister [herself] in a convent” (121), seems equally indebted to radical purity feminism. But the poet rejects the separatist solution when she overhears the “wail/of Babe new-born” (131-32). The sight of the infant infuses the poem with a new vision: “Man in another form! So frail, so sweet—” (133). Her new understanding of male heterosexual desire, as the force that “with seed [woman’s] body fired” inspires the speaker to “Set [her] mind seeking once again God’s plan/Out in the world, where men and women meet” (138-39).

This shift within the poem suggests the importance of sexual reproductivity to Stopes’s understanding of sexuality. For all her work as a birth control advocate, for all her insistence that sexual pleasure was essential to the fullest flowering of individuals and “the race,” Stopes always viewed female sexuality as inextricably bound to maternal desire. In *Married Love*, for example, she recommends that the husband pay careful attention to his wife’s breasts because

[t]he sensitive inter-relation between a woman’s breasts and the rest of her sex-life is not only a bodily thrill, but there is a world of poetic beauty in the longing of a loving woman for the un-conceived child which melts in mists of tenderness toward her lover, the soft touch of whose lips can thus rouse her mingled joy (56).

The connection between sexuality and reproductivity takes a surprising turn in *Enduring Passion* (1928), where Stopes advocates that after ejacu-

lation the husband not withdraw his penis so that he can absorb some unspecified effluence from his wife's vaginal secretions:

The next morning he is observed to whistle and sing on his way to the bathroom; to be bright and happy, to have a gaiety and vitality which has not been robbed but added to. Perhaps one may describe it best as being rendered more secure—more like the happy, spontaneous gaiety of childhood than the eager and hectic excitement of a desirous man. (120)

It might be said that here Stopes is moving very, very close to the polymorphously perverse view of sexuality celebrated by Douglas: “[A]ll the happy dwellers of that place [“The Garden of Death”]/Are reckless children” (21-22). In “Man,” however, she appears less interested in infantilizing male sexuality than in finding a man who will fulfill her linked sexual and maternal desires, a man who, in short, is willing to be both a lover and a father: “I find a soul within the merest clod/Who works to win his children's daily bread” (158-59).

But her quest remains unfulfilled until she imagines meeting a man who will “turn the blood within [her] veins to fire” (162). She figures their coupling—which I take to be mental as well as sexual and procreative—as weaving. Woman provides the warp, Man the woof; together they “weave firm cloth of gold./Fit garment for God's image to unfold” (173-74). This sense of complete union pervades the poem's final images, as the poet awakens from her dream and is joined by an actual lover, “No visioned wraith, but flesh,/Pulsating, my twin-soul within its mesh” (183-84). Although the poem ends with a sexual coupling, the depiction is both conventional and vague: “And as we lie, not only heart on heart,/And tingling hands clasping swift tender hands/(Soft whispered words, exchanging love's demands)” (186-88). Clearly, Stopes had not yet found the courage or the voice to render a more graphic description.

However, by the time Stopes had come to publish *Love Songs for Young Lovers*, she was far more confident of the value of graphic sexual description and of her ability to render it beautifully. Not that many of her poems employ this mode. Quite the contrary: most of her erotic poems utilize metaphor, and fairly conventional metaphor at that, for sex. Two poems, however, do bring more or less graphic descriptions of sexual activity into print, “The Stream” and “Your Moonlit Face.” Interestingly enough, in neither of these poems does Stopes speak as a woman. Rather, in “The Stream” she speaks from an indeterminate gender position,²⁵ and in “Your Moonlit Face” she speaks as a man:

Words have departed
For your tongue
Now slips between caressing lips
And all my manhood

Throbs in search

Of Life's deep source within your hips (7-12)

It's hard to know how to read this extremely queer poem. Stopes claims that the poems in this volume "came swiftly transmitted from the storehouse of human memory" (*Love Songs* 69), and it may well be that she believed herself as able to speak as effectively for Everyman as for Everywoman. The poem may also be motivated by her never-diminishing didactic impulse to tell men (and women) how to do it and how to do it right. (And it's worth observing that the man who knows how to do it right acknowledges the priority of female reproductive prowess, as he seeks "Life's deep source within your hips.") I can't help but wonder, though, if the poem doesn't encode some long repressed lesbian desires which Stopes can only articulate by imagining herself as a man. In her late teens and well into her late twenties, Stopes developed crushes on several women. Traces of her desire appear in sometimes odd places, including a journal entry written in 1908 ("Why do I always fall in love with women?" (qtd. in Hall 78)) as well as *Married Love* where she proclaims that "a beautiful woman's body has a supernal loveliness at which no words short of a poetic rapture can even hint" (96). Stopes's own normalizing impulses can thus be read over and against not only varieties of (queer) male discourse about sexuality (including those of Havelock Ellis, Edward Carpenter, and Lord Alfred Douglas), but also eruptions of her own queer impulses.

