Deviance and Disloyalty: Historiographical Discourses in Representations of the Cambridge Spies

James John Garner
B.Math, B.A.(Hons)

Submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
June, 2003
School of Music and Drama
(The Conservatorium)
University of Newcastle, NSW
Australia
I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.

(Signed) ......................................
Dedicated to the memory of my father
Leonard James Garner
(1928-2003)
Table of Contents

Abstract........................................................................................................................................5

Introduction....................................................................................................................................6

Chapter 1 - Historical Context....................................................................................................39

Chapter 2 – Journalism, Historiography and the Cambridge Spies..............................77

Chapter 3 - Biography and Autobiography..............................................................107

Chapter 4 – The Playwrights and their Historiographical Approach...........145

Chapter 5 – Homosexuality, Englishness and Treason..............................193

Chapter 6 – Conclusion........................................................................................................250

Appendix 1 - Timeline...........................................................................................................255

Bibliography.............................................................................................................................258
Abstract

This thesis examines dramatic treatments of the lives of the Cambridge spies (Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean, Kim Philby and Anthony Blunt) with particular reference to the construction of a nexus between loyalty and sexuality. The queer/traitor metonym is also traced in journalistic and biographical works concerning the same characters. It is argued that this nexus arises from more general myths and archetypes of the hidden sterile alien; that its late-twentieth-century form draws its historical context from Cold War paranoia; that historical dramas made for mass audiences have been a central conduit for conveying the metonym as historical truth; and that treatments of the Cambridge spies are a principal site for studying the use of this pairing, or its exposure and denial. The authors of the prose and dramatic texts are examined with respect to their view of absolutist or relativist historiography and the concept of the ‘true’ story. Their use of particular paradigms of sexuality are also investigated, along with concepts of the ‘closet’, of Englishness, and the relationship of class and education to both sexuality and treason. Genre-related influences, such as those of television and of biography, are also taken into consideration. The role of journalists as historians is questioned, and their relationship with the government is used as an example of problematic historiography. For each of the principal playwrights (John Osborne, Hugh Whitemore, Hugh Conner, Robin Chapman, Julian Mitchell, Ian Curteis and Alan Bennett) the central task is to show how the queer/traitor nexus is either covertly confirmed or directly examined and criticized in their plays, and to consider the role of this nexus in homophobic aspects of the writing of history.
Introduction

This is Art holding a Mirror up to Life. That’s why everything is exactly the wrong way round.

Terry Pratchett

*Wyrd Sisters* (Gollancz, London) 1998

Betrayal has always been portrayed as the most severe of crimes. The worst place in the lowest level of Dante’s Inferno is reserved for Brutus, Cassius and Judas Iscariot, and the *hubris* of the ancient Greek tragic heroes is, in part, a betrayal of an allegiance to the gods. In the twentieth century, the native spy (as distinct from the foreign infiltrator) was a type of traitor whose image was replete with dark connotations – disloyalty, secrecy, indiscretion and dissent from the nation’s culture and politics. The ‘cloak and dagger’ were symbols of the hidden and the dangerous, that is, the dishonourable stab in the back.

Treason and espionage, then, are powerful accusations to make against any group one wishes to demonize. The scapegoat group may be racial, social or sexual. During the Cold War, the existence of a group of British Cambridge-educated men who were spying for the Soviet Union drew particular attention to the sexual. The homosexual or bisexual lifestyles of the majority of this group became a peg upon which to hang a particular form of scapegoating: the ‘queer’ Communist traitor. Deviance from sexual norms became a marker of disloyalty, sufficient to dismiss any person from sensitive work despite the absence of any actual evidence of espionage. The stereotype was perpetuated in the public consciousness by *exposé* prose, biography

---

1 Dante. *The Divine Comedy*, Canto XXXIV.
and historical drama, and through them the ambiguities of sexual orientation became metaphors for the ambiguities of political deviance and disloyalty.

This thesis deals with plays and other works written on the subject of the Cambridge spies (Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean, Kim Philby and Anthony Blunt) with particular reference to the construction, advocacy, exposure or criticism of an essential link between treason and non-heterosexual behaviour or identity. It will make a number of assertions concerning the nexus between sexuality and loyalty: that it arises from more general myths and archetypes of the hidden sterile alien; that its late-twentieth-century form draws its historical context from Cold War paranoia; that historical dramas made for mass audiences have been a central conduit for conveying the metonym as historical truth; and that treatments of the Cambridge spies are a principal site for studying the use of this pairing, or its exposure and denial. Plays about the Cambridge spies were written against the background of the Cold War, or its end with the falling of the Berlin wall. They were conditioned not only by the metonyms of sexual orientation but by the historical events that encouraged them. In Burgess, Maclean, Philby and Blunt, a queer/traitor stereotype appeared to be confirmed by history. Such *prima facie* examples of the doubly marginalised alien, both politically and sexually dangerous, allowed the myth to be expressed through non-fictional characters. Historiographical issues were added to the problems inherent in representing such figures in biography, journalistic writing and drama. It will be argued that the queer/traitor metonym can be critically deconstructed by the use of relativist historiographical approaches to 'evidence' and evaluating the agenda of authors and playwrights accordingly.
The scope of this study is limited in several respects including nationality, chronology and gender. For example, the texts under scrutiny all originated in Britain. In dealing with historical background, some political and cultural events in America will be studied because of their effect on the rest of the Western world, especially in encouraging fear of the homosexual as a potential Communist infiltrator. However, the plays, prose works and the historical events they describe are all British.

Because the Cold War and fear of Communism are inextricably linked with the principal issues of the plays, this thesis is chronologically restricted to texts written in the period from 1945 to the present. Earlier artefacts are used only to assist in matters of historical background, such as the treatment of homosexuals in the theatre and in British law.

The Cambridge spies were all male, and the playwrights have applied the ideological issues of their plays solely to non-heterosexual males. Historically, the paranoia of the Cold War years was directed at lesbians also, particularly in popular culture and in the construction of archetypes of the Other (dealt with in this introduction). However, the specifics of the texts under study are related to men, and so this body of work does not deal with dramatic treatments of women, nor with gender issues except in relation to images of sexual orientation. It is also questionable whether the construction of images of the male queer/traitor can rightly be applied mutatis mutandis to lesbians. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick states as her third axiom for The Epistemology of the Closet:
There can't be an *a priori* decision about how far it will make sense to conceptualize lesbian and gay male identities together. Or separately.²

The texts selected for study and the media to which they belong are all aimed at mainstream audiences. Works produced for a gay audience, or intended to be performed by gay theatre groups, are not introduced except as cultural background. This is not simply because plays about the Cambridge spies happen to have been produced for mainstream theatre and television, but because a principal focus of this study is the conveying of history and ideology to a broad public. Gay men are principally used as objects, not subjects, in these alleged ‘true stories’.

Resources from a number of subject areas have been useful in the analysis of the texts. Historical background in this thesis is drawn from cultural history, rather than that traditional historical idiom which emphasises great men and great events. Principal sources for post-war British history include Hewison’s *In Anger: Culture in the Cold War 1945-60* (1981) and *Too Much: Art and Society in the Sixties* (1986), and Marwick’s "A Social History of Britain 1945-83" in *Introduction to Contemporary Cultural Studies* (1986). *The Sixties Experience* (1991) by E.P. Morgan is also useful for the politics and youth culture of that era.

Studies of the docudrama genre include Fiske and Hartley’s *Reading Television* (1978), which examines the role of realism in television drama and the possibilities of the genre for works with agenda more radical than the usual costume drama. Paget’s *True Stories? Documentary drama on radio screen & stage* (1990) considers the meaning of Art within the genre and places it in the context of cultural materialism.

² Sedgwick 1994: 36
Tulloch’s *Television Drama: Agency, Audience and Myth* (1990) examines the roles of empiricism, nostalgia and high culture as well as the constructions of myth and counter-myth in historical and documentary drama.

Histories of the theatre in Britain after World War II include John Russell Taylor’s *Anger and After* (1963) which focuses on a perceived importance of the opening of Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger* in 1956. Taylor also wrote *The Second Wave: British Drama of the 60s* (1971), covering such playwrights as Bond, Stoppard, Orton and Brenton. Innes’ *Modern British Drama 1890-1990* (1992) provides a broader perspective. Dissent from the division of theatrical history into pre- and post-Osborne can be found in Elsom’s *Post-War British Theatre* (1976). Rebellato’s *1956 And All That* (1999) also de-emphasises the significance of 1956, and contains substantial analysis of the relationship of homosexuality to the theatre.

Of all analyses of representations of gay people in drama, the best known is Vito Russo’s *The Celluloid Closet: homosexuality in the movies* (1987), which examines periods in which gay characters were successively laughable, absent, demonised and suicidal. Representations on the stage are covered in Clum’s *Acting Gay: male homosexuality in modern drama* (1992) and De Jongh’s *Not In Front of the Audience: homosexuality on stage* (1992). These works trace the history of stage representations, noting certain landmark plays. Corber deals with both media, placing specific works in the general contexts of history and politics in his *In the Name of National Security: Hitchcock, Homophobia, and the Political Construction of Gender in Post-war America* (1993) and *Homosexuality in Cold War America: Resistance and the Crisis of*
Masculinity (1997). These works are thus useful in connecting dramatic devices with the Cold-War brand of homophobia, which informs writings on the Cambridge spies.

Specific scholarship on the authors to be studied is principally confined to Alan Bennett. These works study thematic concerns and historiography with respect to Bennett’s plays but are not concerned with the link between orientation and treason. Langford’s “Fetishism & Fantasy in Bennett’s Old Country & Single Spies” (1993) considers aspects of sexuality other than the binary of sexual orientation. Turner’s article "North & South: 2 Landscapes of Alan Bennett" in Modern Drama (1994) is concerned with a regional dichotomy which carries implications of class and dramatic idiom. Scarr’s "Alan Bennett: Political Playwright" in New Theatre Quarterly (1996) seeks to position Bennett in relation to politically radical playwrights such as Brenton and in relation to such mainstream authors as Ayckbourn. Finally, in “Royal Family Values: The Americanization of Alan Bennett's Madness of King George” (1999), O’Mealy looks at Bennett's attitude to historiography and dramatic licence.

The most important theoretical debates that are relevant to the subject are in the areas of historiography and queer theory. One primary discourse questions the possibility of the transmission of an absolute historical truth, through docudrama or by any other means. The principal literature in the area of historiography includes Lowenthal’s The Past is a Foreign Country (1985), which retains the idea of an absolute historical truth but asserts that any communication of history can never be free of bias. Roland Barthes expounded principles of postmodern history in such works as “Le Discours de l’Histoire” in Information sur les Sciences Sociales (1967). Keith Jenkins’ Rethinking History (1991) and On ‘What is History?’ (1995) explain in easily
accessible terms the conflict between absolutist and relativist history, the importance of alternative histories for subsections of society, and the need for scepticism in the reading of history. Samuel’s *Theatres of Memory* (1994) emphasises the importance of popular culture and public perception of history, above the constructions of professional historians.

A cardinal point of this thesis is that representations of the Cambridge spies are subject to all the biases inevitable in historiography, and that a true and real presentation of their sexuality, their politics or their motives is impossible. Consequentially, no alternative ‘correct’ view of them will be offered. Specific issues of ‘metahistory’, to use Hayden White’s term, and of postmodern history will be addressed in several chapters. However, the relativist argument is summarized by, for example, Postlewait’s ‘twelve cruxes’ in *Historiography and the Theatrical Event*. He suggests that the subjectivity of history begins with the motives of those people who initiate events, and the conditions that render those events intelligible. Partial documentation must then be taken into account, given that only a limited number of witnesses and interested parties create historical documentation. External factors will affect the reliability of a document and the probability of its preservation. This includes value judgments concerning whether an event is significant enough to be preserved for posterity or discarded. Testimony surrounding an event is then shaped by successive commentaries. When it is subsequently researched, the values of the historian’s own age are interposed. This includes "the ideas of change that historians use to describe sequences and interpret causes of events" as well as their devices of rhetoric and narratology. Finally, the reader’s values and expectations alter the meaning of a received historical account.

---

3 Postlewait 1991

4 Postlewait 1991: 157-178
the case of a historical play, the later stages of historical transmission concern the playwright directly, but further problems arise when dramatists claim to be representing documented facts, ignoring or denying the other distortions listed.

In dealing with the realms of theatre, history and sexuality, Rebellato’s 1956 And All That warns that there are three notions to be challenged: theatrical representation as a ‘fixed set of signs that pre-exist their reception’; gay history as a simple narrative of liberation; and homosexuality as an ahistorical identity. These points are all relevant to the study of plays concerning the Cambridge spies. The values and expectations of the audience are crucial in the reception of history and biography through any medium, including drama. These values are conditioned by the cultural and political background of the times, so a survey of these conditions is essential. It will be shown that social and legal conditions for the homosexual man in Britain fluctuated over the period in question, so that his position was by no means a linear climb from pariah status to acceptance. Finally, differing paradigms of sexual orientation (which have not been chronologically successive, but overlapping) all have their influence on the plays. These models and other issues in queer theory will inform the arguments of this thesis.

Use of the queer/traitor nexus in the spy plays is heavily dependent on the paradigms of sexuality assumed or discussed in the play texts. The queer ‘identity’ model dominates, and is used to associate disloyalty with a type of person as opposed to particular behaviour. Michel Foucault postulated two paradigms of homosexuality, the first based upon individual sexual acts, which in the Christian era became bound up with the concepts of crime and sin. The second is based on identity, its basis medical

---

5 Rebellato 1999: 156
but still juridical. He believed that the second model began in the 1870’s and thus the concept of the homosexual person was invented at that time. The concept of a fixed pseudo-ethnic subset of humanity has been politically useful, as it has facilitated the use of civil rights arguments equivalent to those applying to women and to racial groups.

However, a third major paradigm is emerging (but not yet fully formed) in which there are no fixed identities or boundaries, but human sexual desires are fluid. Like most postmodern concepts, this model emphasizes multiplicity of choice and rejects rigid and conveniently simple categories and narratives. It provides a basis for alternative readings of the Cambridge spies’ behaviour, to set against the dominance of the identity model in the plays.

Representations of these paradigms occur in the depiction of queer characters in history and literature, but also at the level of language, that is, the use and meanings of words. A useful study of the latter, which will be referred to frequently, is Sedgwick’s *The Epistemology of the Closet*. The first of her set of axioms is the simple statement that “People are different from each other”⁶. In this context Sedgwick gives a list of ways in which sexuality varies other than by gender choice, and criticizes the privileging of the gender of one’s partner to create the dominant concept of orientation. She then addresses the problems involved in debating psychological explanations for sexual behaviour:

---

⁶ Sedgwick 1994: 22
Axiom 4: The immemorial, seemingly ritualized debates on nature versus nurture take place against a very unstable background of tacit assumptions and fantasies about both nurture and nature.\(^7\)

The plays under study often focus on education and class upbringing as explanations for the behaviour of the spies, both sexual and political. Sedgwick argues against the primacy of this dichotomy based on biology or culture, that is, on essentialist or constructivist thought. Rather, she focuses on views of sexuality that are either minoritizing or universalising. In the former, the supposed binary of hetero/homo sexuality is relevant only to a fixed minority – those who are marginalized by the distinction. In the universalizing view, sexual choices are an important and determining cultural factor for all people and relevant to all literary discourse.\(^8\) This is not only a statement about the importance of sexuality in all human thought, but recalls the post-structuralist concept in which ‘normal’ sexuality can only be defined by reference to that which is ‘deviant’. The idea of heterosexuality cannot be conceptualized without defining the behaviours it excludes. Thus, any portrait of a politically and sexually marginal traitor helps to define orthodoxy, as conceived by the hegemony existing in the Cold War years.

