

I: Thomas Mann's Homosexual Vision

Thomas Mann, born in 1875, was the most enigmatic German author of the twentieth century. He borrowed features and mannerisms from his friends and relatives, commemorated passionate friendship and old loves in the names he gave to his characters, replayed events that had marked his life. He transcribed his personal history with so little effort at disguise that it aroused outraged protest and cost him more than one friend. Mann, the symbolist and ironist has been canvassed intensely in the scholarly literature because of his capacity to translate the raw materials of his experience into literary form. Winner of the 1929 Nobel Prize for literature, Mann bridged nineteenth-century realist fiction and the twentieth-century modernist style in his novels, short stories and essays.

He was an uncomfortable man, seeking all his life to come to terms with what made him uneasy inside his skin – his homoerotic inclinations – which Terence James Reed interpreted as Mann called “sexual inversion”(325). His ambivalent relations with his family, and his conflicted, contradictory, ambiguous situation as an artist in a commercial world made him half outsider and half insider. Although he was to remember his friendship with painter Paul Ehrenberg as the love of his life, in 1905 he married Katia Pingsheim out of fear for society. In marrying her, he sacrificed his “natural inclinations” – homosexuality – for social convention (Prater 73). Richard Winston discovered through his study of Mann that Katia bore him six children of whom “Erika, 26, was lesbian and Klaus, 25, gay” (23). Anthony Heilbut in “Exile in Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in American from the 1930's to the Present” persuades us that “though Mann's marriage was secure and happy, his wife was aware of his predilections and even after, as he confessed in his diary,

he had failed her sexually” (7). This shows that Mann was a homosexual person; therefore he had been unable to satisfy his wife sexually.

Mann found very young men attractive and beautiful, but his homosexuality remained hidden for 50 years after his death, when his diaries were released. These diaries revealed that he was prone to fits of nausea, nervous, trembling and convulsive sobbing quite at odds with his public image of elegant, self-assured aloofness. Klaus wrote novels, short stories, plays and essays whose life Germany’s disaffected bohemian youth in the interwar period. His open homosexuality led to some conflict with his father, but Mann chose to express his homosexual desires in a very different manner.

Thomas Mann never practised homosexuality openly throughout his life. It was only through the subtle study of his diaries that he began writing from the age of 14 that critics discovered his homosexual desire. He kept his diaries hidden until his death. During the Second World War he worried about their possible discovery by the Nazis and instructed his son Golo to retrieve them – wrapped in canvas, tied, sealed with wax, hidden under the floor boards in the house. Cecil C. H. Cullander studied Thomas Mann with great interest because of his mysterious lifestyle, which resulted in his findings that Mann had homosexual feelings. His instruction to Golo included, “Do not read them” (2). Mann ordered that his diaries not be opened until 20 years. It is after his death, since 1975, the diaries have been regularly published in German. There are ten volumes altogether which concern his life, political development and German and World history. The final volume comprises the year 1953 to 1955 has only just appeared. On February 17, 1896, Mann was reported to have written to his friend Otto Grautoff that he had burned his diaries since, in which he wrote, “it

became embarrassing and uncomfortable to have such a mass of secret – very secret – writings lying around” (13). This secret most possibly included his homosexual desire.

Interest in Thomas Mann as a person quickened upon the publication of the diaries in 1975. The scholars and critics were shocked by the revelation of Mann’s extreme narcissism, his homosexual preoccupations, and the nasty comments he made about friends and people who had been of help to him and his family. Many people who could read German began reading the diaries. Cecil C. H. Cullander discovered from his study of the diaries that “Mann’s sexuality was the solitary inspiration for his creations” (15). Thomas Mann dealt with human sexuality as a central issue in his fiction, which will be later discussed in the following paragraphs. Given the diaries and his command of German culture, Anthony Heilbut attempts to show how Mann’s sexuality governed both his writing and his life. He writes:

Mann’s career may be read as a tale of profound erotic disappointment and its diversion into and projection on to the widest range of disparate subjects. But, conversely, it also kept him young, alert to each promise de bonheur – promise of happiness – a term he was still using in his 70’s. As he wrote of George Bernard Shaw, ‘Having never been young, he remained eternally youthful.’ (5)

Even Mann’s political consciousness had an “erotic basis” in Heilbut’s view. During his nationalistic period, he shared the common infatuation with glamorous male warriors as Heilbut further writes:

By 1920 Mann's social vision had grown specifically homoerotic and right-wing; witness his admiration for Hans Blucher's 'blood and soil' doctrine. Two years later, his turn to the left and his embrace of the unpopular Weimar Republic 'was catalyzed by his reading of Walt Whitman.' He sang of 'the body electric' in *On the German Republic.* and of 'Hellenism born anew as the spirit of American democracy.' (6)

Such a view of Mann is startling and troubling to say the least. From Mr. Heilbut's portrait we could guess that Mann's life was traumatic and miserable. However, Mann remains one of this century's literary giants, embodying the best of his culture as few recent figures have done. From different critics' views on him, we could see Mann more precisely as a great erotic writer, a man whose language was saturated by his sexuality.

Although Mann encoded his own homosexuality in his fiction, he thought that homosexuality led to the destruction of social institutions and death of the individual homosexuality, which he showed in *Death in Venice*. In the letter to his friend Count Heramn Keyserling, Published as "Uber dieEhe" (About Marriage, 1925), Mann tried to separate the creative and enduring institution of marriage, which creates families and, ultimately, states, from the artistically necessary, but eventually destructive force of homoeroticism. Ignace Feuerlicht found that Mann wrote about the same-sex desire despite his own: "There is no blessing in it same that of beauty and that is the blessing of death" (90). Since Mann was the solid burgher of his generation, a celebrated author, and a family man, a father, he admitted that homosexual identity had to be rejected as it

threatened not only society but his own preeminent status. That is the sole reason why he kept his diaries hidden throughout his life.

Thomas Mann's writing can be viewed as a depiction of his homosexual desire. So, his depiction of homosexual desire can be seen as an attempt to encode homosexuality in a manner that would allow him to speak what at the time was unspeakable for him, namely, his own homosexual feelings. This dual "otherness," that of the artist, and that of the homosexual found private expression in his diaries and fiction.

Thomas Mann's diaries and letters, along with several essays and prose works, provide evidence of the author's erotic attraction to his own sex, particularly to handsome young men. The relationship he formed with Paul Ehrenburg and Klaus Heuser has been of particular interest to literary historians. Such friendships and the passages Mann denoted to this topic both in fictional and non-fictional works provide conclusive proof that the author did indeed experience and value homosexual feelings. But Mann does not typically describe homosexual desire overtly or bluntly. Instead, he makes its appearance evident through symbols, metaphors. As it became the major theme of his works, it took on other forms in language – metaphor, allusion – character and plot. The "pencil-lending" episodes of *Der Zauberberg* exemplify this practice and have become iconic examples of writing about homosexual desire without naming it explicitly. Years ago, Hans had secretly "borrowed" a pencil from his classmate Pribislav. When Mann describes the reawakened memory of that moment, it becomes clear that the pencil symbolizes Pribislav's penis. Hans yearned to express his love for his friend sexually, but all he could bring himself to do was to take one of his friend's possessions, as a token of him

The deeply symbolic value of that token becomes evident when Chauchat offers Hans a pencil and triggers that memory, thus, enabling him to resolve his homosexual past, to “get well.” Moreover, Mr. Heilbut cites Mann’s ironic style, for one thing, his “save and facile” purpose that enabled him to “reveal a dubious, pathetic character without undermining his narrative authority” (3). That style extended to Mann’s bearing, which was decorous and public even when intimacy was called for. And of course Mann disguised himself as burgerlich man of letters, complete with town and country domiciles and upper class wife and six gifted children.

Mann’s fictional works have proved of enormous interest to gay scholars recently because so much about homosexual desire in fiction prior to Stonewall has to be read between the lines. It remains encoded, yet open to the interpretation of a generation of readers whose experiences and indeed definitions of homosexuality are quite different from Mann’s own.

Many of Mann’s chief works pursue the struggle to maintain a balance between the spheres of the artist and of the everyday, family man. Often at the core of the struggle is one man’s urge to love another. Everywhere in his writing such homoerotic incidents are hidden in plain sight. In his first novel *Buddenbrooks* (1901), Count Kai’s kissing the dying Hanno at the end is the testimony to homosexual. Several critics believe that in some of Mann’s later works, for example, *Die Betrogene* (*The Deceived* 1953) and *Bekenntnisse des Hochstaplers Felix Krull* (*Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man* 1954), he purposely disguised his homosexual feeling and gave them a heterosexual guise by having female characters experience what he himself had felt for younger men.

In the story *Tonio Kröger* (1903), Mann uses the homoerotic feelings that the title character has as a boy for his friend Hans Hansen to indicate that Tonio, from childhood on, is separated from normal, bourgeois life. Homoeroticism becomes a metaphor for difference, for *Auenseitertum* (being an outsider). He yearns to belong to those “blond and blue-eyed, the brightly living, the happy, those worthy of love, the ordinary people” (45). But in order to join them he would have to relinquish his identity as an artist. And crucial to that identity is the position outside their realm of everyday existence, the place from which the artist creates, a place that borders on the homoerotic.

Mann’s unresolved attitude toward homoeroticism (his fear of secret desire becoming public identity and thus destroying the stability of his life) expresses itself in his 1924 novel, *Der Zauberberg* (*The Magic Mountain*). The main character, Hans Castorp, comes to visit his cousin at Berghof, a sanatorium for tuberculosis patients.

In this novel, the simple young engineer becomes a patient at the sanatorium and a pupil of two men representing opposing views of the world as well as philosophical traditions, Settembrini and Naptha. Crucial to Castorp’s physical rejuvenation and spiritual renewal is Clavdia Chauchat, a Russian émigrée staying at Berghof. She uncannily resembles Pribislav Hippe, a boy whom Hans had loved when they were fourteen-year-old schoolmates.

