

Body, Desire and Truth: On Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's reading of Henry James's *The Beast in the Jungle*

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Introduction

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, who examines her own shame in *Touching Feeling*, has been recognized for her contributions to queer affect theory. Insufficient attention, however, has been devoted to her analysis of “male homosexual panic” in Henry James’s “The Beast in the Jungle” (1903) through the perspective of her “own eros and experience” (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 209). In her essay “The Beast in the Closet: James and the Writing of Homosexual Panic,” Sedgwick begins with the section “historicizing male homosexual panic,” first considering its historical context by referring to Alan Bray’s genealogical investigation of male homosexuals. Then citing her “own eros and experience,” she interprets the female protagonist’s desire for “truth and authority” (p. 209).

Scholars after Sedgwick argue about John Marcher’s sexuality, but no studies have considered how May Bartram’s desire, which Sedgwick foregrounds, relates to what Sedgwick calls Marcher’s male homosexual panic. Marcher’s “homosexual panic” is among the main subjects of the story. However, female desire emerges as the more important theme after Sedgwick speaks of Bartram’s desire for Marcher from her “own eros and experience.” The aim of this paper is to reexamine Sedgwick’s reading of James’s novella and to reveal that the female desiring subject is not so much the fictional mainspring of “male homosexual panic” as its precondition. Focusing on the performativity of the syllogism that occasions enactment of the truth, the satisfaction of female desire that conditions “male homosexual panic,” this paper demonstrates that Sedgwick’s theory is not so much a disclosure of “the truth” about male sexuality as it is the process by which female desire becomes its “real truth.”

2 The impossibility of male desire

Tracing the subject through 19th and 20th century novels, Sedgwick asserts that “male homosexual panic” derives from the accumulation of society’s or judicial system’s ambivalent, homophobic attitudes toward gay men. According to Alan Bray, “molly houses” had been judicially either attacked or permitted randomly and arbitrarily Sedgwick and Bray, however, disagree about the inconsistent treatment of “molly houses.” Bray suggests that in being ghettoized they had been “a function of the society itself” (p. 102); Sedgwick argues against the dichotomy of “the homosexual” as “an already-constituted entity” and the “society” “suppressing or controlling it (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 86).” She attributes the incompleteness of its oppression to the impossibility of distinctively identifying someone as homosexual.

As Sedgwick suggests, if no one can recognize the homosexual, then “not only must homosexual men be unable to ascertain whether they are to be the objects of ‘random’ homophobic violence, but no man must be able to ascertain that he is not (that his bonds are not) homosexual” (pp. 88-89). Unless a man becomes convinced “that he is not (that his bonds are not) homosexual,” he must assert it. As a result, men obsessively assimilate into heterosexuality by embodying the possibility of arbitrarily punishing “homosexuals.” They thus acquire the appearance of being “normal” (heterosexual) in a way that is subjected to heterosexuality. In Sedgwick’s sense, therefore, the term “male homosexual panic” in a compulsive, heterosexual, patriarchal society refers to “its hypostatized compulsions” through acts of self-ignorant men (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 212). If there were distinctions between homosexual and homosocial male bonds, it would be the external distinction between the sexual and the social — that is, “proscription” and “prescription” (p. 186).

This differentiation is based on a stable relation of an exception to the whole. It depends on the assumptions that homosocial bonds are norma-

tive and legitimate, and that homosexual bonds can be forbidden and excluded. The distinction requires eliminating the homosexual as “proscription” from the homosocial as “prescription.” While “male homosocial desire” is an external differentiation between men, “male homosexual panic” is an inner differentiation within a man himself. The latter is based on “a relation of part of whole that is, constitutively, unstable and unascertainable” (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 88). This “unstable and unascertainable” relation denies the relation of an exception to the whole, on which the former external, stable differentiation depends. Therefore, “no man must be able to ascertain that he is not (that his bonds are not) homosexual.” In other words, “male homosocial desire” is the externalizing process whereby one male bond excludes another in labeling it “proscription” in order to hypothesize its legitimacy and normality to be “prescription.” “Male homosexual panic” is the internalizing moment caused by the impossibility of the external differentiation. When a self-ignorant man in a “male homosocial” bond *realizes* the potential for homosexuality within himself, he falls into “male homosexual panic.” In addition, one can argue that “male homosocial desire” functions as a temporary resolution of “male homosexual panic.” Whenever a man fears his potential for homosexuality, he has no choice. Since no man can completely negate his potential homosexuality, he must display his heterosexual relationship to women to demonstrate that he is not homosexual. “Male homosexual panic” is cyclically and complementarily connected with “male homosocial desire.” These two views of male homosexuality consist in the movement from an internalizing moment to an externalizing process, which constructs a heteronormative patriarchal society.