Certain tropes of gender arise in dramatizations of the lives of the Cambridge spies whenever, for example, Guy Burgess is depicted as an effeminate stereotype. Understanding of this phenomenon is assisted by a second dichotomy expressed by Sedgwick, namely, between views of homosexuality as liminal or separatist. Same-sex object choice is on the one hand thought of by society as a matter of transitivity between

\(^7\) Sedgwick 1994: 40

\(^8\) Sedgwick 1994
genders, but on the other it is a simple preference of like for like. The idea of a
‘woman's soul in a man's body’ preserves an essential heterosexuality - desire operates
between a male identity and a female one. But in the separatist alternative it is natural
that those with so much in common should bond together. This places gays at the centre
of gender definition, not on the threshold.9

However, the three models of sexuality suggested by Foucault and by
postmodern fluidity are the most significant discourse concerning representations of the
Cambridge spies. It is only possible to claim that gay men tend to be traitors if
homosexuality is a well-defined concept with fixed borders, that is, if there is a
delimited group to be accused and people do not shift in and out of this group. At
present, the concept of sexual orientation as a fixed identity is most favoured by the
activist gay community, at least partly because of the aforementioned political
usefulness of this paradigm. However, models of fluid desire have become a subject of
debate because of the issues of inclusivity and the boundary problems inherent in an
identity model. It is not yet widely recognized that negative associations such as those
made in the spy plays are heavily dependent on the domination of the fixed model of
sexuality over the fluid. Corber describes the connection of this debate with the
terminology of sexuality:

Discarding sexual object choice as a master category of social and sexual
identity, many theorists have adopted the term queer as more inclusive
than the terms gay and lesbian, which reinforce binary opposition
between heterosexuality and homosexuality and cannot accommodate
sexual identities that do not fall under either category (for example,

9 Sedgwick 1994: 87
bisexuality, transvestitism, and sadomasochism). Their use of the more fluid and ambiguous *queer* is governed partly by a desire to construct a community that is no longer defined by the sexual object-choice of its members.\textsuperscript{10}

Paradigms of shifting desire have been most favoured by writers dealing with bisexuality. Eadie, for example, criticizes the bipolar simplification of sexuality shown in the assigning of bisexual personalities such as Oscar Wilde to the homosexual alternative, but advocates the dismantling of the dyad, not the addition of a third term for bisexuality.\textsuperscript{11} Klein takes the Kinsey Report’s\textsuperscript{12} scale of seven steps between ‘pure’ heterosexuality and homosexuality and converts it to a grid, with the second dimension consisting of past relationships, present ones, and the individual’s ideal desires.\textsuperscript{13} It should be added, however, that this model can be misunderstood as placing a person in a fixed position at a moment in time, denying multiplicity of desires and choices. Adoption of this paradigm would allow the Cambridge spies to be depicted as undergoing ‘conversions’ of their sexuality but still belonging to a definite homosexual or bisexual ‘ethnicity’ at the time of their treason. Daumer also argues against asserting a bisexual identity, as this would undercut the epistemological possibilities of a completely fluid model of sexuality:

I propose, therefore, that we assume bisexuality, not as an identity that integrates heterosexual and homosexual orientations, but as an

\textsuperscript{10}Corber 1997: 195-6
\textsuperscript{11}Eadie 1999: 122
\textsuperscript{12}Kinsey Report 1948. See chapter 1 for details.
\textsuperscript{13}Klein 1999
epistemological as well as ethical vantage point from which we can examine and deconstruct the bipolar framework of gender and sexuality...

Hemmings connects this goal with Foucault’s models of homosexuality, by questioning the place of bisexual behaviour in act-centered or identity-based paradigms:

The fact that bisexuality has not been pathologised as a sexual identity per se may be one reason for the contemporary claims that bisexuality does not exist. It is still considered (problematically) as a set of acts. Yet there is a danger that in claiming an identity per se, bisexuals will be categorised and contained in a similar way to homosexuals at the end of the nineteenth century. Does recognition of other sexual subjectivities outside of homosexuality and heterosexuality necessitate the assumption of a particular identity?

Most importantly, breaking down the identity paradigm creates a more elusive target for stereotyping. A collection of desires, rather than a well-defined group of people, is less easily portrayed as dangerous, alien or disloyal. Since the principal model of sexuality assumed in the plays (and in prose works to be studied) is that of fixed identity, the Cambridge spies are regarded primarily as homosexual or bisexual persons. The language of identity will therefore dominate discussion of sexuality in the texts. This thesis concurs with the emerging view of the fluidity of human sexuality, but its focus is on texts which conveyed to the audience the static version of orientation, and

---

14 Daumer 1999: 159
15 Hemmings 1999: 198
therefore discusses sexuality principally in terms of that concept. It will be shown that
the texts either advocate or deconstruct a connection between treason and gay identity,
as opposed to either (a) homosexual acts as in Foucault’s pre-1870 paradigm, or (b)
homoerotic desires as in the fluid model.

Discourses on the nature of sexuality arise not only in political debate within, or
on behalf of, the queer community, but in the representation of non-normative
sexualities in literature and drama. A recent and sympathetic biographical play is The
Invention of Love by Tom Stoppard\textsuperscript{16}, concerning the life of the classicist A. E.
Houseman. Its most significant aspect is that Houseman’s unfulfilled love for his
colleague Moses Jackson is depicted in a manner free of moral judgments, and is
represented as a particular sexual desire, an entity in its own right, not a symptom of a
fixed sexual identity. Houseman is depicted as ‘a personality and not just a sexuality’
(to borrow a slogan from gay politics). The extent to which this is true of
representations of the Cambridge spies varies from author to author.

Corber detects a departure from the identity model in gay writing even before
the postmodern era. Examining such writers as Tennessee Williams and Gore Vidal, he
writes:

The gay male writers examined in this study tended to treat
homosexuality less as a category of identity resembling other categories
of identity such as race and ethnicity than as a form of oppositional
consciousness. They rejected models of political solidarity that were
patterned on kinship relations. Insofar as such models require the

\textsuperscript{16} Stoppard 1997
constant policing of borders to determine who did and did not legitimately belong to the gay and lesbian communities, they hindered the formation of the broadly based coalitions that were needed to overcome the racist, sexist, and homophobic structures of post-war American society.\textsuperscript{17}

The plays concerning the Cambridge spies, however, were not written by playwrights who publicly identified themselves as gay, nor will this study assert that the sexuality of the authors is a significant factor in the reception of the texts. Rather, the playwrights will be studied principally with respect to their attitudes to historiography. However, it will be asserted that these beliefs concerning historical truth are a significant factor informing the texts and the images of sexuality and treason contained in them.

When historical drama seeks to represent persons of non-normative sexuality, additional subjectivities arise, beyond those common to all historical writing. In order to place representations of the Cambridge spies against the background of other dramatic biographies of gay men, a brief survey of plays and films concerned with non-fictional homosexual men is useful, and reveals some problematic images and issues. A series of unsympathetic portrayals of historical characters can be traced. Goldman’s \textit{The Lion in Winter} (1966) depicts the relationship between the future Richard I of England and Philip II of France as a dirty secret and a matter of great distaste to Philip. Hampton’s play and film \textit{Total Eclipse} (1969), concerning Rimbeau and Verlaine, depicts Rimbeau particularly as selfish, arrogant and violent.

\textsuperscript{17} Corber 1997: 4
Comparison of films concerning T. E. Lawrence demonstrate a shift from silence to openness in the last four decades of the century. David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) concealed Lawrence’s sexuality, with regard to his homosexuality and his masochism. His autobiography, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, carries indications of both:

In the Mediterranean, woman's influence and supposed purpose were made cogent by an understanding in which she was accorded the physical world in simplicity, unchallenged, like the poor in spirit. Yet this same agreement, by denying equality of sex, made love, companionship and friendliness impossible between man and woman. Woman became a machine for muscular exercise, while man's psychic side could be slaked only amongst his peers. Whence arose these partnerships between man and man, to supply human nature with more than the contact of flesh with flesh.18

Furthermore, Lawrence’s description of the incident at Derra, when he was flogged by the Turks, shows a deep preoccupation with the details of the event and reveals his mental obsession with the incident afterwards.19 Lean’s film obscures this by ascribing to Lawrence a vague form of post-traumatic stress after Derra. In a form of expurgation common to biographical films of the time, no desires for men or boys are alluded to. In contrast, *A Dangerous Man: Lawrence After Arabia* (1993) depicts Lawrence's activities at the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919. In this film Lawrence's homosexuality is made clear when a woman is sent by French diplomats to seduce and

---

18 Lawrence 1988: 508-9
19 Lawrence 1988: 442-7
spy on him. The latter film’s frankness is an indication of changing values on the part of filmmakers and audiences. However, this does not mean that negative images of historical homosexuals ceased to appear: using Marlowe’s play *Edward II*, Derek Jarman produced a 1992 film in which Galveston and his associates are not only murderous and devious as in Marlowe, but also decadent and sleazy.

The nature of representation is explicitly discussed by Quentin Crisp in an introduction to the teleplay based on his 1977 autobiography, *The Naked Civil Servant*. He tells the audience that he wanted the film to be made, because films are fantasies:

> But then they said “we want the film to be real – you know – real life”.
> So I said “any film, even the worst, is at least better than real life…Yes, of course you must have an actor to play me. He will do it far better than I have done”. 20

Crisp is here setting out in plain language a cardinal point of dramatic historiography. He rejects the notion that any representation of himself can constitute reality, but welcomes the prospect of a simulacrum as a valuable artefact in its own right. Crisp’s concept of artistic *quality* in drama is important to him, not its degree of ‘truth’.

While queer theory is concerned with representations of gay characters and with epistemology, these matters are also connected with the use of myths and Jungian archetypes. In addition to historiography and queer theory, the study of representations of the Cambridge spies is also informed by mythical constructs concerning the ‘Other’, that is, all that is different from the ‘Self’ and is socially abnormal. These ideas infiltrate

20 Crisp, Q. *The Naked Civil Servant* [film], (Gold 1975)
culture at many levels, the most significant being those that reach the largest audiences. Political and sexual bindings of the Other in popular culture therefore form a foundation upon which representations of the Cambridge spies were constructed.

The social climate of the late twentieth century has strengthened the myths and archetypes of Otherness based on political and sexual unorthodoxy. Censorship of realist portrayals of sexuality in the arts has not prevented symbolic representations of ‘deviance’ in fiction, especially in the more fantastic realms such as science fiction and horror. During the 1970s and 1980s, as literary and sexual censorship relaxed, these myths were fed back into realist and historical drama. Plays and teleplays depicting the Cambridge spies were therefore informed by paranoid images of the Other, particularly as the sterile but proselytising alien. The epistemological basis for these myths lies in the placement of any kind of deviance on the marginal side of a multiplicity of binaries. The sense of Otherness, when applied to a particular target group, was reinforced by applying a second such paradigm, so that the queer/traitor association was only one of the pairings brought into play. In the 1990s, under the influence of new critical insights, these binaries have been brought to the foreground and thus deconstructed, by postmodern play and satire.

The binaries capitalist / Communist and heterosexual / homosexual may be described as ‘surface’ examples of a deeper division of terms into central and marginal. One of Derrida’s principal tools for deconstructing texts was the reversal, followed by the neutralization, of these binaries. Some of the pairs he considered most significant were presence / absence, purity / corruption, nature / culture and speaking / writing. The Marxist and the homosexual are therefore identified as absent from the visible
world - hidden, corrupt, and culturally produced, whereas the politically orthodox Briton or American and the heterosexual are held to be present, pure, and according to nature. Even the speaking / writing binary is mapped to sexuality when Derrida speaks of Orpheus entering a homosexual phase and exchanging singing for writing.\textsuperscript{21} Both Derrida and Foucault have shown that in these binaries, the central term is always already penetrated by the marginal and defined through it. Orthodox politics or sexuality cannot be conceptualised except as that which is ‘not commie’ or ‘not queer’. Though the marginalized are used as scapegoats, this phenomenon is double-sided. The original Greek \textit{pharmakon} (the literal scapegoat) was led from \textit{inside} the city to the outside, to perform a purifying effect. The scapegoat is both stigmatised and beneficial, just as the Greek word means both poison and remedy. There must always be a marginalized group to be blamed for all woes, but also to give the majority a means of self-identification.

\textbf{During the Cold War the highest priority target for exclusion in the West was the Communist. However, for marginalizing propaganda to be successful it was desirable that it invoke a visceral reaction in the majority of the population, and a group distinguished only by its beliefs concerning the distribution of wealth did not fit this requirement. It was too intellectual a concept and needed to be loaded with more basic biological overtones such as race or sexuality. For this reason the dangerous Bolshevik was usually paired with another marginalized group: the Jew in the Nazi and Fascist}

\textsuperscript{21} Sedgwick gives an extended list of binaries that are applied to sexual orientation. Using the convention of placing the normative term first, these include disclosure / secrecy, knowledge / ignorance, public / private, masculine / feminine, majority / minority, innocence / initiation, natural / artificial, new / old, discipline / terrorism, canonic / non-canonic, wholeness / decadence, urbane / provincial, domestic / foreign, health / illness, same / different, active / passive, in / out, cognition / paranoia, art / kitsch, utopia / apocalypse, sincerity / sentimentality and voluntariness / addiction (Sedgwick 1994: 11).
regimes; the Asiatic in, for example, Australia where Communism was associated with the ‘yellow peril’; and with the homosexual on both sides of the Atlantic. Persons who posed the same threat were already metonymically the same person, but the two targets for paranoia have often been literally portrayed as the same group. Hence, in the abovementioned historical examples, the Jew is a Bolshevik even if he is a banker, Asian immigrants are a political threat even if they are shopkeepers, and the queer is a potential traitor whatever his position or background.22

In popular fiction, the racial and gender stereotyping of the political villain has been commonplace. Sax Rohmer’s Chinese character Fu Manchu (in novels of the 1910s to 1950s) and Fleming’s Doctor No were the epitome of the yellow peril. The femme fatale in Anglophone fiction was a mainland-European version of the insidious alien linked with the female (also, of course, the marginalized term of a binary). The ‘Mata Hari’ figure represented political danger through espionage combined with a dangerous sexuality. From the earliest decades of film, the ‘vamp’, exemplified by Theda Bara, provided visual images of this two-fold danger and was connected to the myth of the literal vampire.

Up to the 1960s, censorship restrained the unencoded representation of homosexuals in the fiction of espionage. In one of Ian Fleming’s James Bond novels, the sexuality of the assassins Wint and Kidd is referred to, and Kidd is said to have a

22 The pairing of sexual unorthodoxy with anti-capitalism began long before the Cold War. William Lecky in Democracy and Liberty (1896) wrote that capitalism is based on hereditary property, and therefore on marriage and the family. Socialism seeks to annihilate family stability and affection, and to undermine morality (Dijkstra 1996: 270-1). This combination of sexual with economic rhetoric was inherited by such writers as Ayn Rand, in whose works the ‘real man’ is the individual entrepreneur, whose family is threatened by any form of collectivism.

25
‘pretty face’ but no overt sexual behaviour is depicted. A C.I.A. agent in the book ventures the opinion that homosexuals make some of the most vicious killers. In the 1971 film made from this book, however, Wint and Kidd use perfume, hold hands, and use effeminate body language throughout. Between the 1950s and 1970s, increasing license to portray homosexuals allowed a more thorough, yet thoroughly negative, picture of the queer killer to be shown. Thus, in the realm of fiction, the homosexual Cold Warrior or gangster could be depicted and exaggerated, alongside representations of the historical Cambridge spies.

From the 1960s onward, however, novels such as those of John Le Carré produced an alternative image of the Cold War, a more earthy and ruthless Cold Warrior than Fleming's romanticized James Bond. Le Carre's *The Spy who Came in from the Cold* (1963) uses a metaphor of a family in a car being crushed between two trucks, Communism and Capitalism, reflecting Le Carre’s portrayal of two forces equal and opposite but both deadly. The television series *Callan* (1967-72) also depicted the British secret services as no less unscrupulous than the K.G.B. This lessening in the demonization of Communism may have weakened the power of the queer/traitor metonym, but did not reduce the frequency of its use, especially since it was encoded in other kinds of popular culture besides the espionage story.

In the spy novel or film, the political (that is, Communist) half of the nexus was in the foreground, leaving the sexual half to be encoded. In more fantastical literature, however, the polymorphous aspects of the myth of the alien Other could be either deeply embedded or deliberately brought into the open in allegorical fashion. The genres of science fiction and horror are the most fruitful in tracing images dealing with

---

the fear of the perverse. These two areas of popular culture contain characters analogous to the Cambridge spies - creatures who are literally rather than figuratively alien - who express outwardly the threatening aspects encoded into images of the spies. The horror genre presents archetypes at their strongest and most threatening, and thus presents the most obvious sexual subtexts. Science fiction also has an ability to present social concepts at their most basic, by stripping them of any familiar context or by reversing the normal/deviant duality.

In the realm of science fiction, the use of political/sexual binding as a tactic is explored openly in *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1981), a novel by Ursula LeGuin. On a planet whose inhabitants are hermaphroditic, the politician Estraven has a strong preference for the male role in sexual relations. Any such strong leaning in either direction is considered deviant by this rigidly bisexual society, and Estraven’s enemies make full use of it in falsely accusing him of treason. In exile, he makes a speech almost identical to one attributed to Guy Burgess in Bennett’s *An Englishman Abroad*:

> How does one hate a country, or love one?... I know people, I know towns, farms, hills and rivers and rocks... but what is the sense of giving a boundary to all that, of giving it a name and ceasing to love where the name ceases to apply?²⁴

The question being asked is ‘what are Estraven and Burgess betraying?’. LeGuin’s answer is that Estraven is betraying the norms of society, those norms in this case being the reverse of the heterocentrism of our society.

²⁴ LeGuin 1981: 181
There are many works of science fiction that throw into sharp relief a nexus between sexual deviance and traitorousness in a more cryptic manner than LeGuin. Included in this category are all works in which insidious aliens take over human beings, notably Robert Heinlein's novel *The Puppet Masters* (1951). This device reflects a particular aspect of homophobia - that one cannot tell the 'aliens' from normal people - the racist can at least detect the object of his phobia immediately. The undetectable alien also represents both the Communist traitor and the sexual deviant in that both may be spawned by normal, even elite, parents. This often-repeated mythical construct plays on the same fears that are applied to both homosexuals and Communists – they can look like normal people; they are the undetectable insurgents who, like Heinlein’s parasites, cannot reproduce and so must convert others. Here we see an allegory of Communist recruitment as well as the perceived danger of allowing ‘queers’ to influence children.