Through his relationship, emotional and sexual, with Chauchat, Castorp resolves his homosexuality in his favor, as Karl Werner Böhm argues that Freud’s influence on Thomas Mann was significant and may certainly have played a role in Mann’s conception of how homosexual desire might be

integrated, rather than repressed or destroyed. Nonetheless, illness remains ineluctably attached to it.

In the novella, *Mario und der Zauberer* (*Mario and the Magician*), (1929) Italy again serves as the intersection of culture and the banal, of art devolved into eroticism. Cipolla, the “magician” of the title, performs in the resort city of Torre di Venere. He is a hypnotist who uses no swaying watches or mesmerizing devices, but instead simply forces his will on his subjects.

After various scenario with unwilling townsfolk doing his bidding, his fancy lights upon an attractive young waiter, Mario, whom he seems more to entice than to request to join him on stage. After referring to Mario as “Ganymede,” it quickly becomes apparent that Cipolla wants to play the role of Zeus.

During the first half of the story, the narrator describes a trip to Torre di Venere, Italy, which becomes unpleasant for himself and his family. He feels the Italian people are too nationalistic. The second half of the story introduces the character Cipolla, a hypnotist who uses his mental powers in a “fascist” way to control his audience. Cipolla may well represent the mesmerizing power of Mussolini, Stalin or Hitler – he is autocratic, misuses power, and subjugate the masses in an attempt to counterbalance his inferiority complex by artificially boosting his self-confidence.

The magician weaves his dark magic by speaking about Mario’s “troubles” with his girl friend, offering himself as the more understanding, more deserving love object. Obeying the supplication Cippola utters as a spell – “Trust me, I love you” – Mario kisses him (26).

That moment of artistic triumph – ” a momentous moment, grotesque and thrilling, the moment of Mario’s bliss” – marks Cipolla’s destruction, for he has crossed that line Mann described in *Death in Venice* as separating the realm of artistic inspiration from overt homoeroticism and, ultimately, death. Immediately when the spell is broken, Mario pulls a gun and kills Cipolla, avenging himself for the magician’s public humiliation of him.

Doktor Faustus (1947), Mann’s great parable about Germany’s descent into fascism, also contains an artist figure who is homosexual. The composer Adrian Leverkühn makes a pact with the devil in order to be able to create masterpieces of music for a few years. In exchange, he grants the devil his soul. Hence, homosexual desire is, in Mann’s conception, antithetical to those forces and institutions that maintain and advance society.

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The protagonist of the novel *Death in Venice* (1911) is a German writer Gustav Aschenbach who has kept his life under tight control. On a trip to Venice, he drops those reins and unleashes emotions that eventually overpower him. The immediate catalyst is a beautiful Polish boy. Aschenbach spies the boy who is accompanied by his sisters and governess at the hotel they share and is enraptured by the blond youth’s beauty, which reminds him of a masterpiece of Greek sculpture.

As Aschenbach feels an intense attachment with Tadzio, he succumbs to long repressed spiritual and physical desire and begins to lose his sense of self. There is one-sided affinity of Aschenbach toward the boy. In this way, the kind of attachment between Aschenbach and Tadzio is unique as Aschenbach is tormented unrequitedly with his homoerotic fantasies. He tries to fulfill fantasies just by watching and staying near by him. This highlights homosexual gaze in the character of Aschenbach.

Critical Perspective on *Death in Venice*

Mann's *Death in Venice* has elicited host of criticisms since its publication in 1912. Its richness is reflected in its criticisms from various perspectives. Edgar Rosenberg criticizes *Death in Venice* as recollection of the five-act divisions of classical tragedy. Very likely, the five-character divisions of the novella is meant to recall the five-act divisions of classical tragedy; the narrative owes much of its weight to one of the greatest specimens of the genre, The Bacchae, and the story teems with the sort of temper-figures whose function is unmistakably Mephistophelean . . . in the passage in which Aschenbach collects his ticket to Venice (his one way ticket), he and ticket vendor literary enact a devil's pact (*Death in Venice* 16). For that matter, the story conforms one of the rudimentary definitions of tragedy: man's fall from high estate. (1)

George Lukacs indicates that the action of the main character is deferred and the social, psychological and moral premises are vital in the novella *Death in Venice*. "Aschenbach's story already points to the problems of action in our time. Yet (and this is in full accord with the self-contained form of the novella) it indicates more than social, psychological and moral premises and a consequences than action itself (119).

Another critic Cynthia B. Bryson analyses the novella *Death in Venice* as the presentation of the dream state of Aschenbach. The action and behaviour he exposes has the powerful implications of his dream-state. Aschenbach is losing this creative edge, “that motus animi continuus”(3), and he can no longer sustain his concentration, conscientiousness, and tact. He needs to rest, and he needs to go to sleep to find Mann’s “theatre of the soul”, or the dream-state, in which there is a hyper acuity of the senses and “the onward sweep of the productive mechanism within him”(1). However, another critic J.P. Stern forwards the idea that the novella contains the fullest statement of the confusing state of the artist who is in bewilderment of the two faced path: moral and immoral.

From the hallmark of the artist’s achievement (we read there), is janus-faced, “moral and immoral at the same time: moral, in so far as it is the result and expression of rigorous discipline, immoral-yes, even hostile to morality – in that its very natural indifference to good and evil. But is even that true? Is “the result and expression of rigorous discipline in and by itself moral? Is passionate intensity enough, regardless of its objects?” (Stern 22).

Rita A. Bergenholtz comments on *Death in Venice* as a parody of tragedy and along with it, there is satire on romanticism. Creative, imaginative life and fantasies, however, are the factors to lead the main character to death.

Numerous critics have suggested that tragedy is no longer possible in the 20th century because, in general, we no longer believe in ideas of the heroic and noble when we can no longer tell straightforward tragic tales, we must turn, as Thomas Mann does in *Death in Venice*, to parody.

The study has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outline of the work, a homosexual vision of Thomas Mann and a

short critical response. Moreover, it gives a bird's eye view of the entire work. The second chapter tries to briefly explain the theoretical modality that is applied in this research work. It discusses homosexuality from historical and theoretical point of view.

On the basis of the theoretical framework established in the second chapter, the third chapter analyzes the text at a considerable length. It analyzes how Aschenbach tries to fulfill his homosexual fantasies just by watching and staying near by him. This highlights homosexual gaze in the character of Aschenbach. It sorts out some extracts from the text as evidence to prove the hypothesis of the work. And, the fourth chapter is the conclusion of this research work.

II: Homosexuality: A Historical and Theoretical Study

Sexuality, which is central to human beings, began to be regarded as a concept part of human nature since the nineteenth century. So, it began to be used as a means to define normality and its boundaries, and to conceive everything outside those boundaries in the realm of psychopathology. In the twentieth century with the theories of Sigmund Freud and of Sexology, Jeffrey Weeks saw that the “not-normal” was seen more as a “discontent of civilization” (176). In a well-known passage of his work, the history of Sexuality, Michael Foucault noted that the development of the notion of sexuality organized sex as a “fiction unity” of disparate parts, functions, behaviors, and feelings with no natural or necessary relation among them therefore “the conception of what is ‘natural’ is a social construct” (12). Hence, in addition to its biological aspect, human sexuality can also be understood as part of the social life of humans, governed by implied rules of behaviors and status quo.

The psychological study of sexuality focuses on psychological influences that affect sexual behavior and experiences. Early psychological analysis was carried out by Freud, who believed in a psychoanalytic point of view. He also conjectured the concepts of erogenous zones, psychosexual development and the Oedipus complex, among others. Homosexuality, which Freud believes resulted from human beings failure to master the Oedipus complex, is the peculiar characteristics of human sexuality. However, he views that it is not vice or there is nothing shameful in it.

Homosexuality

Generally, the definition of homosexuality is a sexual attraction to members of one's own sex, though people who engage in exclusively same-sex sexual practices may not identify themselves as gay or lesbian. Melvin Konner defines homosexuality as "the tendency to be sexually and romantically attracted to members of one's own sex" (333). Today the colloquial term "gay" for men or "lesbian" for women are considered respectful ways of referring to homosexual people.

So, homosexuality is sexual desire or behavior directed toward a person or persons of one's own sex. Homosexuality has a number of causal factors that influence its ultimate origination in individuals. In addition, homosexuality has a variety of effects on individuals and society at large. In regards to homosexuality research, much of the research that has been in regards to the causes of homosexuality and the effects of homosexuality has been done since the latter part of the 20th century. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines homosexuality in terms of "an attraction, preference, orientation, or identity." The term "orientation" is particularly favored by those who are promoting public acceptance of homosexuality (334).

A common argument is that an inclination to homosexuality is inborn and immutable. It is widely believed that the public will become more accepting of homosexuality if they are convinced that it is inborn and immutable. For example, neuroscientist and homosexual Simon Levay stated that "people who think that gays and lesbians are born that way are also more likely to support gay rights" (43).

Human nature is a complex phenomenon because people can be homosexuals for many different reasons, involving a variety of combinations of constitutional factors, life experiences, or both. Although the exclusive homosexuality is a culturally important sub-category, Wayne Dynes viewed “sexual orientation should be thought of as a continuum ranging from exclusive homosexuality to exclusive heterosexuality (orientation to the opposite sex), with all gradations in between” (217). Erotic orientation to members of one’s own sex does not, in western culture, necessarily implies any other alteration in what is thought of as masculine or feminine behavior, such as dressing, speaking, or gesturing like a member of the opposite sex, nor is it restricted to any one personality type.

Homosexuals can be found in cultures throughout the world, whether advanced or primitive, large or small, ancient or modern. Societies vary widely in their tolerance of homosexuality, ranging from strict prohibition through casual acceptance to active encouragement. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, among the most tolerant was the culture of ancient Greece. Among the least tolerant is the Judeo-Christian tradition that has dominated western civilization for centuries.

In the world’s history, it is generally known to all that although most creative people are heterosexual (since most people are so), some of the greatest contributors to Western civilization have been overtly homosexual. If we go through the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, we find some of the remarkable examples include “Socrates, the founder of the western philosophic tradition; Sappho, the Greek poet; Michelangelo, the Italian renaissance painter and sculptor; and in modern times, the persecuted Alan Turing, one of the founders of computer

science, whose code-breaking activities helped the Allies defeat Nazi Germany in World War II” (334).