Sedgwick traces “male homosexual panic” in the final scene of “The Beast in the Jungle,” in which Marcher encounters another male mourner while paying respects at gravesite of Bartram. According to Sedgwick, Marcher advances into “the relation of *compulsory* heterosexuality” in that scene,

illustrating “how central to that process is man’s desire for man — and the denial of that desire” (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 211). During the scene, “Marcher begins with the possibility of *desire for the man,*” and then distorts “his desire for the male face into an envious identification with male loss” (pp. 211-212). Sedgwick calls attention to “the same climactic, authoritative (even authoritarian) rhythm of supplying Answers in the form of symmetrical complementarities” in the scene and in the last paragraph thereafter (p. 200). At that moment, James and Marcher, in Sedgwick’s view, unite in representing Bartram’s experience in her absence. In short, they eliminate Bartram in conspiracy with each other.

Sedgwick’s reading of the last chapter of “The Beast in the Jungle” can be divided into three stages. In the first stage, Marcher is fascinated by the face of the mourning stranger in the graveyard and gazes at it enviously (James, 1964, p. 400). In the second, Marcher “[sees] *outside* of his life ... the way a woman was mourned when she [Bartram] had been loved for herself” (pp. 400-401), Bartram’s name on her headstone preoccupies Marcher and clearly shows it is her that he has missed (p. 401). In the final stage, James and Marcher suddenly agree that “she [Bartram] had loved him for himself” (p. 401).

Phase one, when Marcher is “mutely assaulted” by the “face” of the visitor to the cemetery (James, 1964, p. 399) and gazes upon it “with envy” (p. 400), may be subdivided into two sections: in the first, Marcher meets a “face” in the cemetery; in the second, the “face” passes by. James details the initial encounter between Marcher and the mourner:

This face ... looked into Marcher’s own, at the cemetery, with an expression like the cut of a blade. He felt it, that is, so deep down that he winced at the steady thrust. The person who so mutely assaulted him was a figure he had noticed ... absorbed by a grave a short distance away, a grave apparently fresh, so that the emotion of

the visitor would probably match it for frankness. (p. 399)

Following these passages, it is revealed that this “face” is that of “his neighbor, *a middle-aged man*” (p. 399, italics added). That disclosure implies the potential for an erotic relationship between them. As Sedgwick puts it, “the erotic possibilities of the connection between the men appear to be all open” (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 210). James writes of their separation:

What Marcher was at all events conscious of was, in the first place, that the image of scarred passion presented to him was conscious too — of something that profaned the air; and, in the second, that, roused, startled, shocked, he was yet the next moment looking after it, as it went, with envy. (James, 1964, p. 400)

Marcher feels “something that profaned the air” in the encounter with another man, whose “scarred passion” strikes him and after whom he gazes “with envy.”

Sedgwick theorizes about the transition from a homoerotic to envious gaze: “— Deflecting that desire under a fear of profanation, he then replaces it with envy, with an *identification with* the man in that man’s (baffled) desire for some other, presumably female, dead object” (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 211). Since “the possibility of *desire for* the man” is distorted because of “something that profaned the air”— or rather, —“a fear of profanation”—, Marcher feels envy and identifies with the mourner.

James’s description of “this face,” as Michael Lundblad importantly indicates, “remains gender neutral at first, with such generic labels as *person, figure, visitor, and neighbor*, until the encounter takes on violent images” (p. 762). In addition, nothing in the scene or the entire story suggests it is a woman for whom the stranger mourns. Marcher apparently does not read the name on “a grave a short distance away” with which the

stranger seems “absorbed” and does not know if a woman is buried there.

The following passage implies that the unknown mourner’s face is too striking for him to observe other details:

Marcher felt him on the spot as one of the deeply stricken — a perception so sharp that nothing else in the picture lived for it, neither his dress, his age, nor his presumable character and class; nothing lived but the deep ravage of the features that he showed. (pp. 399-400)

Without confirmation, Marcher assumes it is a woman that the man loved and mourns. Marcher carries out a preemptive “*identification with the man*” to exceed the man who evokes his own homoerotic possibility and expels him from a normal social relationship between men. He fears homosexual potential in himself and avoids it through “anticipatory, hastening identification.”¹

In the second phase, James writes of Marcher:

He had seen *outside* of his life, not learned it within, the way a woman was mourned when she had been loved for herself; such was the force of his conviction of the meaning of the stranger’s face, which still flared for him like a smoky torch. (James, 1964, pp. 400-401)

Encountering the mourner’s face, Marcher realizes he would mourn May Bartram if he had “loved” the way she had been. Sedgwick identifies that as the moment Marcher enters “the relation of *compulsory* heterosexuality”:

It is only by turning his desire for the male face into an envious identification with male loss that Marcher finally comes into *any*

relation to a woman — and then it is a relation through one dead woman (the other man's) to another dead woman of his own.