When two phenomena are invoked by the same mythical image, it is easy to engender equivalent fear of them, and promote the assumption that the presence of one in an individual implies the presence of the other. The fear is deepened by the concept of disguise, in which the concealed alien is executing a plan to take over and alter human society. In stories of the literal alien, many aspects of the invader are concomitant with fears engendered with respect to the political and sexual outsider.

It is notable that Heinlein’s *The Puppet Masters* was published in 1951, the year of Burgess and Maclean’s defection, but not filmed until 1994, after the Cold War had ended. Under Orme’s direction, the film adds significant detail to Heinlein’s aliens. When government agents arrive in the town where the invaders have landed, a female agent is the first to detect that something is amiss with the townspeople, because she is
not being subjected to the male gaze in the manner to which she is accustomed. So the first signifier of ‘alienness’ is a lack of proper heterosexual response. Since the alien creatures adhere to the outside of the human body, the compulsory removal of clothing is the second detection strategy used. The alien can no longer be closeted – the binary of openness and secrecy can be broken if deviance is written on the body. This is reflected in a desire to be able to detect homosexuals by physical means, and leads to the portrayal of such characters as Burgess and Blunt in visibly effeminate or effete ways.

A further part of this mythical construct is the lone hero or small group who alone know the danger and must convince the majority. The portrayal of characters who, for example, suspected Philby long before he defected, provides an equivalent to the heroes of ‘hidden alien’ fiction. When most people see a human shape, their tendency is to assume that the object of their gaze is a ‘normal human’ and it is difficult to convince them that s/he is an alien invader. In the same way, the heteronormative gaze can be said to cause the invisible or closeted nature of homosexuality – everyone is presumed a priori to be heterosexual. The homophobe must therefore warn the public of the danger, perhaps giving a list of small indicators of possible deviance. Life magazine in 1964 warned that the homosexual was nearly impossible to detect:

> Often the only signs are a very subtle tendency to over-meticulous grooming, plus the failure to cast the ordinary man’s admiring glance at every pretty girl who walks by.\(^{25}\)

Such markers, applied to characters such as the Cambridge spies, are the real-world equivalent of the flaws which enable the fictional hero/es to detect the invaders.

\(^{25}\) Quoted in Edelman 1994: 152
Invasion of the Body Snatchers was originally filmed in 1956 from Jack Finney’s novel, and a remake was produced by Kaufman in 1978. The activities of aliens once again become noticeable when a man fails to respond to his wife in his usual manner. Several heterosexual couples are estranged in the early part of the film, which depicts the gradual revelation of the alien presence. The next stage is the observation of secret meetings and mutual recognition by the apparently altered people, symbolizing a general fear of underground deviant societies (from gay bars to Communist cells). There is no external giveaway by which the aliens can be detected in Kaufman’s version of the myth, and hence no victory – the ending is apocalyptic.

Fear of foreign, Communist and homosexual influence on the minds of the people are also symbolized in science fiction. The aliens in the film They Live (Carpenter 1988) wear human disguises but are also converting real people to their cause via subliminal messages in all forms of media. They are exemplars of the fifth-column propagandist, and must be fought in the same manner as perceived Communists in Hollywood (vide McCarthy) or British county councils disseminating pro-gay information (restrained by the Thatcher government).

The homosexual as alien can be encoded in the fine details of script or cinematography. Russo shows how the implicitly gay character has been depicted as being from an alien world, from the demi-monde of The Picture of Dorian Grey (1945) to the elite background of Rope (1948). In the film version of Tennessee Williams’ Suddenly Last Summer (1959), the ‘offstage’ homosexual character is faceless. As with the monsters of Ridley Scott’s Alien or Spielberg’s Jaws, the camera shows only parts of him or becomes his point-of-view, to avoid any clear depiction of him. As a rule, the

---

26 Russo 1987: 94
alien remains in shadow, with the possible exception of a final revelation of its form when it is destroyed. The same hidden, closed and cryptic semiotics are used for monsters, for homosexuals and for spies.

The myth centring on a lone monster in the horror genre, such as Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, is generally an inversion of the myth of the hero’s journey. The archetypal monster becomes a Jungian shadow of the hero. This ‘monster’s journey’ has also been frequently applied to homosexual characters, including the Cambridge spies. The hero’s journey involves phases of separation, initiation and return. Similarly, the first phase of the monster’s journey is creation, involving separation from nothingness or from an initial humanity (in, for example, vampires and werewolves). The second is, as with the hero’s journey, the longest and involves repeated clashes with opposing forces. The final stage is destruction – a return to nothingness or to a normal human death. Horror films following this pattern were produced in large numbers in the 1960s and 1970s. Films featuring homosexual characters made in the same period also show a pattern of (a) realisation or discovery, (b) conflict with societal disapproval, and (c) death by suicide or murder. It will be shown that features of this journey can be seen in some of the spy plays, especially Mitchell’s *Another Country*. Like monsters, gays were treated in mid-century films as “things” that should not have happened. They were killers, prison inmates (especially in the case of lesbians), or horror film monsters such as vampires.

---

27 The tortured protagonists of *Victim* (1961), *Children’s Hour* (1962) and *The Detective* (1968) all undergo the monster’s journey. At the least they were sinister figures like the housekeeper Mrs Danvers in *Rebecca* (1940).

28 Russo 1987: 49

29 The place of gay imagery in the vampire genre has been the subject of study in its own right. Lesbian-encoded vampires feature in *Dracula’s Daughter* (1936), *Blood And Roses* (1960), *Vampyres* (1974), and
The vampire is the character from the horror genre who provides the most obvious metaphor for sexual unorthodoxy. Vampires are usually androgynes – the taking of blood replaces sexual relations and victims may be of either sex. They can be interpreted as having no sexual orientation, and are emancipated from the biological family.\textsuperscript{30} Another link between the vampire and the homosexual is the theme of narcissism. Freud saw narcissism as an essential part of male homosexuality and as the rationale behind desire for the similar instead of the different in choice of partners. Vampires change their victims to be like themselves. The innocent heroine becomes the ‘vamp’ stereotype, altering styles of dress, hair and body language accordingly.\textsuperscript{31} As well as vampiric narcissism, this device becomes another allegory of conversion - in this case from heterosexual woman to lesbian. The Communist homosexual is doubly represented in this fashion, presenting the danger of conversion of others to be like him/herself – politically, sexually or both.

This metaphor is one that has been applied as much, if not more, to lesbians as to gay men. Dijkstra has also linked the vampiress with politico-economic metonyms:

Both she and the immigrant hordes were agents of collectivism – that Semitic invention of a man named Karl Marx, who had made the call of “woman-rule” once again echo through civilization. Popular culture

\textit{The Vampire Lovers}, one of several versions of Sheridan La Fanu’s \textit{Carmilla}. Male gay vampires occur in Polanski’s \textit{Fearless Vampire Killers} (1967), \textit{Once Bitten} (1985) and there was recent public controversy over the degree of homoeroticism in \textit{Interview With The Vampire}, based on Anne Rice’s novel.

\textsuperscript{30} Day 1993: 69-70
\textsuperscript{31} Weiss 1992: 94
eagerly emphasized this link. Thus the sexual vampire became a political subversive who threatened the very survival of economic individualism.\textsuperscript{32}

The foremost use of the vampire myth, Bram Stoker’s \textit{Dracula}, was published in 1897 when overt sexual acts could not be described in British novels. It is a novel of copious encoded sexuality. The word homosexual was not yet in use – the nearest 1897 term would have been ‘sexual inversion’. Critical analysis of \textit{Dracula} has painted its title character as Other, culturally, physically and sexually, but also socially - he is attempting to infiltrate Britain’s middle class although he is encoded as both above and beneath them.\textsuperscript{33} As a vampire he is a lower form of life but as a Count he is of aristocratic class. It will be shown that this dichotomy arises in the depiction of the spies, especially Blunt, as upper class and yet degenerate – Marxist and yet elite.

The representation of all these myths – the alien, the monster, the vampire - was opened to new treatment from the 1970s onward, with the advent of post-modern analysis and queer theory. At first there was resistance to the queering of texts - Sedgwick’s sixth axiom states “The relation of gay studies to debates on the literary canon is, and had best be, tortuous”. She provides a list of the ways in which homoerotic speculations about literature are typically dismissed.\textsuperscript{34} However, forms of queer theory had been growing in proportion to the stridency and sophistication of attacks on homosexuality. Foucault considered this inevitable:

\textsuperscript{32} Dijkstra 1996: 281

\textsuperscript{33} Hatlen 1988: 120

\textsuperscript{34} Sedgwick 1994: 48
...but it also made possible the formation of a "reverse" discourse: homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or "naturality" be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified. There is not, on the one side, a discourse of power, and opposite it, another discourse that runs counter to it. Discourses are tactical elements or blocks operating in the field of force relations;...  

Therefore, forms of the ‘alien’ myth came under direct scrutiny by new writers in the postmodern period, starting in the late 1970s. Pearson, in a specific study of science fiction, states that ‘queerness’ is not necessarily about identity but can simply be about difference. Since sci-fi and horror are already concerned with that which is dissonant, these texts may be (a) not overtly queer but analogical, (b) proto-queer challenging sexuality and social surroundings, (c) coded but in plain sight, an open secret, or (d) overtly queer. Such multiple levels were open to other genres also. During this period of conscious exposure of metonyms, the vampire myth was expanded in the novels of Anne Rice, who lived in San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury district amidst the gay community. Her vampire characters are no longer on the ‘monster’s journey’, but are the often-sympathetic protagonists, struggling with the ethical problems and the isolation of their difference from humans. They do not have any human forms of sex - the drinking of blood (including from each other) is sex as well as food for them, and gender is irrelevant. Same-sex desire is never hidden in the novels of Anne Rice. Her sadomasochistic ‘Sleeping Beauty’ series depicts sexual activity in all four combinations of male/female with dominant/submissive. In the same way, her

35 Foucault 1990: 101  
36 Pearson 1999: 5
depictions of vampire society break down presumptions of gender dominance and heteronormativity.

Another recent treatment of the vampire myth which is full of ‘post-modern play’ is Joss Whedon’s television series *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003). The conventions of the vampire myth are constantly satirised, and the image of the helpless female victim reversed. In addition, the encoded sexual unorthodoxy of the vampire is juxtaposed with an open treatment of human sexuality. With actual gay relationships present (and portrayed as healthy and positive), the metonymical treatment of vampires is inevitably brought to the surface and deconstructed. Pairings that were once covert in the vampire genre are brought to the surface through double-entendre dialogue. This kind of open and foregrounded homosexual metaphor occurs in Bennett’s *A Question of Attribution*, which will be examined in detail.

Generally speaking, however, the spy plays are not postmodern but belong to conventional docudrama. Since they were writing in the 1970s to 1990s, postmodern ironical devices such as those of Rice and Whedon were available to the playwrights but not used. Inquiring into the reason for this absence leads us back into the realms of genre and historiography – the playwrights were attempting to produce ‘factual’ or semi-fictional docudrama. They had certain views of history and historical writing which conditioned their treatments of politics and sexuality. Exposure of their use of queer/traitor metonyms requires greater analysis of their texts and subtexts.
This analysis will proceed in the following stages, moving from background, through early historiographical treatment of the spies in prose, to the plays and their authors:

Chapter 1 provides the historical background to the writing of the spy texts and the events they depict. The relevant cultural history ranges from global politics to the arts, including the effects of paranoia arising from the Cold War, espionage, social problems in Britain, the nature of the Left and youth culture. The loss of empire, the class and education systems and censorship are particularly relevant in this context. The position of the homosexual in post-World War Two Britain is examined with particular reference to the legal situation and the theatre. Queer representations in film, television and on stage are reviewed in order to illustrate the cultural milieu surrounding the plays in question.

Chapter 2 summarizes the events surrounding the Cambridge spies and then deals with the exposé class of prose works, written mainly by journalists. The role of journalists as historians is questioned, and their relationship with the government is used as an example of problematic historiography. The approach of these writers to documentation, ‘authoritative’ sources and the concept of truth is examined, with particular reference to Chapman Pincher – especially his use of unattributed sources (secretly approved by government) and his revision of certain matters related to sexuality. Theoretical aspects of historiography and queer studies are revisited, such as foundationalism, revisions of received ‘truth’, and history as a set of connections between facts as opposed to a collection of events. The chapter considers how these discourses can be brought to bear upon the journalistic texts.
Chapter 3 surveys relevant biographies and autobiographies. Thematic and narratological issues are raised, to determine their usefulness in illuminating this biographical material. Examples range from researched biography to personal recollection, including material from Tom Driberg, Graham Greene, Peter Wright, John Banville and Miranda Carter. Kim Philby's autobiography is also studied, along with the place of biography in received history and the problems of autobiographical memory. In particular, the chapter examines the relative importance of sexual orientation to each biographer, and the historiographical values in play. Motives, selectivity and the construction of schemata in biographical works are considered, as well as the role of semi-fictional writing.

Chapter 4 deals directly with drama, and its new layer of problematic issues in historiography. The exigencies of the documentary-drama genre and the requirements of writing for television are included, along with the historiographical approach used by each of the principal playwrights: John Osborne, Hugh Whitemore, Hugh Conner, Robin Chapman, Julian Mitchell, Ian Curteis and Alan Bennett. The content of the plays is summarized, and the place of the authors in the genres of theatre, film and television analysed. The central task is to establish each playwright’s attitude to the transmission of history, since their representation of sexuality will later be shown to have a strong connection to their placement on the scale of absolutism and relativism. Specific theories of postmodern historiography such as those of Barthes and Hayden White are examined for relevance to the playwrights’ works.
Chapter 5 analyses in depth the thematic issues of the plays. It re-examines models of sexuality, and then deals with a list of aspects of representation of gay characters in the spy plays. These aspects include: stereotypical constructions of the central characters; motives and ethical standpoints ascribed to them; homosexual identity versus act-centred definitions; the closet and the openness/secrecy binary; and the upper-class man, the educated man or the English man as traitor (in each case either *ipso facto* or via sexual orientation). For example, this chapter examines class as a significant marker of infidelity in the plays of Ian Curteis, the role of the public school in Julian Mitchell’s *Another Country*, and the centrality of Englishness in the works of Alan Bennett. Finally, the chapter shows how the queer/traitor nexus is either covertly confirmed or directly examined and criticized in the plays, and considers the role of this nexus in homophobic aspects of the writing of history.

A time-line comparing events in the political, legal and cultural worlds is provided as Appendix A.
Chapter 1 - Historical Context

Buffy: I’m only saying, you know, it might be interesting if we came at it from, you know, a different perspective.

Lecturer: I’m sorry you find these facts so boring, Miss Summers… Some of us are here to learn. Believe it or not, we’re interested in finding out what actually happened. It’s called ‘studying history’.

*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*


Political and cultural history in the period after World War Two provided obvious applications for the myths and archetypes of the hidden Other. The Cold War, with its concentration on secrets and infiltration rather than on uniformed soldiers created a paranoid culture, ripe for the use of xenophobia in the broadest sense – fear of that which is different: racially, politically or sexually. It was also an ideological battle, which required the embedding of propaganda inside popular culture. It is important to examine the details of this historical background, with particular reference to the Cold War, espionage, the homosexual community and the theatre, film and television.

The western world emerged from World War Two into a state of fear, both ideological and, in the age of nuclear weapons, existential. The domination of a siege mentality, marked by Churchill’s delineation of the castle walls as the ‘Iron Curtain’, is shown in the vast resources channelled into the arms race, the space race, and on the technology of espionage. The Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb in 1949. The American reaction to this threat included a hunt for spies who had supplied nuclear secrets, and a greater effort to complete the hydrogen bomb to regain nuclear superiority. This triggered an arms race, which was portrayed as a balance of power.
The concept of balance was a comforting illusion used to offset the fear of mutual annihilation. But it also increased the fear of individuals who might be assisting the other side to gain an advantage.

Although in 1957 Khruschev took over from Stalin as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, the expected thaw failed to materialise. In fact, the Cold War was given an added dimension by the 'space race'. The U.S.S.R. launched Sputnik, the first orbiting satellite, and Yuri Gagarin became the first human in space. This clearly placed the Soviet Union ahead of the United States, leading to a massive American effort, especially towards landing on the lunar surface. Lyndon Johnson, in political control of the project, expressed his fear of going to bed "by the light of a Communist moon". The 1962 Cuban missile crisis also showed that the post-Stalin period was still subject to the danger of global thermonuclear war.¹

The paranoia of the Cold War was expressed in a less extreme but in a more specific manner in Britain than in the United States. There were no wide-ranging investigations in 1950s Britain equivalent to the McCarthy hearings. Conservative leaders such as Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan did not openly seek to smear the British Labour Party with accusations of Communism, as Robert Menzies did in Australia throughout the 1950s. Instead, the emphasis was on specific allegations of espionage. There were a number of individual prosecutions for high-level spying in Britain, beginning with scientists Alan Nunn-May and Klaus Fuchs. However, their trials were conducted normally - there were no Royal Commissions in the manner of the Petrov commission in Australia in 1954. In 1946, Nunn-May was sentenced to

¹ One of the first full-length docudramas on American television, The Missiles of October (1973), was a detailed representation of meetings held during this crisis.
ten years in prison for passing atomic secrets to the Soviet Union from the Chalk River research centre in Canada during World War Two. It was implied at his trial that there were other scientists involved in the same activity. M.I.5 investigator William Skardon conducted searching but polite inquiries at Harwell, now the centre of all British nuclear research. He eventually obtained a confession from Klaus Fuchs, who was also imprisoned. Another scientist at Harwell, Bruno Pontecorvo, escaped to Moscow at the time of Fuchs' arrest in 1950. Fuchs and Pontecorvo had been Marxists since the time of Fascism in their native Germany and Italy respectively. However, Nunn-May claimed that his motive was to bring about a balance of power; that he foresaw the era of the Mutually Assured Destruction (M.A.D.) policy, in which neither side would launch a nuclear war for fear of the inevitable counter-strike. Nunn-May saw such a standoff as preferable to a situation where the U.S.A. alone had the atomic bomb, and therefore assisted the Soviets to obtain their own.