However, in the eyes of law and religion, homosexuality has been strictly prohibited. In Mosaic Law, it is considered to be an abomination punishable by death, and Christian tradition has carried forward this condemnatory attitude. Under Nazi rule, homosexuals could be sent inhumanly to concentration camps and gas chambers. Less severe punishment has been common throughout the Western worlds, the Islamic world, and elsewhere, and bigotry remains common today.

Homosexuality in History

Although no one knows exactly how homosexuality entered into human history, it is imagined that the practices associated with the erotic attraction of people to one's own gender have been around since the dawn of humanity. The earliest accounts of homosexual behavior seem to be found in ancient pagan religious practices. At least, the pagans included homosexuality in the worship of various gods. The practice was already a part of the society-at-large.

Human beings began to worship many gods very early in human history. These early gods were most often associated with fertility, agriculture, and war. One of the early gods of the Assyrians was the goddess Asherah. She was worshipped as the goddess of fertility. Often worship of this goddess included orgies and sexual practices. She was often worshipped in the form of a tree with many female breasts carved into the trunk. These trees were central in a grove where worship was conducted. One would invoke or appease the goddess in order to gain fertility for one's self, the tribe, or the clan.

When polytheism, the worship of many gods, was dominant on the earth, gods could be both male and female. These gods were not considered to be infallible or all-powerful like the Christian concept of God. Often they were very much like people with desires and the ability to make mistakes. Gods were believed to have sex with one another and procreate. Those who practised these religions often felt that the nature of these gods had to be appeased in order for the tribe to survive. Having sex with a god as a part of worship, or to seek help for fertile crops, animals, or selves, was a logical extension of the concept of polytheism. Since sex was required for fertility in humans, they believed having sex with a god was all the more crucial and beneficial.

In Greek mythology, Adonis' worship is connected with poles, similar to Totem poles of the early Native Americans, which served as phallic symbols, or replicas of the penis. Wayne Dynes writes:

This cult grew to be extremely sexual in its practices. Spring orgies were associated with the planting season and a bountiful harvest. In at least one culture, Adonis's worship included homosexual activities. He is referred to in the erotic literature of the homosexual community today. (194)

His supposedly perfect body and beauty is now sometimes promoted as an ideal that may often take on god-like dimensions.

The Greek god Dionysus was worshipped and followed by men known as Satyrs, who are always depicted with an erect penis. A Hindu god, Shiva, is worshipped with a long *linga*, or phallic pole. An early Babylonian god called Baal, the sun god whose worship often included a pole, or phallic symbol, in worship.

In ancient Babylon towers and Ziggurats served many practical and religious purposes. Interestingly, phallic towers remain still to the day. There is a phallic tower in Vatican Square at Rome. Although the perceived significance may have changed over the years, these symbols of male-worship still exist.

Towers and poles have been included in many forms of ancient religious practice. They are often associated with the penis in order to deify male-ness. Towers, similar to the Babylonian temples have been found in ancient Egypt. The pyramids certainly have religious significance. The Mayan culture in North America is unknown for the most part, but their culture included these towers. The pantheist belief is that everything is god, and animist, holding all of nature sacred, like the cultures of the early Native Americans, developed totem poles, which are more obviously phallic, as a part of their worship of nature as god. Masturbation, leading to excretion of the semen and sperm onto the ground, has often played a part in early polytheistic and pantheistic worship.

Most likely, additional homosexual practices became a part of polytheistic worship as a successor to masturbation. Evidence suggests pagan priests orally stimulated the sexual organs of the worshippers in order to facilitate masturbation in ancient mid-eastern cults. Dynes mentions:

If one believed that having sex with a god would bring fertility, it was easy to also believe that, if a man added his male-ness, through his semen, to a male god, fertility would be multiplied all the more. Male gods could plant seeds and were therefore seen as more productive than the female gods to some. When a man ejaculated his semen into another man's anus at the shrine, he was

depositing more male power to the gods. With the additional strength of the semen of many men, the god could then insure a bountiful crop, a larger herd, and many children to care for the field. (197)

This highlights the power and importance of homosexual activities from the mythical perspectives.

Greek culture is often promoted as the most accepting of homosexuality. To some extent, this may be true. The Greeks developed a hedonistic attitude toward the human body and sexuality. Although we may think of hedonism as lustful today, Greek philosophers wrote of hedonism in much more glowing terms. They believed that the naked human body, both male and female, was worthy of respect and admiration. They took great pride in the physical form. Public nudity was both tolerated and often encouraged.

The art and statuary of the ancient Greeks reflects this love for the body, particularly the male body. A major negative of this attitude is that those who were handicapped or unattractive children were often left to die, killed, or used in sacrifice to a god. It was not unusual for men to comment on the attractiveness of other men, or for them to express affection for one another. At least part of the reason for this fascination with physical attractiveness and sex is that the Greeks had developed into a culture that had a great deal of leisure time. They were not required to work constantly in order to survive. Blumenfeld and Raymond write:

Similarly, the Greek attitude toward sex was, for the most part, value-neutral. And, though exclusive homosexuality was probably discouraged as a threat to the family, it was widely tolerated both

for older men who had children and for younger men prior to marriage. (155)

The Greek military attitude toward homosexuality was that it brought a sense of comradeship. It was often believed that a person would fight harder to protect his unit if that unit included a lover or lovers. This unique form of male bonding is attributed by some to the greatness of the Greek military might. In spite of this encouragement of homosexual practices, the picture is different for those who were exclusively passive at anal sex. They were believed to be polluted, and to have become like women. Therefore, they were expelled from military service as untrustworthy.

The issue of being exclusively homosexual was extremely difficult. Although the Greeks recognized passion and erotic attraction to both and either sex, they were not tolerant of those who were not also attracted to women. This could very well be due to the recognition that society must be able to reproduce in order to survive. The union of a man and a woman is required to reproduce. Blumenfeld and Raymond write:

After the age of nineteen or so, the young man was expected to marry and establish a family. Those who did not, or who continued to engage in homosexual relations exclusively, were subject to ridicule, or worse. In addition, exclusive sexual passivity in men was met with criticism and, at times, treated severely. . . . rape of a free boy/young man (no such sanctions existed for conduct with slaves) was harshly punished, and male prostitution (again, by citizens) was condemned severely. (157-158)

Greek society only negatively defined homosexual activity when it was exclusive or related to prostitution by a citizen. In nearly every other instance, homosexual conduct was considered acceptable and practical. It was simply a way of enjoying the beauty and awesomeness of the male bodies that they revered so highly.

The attitude toward the family and education could have also played a role in the attitude toward homosexuality. The family was considered to be the basis for reproduction. Women were restricted in their sexual activity because they were needed in order to bear children. Men could have sex with either women or men, so long as they met their societal obligation to reproduce. This is probably why exclusive anal sex was prohibited. Catamites could not bear children for their partners.

Another great civilization was that of the Romans. This empire was influenced heavily by the Greeks. Roman gods are virtually the same as Greek gods except that their names are Latin. It is said that fourteen of the first fifteen emperors were homosexual. During the republic period, Cicero declared without challenge that “there is nothing illegal about a man taking another to the country in order to enjoy his erotic sensual pleasures” (132). This shows that one could enjoy homosexual activities without being subject to penalty. Although one could easily have sex with his wife at home, a man in the baths, a prostitute in the brothel, and a slave in a dark corner, he would have only been criticized if he were not able to keep everything in its place.

The moral issue toward sexuality in general, and homosexuality in particular, revolved around the idea of control for the Romans. One could enjoy any kind of sex, so long as he did not allow himself to be controlled by his

partner. If the wife made demands in response for sex, it would have been disgraceful for a Roman male to give in to her desires. Similarly, if a man was having sex with another man, he could not give that man privileges in return.

In the sixth century A.D., the Roman Empire outlawed homosexuality. This was partly due to the influence of other cultures upon the Capital City, but mostly due to the spread and influence of Christianity. Christianity became the popular religion of the day, and at the same time frequently compromised biblical principles for the purpose of expediency. Those religions that encouraged both female and male prostitution were also banned from the empire.

Although Christian influence brought about this change in legal behavior, not all of the early church adhered to the same kinds of attitudes. According to Boswell,

Despite his violent rhetoric against homosexual practices, Saint John Chrysostom himself obviously considered homosexual attraction perfectly normal and constantly juxtaposed homosexual and heterosexual desires as two faces of the same coin. In complaining about sinful motivations for entering the temple of the Lord, he mentions in terms of equal likelihood a man's desire to see the beauty of women or of young men who frequent the sanctuaries. (160)

Motives for condemning homosexuality were also generally mixed with condemnations of any kind of eroticism in general. According to this sexual theology the only valid reason for sex was in order to procreate. Sensuality and sexual desire of any kind was viewed as an evil "desire of the flesh."

The duality of humanity, the doctrine that human beings consist of two parts; physical and spiritual, has led many theologians to argue against any kind of sexuality at all, and laid the foundation for a supposed celibate priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church. The biblical view of humanity's duality does not condemn the body as evil, but as something that can be used for either evil or good. In spite of this the latter idea seemed to prevail.

Western Europe gradually changed its attitude toward homosexuality. The Catholic Church gained influence and officially stood opposed to homosexuality. However, this was certainly not what was always practiced. Charlemagne, who considered himself personally responsible for the creation of a Christian Europe, appears to have been quite shocked upon hearing that some of the monks in his kingdom were 'sodomites.' He besought the monks "to strive to preserve themselves from such evils . . . but no civil legislation against homosexuality was enacted" (Dynes 177).

The break up of the Roman Empire is attributed with a time of changing attitudes toward homosexuality once again. Although some people attribute homosexuality with at least a part of the reason for the collapse of the Empire, there is little, if any, evidence to support this view. However, it could be possible that one of the reasons for the increasing decline of Latin influence and rise of Germans and other Europeans is due to the fact that the Latins did not continue to have children at a growing rate. It could be that the restrictions on being exclusively homosexual found in Greece would have helped preserve Latin influence.

