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**Published version**

TWELLS, Alison (2021). “Eros the Great Leveller”: Edward Carpenter, sexual cosmotopianism and the northern working man. *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 22 (3).

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# **“Eros the Great Leveller”: Edward Carpenter, sexual cosmopolitanism and the northern working man**

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## **Abstract**

This article focuses on the domestic and transnational dimensions of Edward Carpenter’s arguments for the naturalness and cultural significance of same-sex love. Drawing on the concept of “aspirational cosmopolitanism”, defined by Clare Midgley as “a transnational and transcultural utopian space of interaction”, I explore the relationship between Carpenter’s representations of “comradely love” between men in Ancient Greece, Hindu mythology and culture, and industrial communities in northern England, to contribute to recent scholarship on friendship and anti-imperial politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I argue that bringing Carpenter’s interest in transnational and cross-class desire into the same frame enables exploration of his cosmopolitan aspiration to promote an understanding of same-sex and cross-class sexual relationships as of social value and central to the democratic era, and ultimately, his inability, in Leela Gandhi’s words, to “ally” with the “savage”, and to escape the structures of late nineteenth/early twentieth century imperialist Britain.

This article focuses on the domestic and transnational dimensions of Edward Carpenter’s arguments for the naturalness and cultural significance of same-sex love. I explore the relationship between Carpenter’s representations of “comradely love” between men in Ancient Greece, Hindu mythology and culture, and industrial communities in northern England, to contribute to recent scholarship on friendship and anti-imperial politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The article draws on the concept of “aspirational cosmopolitanism”, defined by Clare Midgley as “a transnational and transcultural utopian space of interaction”, which, in Carpenter’s case, involved a homo-erotic imagining of a universal humanity and valorisation of cross-class same-sex desire.<sup>2</sup> I argue that bringing Carpenter’s

interest in transnational and cross-class desire into the same frame enables exploration of his “cosmotopian” aspirations and his ultimate inability to escape the structures of late nineteenth/early twentieth century imperialist Britain.

The present article brings together the transnational dimensions of Carpenter’s “comradely-love” with his writing about northern working-class men, amongst whom he lived following his moved to Sheffield in 1877. As Sheila Rowbotham has noted, historians have long tended to “do” Edward Carpenter “in bits”, emphasising his socialism or his interest in the east or advocacy of sex reform.<sup>3</sup> More recent scholarship focusing on the transnational and domestic dimensions of his writing on same-sex love similarly separates into distinct strands of scholarship, examining the influences of Ancient Greece and Walt Whitman on Carpenter’s concept of “comrade-love”,<sup>4</sup> and the “erotic and philosophical culture of the East” as a source of inspiration throughout his work.<sup>5</sup> A related strand of scholarship consider issues of “sexual colonialism” and “homosexual orientalism” in Carpenter’s accounts of his travels in India and Ceylon in 1890-91, as part of a problematic search for and identification of same-sex sexual practices among colonised and “primitive” peoples.<sup>6</sup> Most recently, Leela Gandhi has inverted the relationship to explore Carpenter as representative of a small group of Britons who were enabled by their own marginalised social status—in his case, as a gay man—to pursue cross-cultural friendships and so create spaces for anti-imperial politics.<sup>7</sup> By bringing together Carpenter’s writings on class and sexuality within a transnational and transcultural frame of aspirational cosmopolitanism, I reveal and explore the co-existence of anti-imperial qualities in Carpenter’s thought alongside hegemonic class and orientalist features of his writings that suggest limits to his aspirational cosmopolitanism.

In the first part of the paper, I argue that Carpenter’s representation of northern working-class men derived not just from his personal encounters with men in South Yorkshire’s industrial communities, but was crucially shaped by his cosmopolitan and transnational friendships and interests, most importantly Walt Whitman, whose work he engaged with deeply, and who he visited twice. Building on William Pannacker’s insightful exploration of the hopes and limitations of Carpenter’s democratic vision of “comrade-love”, I argue that Carpenter’s tendency to impose his own emergent sexological understandings of same-sex desire onto the lives of his working-class lovers and interlocutors potentially obscured their own world-views and reinforced not only his own position as an educated outsider with power to interpret and create meaning but also hegemonic representations of

northernness and northern working men. It was also a forerunner to Carpenter's writing about "primitive" peoples across the globe following his travels in imperial India and Ceylon. The second part of the article places Carpenter's cross-class theorisation alongside his anthropological interests in Vedantic mysticism, male friendship in India and Ceylon and the homosocial culture of Ancient Greece. Spurred on by the Labouchere Amendment to the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 with its prohibition as "gross indecency" of intimacy between men, and working alongside John Addington Symonds, Havelock Ellis and other sexologists, Carpenter sought evidence of cultures in which same-sex desire was accorded social value, to develop a more high-minded, pure-hearted, possibly heroic and certainly comradely and democratic articulation of sexual desire and same-sex relationships. His writings on same-sex and cross-class relationships in Britain and America were incorporated into a global vision which combined clear evidence of anticolonial "allyship" with orientalist attitudes associated with western imperialism.

Carpenter's life and writing provides extensive evidence of what Haggis et al have termed "alternative visions of amity and co-existence", a "coming together" of subjects on either side of the global colour line.<sup>8</sup> However, a focus on the cosmopolitan dynamics of Carpenter's cross-class sexual desire highlights the extent to which this remained at the level of vision or aspiration, raising questions about the extent to which, as Leila Gandhi has argued, the "savage" and the "invert", both marginalised as degenerates within late C19th evolutionary psychology, were "natural allies".<sup>9</sup> Carpenter's search for same-sex sexual practices and identification of the working-class and transnational "invert" was the product of a cosmopolitan imagining which was resolutely male, and ultimately bourgeois, western and rooted in the structures of late nineteenth/early twentieth century imperial Britain.

### **Class, Whitman and Carpenter's northward gaze**

Carpenter was unusual for a man of his class for the value he accorded working-class culture as something he could learn from rather than seek to reform.<sup>10</sup> His decision to work for the Cambridge University Extension movement, founded to take adult education to working men, was not a philanthropic endeavour.<sup>11</sup> The cultural attraction of the northern working class was compounded by his encounter in the late 1870s and 1880s with the distinct sexual culture that existed among Sheffield working men in which, as Helen Smith has shown, "same-sex friendships were highly valued and same-sex sexual encounters could be an ordinary mode of

sexual expression.”<sup>12</sup> Carpenter’s interest in this culture extended to an exploration of the democratising potential of cross-class relationships between men.