The most significant event in post-war espionage in Britain, however, was the defection of diplomats Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean in 1951, which will be discussed more extensively in the next chapter. The discovery of their defection caused uproar in the press, and fury on the part of the Americans (to whose Atomic Energy Commission Maclean had had access). The homosexuality of the two diplomats became an issue immediately, and Kim Philby was named in the House of Commons by Marcus Lipton MP as the 'third man' in the spy ring. He was officially cleared for lack of evidence in 1955 but removed from all access to official secrets. He disappeared in Beirut and surfaced in Moscow in 1963. Sir Anthony Blunt admitted being the 'fourth man' in the spy ring to M.I.5 in 1964. He was given immunity from prosecution provided he would cooperate with M.I.5 and reveal all he knew of other Communists
and potential spies. This arrangement went on for fifteen years, during which only a select few officials knew of his confession. He was publicly exposed in November 1979, in a statement to the House by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Speculation immediately began concerning whether there was a 'fifth man'.

These events being played out throughout the decades of the Cold War created a public fascination with the secret world, fed by the writings of investigative journalists such as Chapman Pincher and Nigel West. In fact, it was the imminent publication of such material that led to Blunt's public exposure. There were also "Secret War" style revelations, such as the publication of the work of Alan Turing and others in codebreaking during World War Two - details of the cracking of the German Enigma cipher machine were made public. Signals Intelligence (Sigint) and other forms of espionage had been kept under an even greater cloak of secrecy than nuclear weapons matters in Britain. Despite the absence of large scale public witch-hunts for spies, the British Official Secrets Act was taken very seriously. The locations of M.I.5 and M.I.6 headquarters were supposedly secret, in contrast with the road-signs at Langley, Virginia, which openly direct traffic to the "C.I.A.".

Prior to 1952, candidates for sensitive posts had been only negatively vetted by services such as M.I.5, M.I.6 or the Special Branch. This meant that their names were checked against their files of persons whose activities or beliefs were held to be suspect.

---

2 Sir Roger Hollis was accused by authors including Chapman Pincher in *Their Trade is Treachery*, and Peter Wright in his biography *Spycatcher*. The British Government fought to suppress *Spycatcher* in a court case in Australia, where Wright now resided.

3 John Costello's *Mask of Treachery* (1988) claimed Blunt was the ringleader rather than a minor talent-spotter as he claimed.
If there was no match, the application would be stamped N.A.K. (Not Adversely Known) or ‘Nothing known against’. But in the wake of the Burgess/Maclean defection, a more searching procedure was adopted. Positive vetting involved specific research and interviewing. It was a searching and pro-active policy that went beyond the consultation of existing records.

The importance of nuclear secrets required a greater intrusion into the privacy of key personnel, and personal eccentricities that would have been ignored before and even during World War Two now became unacceptable indicators of instability. Nuclear scientists and codebreakers such as Oppenheimer and Turing were part of a new elite. The idea of scientists replacing priests as the saviours of mankind had been growing throughout the century, and the likes of Einstein were now paragons in the public mind. Those working directly on the Manhattan project had achieved great status, but the heavy increase in responsibility that came with it created a crisis of conscience. Indeed, Einstein, Leo Szilard and others protested against the bomb’s use.4

The threat of human fallibility led to a desire to place as much as possible of the nuclear apparatus in the hands of machines.5 But the principal fear in military and government circles was that vital information lurked in human brains where it could not be deleted, and where there was insufficient control over where it might be transmitted. The most unfortunate fact about human individuality in this context was that original

4 This process of loss of innocence has also been made the subject of docudrama, notably Day One (Sargent 1989)

5 Nightmare scenarios that could arise from this thinking are enacted in such films as Fail Safe (Lumet 1964) and Wargames (Badham 1983), although the satirical Dr Strangelove (Kubrick 1964) depicts nuclear disaster as triggered by human insanity.
thinking was required to stay ahead in technological advances, in weaponry and in the
science of secrecy itself (cryptography, faster and greater computer storage, etc). The
idea of the eccentric genius had many exemplars. Elimination from military or
paramilitary work of the unstable personality could mean the removal of the very
individuals who were capable of innovation. For example, in discussing the
background to Alan Turing’s life, Hodges deals with the dilemma of the ‘dangerously
individualistic’ mind:

It was a hard saying, for it meant that Keynes and Russell, Forster and Shaw,
Orwell and G.H. Hardy all alike belonged in prison. Like Einstein they had
permitted themselves to doubt the axioms, and even if they agreed to obey the
rules, it had been their own choice so to do. That very detachment, that sense of
making a choice, was precisely what the ordered community would have to
deny.6

Homosexuality, of course, was one of the most feared forms of eccentricity, especially
in the wake of the defection of Burgess and Maclean.

With the advent of nuclear weapons, the entire nature of warfare had changed.
The movements of troops and ships were no longer a matter of deploying superior
firepower to a point of engagement, as in the entire history of warfare hitherto. Instead,
such movements were merely signifiers of the determination of the superpowers to
engage in global thermonuclear war if provoked beyond a certain point. They were part
of a new language being spoken between the U.S. and Soviet governments.7

6 Hodges 1983: 499
The existence of nuclear weapons and the M.A.D. policy of deterrence between East and West created a climate of apocalyptic fear. Postulations in serious discourse and in speculative fiction included the extinction of the species or various post-holocaust dystopias. These works emphasised the danger to human society and to the entire ecosphere. Fear of nuclear disaster became connected with pollution issues and growing environmentalism to create new imperatives in sociopolitical thought. Government and media pursuit of individual spies provided a public distraction from proposed systemic solutions, such as mutual or unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Although Britain obtained its own atomic weaponry and had a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, one of the contributing factors to the national mood in post-war Britain was the realization that it was no longer, in fact, a first-rate power in the world. The former British Empire was disintegrating. The status of the self-governing democracies (Australia, New Zealand, Canada) had already been changed by the Statute of Westminster in 1931, when the Empire officially became the Commonwealth. Malaysia and Singapore obtained a similar status. In 1947, Britons saw the Union Jack lowered in India, the "Jewel in the Crown", as it was partitioned into independent India and Pakistan. In Africa, Jomo Kenyatta led Kenya to sovereignty, while Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence saw Rhodesia's separation from Britain in 1965. In smaller places such as the Bahamas and Barbados, Britain's influence began to wane in comparison to American military domination, established when lend-lease bases were granted in these places during World War Two. Reasons or emblems for the wane of British status became psychologically desirable, and ‘decadent’ traitors were convenient candidates.

Secretary of Defence Robert McNamara is depicted as trying to make his Admirals understand this in Donaldson’s film Thirteen Days (2000).
Nasser had overthrown British domination of Egypt along with King Farouk, and went on to cause a crisis for Britain in 1956 by nationalizing the Suez Canal. The government of Anthony Eden was widely condemned for collusion with Israel and France, to obtain an excuse to invade Egypt. It was believed by the invasion’s opponents that Britain was trying to return to the outmoded practice of ‘gunboat diplomacy’. The failure of this attack, mostly due to hostile diplomatic efforts by America, was one of the strongest signals of Britain's diminishing status. Perhaps as significantly, British and French actions at Suez destroyed their moral ability to protest over the U.S.S.R.’s violent suppression of revolt in Hungary that same year. The U.S.S.R. had also made threats of nuclear attack upon London, Paris and Tel Aviv over the Suez affair, provoking threats in return from the U.S.A., even though it was opposed to the Anglo-French expedition. The threat of nuclear war at this time was one of the main reasons for the establishment of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, whose lobbying temporarily changed the policy of the Labour party to one of unilateral disarmament (1960-61).

After 1956, the next significant date arising from eastern-bloc politics was 1968, when a suppression similar to that of Hungary took place in Czechoslovakia. The ruthless suppression of the ‘Prague spring’ (a culturally-led political resistance to the Communist government) resulted in many resignations from the Communist Party in the West, which had also occurred in 1956. These two incidents (as well as the pre-war Nazi-Soviet nonaggression pact) contributed to a diminution of British Communism.

---

8 The C.N.D. split in 1960, with Bertrand Russell leaving to form a more militant group. Hewison describes a more general split between the old and new left: public school Marxists versus middle class youth. (Hewison 1981: 203)
and the transformation of the left into issue-based independent organizations such as the C.N.D. The Cambridge group were now out of date – they were no longer merely the most proactive examples of a substantial culture of upper-class Marxism.

Separation of the British left from the Moscow line also made it more adaptable to social conditions peculiar to Britain. Far more than the simple Marxist divide between proletariat and bourgeoisie, Britain had, in the twentieth century, a shifting spectrum of class divisions. A diminishing remnant of titled aristocracy retained far more prestige in, say, the 1930s and 1950s than its actual wealth could convey, but its power was exercised through influence rather than automatically granted authority. By the 1980s this loss of wealth and real estate was even greater. Secondly, there was an untitled but still hereditary class, passing its power on to the next generation by bequeathing its wealth. This also gave it access to the upper echelons of the education system and thus to some of the same influence as the titled class. Thirdly, distinct from families of inherited wealth, was a class of “new money” whose ranks increased during economic periods favourable to entrepreneurs, such as the 1920s and 1950s. The middle class has also been multi-faceted, with concepts of upper and lower middle classes arising from the relative positions of middle-management, intellectuals and professionals, and the owners of small businesses. The concepts of the lower class and the working class were, for much of the twentieth century considered synonymous, but economic depression and recession periods enlarged a true underclass of the unemployed and homeless.

Class divisions in Britain were strongly denoted through access to levels of education. The elite public schools remained throughout the twentieth century, but for
many decades there was an intermediate tier, the ‘grammar school’. Entrance to these
was through the ‘eleven-plus’ examination (the approximate age at which it was taken).
The grammar schools represented an incomplete shift from wealth to academic ability
in the placement of children into ‘grades’ of education. Before this there was, however,
the phenomenon of the ‘scholarship boy’ who by reason of superlative merit or charity
became a token representative of the lower or lower-middle classes in the elite schools
and universities. The significance of class and education in representations of the four
spies will be discussed in chapter 5.

Another specific cause of political instability in Britain in the 1960s was the
issue of immigration. Since independence and partition, Indian and Pakistani nationals
had been moving to Britain in large numbers, and in 1968 there was an exodus of
Kenyan Asians, exercising their rights as subjects of the British Crown. A process of
reverse colonization was occurring as a concomitant of the end of empire. Bram
Stoker’s *Dracula* has been seen as foreshadowing this fear: Stoker’s character Harker,
amid his feelings of guilt over helping to transfer the count to London, envisages semi-
demons spreading over England, colonizing not only land but also bodies, which he
appropriates and transforms.⁹ Arata characterizes the underlying paranoia thus:

But fantasies of reverse colonization are more than products of
geopolitical fears. They are also response to cultural guilt. In the
marauding, invasive Other, British culture sees its own imperial practices
mirrored back in monstrous forms.¹⁰

⁹ Arata 1993: 88
¹⁰ Arata 1993: 85
Specifically, Britain seemed to be subject to colonization by monsters of unfamiliar race, culture and religion. It was easy for unfamiliar sexuality to be added to this list in consequence of the 1951 defection.

During the post-war period of racial disharmony, Conservative MP Enoch Powell became a spokesman for anti-immigration feeling. The racist movement evolved into the National Front, a youth-oriented party connected with ‘skinheads’, reminiscent of the German S.A. This racism contributed to a general feeling of alien invasion, of infiltration by Otherness, which spilled over into the issues of Communism and homosexuality.

But one of Britain's greatest problems was concerned with perceived invasion and occupation by the English. Troops were sent into Northern Ireland in 1969, ostensibly to defend the Protestant community. Hostilities with the Irish Republican Army intensified until attacks occurred in London in the 1980s, such as the bombing at Harrod's. British people could well see themselves as victims under siege, rather than the dominators of the world, and thus terrorists were added to the list of infiltrating aliens.

The invasion of the Falkland islands by Argentina in 1982, and the British counter-attack, gave extended life to British jingoism, and the resulting consolidation of Conservative power was to have strong repercussions for the British economy as well as social issues such as the legitimacy of non-heterosexual lifestyles.¹¹ The Falklands War was seen by many as the last assertion of British imperialism. Its political success for

¹¹ A political dispute in the aftermath of the Falklands would be fought using documentary drama as the background. The historiographical implications of this will be discussed in a later chapter.
Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had an element of ‘the British bulldog’ being not quite toothless yet. The U.S.A. kept its distance as it had in 1956, though its diplomatic statements were friendlier to Britain this time.

Throughout the post-war decades, the greatest changes in Britain were cultural – there were no massive political disruptions on the scale of the U.S. Vietnam protests or the student uprising in France in 1968. Neither was there any great disruption to Britain’s long-standing class divisions. While the election of the Attlee Labour government in 1945 had held out hope of some deconstruction of the class system during the reconstruction period, this failed to eventuate. The next Labour government, Harold Wilson’s in 1964, was swamped by Britain’s general economic problems. It raised taxes on the wealthy, especially ‘unearned income’ (those who live by owning) which began to separate the titled aristocracy from their estates. In education, however, the domination of the public schools and of Oxford and Cambridge in training people (men) for positions of power continued. The structure of power which existed in Britain when plays about the Cambridge spies were written was little different from that of the 1950s.

Cultural histories concentrating on the theatre generally mark 1956 as a strong turning point because of Osborne’s Look Back In Anger and the Royal Court Theatre. Rebellato in 1956 And All That: the making of modern British drama (1999) critiques excessive concentration on this date by surveying significant stage works prior to 1956 and weaknesses in the scope of what was presented on stage afterward. It may be that Look Back In Anger is given such emphasis because it was presented to the public in the same year as other ‘angry young’ works outside the theatre, such as Ginsberg’s poem
Howl and Colin Wilson’s book The Outsider. These works merged with changes in the theatre to form the impression of the ‘angry young man’s arrival. In 1958 Kerouac’s On The Road was published in Britain, and aspects of European bohemianism, frequently fashionable in the past to sections of youth culture, again became connected with a left-wing artistic subculture. The synthesis of these cultural flags became known as the ‘beat generation’. The contraction ‘beatnik’ was probably pejorative in origin, given its Russian-language suffix, to mark the beat generation as potentially or actually Marxist and therefore dangerous. Abstract expressionist painting and jazz music travelled across the Atlantic in the 1950s. A new form of leftist journalism arrived in the form of such publications as the New Left Review. However, the new left was principally a youth movement. Never before in history had the young been placed so strongly in the foreground. Youth culture came to encompass a feeling of social responsibility, seen in terms that were more oppositional and more concerned with direct political action than in previous generations. This trend peaked in the middle to late 1960s, with cultural markers of conformity inherited from the 1940s and 1950s rejected as no longer valid. A sense of failure and loss could be said to exist on both sides of the ‘generation gap’, the young believing that the older generation had squandered opportunities, and older citizens observing social change with an increasing feeling of alienation. Calls for greater tolerance of homosexuality seemed part of this unwelcome social upheaval, which was not conducive to any positive revision of perceptions of the Cambridge spies.

In the 1960s, beatniks and teddy-boys were replaced by mods and rockers, then by hippies, yippies and flower children. Principal driving forces for these subcultures
included opposition to the military-industrial complex, resistance to consumerism, and sexual freedom:

Similarly, the hippy rejection of marriage and the family, of the mass systems of production and distribution, exalted the self and self-discovery against the range of conformities.¹²

Artistic self-expression was arguably second only to Vietnam as a focusing point for youth culture, and only in the U.S.A., not in Britain. American involvement in Vietnam was the issue that dominated the cultural upheaval of the 1960s in that country. Dissent from a foreign policy of opposition to Communism at all costs was expressed in resistance to the draft and widespread protest against the Johnson and Nixon administrations. But because the British government did not commit troops in Vietnam, there was less large-scale political activism. A slight skirmish in Grosvenor Square was the nearest Britain came to the Kent State fatalities in America in 1969. On the whole, Britain in the 1960s was marked not by the radical politics of the streets as in America, but by the images of Carnaby Street fashion and the Beatles. Long hair as a counterculture statement spread back to the U.S.A., but such phenomena as the drug culture and the sexual revolution were less overt in Britain. They were only implied by the cultural content; for example, in Lennon & McCartney's "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" (L.S.D.) In America, massive radical movements pushed the issue of individual spies (such as Alger Hiss or Julius & Ethel Rosenberg) aside. There was no such shift in perspectives in Britain to diminish the lasting image of the Cambridge spies.