The rise of anti-homosexual attitudes toward the end of the empire and the rise of the middle ages seems to have changed when the various states of the

empire emerged. While Roman Christianity officially held that homosexual practices were sinful, little was done to enforce this code, even among the priests and monks. Some evidence suggests that monks were often placed in logistical positions where homosexual contact would have been difficult if not impossible to control.

Tolerance of homosexuality seemed to rise until about the thirteenth century. There was a time when monarch and commoner could be openly homosexual. One particular relationship brought the king of England and the king of France into the same bed, professing their love for one another. During this time there was an active homosexual subculture with influence in many areas of life including the arts and the church.

The period of conformity began with a desire to bring many subcultures together. The Inquisition followed, with many people condemned to death because of suspected or actual acts of sodomy and homosexuality. By this time, sodomy had come to be identified as nearly any kind of deviant, other than the norm, sexual behavior.

The rise of intellectualism and the Protestant Reformation did little to change attitudes toward homosexuality. The Spanish Visigoths punished homosexuals by castration. The Reformation brought stronger condemnations of those who commit homosexual acts. France punished homosexual behavior with loss of the testicles for the first offense, loss of the penis for the second offense, and death by burning at the stake for a third offense. Henry VIII outlawed homosexuality in England in 1533 with penalties including confiscation of property and death sentence. Police were mobilized to monitor Molly Houses or

brothels for male prostitutes, and those found guilty were put to death. This practice continued until the early 1700s.

The earliest record of someone receiving the death penalty for homosexual acts in what would become a part of the United States was in St. Augustine, Florida in 1566 when a man was executed by the military. The United States maintained the death penalty for convicted “sodomites” until about 1779 when Thomas Jefferson proposed that Virginia drop the death penalty for the crime and replaces it with castration. Some states have revised the punishment for sodomy over the years, and some states and localities have passed laws protecting those who commit homosexual acts.

The Revolution in France brought an end to criminal laws regarding sexual activities in 1810 under the Napoleonic Code. England abolished the death penalty for acts of homosexuality in 1861. Homosexual history is one of abuse, prejudice, pain, and death.

Theories of Homosexuality

The question of why a given human being may become homosexual, heterosexual or some combination of the two has always fascinated thoughtful people over the past few decades. Although some psychologists and psychiatrist believed they had answers to this question thirty years ago, recent discoveries have shown that most such answers were highly questionable. The reason is that scientific understanding of the solution to this puzzle is in its infant stage.

The traditional view of human behavior held by Richard Von Krafft-Ebing and other nineteenth century authorities is that we are preprogrammed by our genetic make up. He believed that “homosexuality always involved a strong constitution (biological) predisposition” (334). This view sees life as a kind of

unfolding drama, where each period of a person's life is predetermined, but it unfolds over time and with interaction from culture. This view would see one's behavior later in life as present in one's genetic material from conception.

However, according to Blumenfeld and Raymond, it is very difficult to prove a genetic cause of sexual orientation. They do not totally negate heredity; they only see insufficiency in determining human sexuality through it. They write:

Since the only acceptable evidence for a genetic basis to homosexuality would have to come from studies of relatives, to argue for transmission within families it makes sense to study family members (especially twins); but families share not only genes but also a wide range of environmental factors: parental attitudes, relations, friends, school environments, and so forth. To demonstrate the connection one would have to separate the genetic components of behavior from the non-genetic, and this is almost impossible to do. (123)

So, this proves that it is not possible to determine the cause of homosexual behavior on the basis of limited study. Another view maintains that humanity is born with a clean slate. There are no pre-programmed requirements to be fulfilled. Instead, human beings behave the way they do because they learn to behave in a certain way. One's environment influences, trains, and teaches a person to behave the way they do. The biblical emphasis on training a child and passing down traditions and truths from one generation to the next appears to support this view of human development. According to Professor Benjamin Lahey:

Language plays a good example of the interplay between nature and nurture in our lives. There can be no question that experience is important in language development. Children will only learn to use language if they are exposed to language, and will learn to speak whatever language to which they are exposed. But neither goldfish nor marmosets will learn to speak a human language when given the same amount of experience required by a human child to learn language. One must have a human brain to learn human language. (289)

In regard to the debate nature vs. nurture both work together to make us who we are. However, the debate continues regarding many aspects of human behavior, including homosexuality. Those who raise the issue of whether a person can be born homosexual, with a predisposition toward either side of the argument, usually do so for biased reasons. Sometimes researchers are willing to admit their lack of complete objectivity. Others, particularly some who are entrenched in religion, refuse to admit that they are biased against such research, regardless of the outcome.

Homosexuality as a Trait from Birth

Many people have come to believe that there must be a genetic explanation for homosexual behavior. Several studies have been done concerning groups of twins, the best being those with identical twins who were raised in different environments by different parents, to determine whether there is a gene that causes one to be homosexual. One study found that identical twins were found to practice homosexual acts. This would appear to indicate that there could be a genetic cause for homosexuality. One conclusion indicated that since

a person with the closest possible genetic make-up to a homosexual man is more likely to be homosexual than heterosexual, the cause must be found in the genes.

Another interesting recent study is of Simon Levay, a neuroscientist with the Salk Institute of La Jolla, California. He studied 41 male cadavers, with 19 of them believed to have been homosexual. He found the hypothalamus area of the brain to be smaller in the cadavers believed to be homosexual than in the ones believed to have been heterosexual. The conclusion being that it is possible those different formations of the brain, more specifically a smaller hypothalamus that is believed to govern sexuality, cause a person to be homosexual.

For the most part, these studies are not conclusive. The issue of brain size is extremely difficult. It would be nearly impossible to know the sexual activity of a person after they are dead. Therefore, Levay's study of cadavers has some problems.

Studies of twins have been completed numerous times and have often shown that identical twins share many traits in common, even when raised in different environments. This indicates that genetics certainly play a role in whether one tends to be homosexual or heterosexual. Limitations arise from the genetic arguments put forth by twin studies. Not enough has been done to control for the environment in which the twins were raised. This fact would certainly have an impact on whether one was born to practice homosexuality. Since the possibility of environment playing a role exists, the studies must be able to either dismiss or support environment as an issue. However, this is a difficult feat to accomplish.

It is very difficult to prove a genetic cause of sexual orientation. This is not to suggest that heredity has nothing to do with sexual orientation only that it

seems not to be sufficient to account for it. In fact, there may be a basic theoretical difficulty in all genetic research. Since the only acceptable evidence for a genetic basis to homosexuality would have to come from studies of relatives, to argue for transmission within families it makes sense to study family members (especially twins); but families share not only genes but also a wide range of environmental factors: parental attitudes, religion, friends, school environments, and so forth. So, Blumenfeld and Raymond hold that “to demonstrate the connection one would have to separate the genetic components of behavior from the non-genetic, and this is almost impossible to do” (123).

It is unlikely that a specific gene alone causes homosexuality. Some would claim that it is impossible because homosexual men cannot reproduce among themselves. However, it is not uncommon that many homosexual men father children for various reasons. Some have sex with women in order to attempt to overcome their homosexuality and therefore produce offspring. Others simply want to be fathers and bear children because of the innate desire to reproduce. Homosexual men who do not bear children are sometimes disappointed that they have no biological offspring. Nothing would prohibit a homosexual couple from being excellent parents whether the child is biological or adoptive.

Hormonal Imbalances

Another issue relative to a physiological cause for homosexual behavior is hormones. The endocrine glands, the Pituitary, Thyroid, Adrenal, Pancreas, and Ovaries for the female and Testes for the male, excrete hormones that are carried throughout the body in blood and other fluids. These hormones control and stimulate the various functions of the body. Some have speculated that a

difference in hormones could be the cause for one's erotic attraction to the same gender.

Although estrogen is usually associated with the female, and testosterone with the male, both hormones are present in the human body regardless of sex. One key difference is that testosterone is produced in a woman's adrenal gland, where a man's testes produce nearly ten times the amount of testosterone as his adrenal gland. These hormones increase during adolescence and cause the body to begin to develop mature sexual organs and characteristics. They also exert some measure of control over one's sexual desire and pleasure. Some have used hormonal therapy as a way of dealing with sexual dysfunction.

In order for the endocrine system to have an affect on homosexuality, it would be logical that homosexually active men would either have less testosterone, or more estrogen, than heterosexually active men. Although studies have been conducted with varying results, there is little evidence to completely support this hypothesis. One difficulty is that hormone levels were often measured from urine, which is an unclear means of studying hormone levels. More recent studies, using blood-testing techniques, can more accurately measure hormones. However, the work still comes up inconclusive with apparent opposite conclusions by different researchers.

Naturally, any evidence needs to be carefully examined according to the results and the reliability of the test base. For instance, a test base of those who smoke marijuana would show a decline in testosterone since marijuana use reduces testosterone levels. One group of fairly conclusive studies found an unexpected result as Blumenfeld and Raymond write:

Several studies (including Glass and Johnston) grounded on the hypothesis that gay males suffered from a deficiency in testosterone, injected study groups of men with large amounts of that and other masculinizing hormones. The result in all cases was not, as expected, a change in sexual orientation or any effect in the quality of sexual response, but an increase in sexual drive. Similarly, estrogen was found to decrease male libido, but not sexual orientation. (129)

Although further research is certainly warranted, there is no evidence to claim that hormones cause homosexual desire or behavior. Instead, these hormones, in the adult, appear to simply impact the intensity of sexuality rather than orientation. There is some evidence, and some researchers have suggested, that a hormonal imbalance during development in the fetes, or puberty, may have some impact. However, this research has not been able to be repeated and is therefore quite questionable. All in all, there is little evidence to show a hormonal causal relationship with homosexuality.

Homosexuality as Learned Behavior

Studies and psychological theories abound regarding the possible environmental causes to homosexuality. Sigmund Freud believed that homosexual men might be fixated with their mothers. He felt that the choice of having sex with other men gave these men the ability to have sexual relations, yet remain true to their mothers, whom Freud believed to be the first love object of a boy. He further thought that homosexuality could be caused by an extreme fixation on the penis. In this scenario, those without a penis are viewed as

without sex. Therefore, the homosexual man cannot imagine having sex with someone without a penis.