Edward Carpenter’s desire to move to the north of England derived not from his direct experience of the North itself, but from his encounter with the poems and essays of Walt Whitman. His first reading of Whitman’s poetry—an expurgated edition of in 1869 and, over the next few years, *Democratic Vistas* (1871) and a complete version of *Leaves of Grass* (1855), including the homoerotic Calamus poems<sup>13</sup>—came at a time of personal crisis involving religious doubt and anxiety about his same-sex desires, which culminated in his decision to give up his curacy and escape from what he had experienced, since his upper middle-class Brighton childhood and whilst at Cambridge, as a stultifying middle-class culture.<sup>14</sup> Whitman’s general insistence that sex and the body were topics for writers and his emphasis on a new style of masculinity, defined by affection and intimacy, comradely but still manly<sup>15</sup> and crucially, anti-bourgeois,<sup>16</sup> and with value accorded to manual labour, were formative for Carpenter. Writing in 1874 to thank Whitman for “a ground for the love of men”, he declared his plan to move north, expressing his relief to be able to “turn from the languid inanity of the well-fed to the clean hard lines of the workman’s face”.<sup>17</sup>

Whitman’s impact can be seen most emphatically in Carpenter’s representation of Albert Fearnough, an iron-worker, scythe-maker and one of Carpenter’s University Extension students, who lived with his wife and children on the farm of Charles Fox, also a student, in Bradway, a hamlet on the south eastern edge of Sheffield.<sup>18</sup> The Bradway farm was the north’s salvation for Carpenter after his move failed to live up to his hopes and expectations. His University Extension classes in Leeds in 1874-75 were attended by middle-class women rather than working men, and he found the culture—Dissenting, manufacturing, commercial and respectable—no more liberating than life in a bourgeois southern town.<sup>19</sup> Sheffield, where he settled in 1877, appeared from the start to hold more promise. Carpenter later described the town as “[r]ough in the extreme, twenty or thirty years in date behind other towns, and very uneducated”, declaring that “there was yet a heartiness about them, not without shrewdness, which attracted me.”<sup>20</sup> He was surely glimpsing here some of the independence for which the working-class town dominated by the knife trades was renowned, evident in an underdeveloped sense of social hierarchy and resistance to middle-class interference and authority.<sup>21</sup> As he became acquainted with manual labour, Carpenter began to explore future possibilities as a craftsman and farmer as well as to develop his writing and articulate his critique of bourgeois culture and sense of “comradely-love”.<sup>22</sup> In the biographical case study he contributed to *Studies in the Psychology of Sex: Sexual Inversion*, he looks back to this period to describe his

“ideal of love” as “a powerful, strongly built man, of my own age or rather younger – preferably of the working class”.<sup>23</sup> His 1916 representation of the “muscular, powerful” Fearnough, “a man whose ideal was the rude life of the backwoods, and who hated the shams of commercialism”, the one “powerful uneducated and natural person I had yet, in all my life, met with”,<sup>24</sup> uses language which comes directly from Whitman’s preface to *Leaves of Grass*.

Whitman can be glimpsed in the social life that Carpenter created for himself during these years: his attendance at the “naked races” in Sheffield centre and open-air bathing at Endcliffe Pool<sup>25</sup> and his “alliances” with “[r]ailway men, porters, clerks, signalmen, ironworkers, coach-builders, Sheffield cutlers, and others”, relationships which felt to be “more satisfactory to me than any I had before known,” and which lead him to feel that he had “come into, or at least in sight of, the world to which I belonged, and to my natural *habitat*.”<sup>26</sup> This is reminiscent of his account of visiting Whitman and noting the poet’s proximity to “the life of the street” and relationships with working men who, as witnessed on their walks along the Delaware River and on the ferry to Philadelphia, greeted him as “old friends”.<sup>27</sup>

Sheffield’s distinctive working-class sexual culture in which boundaries of sex and friendship in relationships between men were blurred,<sup>28</sup> evident in Carpenter’s own relationships with like-minded “special friends”, was represented in his long poem *Towards Democracy*, published in four parts between 1883 and 1902. Described by Kirsten Harris as “the most influential nineteenth-century British adaptation of Whitman’s poetical style”,<sup>29</sup> the poem draws together “a series of parallel spaces, stories and figures”<sup>30</sup> which contrast the class segregation, poverty and conditions of work in the northern cities with the “puppet dance of gentility” of the southern bourgeoisie.<sup>31</sup> Carpenter places desire at the centre of the poem, as the foundation of all life, central to personal transformation and social change and the source of human redemption and knowledge of the divine: “Sex still goes first, and hands eyes mouth brain follow; from the midst of belly and thighs radiate the knowledge of self, religion, and immortality.”<sup>32</sup> His explicitly homo-erotic imagery depicts the “thick-thighed hot coarse-fleshed young brick-layer with the strap around his waist”, the young man who “dreams all night of the face of his new found friend and the kisses of his lips”, and the lovemaking between men in “nights superb of comradeship and love”.<sup>33</sup> Writing in the same decades as the Cleveland Street scandal (1889) and the Oscar Wilde Trial (1895), and in the context of a long history of queer eroticisation of men through cross-class othering,<sup>34</sup> Carpenter offered a

contrary “model” to the public view of homosexuals as effeminate, dandified social butterflies in the Wildean mode or as working-class fairies.<sup>35</sup>

The “democracy” of the poem, represented less in societal, organisational, or political terms than as “a thing of the heart”,<sup>36</sup> a feeling between men, a spirit, “a great invisible wind”, an inter-connectedness between all human souls and recognition of the divine in all beings,<sup>37</sup> owes much to Whitman and makes apparent how the poet served as an important conduit to Eastern philosophy and anti-imperial sentiment. Carpenter’s conception of “democracy” echoes Whitman’s use of “Kosmic rhetoric”, particularly the mystical notion of “All”, reminiscent of Emerson’s Over-Soul, in his own poetic explorations of human essence and primal thought.<sup>38</sup> Scholars have long explored the fundamental resemblances between Whitman’s poems and Hindu philosophical thought, especially the relationship between democratic philosophy and the notion of universal brotherhood and the Vedantic concept of “self”, and an attitude toward love and sex which corresponds with Krishna’s sermon in the Bhagavad Gita.<sup>39</sup> On his first trip to the US in 1877, Carpenter had discussed Indian literature with Whitman and Anne Gilchrist, and visited Emerson, who shared with him his translations of the Upanishads.<sup>40</sup> In *Days with Walt Whitman*, Carpenter wrote how he was reminded of “the subtle and profound passages” in the Upanishads, remarking that the old poet “seems to liberate the good tidings and give it democratic scope and worldwide application unknown in the older prophets, even in the sayings of Buddha.”<sup>41</sup> Carpenter read the Bhagavad Gita in the early 1880s, stating that it “set in movement a mass of material which had already formed within me”, becoming “the starting point and kernel” of everything that followed and a “keynote” throughout his life.<sup>42</sup> He makes various references throughout *Towards Democracy* to “India the Wisdom-Land”, “the venerable sages of India” and “the divine East from ages and ages back her priceless jewel of thought – the germ of democracy – bringing down” – and includes Vedantist passages about the concept of a higher self.<sup>43</sup> The poem’s sensual imagery feeds into a larger vision of human wholeness and freedom,: “I conceive a millennium”, he writes, “... a time when men and women all over the earth shall ascend and enter into relation with their bodies—shall attain freedom and joy.”<sup>44</sup>