(Sedgwick, 1990, p. 212)

The male "desire for man," as we have seen, is denied and then transfigured into "an envious identification with male loss." What forces Marcher toward "any relationship with a woman" is not "man's desire for man" but his denial of that desire. It is repressed homosexuality that compels him toward heterosexuality. Then May Bartram's name on her headstone "smote [smites]" Marcher "as the passage of his neighbor had done [did]," and reveals it is Bartram whom he had lost (James, 1964, p. 401). In Sedgwick's view, he realizes "she has felt and expressed desire for him" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 199).

Phase three starts with a revelation of "the real truth" about Marcher:

[H] e had been the man of his time, *the* man, to whom nothing on earth was to have happened ... It was the truth, vivid and monstrous, that all the while he had waited the wait was itself his portion One's doom, however, was never baffled, and on the day she had told him that his own had come down she had seen him but stupidly stare at the escape she offered him. (James, 1964, p. 401)

We are told that "nothing on earth was to have happened" to Marcher and that he was destined for "the wait." By definition, "doom" implies any awful event that cannot be overcome or avoided; it is no accident that "she had seen him but stupidly stare at the escape she offered him." For Marcher, whose "portion" is "the wait," merely to "stare at" is nothing less than his doom because staring is a kind of waiting. When Marcher looks indifferently upon the opportunity to escape his fate, the prospect that "nothing on earth was to have happened" comes true.

If “the wait” is imposed on Marcher, to what does “the escape” refer? Is it the implication that it is impossible for him *not* to wait? James gives the answer:

The escape would have been to love her; then, *then* he would have lived. *She* had lived — who could say now with what passion? — since she had loved him for himself; whereas he had never thought of her ... but in the chill of his egotism and the light of her use. (James, 1964, p. 401)

James writes that Marcher would escape his “vivid and monstrous” destiny had he “loved” Bartram. She “had loved him for himself,” but he had “thought” only of using her and had not recognized her as being-for-herself.

James reveals the lurking “beast” on a day shortly before Bartram’s death. Marcher remembers when “they continued for some minutes silent, her face shining at him, her contact imponderably pressing, and his stare all kind, but expectant” (p. 386). She had leaned close to him to allow him to “imaginably guess” (p. 402). Instead of guessing, he had had a hunger to “know” — that is, to hear from her lips — but “what he had expected failed to sound” (p. 386).

Sedgwick reasonably finds in the structure of the story “an intensely symmetrical, ‘conclusive’ rhetorical clinch by the narrative/authorial prescription.” Throughout the novella, James refers less to what May Bartram is than to what John Marcher is. Only in the last scene, when she *no longer lives*, does he mention her “needs and desires and gratifications” as what *actually had been* (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 199). Sedgwick interprets the meaning of that structure — “the same climactic, authoritative (even authoritarian) rhythm of supplying Answers in the form of symmetrical complementarities” — as follows:

For this single, this conclusive, this formally privileged moment in the story — this resolution over the dead body of May Bartram — James and Marcher are presented as coming together ... In the absence of May Bartram, the two men, author/narrator and hero, are reunited at last in the confident, shared, masculine knowledge of what she Really Wanted and what she Really Needed. (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 200)

In Sedgwick's view, by disregarding Bartram's unexpressed "passion" and conspiratorially agreeing about what she sought, Marcher and James reconcile in a reciprocating relationship.

In "The Beast in the Jungle," as indicated, when "roused, startled, shocked" by a stranger's face, Marcher gazes after it "with envy." Not knowing the dead lover for whom the stranger apparently mourns, he assumes "the way a woman was mourned when she had been loved for herself." In turn, when smitten by Bartram's grave, he realizes "that *she* was what he had missed" (James, 1964, p. 401). In addition, after her death both James and Marcher assert that Bartram "had loved him for himself."