¹² De Jongh 1992: 87
Even the culture of "sex, drugs and rock-and-roll" was less politically charged in Britain than in the U.S.A. The Beatles and Rolling Stones were relatively apolitical when contrasted with the overt protest music of Joan Baez and Bob Dylan. Britain had no equivalent of Timothy Leary; and the Lord Chamberlain's office and the Obscene Publications Act continued to purge the stage and page of sexual content. Indeed, one of the most revealing aspects of British culture was the resilience of censorship. Censors in post-war Britain oversaw the political as well as the sexual. The revolutionary film *Battleship Potemkin* (Eisenstein 1925) was not licensed for British release until 1954. At the close of the 1950s, however, a number of embarrassingly anomalous court cases forced the Parliament to consider new legislation. At first, the proposed law was potentially more restrictive than the existing regime. But the Conservative government, clinging to a narrow parliamentary majority, was forced by a number of MPs into a more liberal piece of legislation than originally drawn up. In the final form of the Obscene Publications Act 1959, Section 1 defines obscenity as material that would "tend to deprave and corrupt persons". But exceptions could be made if the publication could be defended in court as “in the interest of science, literature, art or learning, or of other objects of general concern”. This led to a series of trials dominated by expert witnesses. As for the interpretation of ‘to deprave and corrupt’, the main precedent cited in prosecutions was *R vs Hicklin* 1868, when it was ruled that material having this tendency included any matter which created "thoughts of a most impure and libidinous character". One of the most notable prosecutions was against Penguin Books for publishing an unexpurgated version of D.H. Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* in 1960. Expert witnesses from psychiatry, literary academia and even the Church of England were all on the defence side, which was victorious. However, the prosecution of "Oz" magazine, an icon of youth culture, was successful and its editors sentenced to

---

prison terms. It was easier to obtain a conviction when the material in question was not ‘literature’ in the highest sense, but part of popular culture.

Although youth subcultures, beginning with the beatnik and the teddy boy, were often depicted as the epitome of anarchy and decadence in the 1950s and 1960s, they were temporary diversions from a more popularly demonized group, that of the homosexual. The position of the British homosexual in the post-war period was undergoing social, cultural and legal changes. Until 1967, homosexual acts were illegal in Britain. The Sexual Offences Act 1956 (again coinciding with other cultural watersheds) had renewed the nineteenth century legislation under which Oscar Wilde had been prosecuted. But this legal repression failed to achieve a cultural repression. A gay demi-monde existed in London and showed itself in public, either in encoded form or as a carry-over from ‘soldier’s drag’ which had been legitimised by its wide use during World War Two. Stage shows by and for soldiers had usually included drag acts, and on London’s stages, this material was evolving into something more risqué. But there was an increasing backlash in the form of letters to the press and complaints to the Lord Chamberlain against effeminate imagery as a perceived promotion of, or communication between, gay men:

In fact, homosexuality in the forties and fifties, far from being nowhere, seemed to many to be everywhere.

14 De Jongh 1992: 52
15 The penalty was two to five years imprisonment. Specifically, the Act said:
12. (1) It is a felony for a person to commit buggery with another person or with an animal…
13. It is an offence for a man to commit an act of gross indecency with another man, whether in public or private. (Halsbury 1990, Vol 12: 279-80)
16 Rebellato 1999: 156
In the 1950s the number of prosecutions of gay men increased, and some took this to be a sign of increased incidence. It may be that in government circles it was thought that an equivalent of the Oscar Wilde case was in order – a highly publicized trial of a prominent person, to send the gay community back underground. This became possible in the case of Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, Peter Wildeblood and two others.\footnote{As with the case of Alan Turing, it began with Montagu’s report of a theft to the police.}

Montagu was originally tried alone in 1953, for an indecent attack on Boy Scouts acting as guides in his museum. This accusation was based entirely on the Scouts’ statements, and Montagu’s flat denials prevented his conviction. But the following year, all four men were charged with offences relating to RAF servicemen. This gave the case an added overtone of affecting national defence. The press treated it as a show trial about widespread moral decay. Wildeblood, who was a writer for the Daily Mail, published an account of the process in which he accused the authorities of a range of high-handed and illegal activities: forgery, searches without warrant, telephone tapping, use of the Special Branch, and incentives to turn ‘Queen’s Evidence’.\footnote{Wildeblood 1955}

However, some MPs were concerned about the publicity engendered, and this led to the recodifying of the 1885 law. Parliamentary discussions began in 1954, with opposition to reform mainly set out through attacks on ‘so-called scientists’, behaviourists and psychologists whose revisionism on the nature of homosexuality was held to be a threat to youth. Scapegoating and the death of empire arose simultaneously when one Lord spoke of ‘other countries in the past, who were once great, but became decadent through corrosive and corrupting immorality.’ But the 1956 outcome, restating the old law, showed that the dominating opinion was close to that of Lord
Brabazon: "There are the hunchback, the blind and the dumb; but of all the dreadful abnormalities surely abnormal sexual instincts must be one of the worst."\(^{19}\)

It is a measure of the difference between the cultural climate of the two decades that only eleven years later the Sexual Offences Act decriminalised homosexual acts for men over 21 years old.\(^{20}\) The 1967 law stated:

1. (1) Notwithstanding any statutory or common law provision... a homosexual act in private shall not be an offence provided that the parties consent thereto and have attained the age of twenty-one years.\(^{21}\)

However, some of the vital concepts in this provision were not what they seemed. It was declared in judicial precedents that an act was not in private 'when more than two persons take part or are present'.\(^{22}\) Other exceptions to the new law related to homosexuality in the armed forces, merchant ships, public lavatories, involving mentally handicapped people, and for procuring. Here, the old penalties still applied.

Organized political consciousness in the homosexual community began in the U.S.A.\(^{23}\) In 1969 the Stonewall riots, prompted by raids on New York gay clubs, led to

\(^{19}\)Hansard (Lords) 187 p737-767

\(^{20}\)There had never been any laws against acts between women. Queen Victoria had stated during the drafting of the nineteenth-century legislation that such things were physically impossible, and no Parliamentarians had seen fit to update this view.

\(^{21}\)Halsbury 1990, vol 12: 383

\(^{22}\)Halsbury 1990, vol 12: 383

\(^{23}\)The Kinsey Report in 1948 had found that fifty percent of males had responded sexually to members of the same sex at least once (De Jongh 1992: 51). The concept of a bisexual spectrum, rather than a discrete
the formation of the Gay Liberation movement. An equivalent organization was formed in Britain the following year. At the same time, media attitudes to the gay community shifted from silence to prurience. In 1970, the ‘current affairs program’ treatment of homosexuality was satirised in Monty Python’s 'mouse problem' sketch. Silhouetted interviewees discuss their activities in hushed tones: "Well it's not a question of wanting to be a mouse. It just sort of happens to you... I came to realise that I was more at home when I was with other mice”.

The 1980s saw a new wave of homophobic paranoia arising from the A.I.D.S. issue. The media did not shrink from using the term ‘gay plague’ for the H.I.V. outbreak; renewed discrimination in employment had a convenient raison d’être; and the new Religious Right declared it to be God’s judgement upon homosexuals. Health information programs, commenced by British county councils when the nature of required preventative measures became clear, were soon heavily restricted. In 1987, the Thatcher government brought down Section 28 of the Local Government Act, which stated:

(1) A local authority shall not -

(a) intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality.

binary of sexuality, made its debut. This idea worked against the classification of homosexuality as a sickness or as a freakish placement of a ‘female mind in a male body’. In 1973 the U.S. Psychiatric Association declared that homosexuality was not a mental illness. This jettisoned texts from Kraft-Ebbing through Freud up to hybrid (such as Jesuitical) Christian/psychiatric views.
(b) promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship.²⁴

This forbade any funding of gay organizations, any printing of material helpful to the homosexual community specifically, or any funding of counselling services. Short of repealing the 1967 Act, the government did all it could to suppress official recognition of a homosexual lifestyle.

The consent aspect of the 1967 law was thrown into doubt by the 'Operation Spanner' case. In 1990, the Central Criminal Court condemned a group of gay men for sadomasochistic activities. Appealed all the way to the House of Lords in 1993, this case established that consent was not sufficient to prevent conviction if judges did not like the particular sexual acts involved. The concept of privacy under the 1967 reforms was also fraught with danger. As a legal defence it did not apply if a third person was present. This enabled continued persecution of the gay ‘scene’ - bars, clubs and saunas were likely to be haunted by undercover police looking for acts of ‘indecency’ that were not private enough for their taste. So even at the end of the twentieth century, the British homosexual man was walking a legal tightrope. He had to be very careful of the age of his lover due to a discriminatory age of consent (21 years), and careful of the narrow definitions of privacy and of consent.

It is clear from this strategy of loophole attack that the ‘gay history’ of these decades cannot be seen as a narrative of gradual liberation. It was also integrated with the Cold War phenomenon of paranoia concerning Communist infiltration and

²⁴ Halsbury 1990, Vol 25: 882
espionage. In the most general terms, Alan Turing’s biographer casts the queer/traitor nexus in terms of a binary of conformity versus individuality:

Meanwhile the axioms of politics held that, granted the existence of an enemy, real or imaginary, any dissension or falling out of line could be regarded as weakening the state, and hence a form of treachery. And it was commonly suggested that a man who could do that thing, the worst thing in the world, was capable of anything. He had lost all mental control. He might love the enemy. For all these reasons there was life in the ancient myth, or mythette, of the homosexual traitor.²⁵

In more specific terms, the homosexual became a target of the apparatus of McCarthyism in America, and Britain was obliged to follow suit, since all of America’s allies were compelled to copy U.S. security procedures before they were allowed access to American secrets. All the byways of McCarthyism were therefore contagious. In the United States in 1950, the Senate established a committee to inquire into

the extent of the employment of homosexuals and other sex perverts in Government; to consider reasons why their employment by the Government is undesirable; and to examine into the efficacy of the methods used in dealing with the problem.²⁶

²⁵ Hodges 1983: 500-501

²⁶ Interim Report submitted to the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments by its Subcommittee on Investigations pursuant to S.Res.280, 81st Congress. (Reprinted in Corey 1951)
There had never been so specific an enquiry before this. Its findings set out the reasoning behind the blanket homophobia of the Cold War period:

It is generally believed that those who engage in overt acts of perversion lack the emotional stability of normal persons. In addition there is an abundance of evidence to sustain the conclusion that indulgence in acts of sex perversion weakens the moral fiber of an individual to a degree that he is not suitable for a position of responsibility…

The conclusion of the subcommittee that a homosexual or other sex pervert is a security risk is not based upon mere conjecture. That conclusion is predicated upon a careful review of the opinions of those best qualified to consider matters of security in Government, namely, the Intelligence agencies of the Government.27

The committee was clearly urged on in its task by the secret services – it should be borne in mind that J. Edgar Hoover was head of the F.B.I. at this time, his homosexuality being known only to a select few.

Testimony . . was taken from representatives of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the intelligence services of the Army, Navy and Air Force. All of these agencies are in complete agreement that sex perverts in Government constitute security risks. The lack of emotional stability which is found in most sex perverts and the weakness of their moral fiber, makes them susceptible to the blandishments of the foreign espionage

27 ibid.
agent... Furthermore, most perverts tend to congregate at the same restaurants, 
night clubs and bars.\textsuperscript{28}

Corber’s summing-up of the report of the Senate Appropriations Committee points out 
its basis in the Foucauldian ‘post-1870’ view of sexual orientation and in fear of the 
concealed and undetectable:

To support its claims that lesbians and gay men did indeed constitute a 
security risk, the committee appealed to a medical model of same-sex 
eroticism. It tried to show that homosexuals and lesbians were by 
definition emotionally unstable and should therefore "be considered as 
proper cases for medical and psychiatric treatment". This meant that even 
those gay men and women who seemed "normal" should be expelled 
from the government. They were as emotionally unstable as more 
stereotypical homosexuals and lesbians and were therefore just as 
vulnerable to the "blandishments of the foreign espionage agent".\textsuperscript{29}

The report acknowledged that substantial surveillance would be needed to establish that 
a targeted person was a homosexual, that effeminate behaviour was not a necessary 
condition for such a determination. The gay man was the hidden fourth-columnist, the 
invisible alien. The idea of such a person having access to secrets was anathema. Corber 
expands on his link between this fear and psycho-medical discourse concerning 
sexuality in his film study, \textit{In the Name of National Security}:

\textsuperscript{28} ibid.

\textsuperscript{29} Corber 1993: 62
I will argue that this paranoia is directly related to Cold War fears that "the homosexual" was indistinguishable from "the heterosexual" and had infiltrated all levels of American society. Finally, locating the film in its historical context will shed more light on the heterosexual panic of the period. In particular, it will clarify the significance of the juridical construction of "the homosexual" as a security risk. Because this construction involved the appropriation of a medical model of same-sex eroticism, it resulted in overtly unprecedented alliance between juridical and medical discourses.\(^{30}\)

Cold War paranoia was therefore working against any process of enlightenment occurring in the fields of psychology or sociology. The Kinsey Report (1948) was a first step in breaking down the idea of a fixed and delineated homosexual ‘subspecies’ in favour of a pattern of complex and shifting desires. However, this was not a soothing idea for post-war homophobia, but rather the opposite:

Although historians of American sexuality may be right in claiming that the Kinsey reports eventually undermined the restrictive norms of male and female behaviour in post-war America and therefore helped to make possible the sexual liberation movement of the 1960s, their most immediate impact was to exacerbate the emergent heterosexual panic. Kinsey's findings that the sexual identities of most Americans were fluid and unstable only reinforced fears that homosexuals and lesbians had infiltrated the federal government and threatened to subvert it from within. For if Kinsey was correct, if homosexuality and lesbianism did

\(^{30}\) Corber 1993: 61
indeed constitute an "inherent physiological capacity" that could not be contained, then gay men and women would have little difficulty converting straight employees to their "perverted" practices. The knowledge that many "normal" men and women had once been so converted, even if they were not now engaging in same-sex practices, made this vulnerability to sexual conversion seem even more acute. The report issued by the Senate Appropriations Committee claimed that "one homosexual can pollute a government office". In other words, the continued employment of lesbians and gay men by the federal government threatened to result in a homosexualisation of American society.\textsuperscript{31}

In this atmosphere the precise legal position of homosexual acts \textit{per se} was almost irrelevant – the presence of any person practising them in a governmental or influential position was tantamount to a crime against the state. Such a person was not required to commit any specific act of treason to be considered a fifth-columnist.\textsuperscript{32}

In Britain, these views were not so specifically set out as in the Senate’s report, but they were nonetheless applied in practice. Alan Turing’s biographer notes that when Turing was arrested and tried for a homosexual act in 1952:

\textsuperscript{31} Corber 1993: 63

\textsuperscript{32} The presence of J. Edgar Hoover was not the only irony associated with this attitude. An equally fanatical anti-Communist homosexual, Roy Cohn, was chief aide to Senator Joseph McCarthy. McCarthy’s pursuit of the Army Department, which led to his downfall, may have been urged upon him by Cohn because the Army would not release Cohn’s lover from military service.
[He] had not only been found out, but had been found behaving with what to the official mind, or indeed to the mind of anyone alive to the demands of national security, would appear a horrifying indiscretion... His brain, filled with knowledge of the British cryptographic and cryptanalytic work of not ten years before, had been allowed to mingle with the street life of Oxford Road - and who knew where else?

Turing’s lack of discretion would seem to mark him as unsusceptible to blackmail in the way that a closeted gay man would be. He had admitted his ‘offence’ to the police in full detail, pleaded guilty, and showed no concern about press exposure (though this was minimal). But this made no good impression on the secret services. Indiscretion and open eccentricity were held to be signs of instability and nonconformity that rendered the practitioner unsuitable for secret work. Apart from attending an anti-war rally in 1933, Turing had had little involvement in politics. But his background in Trinity College at Cambridge combined with his sexuality had associated him with Burgess and Maclean. In fact he was not part of their elite circle of leftists (“the Apostles”), but the risk that he was another ‘Red Queen’ could not be taken without infuriating the Americans. Turing’s mathematical work had shown that there could be no proof to certain logical questions, and now, ironically, there could be no proof of his innocence.

The situation applying in the secret world of defence science, the security services, politics and diplomacy was also being played out in the arts. Like the Kinsey Report, visibility on the stage and screen or in print was a two-edged sword. Better

33 Hodges 1983: 502

34 This parallel is one of the bases of Whitemore’s play based on Turing’s life, Breaking The Code.
representations increased understanding but also increased fear. For this reason the progress of dramatic depictions of homosexuality was a case of ‘two steps forward, one step back.’

The history of the British theatre in terms of its depiction of gay characters is conditioned by the legal situation regarding censorship and sexuality itself. But like the broad social position, it is not a linear narrative, either of an increasing number or a steadily improving quality of representation. Rather, a series of ‘in’ and ‘out’ periods concerning outward behaviour can be traced – fluctuations in the degree to which the theatre discussed and/or enacted such markers as drag, the same-sex kiss, and nudity in a homoerotic context. There were similar fluctuations in a broader thematic sense, though certain breakthroughs can be mapped, in which aspects of non-heterosexual life are first shown to the mainstream theatrical audience.