It must be understood that not everyone and certainly not all modern psychoanalysts hold to Freud's view of the sex drive being primary. Others have developed their own theories regarding the development of sexual preference according to environmental causes. After Freud, many of his followers developed theories related to family life, initial sexual experiences, exposure to the same sex predominantly, and further studies of a fixation on the penis as causes for homosexuality. Blumenfeld and Raymond write:

Irving Bieber, for example, terms homosexuality a, 'hidden but incapacitating fear of the opposite sex,' a way to get love and acceptance from men that homosexuals could not get from their fathers. He based this conclusion on the results of a questionnaire he distributed to homosexuals and heterosexuals undergoing psychoanalysis. (137)

Sigmund Freud determined that homosexual conduct was certainly not "normal" in the sense that the vast majority of society did not practice homosexuality. He attempted to make this determination based on language and arguments that were amoral. He developed a more subtle perspective. In a letter written in 1935 to the mother of a homosexual man, Freud declared that homosexuality "is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as illness." But he also attributed it to "a certain arrest of sexual development." Yet he went on to say that in most cases no therapy or analysis could change homosexual into a heterosexual. He wrote:

What analysis can do for your son runs in a different line? If he is unhappy, neurotic, torn by conflicts, inhibited in his social life, analysis may bring him harmony, peace of mind, full efficiency whether he remains a homosexual or gets changed. (qtd. in Konner 333)

However, the realm of behavioral sciences held that homosexuality was a mental disorder. This view remained intact until 1973 when the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychological Association removed homosexuality in itself as a disorder. The two criteria established by the groups for determining whether a condition is a disorder were, if the condition causes severe subjective distress, or, an inability to function in the society as a whole. The causes of distress for those who practice homosexual acts were determined from this point to be because of the expectations of family and society, not the homosexual acts themselves.

Various other studies have mixed conclusions and certainly the data can be challenged regardless of the position taken. Excessive masturbation, an accidental homosexual encounter as a child, a missing or uncaring father, an unhappy or unfulfilling first heterosexual experience, dominant mothers, and poor role models all have been presented at one time or another as causes of homosexuality.

Gerard van den Aardweg a Dutch psychologist concludes that homosexuality is a form of neurosis that stems from inferiority and complaining child complex. His theory is that, in at least this pertinent area of life, a complaining child lives within the adult to the extent that a homophile neurosis develops.

Thus we have three notions that for the most part overlap: inferiority complex, child-in-the-adult, and self-pity habit (also called “complaining sickness”). These are adequate descriptions of what is going on the mind of neurotic people in general, that is, people with a variety of psychic hang ups, obsessive emotions, inadequate feelings of insecurity, and inner conflicts. Kinds of inferiority complexes and variants of the “inner complaining child” are legion. The homosexual inferiority complex is one of them. Hence, apart from the specific symptom of homosexual desire, homophilia is not an isolated phenomenon, but one of an endless series of neurotic problems. (Aardweg 51-52)

Dr. van den Aardweg goes so far as to report successful therapies to deal with what he calls “homophile neurosis” and outline the steps of therapy required to address the issue. Included in his therapy program is the issue of religious conversion, although his is not a distinctly Christian practice.

Guilt and Fault

One of the greatest reasons for the debate over whether homosexuals are born or made regards the issue of guilt. Some would insist that homosexuals are born homosexual in order to promote the lifestyle as normal and acceptable. In other words, guilt is removed because the practice can be reduced to the same kind of issue as the color of one’s hair or whether one is left-handed or right-handed. However, it has never been conclusively shown that homosexual behavior is a trait certain people are born with.

Others would like to insist that people who practice homosexual sex do so out of a sense of rebellion and desire to be different. They might conclude that, yes, homosexuals choose to be sinful and are therefore worthy of the utmost

punishment due to their sins. If it can be shown that homosexual behavior is a simple choice, then the heterosexual majority believes it can easily condemn the homosexual minority.

However, it can also not be concluded that homosexual tendencies are completely at the choice of the individual. As a matter of fact, studies indicate that those who practice homosexuality believe that they have no choice but to do so. Most even profess to have tried to be heterosexual, but simply could not enjoy sex with women to the same extent that they were fulfilled in their relations with men.

The issue of fault and guilt is extremely difficult, except when we remember that guilt is a human phenomenon not a homosexual phenomenon. Whether someone is born with homosexual traits or they learn them is irrelevant. From the biblical perspective everyone is born with the guilt of sin. The entire human race is guilty. Homosexuals are certainly guilty of sin as a part of the overall sinfulness of mankind, if for no other reason.

One's tendencies to enjoy or lean toward certain acts are influenced by our genes. The possibility of sexual attraction to the same sex is inherited from the generations of people that preceded us. However, one must consider whether being predisposed to a particular act justifies the behavior.

The best answer is that probably both nature and nurture are true. The reasons for sexual conduct are often as varied as the people who are participating in the conduct. Alan Bell writes:

Homosexuality involves a large number of experiences – developmental, sexual, social, and psychological – and that even after a person has been labeled 'homosexual' on the basis of his or

her preferred sexual object of choice, there is little that can be predicted about the person on the basis of that label. One's experience of homosexuality differs according to one's age, social status, sex, race, and geographical residence. (142)

Some may have simple desires; others may have more complex reasons for sexuality than can be determined by social scientists. God has designed humanity with the capacity for great variety and uniqueness. It is in this very diversity that God's nature and creativity are displayed. No group, regardless of their sexual attractions is any more or less a part of that diversity.

Homosexual Gaze

In general, "gaze" refers to long and fixed 'look' at somebody and something. The "gaze," is a technical term which was originally used in film theory in the 1970s but which is now more broadly used by media theorists to refer both to the ways in which viewers look at images of people in any visual medium. Though the term 'the male gaze' has become something of a feminist cliché for referring to the voyeuristic way in which men look at women, it can also be associated with a male's "gaze" at another male to satisfy his same-sex desires in psychoanalytical analysis.

Many literary critics and theorists have approached the idea of the "gaze" from different perspectives. One of the critics, Robert Samuels seeks to "correct," with the intentions of solidifying feminist criticism, prior definitions as to what, for Lacan, the gaze actually is and what such a notion implies. As Samuels himself admonishes, the "gaze is therefore the object that is eluded by all forms of representation and vision; it is the lack or the limit that is inscribed into the phenomenology of consciousness" (111). Once Mulvey's definition of

the Lacanian gaze is clarified and “corrected,” Samuels endeavors to point out how it becomes inverted and directly linked, as in Thomas Mann’s *Death in Venice*, to voyeurism. Further, the Lacanian relationship between gaze and voyeurism plays for Samuels a direct role in the relationships. While Samuels’ primary analysis is consistent and quite valid, there seems to remain sizeable gaps in how his application of the gaze as it helps to inform and delineate the frustrated relationships both formed and unformed within the novella.

In *Death in Venice* the gaze becomes a catalyst for the unweaving of both the narrative and the protagonist’s thoughts represent. Lacan depicts the relationship between voyeur and gaze-object as one that is defined and allocated by the gaze-object’s ability to “fragment the illusion of the totalized body-image” (Samuels 112). Thus, the voyeur seeks, either intentionally or inadvertently, to find a fragmented or dismembered object image – usually an image that the voyeur (subject) desires to identify with (what Samuels describes as “inverted narcissism”). Moreover, the voyeuristic process is one prescribed by the incoherency or lack that characterizes the gaze-object. According to Lacan then, it is this lack or absence that the voyeur finds intriguing: “What he is trying to see is make no mistake, is the object as absence. What the voyeur is looking for and finds is merely a shadow behind the curtain . . . what he is looking for is not, as one says the phallus, but is obsession with the gaze as omnipresent in such writings” (123).

In this way, “gaze” is associated with various symbolic meaning because of its fixed nature. It reflects the gazer’s motive behind observing particular person or object. In the novel, gaze is associated with homosexual activity.

III: Homosexual Gaze in Mann's *Death in Venice*

Thomas Mann's famous novella *Death in Venice* is a direct parallel to his life. The novella's main character, Gustav von Aschenbach, is the mouthpiece of Mann. The story is based on Mann's real vacation experiences of 1911 in Venice, where he came across a young male waiter who worked in the hotel. The only difference between Mann and his protagonist Aschenbach is that Mann was traveling with his wife and brother, while Aschenbach is a solitary widower. Mann was 36, still a rising young writer, while Aschenbach is past the apogee of an illustrious career. Aschenbach who lives in Munich in the early 1900s, journeys south on a ship to Venice where at his hotel he notices a fourteen-year old Polish boy named Tadzio, who is vacationing with his family. Despite his successful writing career, Aschenbach feels that his life is empty and meaningless. He becomes so much obsessed with the boy that he follows his family on their excursions in the city and spies on the boy from afar. While in his stay in Venice, he develops erotic obsession with Tadzio though he has no direct contact with him.

Aschenbach's journey from repressed northern Europe, Munich into the fecund South, Venice carries much significance as it helps substantiate his homoerotic feelings. This voyage is from consciousness into the Freudian depths, from Apollonian discipline to Dionysian hedonism, and ultimately from heterosexual "normalcy" into homosexual "deviance."