Carpenter’s radical endeavour to put into practice Whitman’s injunction “to go freely among the powerful uneducated”<sup>45</sup> can also be seen in the life he created at Millthorpe, his home in north east Derbyshire’s Cordwell Valley from 1883. Described variously as anarchistic, ashram-like, democratic and anti-capitalist,<sup>46</sup> Carpenter envisioned the house in

utopian terms as “a *rendez-vous* for all classes and conditions of society”, sharing it first with the Fearnoughs and then from 1893 to 1898 with the family of George Adams, another working man.<sup>47</sup> Michael Hatt has described Carpenter’s repudiation of bourgeois formalities, evident even in his choice of décor and rejection of domestic artefacts, as “a vigorously anti-middle class style statement”, a rejection of “the visual and material culture of capital”.<sup>48</sup> His engagement with sandal-making, modelled on two pairs sent to him by Harold Cox from India in 1886, can be seen as “his way of bringing what he perceives as anti-capitalist Eastern values to the experience of life in Britain.”<sup>49</sup> From the later 1880s, Carpenter took Whitman’s more abstract sense of comradeship a step further as he began to connect a democratic cross-class love between men with the emergent socialist movement as he became a member of the Fellowship of the New Life (1883) and the Socialist League (1884) and one of the founders of the Sheffield Socialist Society (1886).<sup>50</sup>

Carpenter’s representation of northern working-class culture and especially working men expands images of northern identity from the dominant literary tropes of the industrial north. While the impoverished, uniform north features in his writing, Carpenter’s comradely and manly heroes straddle industry and rural life and are secure in their rejection of middle-class values. At the same time, while it may be too harsh to compare with the persistent class, gender and sexual hierarchies of the settlement workers at Toynbee Hall and Oxford House who chose to live in working-class neighbourhoods, Carpenter’s depiction of the northern man is an outsider’s view. He continued to benefit from social and economic capital. Carpenter’s home ownership rested on inherited wealth, and other trappings of bourgeois life included frequent travels to London and abroad. Moreover, his days spent writing in the garden and hosting visitors were enabled by the labour of Mary Ann Fearnough and Lucy Adams, acting as (presumably paid) housekeepers and from 1898, his long-term working-class partner, George Merrill. Pannacker presents an insightful discussion of the class dynamics which continued to suffuse Carpenter’s and Merrill’s relationship—evident, for example, in common photographic depictions which saw Carpenter “in the conventionally seated position of the husband, while Merrill either stands like a wife or sits on the ground like a child or domestic animal.”<sup>51</sup> While Merrill was certainly agent in their relationship—he saw his housekeeper role at Millthorpe as a partnership, enabling Carpenter to do his writing—he remained well aware of the social gulf between them, expressed in his desire to be a helpmeet rather than one “helped so much”.<sup>52</sup> Further, Carpenter’s representation of Merrill in his unpublished biography is infused by tropes of noble savagery: “Bred in the slums quite below civilization”,



“natively human loving and affectionate”, endowed with a “native refinement” and capacity to feel “at ease in any society, aristocratic or vagabond”, Carpenter celebrated Merrill for being “utterly untouched” by “the prevailing [bourgeois] conventions and proprieties... he was, it may safely be said, never ‘respectable’”.<sup>53</sup>

Carpenter’s privilege and outsider status frames his projection of sexological understandings of same-sex love onto the lives of his working-class comrades and lovers. He could not understand, for example, how his previous lover George Hukin continued their physical closeness even after his heterosexual marriage.<sup>54</sup> He also represented working-class men as lacking awareness of the significance of their “suppressed and unself-conscious” comrade-love.<sup>55</sup> Carpenter thereby failed to discern their own cultural meanings. As Smith has shown, such relationships did not imply homosexuality; in working-class Sheffield, men remained defined by other aspects of their lives, such as their workmanship, workplace community, kinship and heterosexual marriage.<sup>56</sup> Carpenter’s imposition of his own understanding, rather than inquiry into the meaning of such relationships in working-class culture, is replicated in his cosmopolitan interpretations of same-sex relationships in the “pre-civilised” world – as I will discuss in part two of the paper.

### **“A fresh influx of savagery”: India, Ancient Greece and working-class Sheffield**

During the 1890s and early 1900s, Carpenter engaged in more explicit theorising about the naturalness of love between men and the place of same-sex desire and cross-class love in a reformed body politic. He began to develop his ideas in a well-received volume titled *Civilisation: Its Causes and Its Cure* (1889), the central theme of which is introduced by an opening quotation from Whitman: “The friendly and flowing savage, who is he? Is he waiting for civilisation, or is he past it, and mastering it?”<sup>57</sup> Simultaneously drawing on and critiquing contemporary understandings of cultural change which held that all societies were involved in a stadial development, from savagery, through barbarism, to civilisation, Carpenter argued that the present stage of civilisation involved significant losses: in human interconnectedness and community, the lesser value given to ways of knowing that involved emotion and the senses, and in identification of the divine with nature and the cosmos. Sexuality was part of this decline: civilised society had seen “the disownment of the sacredness of sex... a complete divorce between spiritual reality and the bodily fulfillment”.<sup>58</sup> This contrasted with the period “long before Christianity existed, [when] the sexual and astronomical were the main forces of religion... [M]en instinctively felt and worshipped the great life coming to them through Sex,

the great life coming to them through the deeps of Heaven. They deified both.”<sup>59</sup> Carpenter argued that this impulse would be “restored” to modern society in a democratic final stage as “a fresh influx of savagery” saw the rehabilitation of characteristics from previous “savage”, “primitive” and “pre-civilisation” eras. According to Carpenter, drawing on Lamarck, the coming change, driven less by external social forces than by internal need and desire, could already be discerned in the same-sex and cross-class love between men in Britain and America; desires and practices shared with men in India, Ancient Greece and other parts of the contemporary and historical world.<sup>60</sup>

Carpenter engaged in this project in discussion with a range of scholars and friends, among them Ponnambalam Arunachalam, a fellow Cambridge student and Ceylonese Tamil who had returned to Colombo as a civil servant and would later become a member of the Executive and Legislative Councils of Ceylon. Carpenter wrote in his autobiography that he learned much about Hindu customs, manners and literature from their extensive correspondence which, beginning in 1874, ranged politics, travel, the natural world to religious belief and practice, spirituality, Eastern anti-materialism and the ravages of western imperialism; it was Arunachalam who, on one of his visits to Sheffield in the early 1880s, gave Carpenter the copy of the *Bhagavad Gita* which was to have such a profound impact on his life and work.<sup>61</sup> In turn, Carpenter’s experiments in “simple living” encouraged Arunachalam’s growing critique of colonial rule, including his decision to adopt traditional dress and turn away from the “material west”.<sup>62</sup>

While Arunachalam welcomed Carpenter’s his critique of social inequality, consumerism and western ideas of progress and approved of his broadly anti-imperial stance,<sup>63</sup> he challenged what he saw as overly romanticised aspects of Carpenter’s argument: “Your present theories cannot be correct”, he wrote in response to *Civilisation*: “For instance, the pilfering negro women’s consciousness of sin cannot be healthy as you would have it. If it were so, the nearer we get to the condition of the brute, the better.” For Arunachalam, and the Hindu holy man whose thoughts he sometimes conveyed to Carpenter, unconsciousness of sin was only a positive once an individual had completely divested themselves of worldliness and become immersed in nature and cosmos.<sup>64</sup> As a modern product of empire, his education and career imbricated with the colonial state,<sup>65</sup> Arunachalam’s challenge no doubt came in part from his position within the law, but it is aimed at Carpenter’s mobilisation of an idea of savagery which was to his mind rather too noble.<sup>66</sup> During Carpenter’s later visit to Ceylon in