Stopes's most recent biographers have treated the question of her sexuality by saying that she had "bisexual tendencies." A stranger and sadder, but somehow more telling account comes from her third biographer, Keith Briant, who was Stopes's lover during the months that she wrote *Love Songs for Young Lovers* and to whom she dedicated the book:

Early in her life Marie Stopes developed male elements in her character which, although they greatly contributed to the success of her work, were not a source of happiness to her in her personal life, and made it difficult for any man to satisfy her. The success of her teaching was due to the fact that she was a woman writing with a male personality and a male approach towards the sexual act. From the beginning of her crusade Marie Stopes appeared in the eyes of the world, and deliberately represented herself to be, a feminist—a woman fighting in the jungle of a man-made world; but her approach to sex was not feminine. She was highly, if not over, sexed (255).

Briant would undoubtedly seize on "Your Moonlit Face" as evidence of Stopes's (innate?) masculine characteristics, although he might choke on the suggestion that the poem transforms him into a woman. Can we then say that the poem enacts a form of sexual inversion: Stopes, the heterosexual woman, imagines how intercourse feels to a heterosexual man and

invites her lover, the heterosexual man, to imagine how it feels to be a heterosexual woman? And does it then also enact a version of heterosexual pederasty, given Stopes's didactic impulses and the extreme age difference between Stopes and Briant? (She was 57 when they met, he 25.) And does the pederastic impulse—the adoration of a young male body—insinuate Stopes, however obliquely, to the gay male culture she both deplored and depended on (via Edward Carpenter) for her successful deployment of “normal” heterosexuality? How ironic: Stopes, one of the most flamboyantly heterosexual woman of her age, speaking as a stone butch lesbian, a transsexual, a straight male pederast, or even a gay man! But also how fitting that the woman Angus MacLaren so eloquently called “one of the chief architects of heterosexuality in the twentieth-century” should also embody in one short poem all the crazy ruptures, inconsistencies, and imbalances of sexuality itself (94).

Polymorphously Perverse Conclusions

After 1939, Stopes and Douglas ceased wrangling, for the most part, over the *bête noir* of homosexuality, although they continued to disagree about the morality of contraception. Their correspondence in the years preceding Douglas's death in 1945 is marked by strong mutual affection and respect, as well as hatred (and perhaps envy) of the modernist “gang.” When not preoccupied by financial worries, his wife's death, and his own failing health, Douglas was most apt to write about the composition, presentation, and publication of *Principles of Poetry*, which he considered the ultimate apology for his own poetry and parting salvo against the modernist movement. Ironically enough, there is some evidence that Douglas was no more than a minor collaborator on the lecture. In a letter dated 25 September 1944, Stopes quotes Raoul Pugh who claimed that a young man named Richard Jones wrote the better part of the lecture. Douglas never denies the charge. He responds that he “employed young Richard Jones to give me some help in my lecture & paid him £10 for his services. [...] Jone's [sic] contribution to the lecture begins on p 10 with the passage about Plato & though I re-wrote & altered a great deal, & added some passages & omitted others, what follows is largely his” (Ad Ms 58495). This is, I think, tantamount to collaboration—at the very least—since “what follows” is an additional sixteen pages, more than half the lecture. On the other hand, Douglas never admitted any wrongdoing, telling Stopes that the entire scandal was due to a “breach of confidence” by Pugh and adding, “The Lord deliver us from the young men of today” (Ad Ms 58495).