Thus, Sedgwick's reading of "The Beast in the Jungle" accords with the story, and it is Sedgwick's seminal insight that Marcher is "the irredeemably self-ignorant man who embodies and enforces heterosexual compulsion" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 210). Sedgwick interprets "The Beast in the Jungle" as a story that reveals the impossibility that John Marcher, a man ignorant of his sexuality, can enjoy both homosexual and heterosexual desire. In his critical response to Sedgwick's reading, David Van Leer asserts that "throughout, Sedgwick assumes the insatiability of gay man" (Van Leer, 1989a, p. 602), and that she expels from her discussion "the category of the healthy, well-adjusted male homosexual" (p. 598). However, as Sedgwick explains again in "Tide and Trust," she had argued in "The Beast in the

Closet" that homosexual panic is "the terrain from whose wasting rigors *only* the homosexual-identified man it at all exempt" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 188), and she has read John Marcher as a man who does not identify with homosexuality, but is nonetheless ignorant of his own sexuality. We conclude, therefore, that Sedgwick does not banish gay identity from her discussion. In addition, Van Leer persistently accuses her of "unintentional homophobia" (Van Leer, 1998b, p. 762), but to expose an inadvertent homophobic feeling of Sedgwick cannot allow us to reveal social structures that make it possible.

Although I generally concur with most of Sedgwick argument, I disagree with her implication that "*she* has felt and expressed desire for *him*" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 199). For Sedgwick also inadvertently concedes "the confident, shared, masculine knowledge of what she Really Wanted and what she Really Needed." If Bartram represents the woman who is vulnerable to Marcher's "male homosexual panic" but does not identify herself with "straight," then their relationship is also a pretext for concealing her own sexuality. If, therefore, Bartram does not identify herself with heterosexual women, she also negates her own potential homosexuality by virtue of their relationship. If their relationship is a pretext for their own sexuality toward each other, it is not misogynic but reciprocal.

Only by affirming their "knowledge" of Bartram's alleged latent desires, therefore, can Sedgwick criticize "The Beast in the Jungle" from a feminist and anti-homophobic perspective as being constituted of "homosocial" plots. Although James writes that "*She* had lived — who could say now with what passion —?," Sedgwick claims that "John Marcher, in James's story, does not even know that desire is absent from his life, nor that May Bartram desires him, until after she has died from his obtuseness" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 195), and that "*she* has felt and expressed desire for *him*." Sedgwick can criticize Marcher's homosexual panic only by

foreclosing the possibility that Bartram should have other desire than heterosexual one. It cannot be overemphasized that all women in heterosexuality do not necessarily have heterosexual desires. Sedgwick also concedes that while “the absence of lesbianism” from her study in *Between Men* is her own “early and ... necessary decision,” “the exclusively heterosexual perspective of the book’s attention to women” should be “seriously impoverishing in itself” (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 18). Given what has been said, we can agree with Sedgwick’s reading only insofar as we disregard her denial that there is at least an exception to female sexuality. In this sense, we agree with Teresa de Lauretis that lesbian desire never matters in Sedgwick’s criticism (p. 115-116). The purpose of this essay, however, is not to denounce that Sedgwick dismisses the difference between female homosocial and homosexual bonds, but to consider female desire in relation to “male homosexual panic.”

What is desire? In *Between Men*, “desire” is described in relation to “love”; in the context of literary criticism, “love” tends to mean “a particular emotion” or “a particular affective state or emotion,” whereas “desire” general signifies “a structure” or “the affective or social force, the glue.” The relationship of “desire” to “love” is that of the social, historical, and systemic to the private, particular, and individual. “Love” is inadequate to trace how “the structural permutations of social impulses” affect the literary (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 2). The analysis of changing “desire” allows us to reveal and criticize social conditions that determine its visibility and enable it to attain legitimacy. By investigating the history of “desire,” Sedgwick challenges social conventions that condition “male homosexual panic.” Kaja Silverman interprets the last scene of “The Beast in the Jungle” as a “primal scene,” a psychoanalytic term referring to parental intercourse witnessed by children (1992, p. 172). Sedgwick dismisses Silverman’s reading because it “excludes, or rather repels consideration of, every historical dimension involving power, oppression, and the consolidation or

resistance of marked identities" (Sedgwick, 1993, p. 74). Sedgwick finds it important to challenge the historical power relation and injustice of social recognition, but Silverman's psychoanalytical reading cannot allow that challenge. Sedgwick's aim is to explore historical and social conventions that condition Marcher's "male homosexual panic."

In "The Beast in the Jungle," however, it is Bartram who "had told him, his friend, not to guess"; who "had forbidden him, so far as he might, to know"; who "had even in a sort denied the power in him to learn." It is "precisely" Bartram herself who is responsible for "[depriving] him of rest" (James, 1964, p. 395). If the impossibility of Marcher's desire would be determined not by "historical dimension" but rather Bartram's prohibition and permission, what should we make of it? How did the female agency that provokes "male homosexual panic" disappear?