The genre of documentary or biographical drama and issues of historiography became relevant when Stokes’ *Oscar Wilde* opened on the stage in 1936, directed by Norman Marshall. With Robert Morley in the title role, this play emphasized Wilde’s refusal to modify his aesthetic persona, and his recklessness. The film based on the play (1959), still starring Morley, was scripted in such away that events were open to the interpretation that Wilde was falsely accused. The homophobic ‘reader’ could experience the tragedy of a great artist suffering from lies and innuendo.

---

35 Clum’s *Acting Gay* 1992 traces in detail the movements of these three markers between visibility and invisibility.

36 For example, J.B. Ackerley’s *The Prisoners of War* (1925) seems to be the first twentieth-century play in London or on Broadway that dealt with homoerotic desire, albeit unexpressed. (De Jongh 1992: 23)

37 This ambiguity was also used later to some extent in Philip King’s *Serious Charge* (1955) and certainly in the film version of Robert Anderson’s *Tea and Sympathy* (1956).
On the post-war stage, Otway’s *The Hidden Years* (1947) depicted homosexual behaviour in a private school and ends with a guilt-stricken suicide, prefiguring the norm for gay characters in films and plays of the 1960s. A full *Crucible*-style persecution was depicted in Osborne & Creighton’s *Personal Enemy* (1955). A soldier who becomes a Marxist while serving in Korea is accused, along with his brother and an older mentor, of embracing homosexuality as well. This appears to be the first play linking the two – the idea of the queer as ‘commie’ and vice versa is placed in the foreground (not merely a subtext) and in the minds of ignorant and paranoid characters.

In 1956, the same year as Parliament’s confirmation of the nineteenth century law of gross indecency, the Royal Court Theatre production of Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger* was perceived as the beginning of a new wave of theatre in Britain. The ‘Angry Young Men’ were creating plays of social discontent. However, representation of homosexual characters in mainstream theatre did not make any great leaps forward, and George Devine, director of the Royal Court, rejected all forms of ‘camp’ in its productions.\(^\text{38}\) The only references in the stage version of *Look Back In Anger* to homosexuality are directed towards offstage characters. Jimmy refers to 'Greek chorus boys' and the 'Michelangelo brigade', and goes on to say:

He doesn't like me - they hardly ever do… I dare say he suspects me because I refuse to treat him either as a clown or a tragic hero. He's like a man with a strawberry mark - he keeps thrusting it in your face because

\(^{38}\) Rebellato 1999: 215
he can't believe it doesn't interest or horrify you particularly... As if I give a damn which way he likes his meat served up.\textsuperscript{39}

Rebellato notes that these terms and phrasings may have been chosen to placate the Lord Chamberlain, who would not yet allow homosexuality to be overtly mentioned. When \textit{Look Back In Anger} was filmed in 1958, Jimmy does remark that a playwright 'has never been in a woman’s bedroom’ and says that gays at least have a cause to fight for.\textsuperscript{40} De Jongh suggests that Osborne had a distaste for the aging homosexuals he met: that they were to him comic-pathetic ‘Peter Pans’.\textsuperscript{41} It may be that Osborne associated such men with the older style of theatre, such as that of ‘Binkie’ Beaumont, against which he was rebelling. There was a widespread perception that gay men were in control of the theatre, so that jokes circulated in which auditionees had to hide their heterosexuality, and an excessive interest in the theatre was a mark of gay identity.\textsuperscript{42}

The Lord Chamberlain’s ban, which had prevented the stage from acknowledging that homosexuality existed, was lifted on 6 November 1958. However, no embraces or violence (in that context) were permitted. Plays produced that year included \textit{A Taste Of Honey} which depicted a non-effeminate gay character, and Roger Gellert’s \textit{Quaint Honour} in which a number of double entendres had apparently escaped the notice of the Lord Chamberlain’s office.\textsuperscript{43} The necessity of encoding gay behaviour

\textsuperscript{39} Osborne 1960: 36

\textsuperscript{40} Rebellato 1999: 213

\textsuperscript{41} De Jongh 1992: 117

\textsuperscript{42} Rebellato 1999: 170. The latter idea continues to the present day in a more specific form: in the remade version of the film \textit{Bedazzled} (2000), excessive knowledge of Broadway musicals is taken as proof that the main character has been ‘turned’ gay.

\textsuperscript{43} Rebellato 1999: 175-6
prior to this date may have led to the relaxing of restrictions. Rebellato explores the negative results of having to make these encryptions in plays such as those of Terence Rattigan. Conservative forces made accusations of covert imposition of a false set of values on the public, based on the supposed prevalence of homosexuals in the theatre.\textsuperscript{44} This reactionary argument was that serious representation should be allowed by the Lord Chamberlain in order to bring matters of sexuality into the open. At the heart of this argument were all the binaries of secrecy/disclosure or inside/outside, as mentioned in Sedgwick’s \textit{Epistemology of the Closet}, constituting a fear of secret signals and a hidden community existing in the midst of heterosexual society.\textsuperscript{45} If homosexuality could not be totally closeted and invisible, it was preferable that it be brought into the light to be attacked. Just as the pursuit of Montagu and Wildeblood signalled a desire on the part of the government to force homosexuality into the open, the 1958 censorship reform can be read as a paranoid act of exposure rather than a liberal one:

\begin{quote}
Historically, then, there is nothing neutral about the project of representing homosexuality openly and honestly, at a time when the most alarming feature of homosexuality seemed to be its ability to unsettle the possibility of openness and honesty.\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

This interpretation of events serves to demonstrate the danger of seeing gay history, even within the theatre, as a narrative of progressive liberation. Certainly, the details of homosexual representation continued to be heavily censored between 1958 and 1968.

\textsuperscript{44} Rebellato 1999: 162
\textsuperscript{45} Rebellato 1999: 190
\textsuperscript{46} Rebellato 1999: 193
In the 1960s, the theatre sought to be ahead of public standards whereas in the past it had lagged behind. Plays could avoid the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain if presented to the members of a private club, and the Royal Court was made the venue of this kind of presentation for Osborne’s *A Patriot For Me* in 1966. The political fallout from this play took the form of a disagreement between the Lord Chamberlain and the Department of Public Prosecutions. His Lordship wanted the Royal Court prosecuted because its ‘club’ tactic was contrived and flimsy – he believed the law was being flouted. However, the play was a critical and popular success, and the D.P.P. feared public scorn especially if the prosecution failed.\(^{47}\) Innes places *A Patriot for Me* in a list of three plays which helped bring about the end of the censorship of the stage.\(^{48}\)

A club setting was also needed in London for Tennessee Williams’ *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, in which an all-American character has homoerotic desires, and for Miller’s *A View from the Bridge*. Williams’ ability to encode issues of sexual orientation is particularly strong in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Corber perceives this in the semiotics of the stage setting:

A number of critics have noted the resemblance between the bed-sitting-room in which the play takes place and the homosexual closet. Like the closet, the bed-sitting-room is a permeable space whose borders are not clearly defined but constantly shifting.... Moreover, the bed sitting-room fails to protect its occupants from the intrusive gaze of others.\(^{49}\)

\(^{47}\) De Jongh 1992: 106

\(^{48}\) Innes 1992: 157

\(^{49}\) Corber 1997: 132
In addition, Corber rejects criticisms of Williams which see his constantly indirect references to sexuality as cowardice or an incomplete coming-out, and defends his determination to make his plays legally viewable by mainstream audiences:

In *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Williams explored, albeit indirectly, the linkage between homosexuality and Communism in the Cold War political imaginary. If he refused to limit his audience, that is because he understood that in the Cold War era not only gay men but also “promiscuous” women, Communists, and other groups who rejected the post-war American dream of owning a home in the suburbs were forced to inhabit the closet.\(^\text{50}\)

Despite the discreet language and obliqueness of reference in Tennessee Williams works, the British situation still required that the play could only be seen in a ‘private’ club setting, not at a public showing. This situation ended in 1968 when the Lord Chamberlain’s censorship powers were abolished by Parliament. The Broadway stage had been freed a year earlier when the New York state legislature repealed its 1927 law forbidding ‘sex degeneracy or perversion’ on the stage.

An alternative theatre became available in Britain in 1974 when the Gay Sweatshop company was founded, and there was a call for a season of gay plays in *Gay News*. There was also a reaction against the stereotypical treatment and negativity in Mart Crowley’s *Boys in the Band* (1970). The gay press believed that representation by gay actors and writers was required. The Gay Sweatshop, opposed to the frivolous 'lets put on a show' attitude of private gay 'club' theatre, produced a season of serious socio-

\(^{50}\) Corber 1997: 134
political comment called 'Homosexual Acts'. It was considered a success by critics and by audience attendance. A period of opposition followed, as the era of the National Front, of queer-bashers, of Ian Paisley and Mary Whitehouse began. In 1978 the editors of Gay News were prosecuted for blasphemy over a poem depicting a queer Jesus. The Sweatshop responded to Whitehouse’s Festival of Light organization by basing a play called Manmad on a transvestite impersonation of her. The weakness of the 1967 reforms were demonstrated when the Charity Commissioners refused status to a Gay Sweatshop AIDS benefit in 1978, on the grounds that homosexuality was 'regarded in law as immoral'.

In 1979, the historical drama Dear Love of Comrades was premiered by the Sweatshop. Noel Grieg's play concerns Edward Carpenter, who had a formative role in the British Labour Party but was pushed out as an embarrassment when other party leaders became aware of his lifestyle. Grieg uses a combination of historical narrative and depictions of personal relationships. Love affairs and jealousies are portrayed in language that would have been considered ordinary in the theatre if the persons involved were heterosexual. Gay men were seen on stage as influential in history and as having emotional dynamics independent of the genders involved in a relationship. But most significantly, it was an exercise in historiography and gay biography, undertaken by a gay writer and company.

1982 also saw the staging of one of the principal plays studied in this thesis, Mitchell’s Another Country. Mitchell paid tribute to landmark plays of the past, using Bennett as the name of his crypto-Burgess character, the name used for a similar character in Gellert’s Quaint Honour. A public schoolboy who has committed suicide at

---

51 Osment 1989: lxiv
the start of Mitchell’s play is named Martineau as in Otway’s *The Hidden Years*, so that *Another Country* might be interpreted as a sequel to it.

The mainstream theatre also included the plays of Joe Orton, in which homosexual desire is an important part of events but poses no problems within itself – rather it is used as a pointer to hypocrisy. It is not a sin, not a sickness, and not bound up in stereotypes. Neither are gay characters whitewashed - *Entertaining Mr Sloane* uses the image of the sexy hooligan, who may even be a killer. Innes sees Orton’s characters as devoid of any attributes but egoism, and describes Orton’s world as one in which all moral standards are inverted and sexual deviance is the norm.

Of course, throughout the late twentieth century, film had much greater audiences than the live theatre, and consequently a greater effect on the public mind. The representation of gay people in film, as with the stage, involved steps forward and backward. Vito Russo’s *The Celluloid Closet* (1987) is a significant work tracing the history of gay images on the screen. It deals with the marginalizing effect of the absence of images also. In an era when the movies (especially pre-television) were a primary site of cultural indoctrination, young gay men and lesbians were given a sense of invalidation by the universality of heterosexual relationships on film and the use of implicitly gay characters for humour.  

\[52\] De Jongh 1992: 94

\[53\] Innes 1992: 272

\[54\] The 1916 Charlie Chaplin film *Behind The Screen* depicts Chaplin kissing a woman who (he knows) is disguised as a man. Seeing this apparent same-sex liaison, a heavily built man begins swishing around in an effeminate way, to show some kind of solidarity with the ‘gay’ couple. The ‘sissy’ man, deprived of any overt sexuality, appeared as a comedic device in the form of hairdresser or designer stereotypes (Russo 1987: 4 et seq.) Examples include *The Gay Divorcee* (1934), *Broadway Melody* (1929) and *Call*
Homoerotic screen writing had to be encoded ‘between the lines’ since moral campaigners had forced the introduction of the Hayes code in the 1930s. Representations of ‘sex perversion’ were forbidden under this code until 1961. The Hayes code therefore meant that film adaptations of best-selling novels that involved gay characters had to be radically altered, as did the lives of many subjects of film biography. However, writers such as Gore Vidal could dodge the Hayes code by using cinematic subtext – an actor’s expression or a camera angle. In *Ben-Hur* (1959), Stephen Boyd as Messala (but not Charlton Heston as Hur) was encouraged to play a subtext in which the two characters had been boyhood lovers. Sal Mineo’s character in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) is encoded as gay by a picture of Alan Ladd in his locker, his adoration of the James Dean character, and his persecution by other boys. But images themselves were in the closet, a state of affairs whose irony peaked with Rock Hudson, a gay actor, playing the part of a straight man impersonating a gay man in more than one of his films with Doris Day.

The British film industry ‘came out’ before Hollywood with *Victim* (1961), a blackmail story that used the words ‘homosexual’ and ‘queer’ seriously. With the Hayes code being gradually ignored and eroded, the U.S. followed suit but with a series of *Her Savage* (1932) in which Hollywood’s first gay bar scene has two men performing a chambermaid act and expressing a desire for sailors. Encoded lesbian images took the form of female cross-dressing such as that of Marlene Dietrich in *Morocco* (1930), Greta Garbo in *Queen Christina* (1933), and later, Doris Day in *Calamity Jane* (1953) and Joan Crawford in *Johnny Guitar* (1954).

---

films depicting gays as tortured, miserable and suicidal. In such titles as *Children’s Hour* (1962) adapted from Lilian Helman’s 1930s play, and *The Detective* (1968), it was compulsory that homosexual characters must suffer and be killed in the end, by themselves or society. Thus even when queer characters were not encoded as monsters, their dramatic trajectory was still the ‘monster’s journey’ described in the Introduction.

In 1970, *Boys in the Band* by Mart Crowley was filmed. Its characters were miserable and bitchy but stayed alive, and had a sense of camaraderie. As with the 1960s films of suffering, sexuality was the central point of the film. But *Cabaret* (1972) was the first popular film in which a character’s bisexuality was a side-issue and not very problematic. But the history of film is another area where the concept of gradually and uniformly improving attitudes would be misleading. The 1970s and 1980s saw a number of retrograde steps such as the wide use of homophobic language. While the word ‘nigger’ was disappearing, the words ‘faggot’, ‘fruit’ and ‘queer’ (the last used pejoratively) were rife in film. In 1980 there were many protests over Friedkin’s *Cruising*, set in the world of leather bars. It not only returned the queer killer to the screen, but its characters were full of self-loathing, blaming their first partner for ‘turning’ them, as if homosexuality was a form of vampirism or a disease.

It was in the 1990s that major studios began producing films that were about gay individuals but not about the mere fact of being gay. Straight viewers could get something out of these films, but in a reversal of most of film history, they would have to make the effort of translation into heterosexual terms in order to empathize with the relationships depicted. For example, the AIDS crisis led to the making of the first Oscar-winning film that was about a ‘gay issue’, *Philadelphia* (1993). This was not a
film about sexuality itself, but a specific problem that concerned a gay character and could be seen by anyone in terms of mortality, prejudice and loss.

Television drama was to become a significant site because of the genre of docudrama, which allowed biographical and historiographical teleplays concerning actual homosexuals to be made, including the Cambridge spies. On the whole question of handling homosexuality, television lagged behind film in the U.S. and Britain, largely because censors were much more loathe to relax their grip on images beamed to homes and children.

British television showed a version of Benjamin Britten’s opera *Billy Budd* in 1966, in which the homoerotic desire for Billy in Melville’s book was strengthened by Britten. Australia’s first openly gay character on regular television was lawyer Don Finlayson in *Number 96* (1972-77). American gay characters began with one-shot telemovies on the ABC network: *That Certain Summer* (1972) featured a touch on the shoulder between gay characters who survive to the end of the show; and *A Question of Love* (1978) dealt with the issue of child custody for lesbians. In Britain, the issue of gay imagery was publicly discussed concerning the adaptation of Evelyn Waugh’s *Brideshead Revisited* (1981). This program used (but arguably subverted) the ‘country house’ genre of British drama, and featured an ‘out’ homosexual in the form of Anthony Blanche, but it made more subtle suggestions in the principal relationship, that of Charles Ryder and Sebastian Flyte.

Representations of the Cambridge spies on the page, stage and screen have thus been influenced by many aspects of historical background: world politics and the
particular brand of Cold War homophobia it produced; the emergence of discussion of homosexuality in the dramatic arts with its positive effects as well periods of backlash; legal restraints existing in these fields such as the Sexual Offences Act and censorship laws; the cultural archetype of the infiltrating alien pervading all of these areas. Just as the myth in its encoded form in popular culture was either used covertly (and perhaps unconsciously) or exposed and deconstructed, so the copious writings surrounding the Cambridge spies either reinforced or critically analysed the ‘queer equals traitor’ equation.
Chapter 2 – Journalism, Historiography and the Cambridge Spies

Granny turned slowly in her seat to look at the audience. They were staring at the performance, their faces rapt. The words washed over them in the breathless air. This was real. This was more real even than reality. This was history. It might not be true, but that had nothing to do with it.