1890-1891 he made a further gentle challenge to Carpenter's tendency to rely on orientalist representations, rebuking him for "calling him and the rest of the population, whether Tamil or Mohammedan or Cinghalese, all indiscriminately *natives*, 'as if we were so many *oysters*.'" Laughingly, Carpenter laughed determined always to call them "oysters".<sup>67</sup>

How do we understand Carpenter's difficulty in hearing Arunachalam's counter to his utopian interpretation of Indian and Ceylonese life? Historians disagree here, with Parminder Kaur Bakshi's argument that Carpenter's eastern enthusiasm was "entrenched in ... homosexual orientalism" countered by Brian Anderson, for example.<sup>68</sup> Carpenter's representations were far from consistent. The revered binary expressed in his fear that "the genius of ancient India – the Wisdom-land" was being undermined by "this cheap-and-nasty, puffing, profit-mongering, enterprising, energetic, individualistic, 'business'"<sup>69</sup> of a British imperialism replete with political misrule and cultural arrogance and insularity, was accompanied by criticism of what he saw as Hinduism's fundamental "sluggishness and lethargy", and lack of attention to love and compassion; indeed, he occasionally expressed the belief that India would benefit from an injection of commercialism.<sup>70</sup> At the same time, Carpenter's concerns about the fascination with the West as exhibited by Kalua, his guide in Ceylon, and his young nephews easily tips over into orientalist laments at their threatened "naked beauty and simplicity/*naivete*," Kalua's "savage strength and *insouciance*" undermined by his "dreams of civilisation and the West."<sup>71</sup> It is a complex representation, his focus on bodies revealing Classicism as well as orientalism and homoeroticism. He sees the people as very different from stuffy bourgeois Brits: they are bodily masculine, yet mentally sensitive, affectionate, loyal like children, devoted servants; qualities Carpenter interprets as feminine.<sup>72</sup> He also sees deep likenesses between the "lower castes here and the slum-dwellers in our great cities", wishing that they could "fraternise" in comradeship.<sup>73</sup>

Carpenter's inconsistencies of representation derive from his guiding interest, which was not to interrogate the process of "othering" nor even to develop a coherent anti-imperial stance, but to further his anthropological understanding of Hindu philosophy and consciousness and develop his theories of sex and civilisation. His aim was to mobilise evidence of cultures in which sex and desire between men was seen as natural, dignified and of value to wider society. Thus, the first half of *Adam's Peak* includes observations of sexual practices—the men in Kalua's village who had sexual access to their sisters-in-law, for example, and the sexual availability of devadasis, dancing entertainers at Hindu temples—as well as providing physical

descriptions of men and male friendships and a discreetly eroticised account of a New Year's night spent with Kalua and his brother.<sup>74</sup> Carpenter comments on the absence of the “modern growth” of “prudery” in Hindu culture, citing the sensuality—hot oil on skin, the smell of coconut, the dancers—at the Taypusam (Tai Pacam) festival, the predominance of “rude phallic worships”, the place of Siva, Shakti and sexual energy in Hindu mythology and the notably close relationship between religious ecstasy and sexual rapture.<sup>75</sup> These observations support his argument that sex was not a sin in eastern religion and culture; that historically “the worship of sex is found to lie at the root of the present Hinduism, as it does at the root of nearly all of the primitive religions of the world.” In India, in Aldrich's words, Carpenter found “a spiritual argument for the social beneficence of sex, and one that could potentially encompass ... desire between men.”<sup>76</sup> Indeed, as in Whitman's re-working in *Leaves of Grass* of the story in the *Gita* of warrior Arjuna's call for comradeship and “brotherhood of lovers”, this was a “Passage to more than India”.<sup>77</sup>

Carpenter brought these experiences home with the publication in 1894-5 of four pamphlets through which he aimed to inspire a new public discussion about sexuality as a normal, natural part of a healthy life.<sup>78</sup> *Sex-Love, and Its Place in a Free Society, Woman, and Her Place in a Free Society* and *Marriage in a Free Society*, all published by the Labour Press in 1894, constitute an attack on Victorian sexual codes, covering issues from sexual fulfilment as a basic human need, the social and economic subjugation of women, the burden of child bearing and male supremacy. While transnational and historical themes are not explicit, they nonetheless inform the framework. Carpenter recites a story from the Upanishads, for example, about the instruction given to a man desirous of a son—how to prepare the womb, nourish the foetus and so on—and in which the sex-act is discussed without shame.<sup>79</sup>

Carpenter struggles in these pamphlets to represent the northern working-class man as a herald of the coming world. While “the more capable and energetic manual workers”, men who swim naked in city pools without shame, mark a strong contrast to the “ungrown, half-baked sort of character” who is common among the male elite,<sup>80</sup> he is aware that plenty of “brutish sentiment” exists in working-class marriages, many of which are ruined by male “egoism, lordship and [exclusive focus on his] physical satisfaction”.<sup>81</sup> That difficulty dissipates in his final pamphlet in the series, *Homogenic Love, and Its Place in a Free Society*, which he release, for private circulation only.<sup>82</sup> Exploring the “special attachment which is sometimes denoted by the word Comradeship”,<sup>83</sup> Carpenter draws on cultural sources from

different societies and historical periods to reveal “homogenic attachment” as “a great human passion” which “has an important part to play in human affairs.”<sup>84</sup> His examples now extend beyond India through Polynesia, Africa, Homer’s *Iliad*, Sappho, the Roman age and Persian literature, the romantic sentiment present in Michael Angelo’s statues, Shakespeare, Tennyson and Whitman.<sup>85</sup> Ancient Greece looms particularly large. Carpenter shows the Greeks were “saturated with the passion of homogenic or comrade-love”, arguing that it would be an error to reduce it to mere “carnal curiosity” or to assume it resulted in “corruption and effeminacy”, when it is clearly “capable of splendid developments”, having “a special function in social and heroic work, and in the generation—not of bodily children—but of those children of the mind, the philosophical conceptions and ideals which transform our lives and those of society.”<sup>86</sup>

Carpenter’s aims were to mount a counter argument to the contemporary medicalisation of homosexuality as pathological, representing it instead as a positive and “*distinct variety of sexual passion*”, and to explicate a role for “comrade-alliance” in forging cross-class relations to address social problems. Carpenter’s emphasis was on education and acceptance based on the recognition that homogenic love is of moral value and a “valuable social force, and, in cases, an indispensable factor of the noblest human character.”<sup>87</sup> Bringing northern working men together with evidence of homogenic love from around the world and through history, Carpenter seeks to develop a theory of male homosexuality in opposition to elite Oxford Hellenism as “a means to democracy rather than a way of avoiding it.”<sup>88</sup> Seeing in comrade-love a “savagery” and “pre-civilisation” quality that was socially salvific and a crucible for positive social and political change, Carpenter’s contribution was to inject a thread of socialism, or at least the idea of greater equality and freedom, via cross-class sexual relationships.