3 The gratification of female desire

A few remarks should be made concerning Marcher's sexuality before discussing the issue of female desire. It is controversial whether Marcher actually encounters "male homosexual panic." Chikako Matsushita suggests it is only insofar as "male homosexual panic" is ascribed to Marcher's sexuality that Sedgwick's theory has logical coherence (p. 54). For James does not write about male sexuality in "The Beast in the Jungle." Focusing on Sedgwick's phrases such as "in my hypothesis," "in this reading," and "I hypothesize that" (Sedgwick, 1990, pp. 206-207), Philip Horne argues that her reading of James's work "might be called the abuse of speculation" because it depends on the assumption that "James ... means homosexuality when he refers to something unnamable" (p. 80). According to Horne, Sedgwick's reading is constructed of the "syllogism" whose major premise is that "James writes about the unnamable" and the minor premise is that "homosexuality has often been spoken of as unnamable" (p. 80). Only in and through her inferential process, can Marcher prove to be faced with his

"homosexual panic." The performativity of the "syllogism" operates in her reading; it is "Marcher's male homosexual panic and the damage it does May Bartram" that her reading enacts, Horne remarks (p. 80).

Horne is incorrect, however, in believing Sedgwick hypothesizes about "Marcher's male homosexual panic and the damage it does May Bartram." Rather, Sedgwick hypothesizes about "*May Bartram's* view of Marcher's secrets" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 206, italics added), "*her* understanding that he is imprisoned by homosexual panic" (p. 206, italics added), "*her* own interest in his closet" (p. 206, italics added), and "*what May Bartram* would have liked for Marcher, the narrative she wished to nurture for him" (p. 207, italics added). Even if, as Horne argues, Sedgwick's speculation accumulates to something like a conclusion, it concerns only *Bartram's* "view," "understanding," "interest" and "wish." In Sedgwick's reading, "it is true," for the female protagonist May Bartram, that Marcher "is imprisoned by homosexual panic" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 206).

In order that Sedgwick's theory might be about male sexuality, then, what she actually theorizes about — May Bartram's "view," "understanding," "interest," and "wish" — needs to be recast as facts concerning John Marcher. *Now, how her theory about May Bartram becomes a theory about John Marcher?* This section examines first how Sedgwick extends her interpretation of Bartram into a statement about most women. She begins by replacing "the woman in heterosexuality" with "May Bartram" (p. 209). Sedgwick further generalizes:

She seems the woman (don't we all know them?) who has not only the most delicate nose for but the most potent attraction toward men who are at crises of homosexual panic ... — Though, for that matter, won't most women admit that an arousing nimbus, an excessively refruent and dangerous maelstrom of eroticism, somehow attends men in general at such moments, even otherwise

boring men? (p. 209)

For Sedgwick, "male homosexual panic" might be attractive not only for "the woman in heterosexuality" but also for "most women." Bartram, therefore, *becomes* one of the "most women" in Sedgwick's expanded interpretation.

It is notable that Sedgwick refers to herself when explaining Bartram's "attraction" to "male homosexual panic":

What does she want, not for him, but for herself, from their relationship? What does she actually get? To speak less equivocally from my own eros and experience, there is a particular relation to truth and authority that a mapping of male homosexual panic offers to a woman in the emotional vicinity. (p. 209)

As Kevin Ohi notes, in "highly identificatory ventriloquizing of May's [Bartram's] desires" (p. 14), Sedgwick "less equivocally" displays her "own eros and experience" as support for her claim. Only insofar as Bartram also experiences Sedgwick's "eros and experience" can Bartram acquire "a particular relation to truth and authority." As a result, Sedgwick can be said to critically think of *but* obey "old ideologies of woman's traditional 'selflessness' and a new one of feminist commitment that seems to begin with a self but is legitimated only by willfully obscuring most of its boundaries" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 62). In order to "begin with a self," she presents her "own eros and experience" in front of us, and with the purpose of "obscuring most of its boundaries," she disregards the differences among most women in heterosexuality, between Bartram and herself, and so fails to historicize female experience. In this process, Sedgwick can decide the "truth" of the text, although her reading drives from an individual experience.

From the authorial and authoritative standpoint, Sedgwick thus theorizes the meaning of Bartram's attitude toward Marcher:

Both the care and the creativity of her investment in him, the imaginative reach of her fostering his homosexual potential as a route back to his truer perception of herself, are forms of gender-political resilience in her as well as of love. They are forms of excitement, too, of real though insufficient power, and of pleasure. (p. 210)

In Sedgwick's view, Bartram seduces — more properly, fails to seduce — Marcher so that he would be aware of "his homosexual potential." To seduce Marcher is, for Bartram, not only to "care" about him but also to overcome him. Sedgwick, however, calls the "power" that Bartram attains in so doing "real" but "insufficient," for Bartram's failed seduction is "her emotional labor" exploited by the selfish but self-ignorant Marcher (p. 210). To acquire "authority" over Marcher, Bartram presents him "the real truth" about himself, enacting "a mapping of male homosexual panic" in exchange for "a particular relation to truth and authority." Bartram fails to seduce Marcher and assumes an agency who is "mapping" the equivocal situation of his desire. On the one hand, there is the suggestion that Bartram seduces (or fails to seduce) Marcher to liberate him from a dilemma of "male homosexual panic" and let him "find and enjoy a sexuality of whatever sort emerged." On the other hand, she does (or does not) do so in order to acquire "a particular relation to truth and authority." The former aspect is a form of love, and the latter is a form of desire for "a particular relation to truth and authority."