In the novella, whole of Aschenbach's homosexual desire for the boy is reflected through his secret "gaze" at him, and through his passionate and erotic thoughts on him. Aschenbach's homoerotic desire is fulfilled by long looks, furtive glances and signifying "gazes." While he gazes at the boy, he immerses

himself on the deep thought over the physical features of the boy. At the first sight, Aschenbach notes with astonishment that the boy is perfectly beautiful. He describes Tadzio as a piece of classical statuary, a mythical or godlike figure:

His [Tadzio] face, pale and gracefully reserved, was framed by honey-colored curls. He had a straight nose and a lovely youth and wore an expression of exquisite, divine solemnity. It was a face reminiscent of Greek statues from the noblest period of antiquity; it combined perfection of form with a unique personal charm that caused the onlooker to doubt ever having met with anything in nature or in art that could match its perfection. (1530)

There he becomes obsessed with Tadzio, a fourteen year old boy. Aschenbach follows him everywhere and thinks of little else. He justifies his lust for Tadzio by elevating him to an object of perfect beauty. As he lingers over breakfast just long enough to create confusion around his departure, his fine powers of self-analysis are truly asleep. When the courted accident happens, he seizes it with gladness wholly at odds with a lifetime's devotion to reason and will. Only later does he consciously realize what has kept him, he senses it as an endorsement, rather, of transactions already in the past:

He sat quite still, unseen at his high post, and looked within himself. His features were lively, he lifted his brows: a smile alert, inquiring, vivid, widened his mouth. Then he raised his head, and with both hands, hanging limp over the chair-arms, he described a slow motion, palms outward, a lifting and turning movement, as though to indicate a wide embrace. It was a gesture of welcome, a calm and deliberate acceptance of what might come. (1540)

This experience closes around Aschenbach in stages. First, in the spirit of Plato's *Phaedrus*, he makes an artistic response to the boy, "Good, oh, very good indeed", thought Aschenbach, assuming the patronizing air of a connoisseur to hide, as artists will, their ravishment over a masterpiece (1532). There is at once concealment, and almost immediately another yearning, opposed to his art and perhaps for that very reason a lure, for the unorganized, the immeasurable, the eternal – in short, for nothingness. Aschenbach's preoccupation is with excellence so he longs fervently to find rest in perfection. When a little later he remembers the son he has never had, he responds to the boy as a father. The mystery of the boy's name possesses him, and when he confers 'Tadzio' making the best guess he can from the evidence, he tacitly appoints himself guardian to the boy:

Indeed, it was almost as though he sat there to guard the youth's repose; occupied, of course, with his own affairs, yet alive to the presence of that noble human creature at hand. And his heart was stirred, it felt a father's kindness: such an emotion as the possessor of beauty can inspire in one who has offered himself up in spirit to create beauty. (1534)

But this guardianship is not that of fatherly love, rather it is the physical attraction that drives Aschenbach to act as a surrogate father. Perhaps the boy is not the perfect object of beauty as he describes him to be but it his homosexual desire which leads him to praise his beauty.

By the time of attempted flight, Aschenbach has reached the knowledge that he worships Tadzio, and he speaks a silent and fervent benediction over the boy. He begins to idealize Tadzio who takes on all the archetypal qualities and

features of a myth for Aschenbach. And, in projecting and idealizing his repressed homoerotic love, he sees Tadzio as the vehicle for all his elevated theories of art and the spiritual function of the artist. He makes Tadzio's "physical frame as a model" to write on the erotic as intrinsic to the creative impulse. Tadzio's figure comes to represent for Aschenbach, the discipline, precision and strong will characteristic of the artist even when Aschenbach himself abandons all attempts at creative writing while in Venice, and his own discipline, will and precision crumble in the face of his increasing homoerotic passion, attraction and fantasies surrounding the boy (1544). Slowly he begins to separate Tadzio, the essence of beauty; the "form as divine thought, the single and pure perfection which resides in the single and pure perfection which resides in the mind" (44), from what another whispering part of him knows is the frenzy of erotic drive at the source of creation.

Aschenbach increasingly calls up classical and literary models to contain, convey, dissociate and disguise his intense homoerotic desires. In his interior, intellectual monologues he reconstructs passages from Plato's dialogues, the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*, as ideals and objectifying sublimation for his own concretely sexual passions and impulses, using, for example, Socrates's intellectual seduction of Phaedrus with a lofty discourse on beauty, the lover's way to the spirit as the rationale of his passion for Tadzio:

For beauty, my Phaedrus, beauty alone, is lovely and visible at once. For, mark me well, is the only form of the spirit that our senses can both grasp and endure. For what should become of us, if divinity itself, or reason and virtue and truth were to appear directly to our senses? Would we not be overcome and consumed

in the flames of love, as Semele was at the sight of Zeus? Thus, beauty then is the sensitive man's way to the spirit – just the way just the means, little Phaedrus. . . . (1544)

By exploiting this above discussion on the concept of beauty, which is based on the philosophical debate, Aschenbach endeavors to conceal his same sex attraction for the boy, and he diverts his attraction to the philosophized notion of beauty. Though he dismisses physical passion as puny worldly thing, he, in reality, is not immune to it. So, while hiding his real feelings, he accepts beauty as the means to 'world spirit.'

Although Aschenbach tries to idealize Tadzio with classical figure, he develops his same sex attraction towards young boy. Quizzical and poised, he accepts himself as Tadzio's lover and the boy is now baptized into a private world. From this moment, Aschenbach passes into the new experience that awaits him. Isolated from his own past and from any possible future, he passes also out of the range of effectual communication – whether with the beloved, or with his fellow men, or with himself. By now he has no will to escape; and even as a horror of the quality of his love and impossibility of living without it envelops him, he knows that this horror is better than happiness.

Aschenbach becomes erotically obsessed with the boy in such a way that he cannot remove his "gaze" from the boy. He observes him from multiple angles – from physical structure to facial expression to clothing. He further observes the boy:

Softness and tenderness were the obvious conditions of the boy's existence. No one had yet been so bold as to take the scissors to his lovely hair, which curled about his, brows, over his ears, and

even further down the back of his neck-as it does on the statue of the boy pulling a thorn from his foot. His English sailor suit had puffy sleeves that narrowed at the cuff to embrace snugly the delicate wrists of his still childlike yet dedicated hands. He sat so that the observer saw him in profile. His feet were clad in black patent leather and arranged one in front of the other. (1530)

Aschenbach's such meticulous observation and special attention to the boy undoubtedly reflects his homoerotic feelings towards Tadzio. If it had not been this feeling, he would not have devoted so much of his time in watching the boy. Besides, his comparison of the boy's face with "white ivory" shows the sexual fetish because the boy's face greatly attracts him (1530). Even after everyone at the hotel is gone after having dinner, Aschenbach immerses himself in a "deep armchair" with his eyes "captivated by the beautiful vision before him" (1530). His immersion in the 'deep armchair' reflects the depth of the passion for the boy because he cannot delete the presence of the desired object – Tadzio from his mind. By fantasizing about the boy, he tries to gratify his homosexual desire. After Tadzio's "strangely misty gray eyes," which Aschenbach finds attractive, meet those of Aschenbach, he is sunk deep in contemplation (1531). This shows that Aschenbach finds the boy's 'misty gray eyes' homosexually attractive. This eye contact creates passionate feeling in him as he fantasizes about the boy despite his physical tiredness. Thomas Mann writes:

Tired but nonetheless mentally stimulated, he entertained himself during the tedious meal with abstract, even transcendent matters. He pondered the mysterious combination of regularity and individuality that is necessary to produce human beauty; proceeded

then to the general problem of from and of are; and ultimately concluded that his thoughts and discoveries resembled those inspiration that come in dreams: they seem wonderful at the time, but in the sober light of day they show up as utterly shallow and useless. In the bed, he is frequently enlivened by all sorts of dreams. (1531)

This Aschenbach's fantasy about the beauty of the boy is the reflection of his obsession for the boy. However, his dream about fulfilling his desire with the boy seems appropriate in fantasy and dream due to social barrier, but in reality Aschenbach's homoerotic thoughts seem 'utterly shallow and useless in the sober light of day.' So, he prefers evening as his appropriate time for the fulfillment of his desire because he finds the fragrant air in the evening. He fears to possess the boy in the daytime because of the fear of social constraints. Thus, Aschenbach tries to fulfill his desire for the boy in dreams and fantasy as he is 'frequently enlivened by all sorts of dreams.' His obsession with the boy is so powerful and strong that he can never get rid of the thoughts from Tadzio. Mann's reference of "the stagnant smell of the lagoon" which Aschenbach thinks he could detect following the disturbing night is the testimony to it (1531). Cynthia B. Bryson interprets Aschenbach's intention to leave Venice as generated by "actual bodily surrender" to the "evil concomitants of lagoon" (185). Here the 'evil concomitants of lagoon' metaphorically implies sexual fetish of Aschenbach towards Tadzio.

This obsession for the boy grips his mind so powerfully that Aschenbach observes Tadzia from different angles every day. He becomes struck with amazement as he watches him, indeed even alarm, at the godlike beauty

possessed by this mortal child. Mann describes Aschenbach who is deeply immersed in observing the boy:

Today the boy wore a lightweight sailor suit of blue and white striped cotton with a red silk bow on the chest, finished at the neck with a simple white upright collar. And above this collar, which did not even fit in every elegantly with the character of the costume, rose up that blossom, his face, a sight unforgettably charming. It was the face of Eros, with the yellowish glaze of Parian marble, with delicate and serious brows, the temples and ears richly and rectangular framed by soft, dusky curls. (1532)

There are more than four times when Mann specifically mentions this ‘stripped suit and breast-knot’: The first time is when Tadzio first makes his appearance at the beach, the second time is as Aschenbach tries to find him later the same afternoon, the third time is just before his dream-state begins, and finally and fourth time is when Aschenbach is dying. The “stripped suit” indicating nudity is associated with sexual passion.

Aschenbach’s minute observation of the boy from physical appearance to clothing to mood reflects nothing but his homoerotic feelings towards the young boy. Besides, his comparison of the boy’s face to that of Eros, the Greek god of Love and Parian marble, who possesses perfect physical organs of the body, reflects Aschenbach’s extreme infatuation with the beauty of the boy.

As the family of Tadzio has come there to enjoy their vacation, they often visit the sea beach, which Aschenbach makes his shelter to watch the boy. This scene of the beach has a symbolic significance as it has been always associated with sensual enjoyment from times immemorial. The reason is on the beach

people play with water with scanty clothes on their body exposing nudity, providing many heterosexual as well as homosexual people opportunity to gratify their unfulfilled desire. So, everyone enjoys the “nakedness sanctioned by the bold and easy freedom of the place” (1533). He finds the sea a suitable place for entertaining his homosexual desire. On the one hand ‘sea’ itself can be interpreted as fulfilling sexual desire, and on the other hand it provides people opportunity to watch people who enjoy there with scanty clothing on their bodies. That is the reason why he “loves the sea from the depth of his being” (1533). He wants to stay with the boy all the time. When the boy is not in sight his hands fold in his lap, he lets his eyes roam the ocean’s distances, lets his “gaze” slip out of focus, grow hazy, blur in the uniform distances, mistiness of empty space.