As Carpenter later wrote in *My Days and Dreams*, working-class masculinity was “saturated” with the requisite “fraternity and fellowship”<sup>89</sup> and such vigorous, virile, heroic men, their physicality an indicator of the vitality of working-class culture, reminiscent of Carlyle’s “savage sincerity”,<sup>90</sup> held democratic potential and should be seen as at the forefront of profound spiritual and social change.<sup>91</sup> Such homogenic subjects were not yet aware of their significance: the change was “below the surface ... among the masses of the people ... below the stolid surface and reserve of British manners”, “dim and inchoate in the heart of the people”. Although “a moving force in the body politic” they were currently “unrecognised.”<sup>92</sup> Awareness of the profundity of the coming change was currently available only to cultural

leaders, like Whitman and himself. While Carpenter's public exposition of these ideas was placed on hold during the late 1890s, when the trial of Oscar Wilde dissuaded his publisher from including *Homogenic Love* alongside the three other pamphlets in Carpenter's 1896 volume, *Love's Coming of Age*,<sup>93</sup> his writing in the new century further explored the role of men like himself in building the new society.

Homogenic love has a "special function" in society, he argues in *The Intermediate Sex* (1908), and "its neglect, or its repression, or its vulgar misapprehension, may be matters of considerable danger or damage to the common-weal." "[S]olid work" was "waiting to be done in the patient and life-long building up of new forms of society, new orders of thought, and new institutions of human solidarity—all of which ... stand in need of a comradeship [which is] true and valiant." Carpenter focuses again on the Greeks, before turning to Whitman, whose insistence on "this social function of 'intense and loving comradeship, the personal and passionate attachment of man to man'" makes him "the inaugurator... of a new world of democratic ideals and literature, and—as one of the best of our critics has remarked—the most Greek in spirit and in performance of modern writers..."<sup>94</sup> Carpenter ends by criticising the 1885 law, calling instead for "the spread of proper education", arguing that the propensity of the Uranian for literature, art, education and philanthropy makes him well placed to undertake this role.<sup>95</sup> "Eros is a great leveller", he concludes. "Perhaps the true Democracy rests, more firmly than anywhere else, on a sentiment which easily passes the bounds of class and caste, and unites in the closest affection the most estranged ranks of society." He ends with reference to the social beneficence of his own desire: the Uranian "of good position and breeding", "drawn to rougher types, as of manual workers ... although not publicly acknowledged have a decided influence on social institutions, customs and political tendencies—and [...] would have a good deal more influence could they be given a little more scope and recognition."<sup>96</sup>

In "The Intermediate in the Service of Religion", the first section of *Intermediate Types Among Primitive Folk: A Study in Social Evolution* (1914), Carpenter introduces new material about the social role of the more feminine Uranian male, to argue that "there really is an organic connection between the homosexual temperament and unusual psychic or divinatory powers".<sup>97</sup> Again, his vision is global. Carpenter cites evidence of Behring Strait shamans as "former delinquents of their sex",<sup>98</sup> religious practices and temple cultures in the South Seas,

Greece, Syria, India, China, Japan, Malaysia and more. He recites examples from Upanishads and recalls a carving on the temple at Elephanta, which sees Siva “conjoining the two sexes in one”.<sup>99</sup> There is little about working men or working-class culture generally in this volume. Indeed, having established “the existence of the homosexual temperament as a fact of human nature”,<sup>100</sup> Carpenter’s focus is carving out a social role for men such as himself. His passages about the man “who did not *want* to fight—who perhaps was more inclined to run away—and who did not particularly care about hunting”, who “necessarily discovered some other interest and occupation—composing songs or observing the qualities of herbs or the processions of the stars”, are extrapolated into a discussion of the “non-warlike men and the non-domestic women”, who became “students of life and nature, inventors and teachers of arts and crafts, or wizards (as they would be considered) and sorcerers; they became diviners and seers, or revealers of the gods and religion; they became medicine-men and healers, prophets and prophetesses; and so ultimately laid the foundation of the priesthood, and of science, literature and art.” In his theorising about the transnational and historical existence of the Uranian, Carpenter seeks his own origins and constructs for himself a role as “a forward force in human evolution”,<sup>101</sup> bestowing on the “intermediate sex” a higher power or consciousness befitting a prophet.

Was “Eros... a great leveller”? Leela Gandhi’s suggestion that Edward Carpenter’s homosexuality was a “cornucopian source of his ethical and political capacity, as the privileged rehearsal ground for his strange affinities with foreigners, outcastes, outsiders” rings only partially true. “Radical kinship”—a “radical reconfiguration of association, alliance, relationality, community”<sup>102</sup>—was certainly central to Carpenter’s proposal that “the wealth and variety of affectional possibilities which it [homosexuality] has within itself”<sup>103</sup> was a means of “piercing through the layers and folds of caste, through differences of race, climate, character, occupation, despising differences of time and space.”<sup>104</sup> In his view, “the resplendent-limbed Negro and half-caste... the glitter-eyed caressing-handed Hindu, suave thoughtful Persian, and faithful Turk...”<sup>105</sup> are brought together with northern working-class men, unsettling dominant discourses of race, gender, sexuality and class and ushering in a new democratic world. However, Gandhi’s argument that Carpenter “forsook the privileges of imperial domination to critique both imperialism and the tradition of Enlightenment thought that appeared to legitimize it, developing affinity with the oppressed in the process” is problematic. As Neville Hoad argues, Carpenter’s emphasis on the value of the incorporation of the “primitive”, understood in class and racial terms, and its place within human evolution,

marks his difference from his contemporaries for whom the presence of same-sex acts in primitive sexualities was evidence of their “arrested” or “degenerate” state. However, Carpenter’s attempts “to transform participants in certain corporeal intimacies into homosexual persons” through his identification of same-sex practices among colonised and “primitive” peoples was “frequently based on category impositions and misrecognitions”.<sup>106</sup> In Rowbotham’s words, “Carpenter wanted to become a ‘native’, without conceding the power to decree what a suitable ‘native’ should be like.”<sup>107</sup> As among the Yorkshire working class, in his search for global evidence of same-sex love, Carpenter nowhere asks what sexual practices meant in different cultures; indeed, whether they were understood by their participants as “sexual” at all. Rather than searching for evidence of same-sex practice, Hoad argues, historians need to examine “how these practices are represented, imagined, indeed produced ... how the ‘it’ sits in the eye of the beholder, how it shores up, destabilises and constitutes the gazing.”<sup>108</sup>