Whatever his quirks and foibles, Stopes remained loyal to Douglas after his death. But she was not loyal enough to resist tweaking Douglas's perspective on homosexuality to more closely resemble her own, in *Lord Alfred Douglas: His Poetry and his Personality*, published in 1949. True,

in certain passages Stopes represents him as he wanted to be remembered. She claims for him one of the highest places in the pantheon of English poets and describes him as Wilde's high-spirited collaborator (50-51). But when she casts him as a national hero for his 1916 condemnation of homosexuality—

O England, in thine hour of need,
 [...]
 Call on thy God, cast out thy sin!
 The foe without, the foe within
 Are at thy throat ...
 Two foes thou hast, one there, one here,
 One far, one intimately near,
 Two filthy fogs blot out thy light—
 The German and the Sodomite (qtd. 16)—

she seems to forget that the author of “two foes” was also the author of “Two Loves” and that he very bravely and lucidly stood up against the persecution of Wilde, both in his early and late manhood.

In the history of this curious friendship, and in the histories of these oddly marginalized people—the stories they told about themselves and about each other, the stories that are told about them today—we discover not only a strong current of anti-modernist thinking and practice, but also, paradoxically, many of the crazy ruptures, inconsistencies, and imbalances of modernism itself, which the genealogies of modernism have attempted to suture, erase and correct. It is tempting to use the stories of Douglas and Stopes, told through their correspondence, their criticism, their poetry—above all, their poetry—to create an alternate canon or genealogy. And such is one approach to disrupting the monolithism of a “modernism” evoked by a handful of names: Pound, Woolf, Eliot, Joyce. But such ventures always end up amputating more than they can possibly embrace. To do a fuller justice to both writers and to the age, I would suggest a polymorphously perverse criticism, one that put Lord Alfred to bed with T. S. Eliot, or stranded Stopes on a desert island with H. D. In the shocks of those encounters, as in the encounter I have described here, we might overhear other echoes of long-suppressed quarrels, conversations, poems, or selves.

Notes

Thanks are due Kansas State University's Office of Sponsored Research and Programs for funding travel to London, where much of the research for this essay took place. Thanks also to the staff of the Students' Reading Room of the British Library for orienting me to the Stopes Collection and for tireless and efficient retrieval of manuscripts. I owe immense gratitude to Margaret Wheeler and Debra Rae Cohen for encouraging me

to write this paper and for stimulating conversations at crucial points in its composition. Finally, thanks to Kristin Bluemel for her keen editorial insight and incredible patience. An earlier version of this essay was presented as a talk at the Third Annual Meeting of the Space Between.

1. First he antagonized his father, the Marquess of Queensbury to the point of calling Wilde a “sodomite,” then he recklessly encouraged Wilde to sue Queensbury for libel. Upon losing that case, Wilde was arrested and ultimately convicted. For a bibliography of biographical and critical works about Douglas, see Patterson.
2. Writing five years after Douglas’s death, Stopes objects to Herbert Read’s description of Douglas as “the most complete cad in history.” She compares “the portrait of the gross middle-aged abnormal man in his forties [... with] the exquisite body and face of” Douglas and draws her own conclusion about their moral nature (“Oscar Wilde and Alfred Douglas” 25). Ironically enough, Douglas’s very beauty—and his celebration of like male beauty—constituted a major portion of his sexual charm for Wilde and others.
3. And, indeed, Shaw and Stopes corresponded for decades, beginning in 1917, when she sent him a copy of her stage-play, *The Race*. See Stopes and Shaw.
4. The British Library holds generous portions of the correspondence with most of these individuals. See Stopes and Carpenter, Stopes and Coward, Stopes and de la Mare, Stopes and Thomas Hardy, Stopes and Wells, Stopes and Isreal Zangwell.
5. The correspondence between Douglas and Stopes is held in two manuscript volumes at the British Library, Ad Ms 58494 and Ad Ms 58495. All textual citations are to these volumes.
6. Stopes’s most important collaborations were with Dr R. V. Wheeler, with whom she co-authored her most important scientific monograph, *The Constitution of Coal* (1918). When members of various birth control organizations joined together to form the National Birth Control Council, Stopes was not invited until Dr. Helena Wright promised to keep her in hand (an impossible task). Stopes resigned within three years (Rose 205).
7. The correspondence with Zangwell and Hardy is especially interesting because after their deaths Stopes began corresponding with the surviving spouses. After Florence Zangwell died, Stopes continued to correspond with their daughter. See Stopes and Florence Hardy, Stopes and Elizabeth Zangwell, and Stopes and Olivia Zangwell.
8. The other members of the “syndicate” were Lord Tredegar, Henry Channon and Alex Lennox-Boyd (Hyde 169n).
9. See Muriel Box’s *The Trial of Marie Stopes* for an extended account of the trial.