While comparing himself with the artist who harbors an “affinity for the undivided, the immeasurable, the central, and the void,” which covertly denotes his homosexuality, reflects a “forbidden affinity, directly contrary to his calling” (1533). But the society forbids this kind of ‘affinity’ for the ‘immeasurable, central void.’ So, Aschenbach asks himself, “to rest in the arms of perfection is what all those who struggle for excellence long to do; and is the ‘void’ – his own homosexuality – not a form of perfection?”

Aschenbach’s “gaze” frequently wanders around to search for the object of his desire-Tadzio. He retrieves his “gaze” from the boundless realms and refocuses his eyes to search the boy. On the sea beach, Aschenbach finds it enchanting to watch the boy in “bare foot with slim legs bare from the knees down” (1533). Aschenbach always desires to stay beside Tadzio observing his physical organs, expression and activities. Mann’s description of Aschenbach’s

listening with a certain curiosity aptly reflects his attachment with the boy. When the friends of Tadzio kiss him, Aschenbach feels jealous and expresses his objection in a manner which is not overt. Mann writes: “. . . they went off together along the beach, arms about each other, and the one called Yashu gave his beautiful partner [Tadzio] a kiss. Aschenbach was tempted to shake his finger at him”(1534). The act of Aschenbach’s pointing fingers at Yashu reflects his anger and annoyance when his object of desire – Tadzio is kissed by other than himself.

After this incident, Aschenbach loses sight of Tadzio for a moment, but as he fixes his “gaze” to see the boy who was talking a swim. At this moment Tadzio is seen close, who represents to Aschenbach a concrete manifestation of immortal power. Aschenbach observes the boy:

He [Tadzio] turned back; he ran through the sea with his head thrown back, beating the resisting water into a foam with his legs. The sight of this lively adolescent figure, seductive and chaste, lovely as tender young god, emerging from the depths of the sky and the sea with dripping socks and escaping the clutches of the elements – it all gave rise to mythic images. It was a sight belonging to poetic legends from the beginning of time that tells of the origins of form and of the birth of gods. (1535)

Thus, for Aschenbach, the boy becomes a primeval legend down from the beginning of time, of the birth of form, of the origin of the gods.

When the boy lies on the sand all “wrapped in a white beach towel that was drawn up under his right shoulder, with his head resting on his bare arm, Aschenbach does nothing but fixes his “gaze” at him. (1535). Even when he

refrains from looking at him, he almost never forgets who is living near by or forget that it would cost him only a slight turn of his head to the right to bring the adorable sight back into view. Mann writes:

It almost seemed to him that he was sitting here with the express purpose of keeping watch over the reading boy. Busy as he might be with his own affairs, he maintained his vigilant care for the noble human figure not far on his right. A paternal kindness, an emotional filled and moved his heart, the attachment that someone who naturally possesses beauty. (1535)

This is nothing but Aschenbach's physical obsession with the young boy. But while being passionately obsessed with the boy, he sometimes turns a moral and social person. The role of Freud's "superego" comes into the fore here because he begins to fear that society would discover his "unnatural desire" and his respectability as an established writer would be threatened. Mann writes:

At the same time he thought about his fame and about the fact that many people recognized him on the street and looked at him with respect, all on account of those graceful unerringly accurate words of his. He called the roll of the long list of successes his talent brought him, as many as he could think of, and even recalled his elevation to the nobility. (1531)

This sense of prestige and respectability that he feels he has been able to maintain as a writer makes Aschenbach hide his sexuality from other people. This is the reason why he hesitates to approach the boy directly. So, it is a kind of one-sided obsession while he observes the boy closely and minutely. After

everyone returns from the sea beach, Aschenbach waits for the Polish family to see the boy. One day he gets opportunity to see the boy from a close distance:

He stood very close by, so close in fact that for the first time Aschenbach had the opportunity to view him not from a distance like a picture but minutely, scrutinizing every details of his human form. Someone was talking to the boy, and while he was answering with his indescribable sweet smile they reached the second floor, here he got off, backing out, and his eyes cast down.
(1536)

Thus, Aschenbach's whole time and energy devoted to the observation of Tadzio highlights homosexual feeling of the old man towards the boy.

The very thought of being departed from Tadzio makes Aschenbach sick. However, this painful thought enters his mind and traumatizes him. When he actually has to leave Venice, his heart becomes very heavy. Until now he has not struck a conversation with the boy. So, he bids farewell in his thoughts only as he says, "Adieu, Tadzio, thought Aschenbach. I saw you for such a short time." And enunciating his thought as it occurs to him, contrary to his every habit, he adds under his breath the words, "Blessing on you" (1531). As his mind is obsessed with the young boy, there is nothing in his mind but the presence of the boy, which causes him pain. The infatuation possesses him in such a way that he slips on the verge of insanity and death. Mann describes Aschenbach's situation as:

The traveler looked and his heart was torn was it possible that he had not known had not considered how desperately he was attached to all this? What this morning had been a partial regret, a

slight doubt as to the rightness of the decision, now became affliction, genuine pain, a suffering in his soul so bitter that it brought tears to his eyes more than once. (1538)

Thus, the conflict between the ‘inclination of his soul’ – homoerotic inclination and the capacity of his body seem to the ageing traveler suddenly so weighty and so important. Aschenbach has much difficulty maintaining the facial expression in such situation. It has been very difficult to maintain his physical and mental balance.

Aschenbach’s departure makes him much tormented, but when his luggage is put in the wrong coach, he finds, to his amazement, himself at the hotel, which again provides him opportunity to observe Tadzio. While at the hotel, he looks out, with his hands folded in his lap, “content to be here once more” but shaking his hand in reproach at his own fickle mood, his lack of knowledge of his “own desires” (1540). He sits thus for hours, resting and thoughtlessly dreaming. At noon his gaze finds Tadzio:

He spied Tadzio, dressed in his stripped linen suit with red bow, returning from the shore through the beach barrier and along the wooden walkway to the hotel. Aschenbach recognized him at once from his high vantage point even before he got a good look at him, and he was just about to form a thought something like: look Tadzio, you too have returned, but at that very moment he felt the casual greeting collapse and fall silent before the truth of his heart. He felt the excitement in his blood, the joy and pain in his soul and recognized that it was because of Tadzio that his departure had been so difficult. (1540)

His obsession for the boy causes havoc in life. The trauma that he goes through after each observation of the boy is severe. He finds himself in such a situation that he can't control himself. He imagines to be embracing the boy, who really makes him make physical gesture of embrace: "He made a slow circling and lifting movement that turned his palms forward, as if to signify an opening and extending of his embrace. It was a gesture of readiness, of welcome and of relaxed acceptance" (1540). This activity of Aschenbach reflects his homoerotic desire for Tadzio.

Aschenbach's obsession to the boy works so powerfully that he sees the boy everywhere and around him all the time. Even if the boy is not physically present, he is present in his imagination. In fact, Tadzio is the product of his own obsessed mind. We can easily interpret Aschenbach's attraction for the young boy as his object of homosexual desire, so he sees him every where:

Aschenbach saw the boy Tadzio often; indeed almost continually . . . the lovely boy was in his vicinity nearly all day, with brief interruptions. He saw, he met him everywhere: in the hotel's public places, on the cooling boat trips to the city and back in the ostentation of the piazza itself; and often too in the streets and byways a chance encounter would take place. Chiefly, however, it was the mornings on the beach that offered him with delightful regularity an extended opportunity to study and worship the charming apparition. (1541)

The imagery that Mann supplies for the observation of Aschenbach substantiates the fact that how powerfully and fixedly he gazes at the boy. Mann writes about length of time that Aschenbach devotes to observing the boy:

“Three hours or four were then his in which, as the sun rose to its zenith and grew fearsome in strength and the sea turned a deeper and deeper blue, he could watch Tadzio” (1542). He watches Tadzio on the beach, while still trying to convince him that his interest is solely aesthetic or platonic. Mann moves almost effortlessly from a total identification with Aschenbach, while he contemplates the boy’s beauty, to a position of sardonic distance from Aschenbach’s increasingly in one self-justification. It is as if Mann empathizes – indeed – identifies with his passion, but can’t bring himself to condone it:

[Tadzio] would stand at the edge when the honey-colored hair fell gracefully in ringlets at the temples and the back of the neck, the upper spine, the fine delineation of the ribs and symmetry of the chest stood out through the torso’s scanty cover, the armpits were still as smooth as a statue’s, the hollows of the knees glistened, and their bluish veins made the body-look translucent. . . . tall, youthfully perfect physique! Yet the austere and pure . . . godlike statue . . . he released the slender form he had beheld in his mind and would present to the world as an effigy and mirror of spiritual beauty? (1542)

Of course this passage describes an erotic infatuation. The physical description of Tadzio such as ‘honey-colored hair,’ ‘neck,’ ‘torso’s scanty cover,’ ‘armpits,’ and ‘chest,’ which are considered sexually sensitive parts, add to the sexual passion of Aschenbach. He almost seems convinced he has created the boy himself, out of ‘austere and pure will.’ This is the creation of Aschenbach himself because he finds the presence of the boy everywhere. Tadzio is described as a piece of classical statuary, a mythical or godlike figure who is pale and

translucent, indeed almost dead. At two different points Aschenbach imagines that Tadzio will not live long, which he finds a satisfying, even pleasant notion because since it is not possible for him to possess the boy while he is alive due to social barrier, he finds the thought of the boy being dead out of sheer jealousy.