Further, Carpenter’s positing of a gendered continuum of sexual desire, which he claims to be central to the continuing evolution of the species, draws on new racial ideas. As Siobhan Somerville notes, the appendix to *The Intermediate Sex* includes quotes from a range of contemporary studies which articulate models of homosexuality in terms of contemporary ideas about the mixed-race body in a language of “shades”, “half-breeds” and “fractions”.<sup>109</sup> From this perspective, Carpenter’s “reconfiguration” is less than radical. Drawing on key tropes of evolutionary theory to generate knowledge of the body of the “invert” and subsequently the “homosexual”, he universalised (across time and space) his particular invert/uranian/homosexual. For Carpenter, as for other thinkers of his time, the “savage” is within. Men who desired other men were in this sense less true “allies” of the “savage”, able to “transcend the barriers of age, sex, race, class, and caste”, as Gandhi argues,<sup>110</sup> than modern version of this “primitive type”. The shaman and guru are the cognate of Carpenter’s “intermediate sex” and could be said to be an articulation of himself. Carpenter is thus simultaneously complicit with and subversive of the racialised idea of “savagery”.<sup>111</sup>

## **Conclusion**

As this article has argued, Edward Carpenter’s experience and valorisation of “rougher types” was shaped by more than the particular sexual culture in Sheffield. Carpenter combined eroticised working-class masculinity with longstanding queer attraction, both personal and intellectual, to Hindu mythology and culture and historical knowledge of Ancient Greece and



engagement with the emerging discipline of sexology, to argue that northern working-class men could provide the necessary “influx of savagery” to move the world onto its next democratic phase.<sup>112</sup>

Foregrounding social class makes explicit the limits of Carpenter’s notions of friendship, affect and “radical kinship”.<sup>113</sup> Despite his long and mutually enriching friendship with Arunachalam and his partnership with Merrill, both testimony to his life-long commitment to border crossings and interconnectedness,<sup>114</sup> Carpenter’s class and educational background saw him segue easily into a role as the interpreter of “homogenic” passions. While this critique does not detract from Carpenter’s democratising ambition, it nonetheless points to the complexities of cross-class relationships, the significance of social and economic context and the sustained power of middle-class men to interpret and create, in this case, hegemonic representations of northerness and “rough-trade” working men and of educated middle-class “Uranians” as modern-day prophets.

An exploration of Carpenter’s cross-class and cross-cultural interests and relationships thus allows for a richer understanding of the intersections of sexuality, class and (anti) imperialism in relation to the cosmo-politics of friendship. It is worth noting the extent to which this was also a male imagining. Women feature only sporadically in Carpenter’s progressive framework, seemingly with no place in his envisioned global brotherhood.<sup>115</sup> Eros thus conceptualised was less “a great leveller” than the result of a world-wide search and categorisation with class and imperial dimensions. It might represent a new binary, even on occasion provide a shared ground and a more radical kinship configuration, but rather than desired by class or colonial subjects it resulted from Carpenter’s cosmopolitan aspirations. Carpenter’s search for same-sex sexual practices and identification of the working-class and transnational “invert” was the product of a cosmopolitan imagining which was resolutely male, bourgeois, western and ultimately rooted in and captured by the structures of imperial Britain.

Notes

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<sup>1</sup> For correspondence, [A.Twells@shu.ac.uk](mailto:A.Twells@shu.ac.uk). I would like to thank Margaret Allen, Jane Haggis, Ingrid Hanson, Clare Midgley and Alison Oram and the two anonymous reviewers for their very helpful critical feedback on this article.

<sup>2</sup> Clare C. Midgley, “Cosmotopia Delineated: Rammohun Roy, William Adam, and the Calcutta Unitarian Committee”, *Itinerario* 44, no. 2 (2020): 446.

<sup>3</sup> Sheila Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter: A Life of Liberty and Love* (London and New York: Verso, 2008), 4.

<sup>4</sup> For Carpenter and Ancient Greece, see Josephine Crawley Quinn and Christopher Brooke, “‘Affection in Education’: Edward Carpenter, John Addington Symonds and the politics of Greek love”, *Oxford Review of Education* 37, no. 5 (2001): 687; Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994); Matt Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 122-142. For Carpenter and Whitman, see William Pannapacker, *Revised Lives: Walt Whitman and Nineteenth-Century Authorship* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004); Michael Moon, *Disseminating Whitman: Revision and Corporeality in Leaves of Grass* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991); Michael Robertson, *Worshipping Walt: the Whitman disciples* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2008); Kirsten Harris, *Walt Whitman and British Socialism: The Love of Comrades* (London: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> For Carpenter and India/Ceylon, see: Parminder Kaur Bakshi, “Homosexuality and Orientalism: Edward Carpenter’s Journey to the East,” in Brown, *Edward Carpenter and late Victorian Radicalism*, 151-177; Robert Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality* (London: Routledge, 2003), 298, 409; Robert Aldrich, *Cultural Encounters and Homoeroticism in Sri Lanka: Sex and Serendipity* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2014); Joy Dixon, “‘Out of your clinging kisses ... I create a new world’: Sexuality and Spirituality in the Work of Edward Carpenter”, in T. Kontou and S. Wilburn (eds), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Victorian Spiritualism and the Occult* (London: Ashgate, 2012), 143-163; Antony Copley, *A Spiritual Bloomsbury: Hinduism and Homosexuality in the Lives and Writings of Edward Carpenter, E.M. Forster, and Christopher Isherwood* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Bakshi, “Homosexuality and Orientalism”; Aldrich, *Cultural Encounters*, 34-36. See also Neville Hoad, “Arrested development or the queerness of savages: resisting evolutionary narratives of difference”, *Postcolonial Studies: Culture, Politics, Economy* 3, no. 2 (2000), 137-138.

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<sup>7</sup> Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-de-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006)

<sup>8</sup> Jane Haggis, Clare Midgley, Margaret Allen and Fiona Paisley (eds), *Cosmopolitan Lives on the Cusp of Empire: Interfaith, Cross-cultural and Transnational Networks, 1860 to 1950* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, 59.

<sup>10</sup> Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter*, 13, 24, 28, 30, 36, 41. See also Chushichi Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter, 1844-1929: Prophet of Human Fellowship* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

<sup>11</sup> Sheila Rowbotham, “Travellers in a Strange Country: Responses of Working-Class Students to the University Extension Movement - 1873-1910”, *History Workshop* 12 (1981), 62-95.

<sup>12</sup> Helen Smith, *Masculinity, Class and Same-Sex Desire in Industrial England, 1895-1957* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 18-19.

<sup>13</sup> Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter*, 38.

<sup>14</sup> Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter*, 13, 24, 28, 30, 36, 41.

<sup>15</sup> Moon, *Disseminating Whitman*; Pannapacker, *Revised Lives*, 107-130.

<sup>16</sup> Carpenter was acquainted with other conceptions of “fraternity” and brotherhood, not least in the work and writing of Frederick Denison Maurice, to whom he was a curate prior to his northwards move. Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 231-2.

<sup>17</sup> Carpenter to Whitman, 12 July 1874. In Horace Traubel, ed., *With Walt Whitman in Camden* (Boston: Smith, Maynard and Co., 1906), 158-161.

<sup>18</sup> Carpenter, *My Days and Dreams* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1916), 103-4, 124. *MDAD* hereafter.

<sup>19</sup> Carpenter, *MDAD*, 79-81; Carpenter to Charles Oates, 16 April 1877, Sheffield City Archives, Carpenter Collection (CC hereafter) Mss. 351/27. See also 30 August 1874, 28 August 1867, 3 October 1879, CC 351/18, 351/23, 351/28.