10. He does so even more explicitly when he writes of Yeats that "A great poet (or even just an authentic poet) would have stood out against the current of the times when it was so obviously flowing in the wrong direction, and would have proclaimed the eternal principles of poetry all the more loudly because they were being denied and undermined" (*Principles* 22).
11. Stopes clearly despised Eliot as a poet and a playwright. When he was awarded the Order of Merit in 1950, she accused him of having "misled a number of miniature men by novelty out of harmony with the essence of our national speech" (qtd. in Hall 315). But she also seems to have followed his career. A diary entry puts her at the opening night of *Family Reunion* on Tuesday 21 March 1939 (Ad Ms 58743), as does a letter from Lord Alfred Douglas concurring with Stopes's assessment of the play as "perfectly ghastly" (Ad Ms 58494). Douglas issues his judgement without having seen the play.
12. The connections between Stopes and Carpenter are well-documented. She was familiar with his theories and sent him a manuscript of *Married Love*, whose most rhapsodic passages emulate his rather purple style (Rose 93). In Carpenter's view, the homosexual union was spiritually the highest because it is not procreative. Stopes's argument in *Married Love* that contraception enables the fullest experience of heterosexual passion aligns her with Carpenter, while her identification of the moment of conception as the profoundest experience trumps him.
13. The "returning rhyme stanza" calls for the first and last lines of a stanza to rhyme, the second and penultimate to rhyme, and so forth, until a couplet forms at the center of the stanza. Stopes invented the form for her longest and most successful poem, "Instead of Tears: In Memorium," which mourns the war-death of a young naval officer, Bill Rose. See *We Burn*, 80-90.
14. For example, the conceit of "We Burn," draws on "the proven fact that our lives and the warmth of our bodies depend on the burning of carbon by oxygen within our tissues" (*Love Songs* 70).
15. Stopes was not immune from censorship. She had numerous encounters with the Lord Chamberlain's office over stage plays which were deemed inappropriate for their dramatization of, among other topics, male sexual impotence, venereal infection, and abortion. See Hauck, "Through a glass darkly," 116.
16. Many of the most renowned modernists denied any debt to Wilde, casting him, as did Wyndham Lewis, for example, as the feeble progenitor of "That debile and sinister race of diabolic dandies and erotically bloated diableness and their attendant abortions, of Yellow Book fame, that tyrannised over the London mind for several years" ("Art" 71). Lewis's vehemence only underscores the selectivity of the mod-

ernist genealogy.

17. Moreover, widespread concern about the declining birth-rate and rapidly changing gender relations may have intensified the generations-old impulse of men to escape corporeality into a pure realm of the imagination where male writers give birth to male writers. See Castle, Friedman, and Gilbert and Gubar.
18. My sense of the importance of identity as a crucially under-studied aspect of modernism is deeply indebted to Deborah F. Jacobs, whose 1996 essay "Feminist Criticism/Cultural Studies/Modernist Texts: A Manifesto for the '90s," offers compelling reasons to read modernism within the broader terms of identify production. Jacobs is especially wise to focus on sexual reproductivity as an important site upon which questions of origins and originality converge and upon which the questions (or problems) of female identity always seem to founder.
19. The explicitly homoerotic poems are: "Hymne to Physical Beauty," "In an Aegean Port," "In Praise of Shame," "Prince Charming," "Two Loves," "De Profundis," "Sicilian Love-Song," and "Rondeau." Within the context of these poems, most of the other poems in the collection begin to seem either implicitly homoerotic or invite homoerotic readings, including poems that Douglas republished in subsequent volumes, such as "Lust and Hypocrisy," "Amoris Vincula," "In Sarum Close," "Perkin Warbeck," "The Garden of Death," "To L.," "St. Martin's Summer," and "Jonquil and Fleur-de-lys."
20. Douglas was twenty-one when he met Wilde, who was then thirty-seven.
21. Perkin laments:

Oh! why was I made so red and white,
So fair and straight and tall?
And why were my eyes so blue and bright,
And my hands so white and small?