Aschenbach is so much obsessed with the physical charm of Tadzio that he strongly craves for him. Since Aschenbach is an educated person and a writer, he cannot entertain his homoerotic feelings openly due to the fear of society. So, he cherishes the beauty of the boy in his mind. Mann brings allusion of beautiful Trojan prince who was carried away by Zeus in the form of an eagle to make his lover, “to let his style follow the lines of that body that seemed to him divine, to carry his beauty into the realm of intellect as once the eagle carried the Trojan shepherd into the ethereal heavens” (1544). In the same way, he imagines to carry away Tadzio to make his lover for ever. Mann writes about the obsession with beauty that Aschenbach translates into his writing:

Never had his pleasure in the word seemed sweeter to him, never had he know so surely that Eros dwelt in the word as now in the dangerous and delightful hours he spent at his rough table under the awning. There with his idol’s image in full view, the music of voice resounding in his ear, he formed his little essay after the image of Tadzio’s beauty-composed that page-and-a-half of choice prose that soon would amaze many a reader with its purity, nobility, and surging depth of feeling. (1544)

During his whole stay in Venice, Aschenbach’s time and attention is drawn towards the observation of Tadzio, even though he does not dare to strike a conversation with the boy. He has ceased to pay much attention to the extent of

time he was allowing himself for his holiday; the thought of returning home never crosses his mind.

He thinks of going near and speaking with him who has disturbed him. So, he wishes “to strike up a casual, cheerful acquaintanceship with this boy who unwittingly had caused such a stir in his mind and heart, speak with him and enjoy his answer and his gaze” (1545). But this never materializes as he hesitates to approach the boy. Mann further writes about Aschenbach’s hesitation:

He hesitated, tried to master himself, then suddenly feared he had been walking too long right behind the handsome boy; feared he might notice, might turn around with an inquiring look. He took one more run at him, but then he gave up, renounced his goal, and hung his head as he went by. (1545)

When Aschenbach reflects on his obsession and hesitation, he finds himself in true internal struggle. He realizes that he is in love with the boy, but works to assimilate these feelings into his normal philosophy, which proves unsuccessful. He loses himself in the world of imagination. So, he finds it difficult to awake as it is not possible for him to entertain his homosexual feeling in real life. Thomas Mann writes:

But it may have been that the aging traveler did not wish to return to reality, that he was too much in love with his own intoxication. Who can untangle the riddle of the artist’s essence and character? Who can understand the deep instinctive fusion of discipline and a desire for licentiousness upon which that character is based? For it is licentiousness to be unable to wish for a salutary return to

reality. Aschenbach was no longer inclined to self-criticism.

(1545)

While Aschenbach reflects on reality versus imagination, he confesses his erotic obsession with the boy. But at the same time he fears of his inclination being exposed, and being looked foolish: “He feared that someone, if only the custodian on the beach might have observed his accelerated gait and his defeat; he feared very much looking foolish” (1545). This shows his fear about his sexuality.

Aschenbach is so engrossed in watching Tadzio that when the boy leaves the scene, the day “becomes over” for him (1546). While being engrossed thus, he goes back to the ancient mythology in which Eos Greek goddess used to seduce young men. Mann’s reference of this myth can be associated with Aschenbach’s feeling towards the boy. Like Eos, he imagines to seduce Tadzio. In course of his watching activities, Aschenbach is lost in deep thoughts and falls asleep:

The lonely, wakeful watcher sat bathed in the splendor of the god’s rays, he closed his eyes and let the glory kiss his eyelids. With a confused, wondering smile on his lips he recognized feelings from long ago, early, exquisite afflictions of the heart that had withered in the severe service that his life had become and now returned so strangely transformed. He meditated, he dreamed. Slowly his lips formed a name and still smiling, his face turned upward, his hands folded in his lap he fell asleep once more in his arm chair. (1546)

Aschenbach can never dispel the thought of Tadzio; the name of the boy is always on his lips. Moreover, the smile of the boy always lingers in his fantasy.

When he discovers that Tadzio's family had gone to the city, he is caught off guard when he runs into Tadzio that night, and smiles in surprise and happiness. Tadzio smiles back, looking like Narcissus. Von Aschenbach is shaken by this image and hurries away to collect himself. So, Tadzio's smile, the "fatal gift," promotes Aschenbach's self-revelation of homosexual love for the boy. (Bryson 185). Aschenbach succeeds in creating a mythic, mental fantasy that begins with his attraction to Tadzio. As he begins his dream by looking "within himself," the "real" events in his life become transposed into

[a frenzy that] the aging artist bade . . . come. His mind was in travel, his whole mental background in a state of flux. Memory flung up in him the primitive thoughts which are youth's inheritance, but which with him had remained latent, never leaping up into a blaze. Forgotten feelings, precious pangs of his youth, quenched long since by the stern service that had been his life and now returned so strangely one to metamorphose. . . . He mused, and dreamed. . . . (1556)

His dream becomes a soothing balm, a fantasy, an escape from reality, and a well earned vacation because of the presence of the boy. In his dream Aschenbach, with the assistance of his barber, becomes the "young-old man," and

Like any lover, he desired to please himself and he watched in the mirror and saw his eyebrows grow more even and arching, the eyes gain in size and brilliance, by dint of a little application below the lids. Delicate carmine glowed on his cheeks where the skin had been so brown and leathery. The dry anemic lips grew full, they turned the color of ripe straw berries, and the lines round his eyes

and mouth were treated with facial cream and gave place to youthful bloom. (1560)

As Aschenbach becomes obsessed by the charming physical appearance of the boy, he himself wishes he were young and beautiful so that he would be able to make love to the boy without being looked old and ugly. So, he changes his appearance to please and attract Tadzio. In fact, he does not dream about such wishes, rather this is his day dreaming in which he praises his beautiful organs of his body, wears beautiful clothes and puts on beautiful make-ups. This above description of Aschenbach reminds this researcher of gay people wearing excessive make-ups to attract and homosexual relationship with same-sex people, though Aschenbach does all this in his fantasy.

This obsession for the boy leads him one day to trail and follow Tadzio in the heart of the city. He develops such an infatuation that he loses his sense of direction, for the little streets, canals, bridges, and piazzas in the labyrinth all look alike for him:

He could no longer even tell east from west, since his only concern had been not to lose the sight of the figure he pursued so ardently. He was compelled to a disgraceful soft of discretion that involved clinging to wall and seeking protection behind the backs of passersby, and so he did not for some time become conscious of the fatigue. He saw him [Tadzio], and he did not betray him. Intoxicated by this discovery, lured onward by those eyes, tied to the porn strings of his own passion, the lovesick traveler stole forth in pursuit of his unseemly hope- but ultimately found himself disappointed. (1561)

Aschenbach follows the object of his desire into the street turning his head to assure himself with a quick glance of his extraordinary dawn-gray eyes over his shoulder that his lover is still following. This undoubtedly highlights infatuation with the boy. This researcher sees no any other interest than Aschenbach's homosexual desire for the boy. Otherwise, he would not have spent whole of his time in Venice for observing, praising and following Tadzio. Aschenbach goes to such an extent that he even sacrifices his life for the sake of his lover, Tadzio. He does not care about his life when there spreads cholera epidemic in Venice. Gradually, he allows himself to be infected, and he dies.

Eventually, when Aschenbach keeps gazing at the boy at the hotel room, he reveals and confesses his sexual attraction for the boy. As he is seated on a hotel bench, although he knows it is absurd, he murmurs, "I love you" (1548). This is the climax of the novella. This reflects homosexual love for Tadzio. Up to this point, Aschenbach has struggled to repress his feelings for Tadzio, but his final confession demonstrates the triumph of the repressed desires in his mind. So, finally, Aschenbach verbally admits his love for Tadzio, although he mutters 'I love you' alone, rather than in Tadzio's presence. So, this researcher comes to the conclusion from the evidences extracted from the text that Thomas Mann's protagonist Aschenbach is driven by homosexual love for Tadzio, which is reflected through his constant "gaze" at the boy.

IV: Conclusion

This research concludes with the findings that Thomas Mann's novella *Death in Venice* has dominant features of homosexual gaze. The major character Gustav Von Aschenbach is a tormented fellow of homoerotic fantasies that are kindled in him after meeting a Polish boy named Tadzio. The indirect inclination of Aschenbach is due to conventions and belief of contemporary society. He feels an intense attachment with Tadzio. His constant 'gaze' to Tadzio is filled with his unrequitedly tormented homoerotic fantasies and he succumbs to long repressed spiritual and physical desire and loses himself to the sense of self. Such a "gaze" is homosexual which this research explores with lots of evidences. The issue is further enhanced with the underlying homosexual traits of the writer.

Mann's protagonist Aschenbach's stay in Venice becomes meaningful. The journey from north Europe to South Venice has some specific significance to substantiate his homoerotic feeling as it is consciousness into Freudian depth, Apollonian discipline to Dionysian Hedonism Aschenbach's "gaze" to the boy immerses him in deep thought and notes the boy as a piece of mythical or godlike figure. He justifies his lust for Tadzio by elevating him into an object of perfect beauty. He becomes erotically obsessed in such a way he cannot remove his "gaze" from the boy. The meticulous observation of physical structure, appearance, clothing of boy, comparison of the boy's face with 'white Ivory' undoubtedly reflects homoerotic and sexual attraction to him. The "stripped suit" which Tadzio wears attracts Aschenbach, and the scene of the beach has symbolic significance in providing many heterosexual as well as homosexual people opportunity to gratify their unfulfilled desire.

The homosexual desire is centered upon 'gaze' of Aschenbach because in Mann's conception, it is antithetical to those forces and institutions that maintain and advance society. Aschenbach is the mouthpiece of Mann to mention his bold but implicit vision of homosexuality. Family background of Thomas Mann and his personal diaries are filled with powerful homosexual implication.

Homosexuality has its own history which indicates various upheavals in different epoch.

In the novella, Aschenbach's implicit long repressed obsessive love which he verbally admits for Tadzio shows his homosexual love as he confesses alone to Tadzio at the end rather than in his presence, which indicates the climax of his long repressed same-sex fantasies. Such slow and harmonious development enhances homosexual gaze in a quite successful manner. In this way, the research has a number of proofs to interpret and support homosexual gaze in the novella *Death in Venice*.

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