Terry Pratchett

*Wyrd Sisters* (Gollancz, London) 1998

Given the pervasiveness of the ‘alien invader’ myth, and the increasing visibility of the gay community in the Cold War years, it is not surprising that the public debate about them became connected with fear of hidden spies and traitors. The equivalence of sexual and political threat was supported not only by popular myth but by fears, built into the deepest levels of language, of that which is concealed. Eve Sedgwick in *The Epistemology of the Closet* points out the importance of the knowledge / ignorance duality in the public psyche. Secrecy is seen to be all-pervading, so that in a time when...

knowledge meant sexual knowledge, and secrets sexual secrets, there had in fact developed one particular sexuality that was distinctively constituted as secrecy.¹

On the surface, the secret world of the Cold war period meant the world of Communist spies and infiltrators, but it was unavoidably charged with the meaning of a world of concealed sexuality. This double-layer had profound implications for the historiography of journalism, of prose ‘exposés’, and of dramatic writing.

¹ Sedgwick 1994: 73
The 1950s atmosphere of distrust and fear, both political and sexual, was given something real to reinforce it in a chain of events first known as the “Missing Diplomats” affair. Initially, the press was told only that Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean of the Foreign Office had ‘vanished’. It was soon clear that they had gone to Moscow and that they must have had assistance from other spies within the Foreign and Intelligence services. There was a sensational media response which ranged from details of their flight to allegations of widespread ‘sexual perversion’ in the Foreign Office.

The second phase of the affair could be called the “Third Man” era. Due to his friendship with Burgess, Kim Philby was suspected (strongly in the case of the C.I.A.) and later named in Parliament by Sir Marcus Lipton. After lengthy interrogation by M.I.5 investigators Helenus Milmo and William Skardon, Philby was officially cleared through lack of evidence but was no longer trusted. He was sent to Beirut and quietly slipped into the Soviet Union in 1957. Unwilling to let go of a sensational saga, the media immediately began speaking of a “Fourth Man”. They were justified when it was revealed in 1979 that Sir Anthony Blunt had confessed fifteen years earlier and had been given immunity in exchange for providing evidence that might lead to the detection of more Soviet ‘moles’. The cascade effect rolled on, turning the 1980s into the “Fifth Man” era, in which the prime suspect in some minds, but never proven guilty, was M.I.5 chief Sir Roger Hollis. If Hollis had been a Soviet agent, doubt would be cast on many people he appointed, not least on Australia’s internal security agency A.S.I.O., which Hollis helped to establish.

The role and function of journalists during these events was of paramount importance. With the security services remaining silent and urging politicians to do the
same, newspapers became the principal commentators on events as they unfolded. But some also became longer-term chroniclers through the publication of books on the subject of espionage and the Cambridge spies in particular. In all the writings of journalists throughout these stages there were a number of recurring themes: the failure of the security services to detect the spies; the number of people betrayed to their deaths (substantial only in the case of Philby); the degree to which intelligence relations with the United States were damaged; the role of class and "the old school tie" in the shielding of spies; and above all, the significance of sexuality in the connections between the spies and in their recruitment. Implicit in this last point was whether political and sexual secrecy were necessarily linked.

In the cases of Burgess, Blunt, and to a lesser extent Maclean, both the political and sexual strands of Otherness were actually present in the same men. What was the effect of this on British political interests and on its internal power structure? Would the damage have been less if they had never been exposed, even though they would have had a longer espionage career? This question is indirectly addressed by Sedgwick’s studies on the broad question of the role of homoeroticism in male power structures:

Is men's desire for other men the great preservative of the masculinist hierarchies of Western culture, or is it the most potent of the threats against them?²

Sedgwick’s chosen literary example is Melville’s *Billy Budd*. Budd's charismatic presence initially knits the men together and improves discipline aboard ship, but later causes a near-mutiny. The desire, jealousy and revenge of Claggart, the implicitly

² Sedgwick 1994: 93
homosexual Master-at-arms, brought matters out of the closet, which seems to have made the difference between the binding and loosing aspects of homoeroticism. In the same way, it may be speculated that Burgess' unprompted flight with Maclean invoked the ‘side of the coin’ perceived as dangerous. Maclean’s bisexuality was not widely known – he was safely in the closet. His defection alone would probably not have opened up the area of sexuality to overt discussion in all the debate that followed. The openness of Burgess’ homosexual persona allowed the issue of sexuality to move from the encoded to the surface, from a subtext to a text.

The principal artifacts through which to study journalistic writings are monographs written by newspaper correspondents, since it is in this form that the writers were able most fully to develop their arguments. They were also a principal source for the plays that were written in the next few decades. However, in applying general theories of historiography to the works of journalists, it is necessary to justify their inclusion as historians. Historiographical theory is usually applied to texts produced by academic historians, with particular reference to what is taught in school textbooks. Journalists, however, have a *de facto* place as recorders of the most immediate past. Furthermore, their penetration of a wide section of the population makes it important that their work is subjected to historiographical scrutiny. Samuel in *Theatres of Memory* contends that “history is not the prerogative of the historian, nor even, as postmodernism contends, a historian’s ‘invention’. It is, rather, a social form of knowledge; the work, in any given instance, of a thousand hands”. Application of historiographical theory should therefore be applied to any representations of history, including the journalistic and the dramatic. Representations within popular culture have

---

3 Samuel 1994: 8
as much, if not more, relevance as academic texts. Samuel’s contention is that the debate should be over the dialectic process whereby historical memory is embedded.

At the most fundamental level, it is necessary to question what paradigms of truth are active in a text. The simplest form of analysis of this question is to survey possible authorial biases. Lowenthal does this through his criticism of historians’ references to facts and truth, but he retains the concept of an absolute past which is badly accessed. In his view, bias is inescapable but the works of historians can be compared with primary sources and with memory. In this regard history is less than the past. But Lowenthal also describes the form of revisionism that arises from hindsight, which makes history also more than the past.4

Keith Jenkins and Stanley Fish have traced a continuing conflict, that of foundationalism versus rhetoricism, that has been in existence since the ancient Greeks. Power has always been on the side of foundationalism (absolute ‘revealed’ knowledge). Rhetoricism, emphasizing subjectivity and polemic motives, is now starting to win for the first time.5 So the question becomes whether an author under consideration claims to be conveying matters of absolute fact, the truth of which is borne out in first-hand interviews and in pieces of paper. Are the motives and biases of the people who wrote those papers or made themselves available for interview acknowledged, as well as the mediating role of the recording or transcribing author and of the reader?

The authors of journalistic works on the Cambridge spies faced a specific problem arising from the need to tell a story as well as to analyse the situation. As the

4 Lowenthal 1985: 216-217
5 Jenkins 1995: 130
periods of the third, fourth and fifth men proceeded, there was a frustrating lack of narrative closure. The third man (Philby) escaped to Moscow along with his predecessors; the fourth man (Blunt) was given immunity from prosecution; and the fifth man's identity remained unproven. There was no satisfying climax of retribution. Hayden White identifies this as a recurring historiographical problem:

The demand for closure in the historical story is a demand, I suggest, for moral meaning, a demand that sequences of real events be assessed as to their significance as elements of a moral drama.\(^6\)

There is no hero in the narrative, to detect the ‘immoral’ spies and terminate their activities. Bennett specifically states in the conclusion of *A Question of Attribution* that there can be no narrative closure on the subject:

But who are they all? I don’t know that it matters. Behind them lurk other presences, other hands… It is never-ending.\(^7\)

There was a second authorial difficulty for journalists, namely government censorship of secret matters. But this was revealed to be less problematic than it was made out to be in authors’ and publishers’ rhetoric. The journalistic writers were portrayed by their publishers as thorns in the side of the government, publishing secrets that the government did not want the public to know. Later revelations showed that this was not only a marketing ploy but an obfuscation of government manipulation in the choice of what would be published and who would publish it. The positioning of

\(^6\) White 1996: 282

\(^7\) Bennett 1989: 61
authors such as Chapman Pincher and Nigel West as writers approved by the government, is a factor to take into account when looking at their texts from a historiographical point of view.

In theory, any matters of national defence could be prevented from publication by the system of D-notices. This was a voluntary system rather than a legal requirement under the Official Secrets Act:

Spy-catching as such was obviously a secret matter and would come under Defence Notices. These notices were warnings issued to editors from the Services, Press and Broadcasting Committee, a body in which journalists representing all types of news organisations outnumbered representatives of the Ministry of Defence. Its warnings to keep clear of certain sensitive subjects had no force in law and relied on mutual trust, with final discretion always remaining in the hands of an editor.8

Book publishers also would submit galleys of proposed books on sensitive subjects to the D-notice committee or the security services for approval, but this practice was concealed from the public. It was under these conditions that, following on the newspaper coverage of the spy ‘scandals’, journalists and public commentators began publishing books on the subject, each claiming to make fresh revelations.9 The insiders

8 Hedley & Aynsley 1967: 12

9 One of the first off the mark was Cyril Connolly, with The Missing Diplomats, published in 1953. In the 1960s, Philby’s escape to Moscow had renewed the public’s interest; publications included Sutherland & Purdy’s Burgess And Maclean (1963) and Page, Leitch & Knightley’s Philby: The Spy who Betrayed a Generation (1968).
who were the sources for these books were not revealed - indeed, sources of any kind were not documented. However, their identities often became known later. For example, Sutherland and Purdy, as well as Boyle (*The Climate of Treason*), were assisted by Goronwy-Rees, an enigmatic bisexual figure. In 1979, Andrew Boyle’s publication *The Fourth Man* pointed firmly at Sir Anthony Blunt. The fifteen-year silence over Blunt’s confession could no longer be maintained. Apparently it was this publication which forced the Prime Minister's statement on the matter to Parliament.

However, the case of Chapman Pincher indicates that book publications were sometimes timed according to the government's convenience. Pincher was the best known of the journalistic writers on the subject of the Cambridge spies and the secret world of the Intelligence services, and had a reputation as the scourge of Whitehall secrecy. In 1981 he released *Their Trade is Treachery*. This original version was one of the first to name Sir Roger Hollis as a putative ‘fifth man’, though there had been rumours and accusations around Whitehall for some time. In response to its publication, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher confirmed in Parliament that Hollis had been investigated, with inconclusive results. The nature of the relationship between Pincher and the government came out during the legal battle between the British government and retired M.I.5 Assistant Director Peter Wright, whose memoir *Spycatcher* also accused Hollis in 1987. In his account of the *Spycatcher* trial, Malcolm Turnbull paints a picture which is at odds with Pincher's image as an annoyance to the government:

Chapman Pincher was a legendary political journalist. He was considerably older than Wright, having been born in 1914, but was in

---

10 Robin Chapman’s teleplay *Blunt* (discussed in detail later) depicts him as a having a borderline involvement in the Comintern and at least a full knowledge of what the Cambridge spyring was doing.
robust good health. A staunch conservative, with a small "c", he has the manners and bearing of an English country gentleman. He made his reputation as a journalist with successive "scoops" often about intelligence matters. Pincher's close connections with the conservative military and defence establishment were legendary and in his 1978 book, *Inside Story*, he had boasted of his "unofficial work" as an agent for M.I.5.\textsuperscript{11}

Pincher's first public controversy arose in 1961, when he claimed there had been abuses of the D-notice system in the case of George Blake, a spy for the K.G.B. who escaped from prison. Pincher was vindicated by enquiries into the alleged abuse.\textsuperscript{12} Six years later, he became involved in a dispute over the same system when he became aware that large quantities of outgoing foreign cables were being copied and turned over to the security services at the time of transmission. His revelation of this practice was printed in the *Daily Express* on 21st February 1967. The article was submitted in advance to the security services and a meeting was arranged between Pincher and Colonel Lohan, secretary of the D-notice committee. Hedley and Aynsley’s description of Pincher in a book on this affair turned out to be naïve:

Mr Pincher was at the top of his profession. He was the acknowledged expert reporter on topics covering science and medicine as well as defence and its political fringes. He was the complete professional, so that if the *Daily Express* night desk got him out of bed at 3 AM to say the Russians had a man in space he would react in minutes with a detailed

\textsuperscript{11} Turnbull 1988: 20

\textsuperscript{12} Hedley & Aynsley 1967: 45
commentary. At the beginning of 1967 he was nominated as "Reporter of the Decade", and received the award from Mr Harold Wilson. But success had its price. Mr Pincher's legendary "scoops" for the *Daily Express* brought him enemies in high places as well as admirers. Colonel Lohan said of him: "He had this persecution complex about his telephone being tapped and his letters opened."\(^\text{13}\)

When both Pincher and Lohan reported to the Radcliffe committee, which was appointed by Parliament to investigate the matter, it appeared that there was a miscommunication over whether the D-notices were being specifically invoked or not. Pincher published his article and was accused of breaching the D-notice system by Prime Minister Harold Wilson in Parliament. The *Daily Express* fought back and the incident became a political controversy. Pincher asserted his patriotism and told the Radcliffe committee that he would support the D-notice system to the death.\(^\text{14}\) Colonel Lohan was criticised by the Radcliffe committee, though not accused of any actual misdemeanour or disloyalty. His public response highlights the state of the queer/traitor nexus in the minds of the press and public in 1967:

"The Colonel said, "It was important that those points should be found in my favour. I was being asked, for instance, if I was a queer - it was being put to me point-blank. It was a bit bloody much to put that to a man with four sons, six grandchildren, who has been married to the same woman for 37 years - but it was seriously put to me"."\(^\text{15}\)

\(^\text{13}\) Hedley & Aynsley 1967: 21

\(^\text{14}\) Hedley & Aynsley 1967: 22

\(^\text{15}\) Hedley & Aynsley 1967: 143
While Chapman Pincher may have been an irritant to the Labour government, it emerged that he was *persona grata* with the Conservative government in 1981, when he published *Their Trade Is Treachery*. His principal source for this work was Peter Wright, later the author of *Spycatcher*. The nature of the relationship between them was revealed during the *Spycatcher* trial in order to emphasise the difference in government treatment between Wright and other authors. This discrimination did not focus solely upon Pincher. “Nigel West” was a pseudonym for a Conservative M.P., Rupert Allason.\(^\text{16}\) Using as his principal source an M.I.5 operative, Arthur Martin, he published *A Matter of Trust: M.I.5 1945-72\(^\text{17}\)* and *M.I.5: British Security Service Operations 1909-1945.\(^\text{18}\)* The latter book has a flyleaf note which reads “Like a second Chapman Pincher, he has set the cat among MI5’s pigeons – The Times.” But the trial showed that both cats were in fact working with or at least favoured by the pigeons. A letter from Chapman Pincher to Peter Wright was produced in evidence:

> Havers [the Attorney-General] told me that he is still considering whether to prosecute Martin but says he cannot do that without prosecuting West who has been adopted as a Tory candidate!\(^\text{19}\)

It appears that one reason for Pincher’s privileged status was his use of the past tense in his conclusions. One of the questions submitted by Turnbull to the court during the *Spycatcher* trial was “Why did Pincher draw a very different conclusion in his book

---

\(^{16}\) Turnbull 1988: 29

\(^{17}\) Coronet, London 1972

\(^{18}\) Triad/Panther, London 1983.

\(^{19}\) Turnbull 1988: 99
from that favoured by Wright? Pincher's conclusion was precisely what the government wanted to hear: no current penetration problem, no need for an inquiry”.20

Investigations of this government inconsistency brought to light the details of the procedures followed when such books were published. Chapman Pincher published his own book on the Spycatcher affair called A Web of Deception. It revealed that a copy of the manuscript of Their Trade Is Treachery had been given to Sir Arthur Franks, head of M. I. 6.21 But there was a synopsis delivered by Pincher to M. I. 6. earlier. It reads in part “Prime purpose - to expose, by case records, the true extent of the Communist conspiracy to undermine the fabric of British life and the ruthless methods used by the Russians and their allies to trap the unwary into serving as spies and saboteurs... Roundup - what the facts imply: The vital importance of M. I. 5 and the Security Service in protecting the nation against subversion and sabotage”.22

In short, evidence at the Spycatcher trial suggested that Pincher was an approved right-wing author and that the publication of his book was effectively arranged by Lord Victor Rothschild on behalf of the government. Peter Wright, in his evidence, referred to the arrangement he made with Pincher via Rothschild: “Rothschild said that Pincher's contacts were so good he could ensure the book was published without official interference”.23 But Wright suspected that this was a watered-down version of the true situation:

20 Turnbull 1988: 194
21 Turnbull 1988: 208
22 Turnbull 1988: 183-4
23 Turnbull 1988: 176
I knew Lord Rothschild to be an intimate confidant of successive heads of British intelligence establishments. I could not conceive of him embarking on such a project without knowing it had the sanction, albeit unofficial, of the authorities. I sensed that I was being drawn into an authorised but deniable operation which would enable the Hollis affair and other M.I.5 scandals to be placed in the public domain as the result of an apparently inspired leak.24

All of this background should be borne in mind when examining what Pincher’s texts have to say about the Cambridge spies and the issues surrounding them. His approach to referencing his material and to historiography are outlined in his foreword to the revised edition of *Their Trade is Treachery* (1982).