Here, we must recall the difference between desire and love. According to Sedgwick, desire signifies "a structure" or "the affective or social force," whereas love implies "a particular emotion" or "a particular affective state

or emotion." Bartram's seductive gesture has double meanings as something individual and contingent yet simultaneously socially structured and interrelated. In discussing the distinction between love and desire, Sedgwick does not regard the former as positive, but she reveals the latter cannot take its place unless it is interrelated with the former.

Returning to Sedgwick's reading of "The Beast in the Jungle," we scrutinize how Bartram's love gradually *becomes* "the real truth" about Marcher's sexuality. The topic of conversations changes dramatically at "the turn it happened to take from her [Bartram]" on her birthday (James, 1964, p. 369). On this occasion, Bartram receives Marcher's present, "a small trinket," which is more expensive "than he thought he could afford," so that he himself avoids coming down "real selfishness" (p. 369). She suddenly speaks about their intimate relationship:

"Our habit saves you, at least, don't you see? because [*sic*] it makes you, after all, for the vulgar, indistinguishable from other men. What's the most inveterate mark of men in general? Why, the capacity to spend endless time with dull women — to spend it, I won't say without being bored, but without minding that they are, without being driven off at a tangent by it; which comes to the same thing. I'm your dull woman, a part of the daily bread for which you pray at church. That covers your tracks more than anything." (p. 369)

In reply, Marcher promptly asks: "And what covers yours [Bartram's]?" (p. 369). The substance of their conversation is integrated into a point: "What is it that saves *you*?" (p. 374). Marcher has strived desperately to expose Bartram's view of Marcher's fate: "What do you regard as the very worst that, at this time of day, *can* happen to me?" (p. 381).

When Marcher insists there should be no topic they cannot speak about, Bartram says smilingly, "including each other?" and "some of them have

been unspoken" (p. 382). For Bartram, "the thing that I've never said" "*would* be the worst." "Isn't that what you sufficiently express," she questions, "in calling it the worst?" (p. 383). While Bartram emphasizes "what we're speaking of, remember, is only my idea," Marcher responds: "It's your belief," "that's enough for me. I feel your beliefs are right" (p. 384). He tries to compel her to confess what "saves" her and what, she thinks, "*can* happen to" him, that is, her "belief."

At their last meeting, Bartram's dedicated, seductive approach that Sedgwick interprets as "the imaginative reach of her fostering his homosexual potential as a route back to his truer perception of herself" is described as follows:

It has become suddenly, from her movement and attitude, beautiful and vivid to him ... they continued for some minutes silent, her face shining at him, her contact imponderably pressing, and his stare all kind, but all expectant. The end, none the less, was that what he had expected failed to sound. Something else took place instead, which seemed to consist at first in the mere closing of her eyes. She gave way at the same time instant to a slow, fine shudder, and though he remained staring. (James, 1964, p. 386)

In this way, Marcher expectantly observes that Bartram fascinates him by drawing close to him with "her face shining at him," and his eyes are so "kind" that he contemplates and is disinterested in her "slow, fine shudder." By leaning close to him and showing her own shake, she leads him to perceive not "his homosexual potential" but rather such his own dilemma of "male homosexual panic" as her "slow, fine shudder." When Marcher asks her what had happened, Bartram answers "it has acted." "I'm too glad," she adds, "to have been able to see what it's *not*" (p. 390). What Bartram suggests by "*not*" is Marcher's "male homosexual panic." Since Bartram

already received satisfaction from “male homosexual panic” when he confronts it, she “is closing of her eyes” at the moment it occurs in him. Bartram is fascinated by “men who are at crises of homosexual panic,” but she cannot see the moment when his “homosexual panic” is externalized, materialized through her own body. At the moment Marcher faces his own “homosexual panic,” Bartram presents “a slow, fine shudder” to Marcher without seeing it, in order to let him contemplate her “slow, fine shudder” to perceive his “homosexual panic.” When Bartram engages in “a mapping of male homosexual panic” of Marcher, his homosexual panic becomes manifest through *her* “slow, fine shudder.” In this sense, “male homosexual panic” is externalized by not male but female corporeality.