<sup>20</sup> Carpenter, *MDAD*, 92.

<sup>21</sup> For middle-class philanthropy in Sheffield, see: Alison Twells, *The Civilising Mission and the English Middle Class, 1792-1850: The “Heathen” at Home and Overseas* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009), 58-60.

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- <sup>22</sup> Havelock Ellis and John Addington Symonds, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex, Volume 1: Sexual Inversion* (London: University Press, 1897), Part 4, 108. For the working-class Bolton Whitmanites, see H.G. Cocks, *Nameless Offences: Homosexual Desire in the Nineteenth Century* (London: IB Tauris, 2003), 157-198.
- <sup>23</sup> Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, 108.
- <sup>24</sup> Carpenter, *MDAD*, 102–3.
- <sup>25</sup> Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, 106-107; Carpenter, unpublished reminiscences, CC 253; Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter*, 127-128.
- <sup>26</sup> Carpenter, *MDAD*, 102.
- <sup>27</sup> Edward Carpenter, *Days with Walt Whitman: With Some Notes on His Life and Work* (London: George Allen, 1906), 8.
- <sup>28</sup> Smith, *Masculinity, Class*, 80.
- <sup>29</sup> Carpenter, *MDAD*, 107; Harris, *Walt Whitman and British Socialism*, 24.
- <sup>30</sup> Matt Cook, “‘A New City of Friends’: London and Homosexuality in the 1890s”, *History Workshop Journal* 56 (2003), 44.
- <sup>31</sup> Carpenter, *Towards Democracy* (London: John Heywood, 1883), 27-28.
- <sup>32</sup> Carpenter, *Towards Democracy* (1883), 21.
- <sup>33</sup> Carpenter, *Towards Democracy* (1883), 75, 92, 112.
- <sup>34</sup> Charles Upchurch, *Before Wilde: Sex Between Men in Britain’s Age of Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Morris Kaplan, *Sodom on the Thames: Sex, Love and Scandal in Wilde Times* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).
- <sup>35</sup> Pannepacker, *Revised Lives*, 119-121.
- <sup>36</sup> Gilbert Beith quoted in Leela Gandhi, *The Common Cause: Postcolonial Ethics and the Practice of Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 12-13. See also Harris, *Whitman and British Socialism*, 15-16.
- <sup>37</sup> Carpenter to Walt Whitman, 27 December 1888, <https://whitmanarchive.org/biography/correspondence/tei/loc.01243.html>. See also Carpenter’s explanation in A Note on *Towards Democracy* (Reprinted from *The Labour Prophet*, May 1894), appended to 5th ed., 512.
- <sup>38</sup> Jeremy David Engels, “Kosmic rhetoric: Reading democracy alongside Walt Whitman and the BhagavadGita”, *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 105, no. 1 (2019), 68-97

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- <sup>39</sup> V. K. Chari, "Whitman in India", in Gay Wilson Allen and Ed Folsom, *Whitman and the World* (1995), 396-405.
- <sup>40</sup> Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter*, 54.
- <sup>41</sup> Carpenter, *Days with Walt Whitman*, 76-78.
- <sup>42</sup> Carpenter, *MDAD*, 251, 190, 106.
- <sup>43</sup> Carpenter, *Towards Democracy*, 97, 13. For Vedantic passages, see Copley, *A Spiritual Bloomsbury*, 22-23.
- <sup>44</sup> Carpenter, *Towards Democracy* (1883), 6.
- <sup>45</sup> Carpenter, *MDAD*, 103.
- <sup>46</sup> David Goodway, *Anarchist Seeds beneath the Snow: Left-Libertarian Thought and British Writers from William Morris to Colin Ward* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), 48-49; Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, 37; Michael Hatt, "Edward Carpenter and the Domestic Interior", *Oxford Art Journal* 36 no. 3 (2013), 395-415.
- <sup>47</sup> Carpenter, *MDAD*, 156, 164.
- <sup>48</sup> Hatt, "Domestic Interior", 404, 408, 410-411.
- <sup>49</sup> Hatt, 410. See also Ruth Livesey, *Socialism, Sex, and the Culture of Aestheticism in Britain, 1880-1914* (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press and the British Academy, 2007).
- <sup>50</sup> Carpenter supplemented Whitman with evolutionary anthropology and Lamarckian theory, to take him forward to a new audience. Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter*, 70; Harris, *Whitman and British Socialism*, 32, 38, 41.
- <sup>51</sup> Pannepacker, *Revised Lives*, 125-126.
- <sup>52</sup> George Merrill to Edward Carpenter, 17 November 1896 and 12 February 1897, CC 363/6-7. For class, patronage and protection in cross-class relationships, see George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 108, 118.
- <sup>53</sup> Edward Carpenter, "George Merrill" (unpublished manuscript, 1913), CC 363/17; Carpenter, *MDAD*, 160. For the strategic importance of Merrill for Carpenter's autobiographical narrative and his role as Carpenter's "liberator", see Oliver S. Buckton, *Secret Selves: Confession and Same-sex Desire in Victorian Autobiography* (University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 202-203.

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<sup>54</sup> He was “just as affectionate and loving as ever. It is a funny business but I think I am getting used to it.” Carpenter to Oates, 4 January 1888, CC MSS 351/44.

<sup>55</sup> Carpenter, *Homogenic Love*, 47, 48.

<sup>56</sup> Smith, *Masculinity, Class*, 3, 80.

<sup>57</sup> Edward Carpenter, *Civilisation: Its Causes and Its Cure and other essays* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1889), 1. Originally a lecture to Fabian Society, the book went through eighteen editions in England between 1889-1938, plus many translations, and was cited by Gandhi in *Hind Swaraj* (1910). Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter*, 144; Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, 62-64.

<sup>58</sup> Carpenter, *Civilisation*, 1-50, 26.

<sup>59</sup> Carpenter, *Civilisation*, 45.

<sup>60</sup> Carpenter, *Civilisation*, 47, 133.

<sup>61</sup> Carpenter, *MDAD*, 250-251. 64-65, 141-145, 250-253; Carpenter (ed.), *Light from the East: Being Letters on Gñanam, The Divine Knowledge*, by Hon. P. Arunachalam (London: Allen and Unwin, 1927), 33.

<sup>62</sup> Ponnambalam Arunachalam to Edward Carpenter, 12 January 1883 and 25 November 1888, CC 271/31; Sheila Rowbotham, “Ponnambalam Arunachalam and Edward Carpenter: The Ripples of a Friendship”, *At the Cutting Edge, Essays in Honour of Kumari Jayawardena*, eds Neloufer De Mel and Selvy Thiruchandran (New Dehli: Women Unlimited, 2007).

<sup>63</sup> Ponnambalam Arunachalam to Edward Carpenter, 17 December 1889, CC 271/39.

Carpenter’s strongest criticism of empire came at the turn of the twentieth century when, sympathetic to the Boers, he composed a new section for the fourth part of *Towards Democracy* which declared “the gaud of Empire” to be a distraction from social conditions at home. Edward Carpenter, *Selected Writings* (London, 1984), 3. 74. See Aldrich, *Colonialism and Homosexuality*, 2003, pp 297-298; Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter*, 152-155. Arunachalam approved of his “Empire and Elsewhere”, Rowbotham, *Ripples*, 227.