And why was my hair like the yellow silk
And curled like the hair of a king?
And my body like the soft new milk
That the maids bring from milking? (5-12)

22. The type is drawn even more sharply in this ballad. Jonquil is "White [...] as the curded cream" (2), Fleur-de-lys "white as an onyx stone" (18). Jonquil's "lips were red as round ripe cherries" (9), Fleur-de-lys's "red as the red rubies/The king's bright dagger-hilt that deck" (25-26). (Cherries, indeed! The King's bright dagger-hilt!) This poem relies far more on the trope of narcissism than "Two Loves." The two boys are not similar in appearance, but identical, so identical that that when they trade clothes "Their mothers' selves would not have

- known/ That each the other's habit had" (75-76).
23. Not only did Stopes put valuable information about contraception into print in widely circulated works such as *Wise Parenthood* (1918), *A Letter to Working Mothers* (1919), and *Contraception* (1923), she and her second husband, Humphrey Vernon Roe, also opened England's first birth control clinic, "The Mothers' Clinic," in 1921. In the 1930s, Stopes operated five regional clinics and two travelling caravans which dispensed birth control and fertility advice to rural women (Cohen, D. 79).
 24. In fact, it may even have been a part of the earliest version of *Married Love*, which Stopes destroyed in 1911 upon the recommendation of novelist, Maurice Hewlett. In pencil, on the top of the letter from Hewlett, Stopes writes, "This was discarded by me MS, & a few [of] the poems published in *Man*, other Poems & a Preface & some portions used in *Married Love* & the rest destroyed" (Ad Ms 58496).
 25. I suspect that, insofar as she is consciously trying to express a heterosexual ideal, she is speaking as a man:

When my lips your nipples touch
Am I pleading overmuch
That the rhythm thus begun
Should continue in the sun
[...]
Life's hot stream of me
Floods into love of thee (19-22, 24-25).

Works Cited

- Box, Muriel. *The Trial of Marie Stopes*. London: Femina, 1967.
- Briant, Keith. *Marie Stopes, A Biography*. London: Hogarth, 1962.
- Castle, Terry. "Lab'ring Bards: Birth *topoi* and English Poetics, 1660-1820." *Journal of English and German Philology* 78 (1979): 193-208
- Cohen, Deborah S. "Marie Stopes and the Mothers' Clinics." *Marie Stopes, Eugenics and the English Birth Control Movement*. Ed. Robert A Peel. London: The Galton Institute, 1997.
- Cohen, Ed. *Walk on the Wilde Side*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Douglas, Lord Alfred. *The Collected Poems of Lord Alfred Douglas*. London: Martin Secker, 1919.
- . "The Garden of Death." *Poems/Poèmes* 50-53.
- . "Hymne to Physical Beauty." *Poems/Poèmes* 2-11.
- . "Jonquil and Fleur-de-lys." *Poems/Poèmes* 78-95.
- . *My Friendship with Oscar Wilde. Being the Autobiography of Lord Alfred Douglas*. New York: Coventry House, 1932.
- . *Oscar Wilde and Myself*. London: John Long, 1914.