Finally, we should notice that Bartram’s attitude to Marcher and her feelings for him change with her seductive attitude. As Leo Bersani argues, “we may guess that May Bartram is in love with Marcher” from this passage earlier in the paragraph about “the turn” on Bartram’s birthday (p. 15):

Beneath *her* forms as well detachment had learned to sit, and behavior had become for her, in the social sense, a false account of herself. There was but one account of her that would have been true all the while, and that she could give, directly, to nobody, least of all to John Marcher. Her whole attitude was a virtual statement, but the perception of that only seemed destined to take its place for him as one of the many things necessarily crowded out of his consciousness. (James, 1964, p. 368)

For Bartram, only “one account of her” is “true,” but she cannot immediately display it to others, especially Marcher, who is the last to comprehend Bartram’s “virtual statement” from “her whole attitude.” Bartram’s “whole attitude” is “too much” to fit “his consciousness.” The more he apprehends her bearing from various perspectives, the more he forgets

what he apprehended, so he can never understand “a virtual statement.” Bartram is enthralled by Marcher and comes out of herself, and her “virtual statement,” as Bersani suggests, is “about herself concerning Marcher, more specifically her love for him” (p. 15).

After Bartram's (heterosexual) seductive approach, however, Marcher fails to comprehend the “virtual statement” from “[h]er whole attitude” because she withholds some kind of knowledge about herself:

She had told him, his friend, not to guess; she had forbidden him, so far as he might, to know, and she had even in a sort denied the power in him to learn: which were so many things, precisely, to deprive him of rest. (James, 1964, p. 395)

Bartram disallows Marcher to “guess” and “know” a feeling of “his friend” Bartram herself. What about herself does she not allow him to “guess” and “know”? Is it love or desire? And why do her proscription and negation hold Marcher in suspense?

First, we recall that Bartram's love, according to James, is only “true” of Bartram and is what “she could give, directly, to nobody, least of all to John Marcher.” What about Bartram's desire as filtered through Sedgwick's “own eros and experience”? Sedgwick interprets Bartram's desire as desire for “a particular relation to truth and authority.” Sedgwick seeks will-to-power/knowledge, and that is “what she actually get [gets].” That is the desire which she forbids him to understand. In the last scene, however, James explains that Bartram had (merely) “loved him for himself,” although she had really “loved him” and apparently had “forbidden” him to “know” her desire. What matters is that, when compared with this passage in the last scene, Sedgwick's reading seems to incur a contradiction, and James implies that Bartram in fact had had any desire: “who could say now with what passion?” If Sedgwick reads Bartram's desire through her “own eros

and experience" and Bartram seeks "a particular relation to truth and authority" even though she loves Marcher, then we should understand Sedgwick's/Bartram's reading as "the real truth" of Marcher — that is, her love "for him for himself." The radical aspect of Sedgwick's account is its movement from the political reading based on her "own eros and experience" to the "true" reading.

James writes about that movement. For, as we have seen, Bartram initially appears to love Marcher—unilaterally expresses a "particular emotion." Then when failing to seduce Marcher by virtue of his need to know his destiny, she exercises her own power of suppression and negation. In doing so, she inadvertently illuminates his fate via her bodily vibration. Her "shudder" *is* "his doom" and *is* "the real truth" of him. As Sedgwick notes, "May Bartram's fate, with the 'slow fine shudder' that climaxes her ultimate appeal to Marcher, is herself to swallow this huge, bitter bolus with which she *can* have *no* deep identification, and to die of it — what of, to her, knowledge, not power" (p. 209). Bartram begins with coming out of herself to enter Marcher's unconsciousness, and becomes to consume "male homosexual panic." In *doing* so, her desire for "truth and authority" is vanished, and "the real truth" of him appears when her desire disappears — her death. How does Bartram's desire vanish? Why might one interpret what she offers him not as a fiction orientating in her desire for "truth and authority" but as "the real truth" of Marcher? The answer should be obvious. Bartram's desire vanishes only by being satisfied, and its satisfaction determines and embodies "the truth" of Marcher. James describes Bartram's dead as the satisfaction of her desire for "truth," and at the same time, as "the real truth" of Marcher.