<sup>64</sup> Arunachalam to Carpenter, 17 December 1889.

<sup>65</sup> Kumari Jayawardena, *Nobodies to Somebodies: The Rise of the Colonial Bourgeoisie in Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Social Scientists Association and Sanjiva Books, 2000).

<sup>66</sup> Ter Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

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- <sup>67</sup> Edward Carpenter, *From Adam's Peak to Elephanta: Sketches in Ceylon and India* (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1892), 37.
- <sup>68</sup> Brian Anderson, *The Fraternity of the Estranged: The Fight for Homosexual Rights in England, 1891-1908* (Matador, 2018), 103-104.
- <sup>69</sup> Carpenter, *Adam's Peak*, 355. Carpenter's reversed polarities influenced Indians, including Gandhi, as well as other Brits who were sympathetic to Indian claims for independence. See "Letter to H.S.L. Polak", September 8, 1909, CWMG, vol.9, 396; and Hind Swaraj. G. Koteswara Prasad, "Gandhi and Edward Carpenter", *Indian Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 4 (1986), 591-602. See discussion of George Lansbury and Fenner Brockway in Priyamvada Gopal, *Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent* (London: Verso, 2020), Part Two.
- <sup>70</sup> Carpenter, *Adam's Peak*, 255, 362; Bakshi, "Homosexuality and Orientalism", 165, 169
- <sup>71</sup> Carpenter, *Adam's Peak*, 74-78, 28-30.
- <sup>72</sup> As Bakshi notes, citing Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks, Carpenter never got to grips with differences between sex and gender categories. Bakshi, "Homosexuality and Orientalism", 164.
- <sup>73</sup> Carpenter, *Adam's Peak*, 59, 49; Bakshi, "Homosexuality and Orientalism", 167.
- <sup>74</sup> Carpenter, *Adam's Peak*, 29, 46, 60, 130-31, 60.
- <sup>75</sup> Carpenter, *Adam's Peak*, 47, 125, 116-134 passim.
- <sup>76</sup> Aldrich, *Cultural Encounters*, 37.
- <sup>77</sup> Bakshi, "Homosexuality and Orientalism", 158-59.
- <sup>78</sup> Edward Carpenter, *Sex-Love and its Place in a Free Society; Woman and her Place in a Free Society; Marriage in a Free Society* (Manchester: The Labour Press Society, 1894).
- <sup>79</sup> Carpenter, *Sex-Love*, 17-18.
- <sup>80</sup> Carpenter, *Love's Coming of Age* (Manchester: The Labour Press, 1896), 37. Another pamphlet, *Man the Ungrown*, unpublished in 1894, was included in *Love's Coming of Age*, and addressed the oppressive attitudes of men towards women. For its significance in popularising a new view of sex, see Irene Clephane, *Towards Sex Freedom* (London: John Lane, 1935), 183-84.
- <sup>81</sup> Carpenter, *Marriage*, 12-13. See also 18-19.
- <sup>82</sup> Carpenter, *Homogenic Love and Its Place in Free Society* (Manchester, 1894). For private circulation, see Rowbotham, 190.

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- <sup>83</sup> Carpenter, *Homogenic Love*, 3.
- <sup>84</sup> Carpenter, *Homogenic Love*, 38-42.
- <sup>85</sup> Carpenter, *Homogenic Love*, 4-12.
- <sup>86</sup> Carpenter, *Homogenic Love*, 5, 13-14, 22, 25, 38-43.
- <sup>87</sup> Carpenter, *Homogenic Love*, 49-51.
- <sup>88</sup> Quinn and Brooke, "Affection in Education", 687, 695.
- <sup>89</sup> Carpenter, *MDAD*, 130, 143-145.
- <sup>90</sup> *The Collected Works of Thomas Carlyle, In Sixteen Volumes. Volume VI: Sartor Resartus-Lectures on Heroes* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1864), "The Hero as Man of Letters", 829.
- <sup>91</sup> This was also part of a wider millenarian feeling. See Harris, *Whitman and British Socialism*, 17-18; Dixon, "'Out of your clinging kisses ...'", 144.
- <sup>92</sup> Carpenter, *Homogenic Love*, 46-47.
- <sup>93</sup> Carpenter, *The Intermediate Sex: A Study of Some Transitional Types of Men and Women* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd, 1908), 114-115; Carpenter to George Hukin, 31 July 1895, CC 361/25; Carpenter to Charles Oates, 26 August 1895, CC 351/4 and 12 March 1896, 351/66.
- <sup>94</sup> Carpenter, *Intermediate Sex*, 66-69, 70, 72-73.
- <sup>95</sup> Carpenter, *Intermediate Sex*, 80.
- <sup>96</sup> Carpenter, *Intermediate Sex*, 115.
- <sup>97</sup> Carpenter, *Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk* (London: George Allen, 1914), 36, 48-49.
- <sup>98</sup> Carpenter, *Intermediate Types*, 17. Carpenter is here quoting Edvard Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (1906) and is again conflating sex and gender.
- <sup>99</sup> Carpenter, *Intermediate Types*, 72.
- <sup>100</sup> Carpenter, *Intermediate Types*, 57.
- <sup>101</sup> Carpenter, *Intermediate Types*, 58-59. Thanks to the anonymous reader for clarifying this point.
- <sup>102</sup> Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, 35-36.
- <sup>103</sup> Carpenter, quoted in Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, 43, 59.
- <sup>104</sup> Carpenter, *Days with Walt Whitman*, 58.
- <sup>105</sup> Carpenter, *Towards Democracy*, 14, 16.
- <sup>106</sup> Hoad, "Arrested development", 134.



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<sup>107</sup> Rowbotham, *Edward Carpenter*, 158, 160.

<sup>108</sup> Hoad, “Arrested development”, 134-135.

<sup>109</sup> Siobhan Somerville, “Scientific Racism and the Emergence of the Homosexual Body,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no. 2 (1994), 243–266, quoted in Hoad, 136. Carpenter, *The Intermediate Sex*, 133, 170.

<sup>110</sup> Gandhi, *Affective Communities*, 35, 59.

<sup>111</sup> For the dominant C19th and C20th ‘hierarchical staging of human difference under the historical periodisings of imperialism and globalisation and the attendant logics of evolution and development’, see Hoad, “Arrested development”, 133, 138.

<sup>112</sup> Carpenter, *Civilisation*, 47.

<sup>113</sup> Indeed, while she recognises the “imperial bigotry” in *Adam’s Peak* (60), power is curiously absent from Gandhi’s discussion.

<sup>114</sup> Dixon, ““Out of your clinging kisses ... I create a new world””.

<sup>115</sup> For example, he mentions Queen Christina of Sweden, the issue of whether women were subordinate in Ancient Greece, and “delinquent” Esquimaux girls who decline marriage and maternity to “live as boys”. Carpenter, *The Intermediate Sex*, 56; *Intermediate Types*, 102-116, 18.