- . 1940. *Oscar Wilde: A Summing Up*. London: Icon Books, 1962.
- . "Perkin Warbeck." *Poems/Poèmes* 28-49.
- . *Poems/Poèmes*. Paris: Mercure de France, 1896.
- . *The Principles of Poetry: An Address Delivered by Lord Alfred Douglas before the Royal Society of Literature on September 2nd, 1943*. London: The Richards Press, Ltd., n.d.
- . "Two Loves." *Poems/Poèmes* 104-110.
- Ellman, Richard. *Oscar Wilde*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1988.
- Friedman, Susan Stanford. "Creativity and the Childbirth Metaphor: Gender Difference in Literary Discourse." *Feminist Studies* 13 (1987): 49-82.
- Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar. "Preface." *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century. Sexchanges* Vol. 2. New Haven: Yale UP, 1988: xi.
- Hall, Ruth. *Marie Stopes, A Biography*. London: Andre Deutsch, 1977.
- Hauck, Christina. "Abortion and the Individual Talent." *English Literary History* 70 (2003): 223-266.
- . "'Through a glass darkly': 'A Game of Chess' and Two Plays by Marie Stopes." *Journal of Modern Literature* 21 (1997): 109-19.
- Hyde, Mary, ed. *Bernard Shaw and Alfred Douglas*. New Haven and New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1982.
- Jacobs, Deborah F. "Feminist Criticism/Cultural Studies/Modernist Texts: A Manifesto for the '90s." *Rereading Modernism*. Ed. Lisa Rado. New York: Garland, 1994. 273-95.
- Lewis, Wyndym. "The Art of the Great Race." *Blast* 2. 1915. Santa Barbara, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 69-72.
- McLaren, Angus. "The Sexual Politics of Reproduction in Britain." *The European Experience of Declining Fertility: The Quiet Revolution*. Ed. John R. Gillis, Louise A. Tilly, and David Levine. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992. 85-100.
- Patterson, Gary H. "Lord Alfred Douglas: An Annotated Bibliography of Writings about Him." *English Literature in Transition* 23 (1980): 168-200.
- Rose, June. *Marie Stopes and the Sexual Revolution*. London: Faber & Faber, 1992.
- Sinfield, Alan. "Private Lives/Public Theatre: Noël Coward and the Politics of Homosexual Representation." *Representations* 36 (1991): 543-63.
- Smith, Stan. "A Movement to Which No Name Has Ever Been Given: The Construction of 'Modernism.'" *The Third Annual Meeting of the Space Between. The Space Between: Literature and Culture: 1914-1945*. University of Western Ontario. London, Ontario. 19 May 2000.
- Stopes, Marie Carmichael. Ad Ms 58743. British Lib. London.
- . *A Letter to Working Mothers On How to Have Healthy Children and*

- Avoid Weakening Pregnancies*. Elmer, Leatherhead, Surrey: Published by the Author, 1919.
- . *Contraception (Birth Control). Its Theory, History and Practice*. London: John Bale, Sons & Danielsson Ltd, 1923.
- . *Enduring Passion*. London: Putnam, 1928.
- . "Instead of Tears." *We Burn. Selected Poems of Marie Carmichael Stopes*. London: Moring, 1949. 80-90.
- . *Lord Alfred Douglas: His Poetry and His Personality*. London: The Richards Press, 1949.
- . *Love Songs for Young Lovers*. London: Heinemann, 1939.
- . "Man." *Man, Other Poems, and a Preface* 3-12.
- . *Man, Other Poems, and a Preface*. London: Heinemann, 1914.
- . *Married Love*. 1918. London: Gollanz, 1995.
- . "Oscar Wilde and Alfred Douglas." *The Listener* 5 Jan. 1950: 25.
- . "The Stream." *Love Songs for Young Lovers* 34.
- . "We Burn." *Love Songs for Young Lovers* 9-11.
- . *Wise Parenthood*. London: A. C. Fifield, 1918.
- . "Your Moonlit Face." *Love Songs for Young Lovers* 57.
- Stopes, Marie Carmichael and Edward Carpenter. Correspondence. Ad Ms 58683. British Lib. London.
- Stopes, Marie Carmichael and Noël Coward. Correspondence. Ad Ms 58505. British Lib. London.
- Stopes, Marie Carmichael and Walter de la Mare. Correspondence. Ad Ms 58501. British Lib. London.
- Stopes, Marie Carmichael and Lord Alfred Douglas. Correspondence. Ad Ms 58494-Ad Ms 58495. British Lib. London.
- Stopes, Marie Carmichael and Florence Hardy. Correspondence. Ad Ms 58498. British Lib. London.
- Stopes, Marie Carmichael and Thomas Hardy. Correspondence. Ad Ms 58498. British Lib. London.
- Stopes, Marie Carmichael and George Bernard Shaw. Correspondence. Ad Ms 58493. British Lib. London.
- Stopes, Marie Carmichael and H. G. Wells. Correspondence. Ad Ms 58496. British Lib. London.
- Stopes, Marie Carmichael and Dr. R. V. Wheeler. *The Constitution of Coal*. London: H. M. Stationery Office for the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, 1918.
- Stopes, Marie Carmichael and Elizabeth Zangwell. Correspondence. Ad Ms 58497. British Lib. London.
- Stopes, Marie Carmichael and Isreal Zangwell. Correspondence. Ad Ms 58497. British Lib. London.
- Stopes, Marie Carmichael and Oliva Zangwell. Correspondence. Ad Ms

58497. British Lib. London.

Wilde, Oscar. *The Letters of Oscar Wilde*. Ed. Rupert Hurt Davis. New York: Harcourt, 1962.