Sedgwick's theory is, then, neither a fiction arising from the female desire for "truth" nor a revelation of "the truth" of male sexuality. Instead, it enacts the transformation of female desire into "the truth" of man. That transformation occurs when the female desire for "truth" is satisfied — that

is, the condition of possibility of “authority” of the woman who is an agency mapping “male homosexual panic.” Sedgwick is a “feminist” not only by virtue of her criticism of “male homosexual panic” and its violence against women but also because her theory is posited on the condition that female desire is satisfied. We conclude, then, that Sedgwick, speaking through her “own eros and experience,” implies that the “truth” of Marcher’s sexuality is *realized* via Bartram’s body, and at the same time, her desire for the “truth” is satisfied to vanish. “Male homosexual panic” is not substantiated through the body of self-ignorant man but rather one of female desiring subject. Because of her disregard of the historical, social conditions of female experiences, therefore, Sedgwick inadvertently fails to historicize “male homosexual panic,” which is determined, embodied by a female desiring being.² In addition, no less important is the point that Bartram’s desire seems to be satisfied in exchange for her life. In this sense, as Bidy Martin suggests, in Sedgwick’s theory, “the female appear to become its own trap, and the operations of misogyny disappear from view” (p. 104). Bartram’s desire for “truth and authority” and its satisfaction are conditioned by her death as well as her faire of seduction on Marcher, but at the same time, condition the “truth” of his sexuality — “male homosexual panic” and its violence on her.

Conclusion

This paper has reinterpreted Sedgwick’s theory as the movement from a female *desire* — her “own eros and experience” — to “the real truth” of male sexuality. This reinterpretation is supported by James himself, who writes that Bartram’s love transforms into Marcher’s truth. In “The Beast in the Jungle,” Bartram’s love is transfigured into her love for him “for himself.” As a result, we should not regard Sedgwick’s theory about “homosociality/sexuality” as the mere disclosure of the “truth” of male sexuality, but as the process in which female desire *becomes* its “real truth” through female

bodily act and male disinterested gaze on it. In Sedgwick's reading about James's fiction, the gratification of female desire is the condition of "male homosexual panic," but the female agency must sacrifice her own body or life in return for its gratification and "truth and authority."

Author Note

This paper is an altered version of my thesis for master's degree of Hitotsubashi University: "Reading a feminist writing about male sexuality: on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's reading of "The Beast in the Jungle"."

Footnotes

- ¹ Concerning this term, see Slavoj Žižek (1993).
- ² Rosemary Hennessy points out that “considering historical context is quite different from historicizing” (p. 117). In Hennessy's definition, to historicize “male homosexual panic” is to address it not only in relation to other discourses but also in relation to the historical transformation of capitalism. For such a critical standpoint as Hennessy's, “male homosexual panic” can be transformed along with the development of mode of production. It is necessary, therefore, to examine how the development of capitalism conditions “male homosexual panic,” in order to challenge social homophobia which is considered as social injustice interrelated with capitalism's oppression and exploitation. In this sense, it is not too much to say that Sedgwick mystifies or dismisses the social economical factors that determine the historical feature of “male homosexual panic.” In addition, for a discussion of the desire in the context of mode of production, see in particular the chapter one of Kevin Floyd (2009).

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**身体、欲望、真理 ——イヴ・コゾフスキー・セジウィックによる
ヘンリー・ジェイムズ『密林の獣』読解について
日比野佑香**

本論文は、E.K. セジウィックのH. ジェイムズ論「クローゼットの獣——ジェイムズとホモセクシュアル・パニックについての記述」を、女性の欲望が男性の真理へと生成する機序を論じたものとして再評価するものである。セジウィックは、男性のセクシュアリティについての仮説を提示し、その推論のプロセスを通じて、「男性のホモセクシュアル・パニック」を真理として仮構したのではない。むしろ、セジウィックによって提示されるのは、女性の欲望についての仮説に他ならない。セジウィックは、彼女「自身のエロスと経験」から、「男性のホモセクシュアル・パニック」を布置する媒介者である女性のもつ「真理」への欲望を前景化しているが、この過程は、女性の欲望が男性のセクシュアリティの真理へと生成する過程との相関関係のうちで捉えられねばならない。そうであればこそ、「密林の獣」において、女性の欲望の充足ならびにその消滅と、まさに時を同じくして、女性の「身震い」が、とりもなおさず、「男性のホモセクシュアル・パニック」の現成であることが明らかにされる。以上から、セジウィックの議論が、彼女「自身のエロスと経験」から提起された女性の欲望についての「仮説」が、男性のセクシュアリティについての「理論」へと変容する過程であることが——セジウィックの個別的経験から普遍的真理へ、ならびに女性の欲望から男性の真理へ、という二つの過程を伴う一連の運動として——明らかになる。セジウィックは、女性の欲望/男性の真理ならびに個別的経験/普遍的真理という両項の弁証法的な関係のもとで、女性の欲望ならびにその成就を、男性のセクシュアリティの真理としての「ホモセクシュアル・パニック」とそれがもつミソジニーの根拠として解明している。

Keywords:

E. K. セジウィック、密林の獣、身体、欲望、真理