I also risk being accused of censuring dead men who are unable to defend themselves, but it is the facts that do that, not I. All the allegations made against men that I name arose from their own colleagues, who were witnesses to secret events that infuriated them. Researchers looking for source references will find few here, for in the main this book deals with prime source material collected over the years from people who insisted on remaining anonymous in their lifetime. I am confident that the reader will be able to assess the truth of statements from the detail with which they are presented. As far as possible I have avoided drawing on published material, so much of which is inaccurate and tends to be perpetuated from one book to the next, for the security

24 Turnbull 1988: 135
services eschew correcting published errors on the principle of ‘keeping the waters as muddy as possible’.

While maintaining an illusion of hostility toward the security agencies, Pincher thus seeks to persuade through the Gilbertian device of ‘corroborative detail intended to give artistic verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative’. Certainly Their Trade is Treachery consists mainly of lengthy narration with little or no disclosure of sources or corroboration, even after an inquiry was held between the 1981 and 1982 publication dates. In 1982, Pincher sought to establish an opposition between his sources (such as Wright) within the security services and their leadership, a conflict which clearly did not yet exist:

So far the main result of the inquiry has been to deter present and former members of M.I.5 and the Secret Service from publicly confirming what I have written, which several of them could do.

The density of the narrative in Pincher's work, although failing to supply a hero figure or a satisfying sense of closure, did supply the reader's narratological requirement for plotting. Though there is not much action (in the Aristotelian sense of praxis) there is a plot (mythos) in Pincher's systematic identification of groups which threaten the capitalist way of life. A political, even party-political agenda is indicated by his chapter on ‘Security and the Unions’. Much is made of trips to Moscow by union officials, but

---

25 Pincher 1982: x

26 W.S.Gilbert, The Mikado Act 2 (1885).

27 Pincher 1982: 286

28 Brooks 1996: 260
most partisan is the paragraph on a change in British Labour Party rules, repealing a ban on certain ‘Communist front organizations’ such as anti-nuclear movements:

This move horrified the security authorities whose prime duty is to prevent subversion by Communists and their associates. Their fears that this would lead to a takeover of the Labour Party by extremists, of whom many are known to be secret Communists, proved to be well founded…

Events have moved so quickly that a left-wing demagogue who supports nuclear disarmament by Britain and the weakening of defence relations with the United States, both high priority Soviet aims, is now leader of the Labour Party in the shape of Michael Foot.29

This chapter also contains a diatribe against left-wing controlled borough councils. The same perceptions that led to the passing of the anti-homosexual Section 18 of the Local Government Act are here evident.

Nevertheless, it would not be fair to describe Their Trade is Treachery as an overt exercise in homophobia. Pincher describes the atmosphere of suspicion of homosexuals after Burgess and Maclean’s defection without any particular approval or disapproval:

When Maurice Oldfield was posted to Washington by the Secret Service, he volunteered to undergo a C.I.A. polygraph test to convince the

29 Pincher 1982: 257
American authorities that, as a bachelor, he had no homosexuality problem.\(^{30}\)

The word “problem” may be pejorative, but Pincher keeps his strongest moral condemnations not for Burgess but for Tom Driberg, who wrote a biography of Burgess (see next chapter). Perhaps it was because Burgess was personally silent in Moscow that it was more important to attack the credibility of writers who were putting his point of view.

*Their Trade Is Treachery* and other works naming Sir Roger Hollis as the fifth man failed to obtain widespread consensus that Hollis was guilty, and although it seems that the government wanted Hollis’s name out in the public arena through these books there was never an official declaration of his guilt. Since Hollis was deceased there could never be a trial. The focus of historical writing turned back to the four known spies, examining them in greater detail and with a new emphasis on Blunt. In 1988, John Costello wrote a detailed biography of Blunt called *Mask of Treachery* whose thesis was that Blunt was the ringleader of the Cambridge group, not a wartime spy only, as the official statements had claimed. Costello’s work was described by a later biographer, Miranda Carter, as “unintentionally hilarious…, prurient, feverishly homophobic, wildly fantastical”.\(^{31}\)

When Blunt's involvement as a spy was announced in 1979, it was alleged that he had played a minor role as a recruiter. Government statements placed him in a different category from Philby, Burgess and Maclean because Blunt had been a member

\(^{30}\) Pincher 1982: 279

\(^{31}\) Carter 2001: xv
of M.I.5 whereas the others worked for M.I.6 and the diplomatic corps. However, Costello gave a version of Blunt’s career which included orchestration of the escape of Burgess and Maclean; contact with Philby in 1957 which similarly triggered his removal to Moscow; and that he held evidence of the pro-Hitler activities of the Dukes of Windsor and Kent, which was passed on to the Russians.\footnote{On this last point, Peter Wright wrote that when he was appointed to interrogate Blunt he was instructed to ask no questions about a task Blunt had carried out for the Royal family in the closing months of World War Two. This allegedly concerned the retrieval of communications with the Nazis by the Dukes of Windsor and Kent. Banville in his fictionalized version of Blunt’s life, The Untouchable, speculated that Blunt did not pass this material on to the Soviets, but used it to blackmail the government, hence the fifteen-year delay in his exposure.}

In his views on British public schools and classical education, Costello draws an indirect link between spying and homosexuality by linking both with the upper class (from whom the people with access to worthwhile secrets were mainly drawn). Expensive boarding schools whose emphasis was on the Greek and Roman classics and on the sporting field were the principal influence upon aristocratic youth. Costello refers to a homoerotic undercurrent in these classics and in the gymnasium:

\footnote{Costello 1988: 64}
He then goes on to draw a picture of a group of men who were not only worth recruiting to the K.G.B. but were easy to subvert. In this argument we see one of the principal means of associating homosexuality with espionage - susceptibility to blackmail:

While Britain’s public school system may not have increased significantly the incidence of homosexuality in the national population, it instilled subconscious homoerotic attitudes in successive generations of middle and upper class males, and their shared proclivities in public school resulted in the development of extensive underground “old boy networks” of practicing homosexuals. In turn, because the law made practicing homosexuality a criminal offence punishable with a harsh jail sentence, homosexual networks among the elite offered great opportunities to any blackmailer – or spy – who gained admission.34

However he does not make the suggestion (nor apparently has anyone) that any of the Cambridge group were blackmailed into spying, which makes this logic largely irrelevant. But Costello adds another element of risk for a highly placed homosexual, along with a sordid coloration:

Also like Blunt, Driberg was an aggressive homosexual and relished the danger involved in searching for sexual partners in public lavatories. They shared a preference for lower class men, a common trait of Britain’s privileged classes in search of illicit sex partners.35

34 Costello 1988: 65
35 Costello 1988: 66
Other books released during the ‘was there a fifth man?’ period take on a biographical aspect in the simplistic sense that they concern themselves with a single person, but they were written at a distance and still fall into the category of sensational pieces penned by journalists.\textsuperscript{36}

More general and reflective books were published in the late 1980s and 1990s, which were marked by a decrease in the crusading mentality of earlier works but also contain the broadest speculation about the role of sexuality in espionage. This is true even of Chapman Pincher, who published \textit{Traitors} in 1987. This is a broad-brush approach not focusing on any one group of spies but with a chapter on each of several suggested motivations for espionage, and a treatise on the concepts of loyalty and treason:

\begin{quote}
Loyalty – constancy in a trust or obligation – can be so strong as to lead men and women to prefer death to the traitor’s tag or so weak that it can be overwhelmed by a bribe, a threat or a sexual impulse.\textsuperscript{37}
\end{quote}

\textit{Traitors} also raises the phenomenon of paradoxical attachment to territory, describing how Burgess’ ashes were scattered in an English garden, in accordance with his own wish.\textsuperscript{38} This conflict between regard for the geography and architecture of one's country and distaste for its social and political conditions was to become a major theme in Alan Bennett's plays \textit{The Old Country} and \textit{An Englishman Abroad}.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{36} For example, Freeman \& Penrose’s \textit{Conspiracy of Silence} (1986) and Philip Knightley’s \textit{The Master Spy: The Story of Kim Philby} (1989).
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{37} Pincher 1987: 1
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{38} Pincher 1987: 4
\end{flushleft}
Chapter 9 of *Traitors* is entitled “The Hetero-Sex Factor” and begins with a quote from F.B.I. agent Robert Lamphere: “There is an old adage in the F.B.I. to the effect that there has never been an espionage case in which sex did not play a part.”

This chapter also contains one of the clearest suggestions of a nexus between loyalty/treason and sexuality:

Case histories of known traitors indicate that a totally amoral attitude to sex, expressing itself in abandoned promiscuity – as practiced by heterosexuals like Richard Sorge and by homosexuals like Guy Burgess and Tom Driberg – may well be linked with a similar attitude to loyalty.

Moving on to “The Homo-Sex Factor”, Pincher resists the idea that the so-called ‘Homintern’ was as effective as the Comintern, but ascribes to homosexuality an additional aspect of instability that does not apply to heterosexuality.

With homosexuals like Blunt and Burgess who became revolutionary Communists and traitors, homosexuality may have been a factor in inducing them to rebel against a society which not only disapproved of their habits but regarded them as criminal. As Blunt’s brother, Wilfrid, also a self-confessed homosexual, has expressed it, the treatment of homosexuals as criminals and degenerates was hardly likely to

---

39 Pincher 1987: 114

40 Pincher 1987: 115
encourage uncritical devotion to the established regime in which they were growing up and which they would see as inhuman and oppressive.\textsuperscript{41}

Pincher's final judgment on Burgess indicates the indirect nature of his homophobic thesis:

The notoriously blatant homosexuality of Guy Burgess was not the cause of his treachery but may have been a factor by warping his character in a general way.\textsuperscript{42}

The links in the queer/traitor nexus are therefore being traced as follows: a homosexual is mentally aberrant and will not approach his social responsibilities in a sane and logical manner; therefore if given access to state secrets he will not process the concepts of loyalty and national security rationally. His "warped character" will not only be prone to the acceptance of deviant (that is, radical) political positions, it will produce behaviour that is sociopathic.

The view of homosexuality formed a century earlier clearly lingers in Pincher’s thinking – that it was pathological and mentally all-pervading, a subject for Freudian analysis. Foucault describes the ‘invention’ of homosexuality in this sense in the 1870s:

The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form,

\textsuperscript{41} Pincher 1987: 133
\textsuperscript{42} Pincher 1987: 134
and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology.\textsuperscript{43}

The thesis in \textit{Traitors} on the instability of homosexuals appeals to these pseudo-scientific arguments of the early 20th-century. Pincher seeks a simplistic psychological explanation for Burgess’ orientation, and presumably that of gay men generally, and more significantly attributes treason to the same parental causes.

Freudians further suggest that this is often the result of upbringing by a hostile or uncaring father and that traitors are hitting back at paternalistic authority when they strike at the state.\textsuperscript{44}

Such simplistic psychiatric explications can remain potent in the public mind, and are supplemented by religious claims that homosexual practice is merely a sinful act, that is, an optional choice. Pincher also adopts this idea that homosexuality is learned behaviour, a habit that can be broken. Speaking of an unnamed diplomat who had a ‘past problem’:

Foreign Office officials knew that he had been a homosexual but believed that he had conquered the habit before posting him to Washington.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{43} Foucault 1981: 43

\textsuperscript{44} Pincher 1987: 134

\textsuperscript{45} Pincher 1987: 143
There are a number of similar cases where a person under investigation was able to persuade British or American authorities that particular behaviour in their youth was not indicative of an identity but a passing phase. This manifestation of the idea of fluid desires would be unobjectionable, except that homosexual desires are placed as immature, and as an unpleasant addiction to be conquered.

The legalization of homosexuality, Pincher argues, has not removed the blackmail threat that may result in the recruitment of gay men as spies. There is still a ‘severe social stigma’ attached to any deviance from heterosexual norms. Non-heterosexuals are blamed for being targeted for recruitment, because they don’t stay in the closet – promiscuity, a liking for rough trade, an enjoyment of risk, are all depicted as asking to be blackmailed.\textsuperscript{46} This is despite the fact that neither Pincher nor anyone else has alleged that any of the Cambridge circle were blackmailed into spying.

Pincher’s wish that queers would stay in the closet, and the overwhelming attribution of all their actions to their sexuality are attitudes described by Foucault in his \textit{History of Sexuality}:

\begin{quote}
Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality. It was everywhere present in him: at the root of all his actions because it was their insidious and indefinitely active principle; written immodestly on his face and body because it was a secret that always gave itself away... it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyne; a hermaphrodisim of the soul.\textsuperscript{47}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{46} Pincher 1987: 138-9

\textsuperscript{47} Foucault 1981: 43
This active principle can be interpreted in a number of disparate ways. These interpretations range from the perfectly reasonable proposition that sexuality affects a large proportion of human behaviour, to the idea of the queer as a sociopath who will take dangerous and antisocial paths in any given situation - particularly that of being admitted to knowledge of state secrets.

It is the very concept of secrecy and closeting that makes the prospect of gays in sensitive positions so highly charged. At a semantic level, the contrast of the hidden and the exposed is at the heart of the homophobia that is linked to fear of espionage. Sedgwick describes the domination of mappings to the dualities secrecy/disclosure and private/public in terms of the act of crossing between one term of the binary and the other:

"The closet" and "coming out", now verging on all-purpose phrases for the potent crossing and recrossing of almost any politically charged lines of representation, have been the gravest and most magnetic of those figures.48

In this analysis, the bedroom is a defined private space analogous to the closet - homosexuality should stay there and not be out on Ellen Terry’s streets, frightening the horses. It seems that in the mind of Chapman Pincher and similar authors, the sexual crimes of Guy Burgess and Tom Driberg do not lie in the mere fact of homosexuality but in their openness and ostentation. It is apparently irrelevant that a total lack of secrecy over their sexuality makes an ‘out’ homosexual unsusceptible to foreign

48 Sedgwick 1994: 71
blackmail. At any time in his career, if a potential blackmailer had threatened Burgess with revelation of his sexuality, Burgess would clearly have laughed at them.

In *Traitors*, Pincher implicitly retracts one of his earlier statements about Driberg. *Their Trade Is Treachery* made much of the MP’s ‘assignation’ with a chef in a parliamentary convenience. The charge had been used to characterise Driberg as completely debauched and thus to undermine the credibility of his biography of Burgess (outlined in the next chapter). But it was now revealed as merely a facetious claim by Driberg to another MP as an excuse for lateness.\(^4^9\) This alteration raises a historiographical point on authors’ changes of emphasis over time (not merely on single facts such as this but in overall theme) as historical conditions change. Lowenthal puts this in the form of the simple question “Why do we change the past?”:

> Seeing the past in our own terms, we necessarily revise what previous interpreters have seen in their terms, and reshape artefacts and memories accordingly. But beyond involuntary alterations, explicit aims prompt us to replace or add to an inadequate past. We all want more or other than what we have been left… As with memory, we reinterpret relics and records to make them more comprehensible, to justify present attitudes and actions, to underscore *changes of faith* [my emphasis]… Individually and collectively we revise the inherited past to enhance self-esteem, to aggrandize property, to validate power.\(^5^0\)

---

\(^{49}\) Pincher 1987: 140

\(^{50}\) Lowenthal 1985: 325
'Changes of faith' may be said to include movement into new phases of the Cold War. Although the Berlin Wall had not yet fallen when Pincher wrote *Traitors*, it was the era of Mikhail Gorbachev, *perestroika* and *glasnost*. At this time the level of anti-Communist rhetoric fell, and this may be the key to the difference in tone and thematic structure between *Their Trade Is Treachery* and *Traitors*. Pincher does not retreat, however, from his aggressively conservative political stance:

…the left-wing contempt for patriotism happens to be in line with the Soviets’ requirements of killing national pride in every country except their own.⁵¹

To sum up the nature of Chapman Pincher's writings, homophobia is not his principal aim, but rather a general attack on Communism and the left. Nevertheless he maintains those attitudes towards homosexuality which tend to accompany a conservative point of view, drawing on Christian and faux psychological views. For the usual reasons - the epistemology of secrecy and the myth of the alien - these views become transitive, connecting the sexual to the political.

On the central historiographical question of conveying ‘truth’, Pincher and his contemporaries represent their unnamed sources as authoritative because they are inside the security organization under scrutiny. It is suggested that they are whistle-blowers, revealing a hidden truth which stands in opposition to a vaguely-defined atmosphere of official distortion or concealment. Furthermore, the idea that the sources are taking a risk by revealing what they know is taken as evidence of their veracity. Much of this

⁵¹ Pincher 1987: 3
positioning is undercut by the revelations of government complicity in the production of at least some of the books, such as Pincher’s and West’s.

Clearly this places such authors on the foundational absolutist view of historical truth. To efface this, an author would need to adopt what Jenkins calls a reflexive methodology – a willingness to explain why the reader is being given this version of history and not another.\textsuperscript{52} If \textit{Their Trade is Treachery} had been prefaced by an account of the involvement of Rothschild and Attorney-General Havers in its production, and an exploration of the motives of its sources such as Wright, Pincher might be said to have duly acknowledged the role of rhetoricism and subjectivity in historical writing.

The ideologies involved in the publication of carefully vetted “revelations” are clear. In Marxist and related materialist schools of criticism, culture is the domain of a struggle for hegemony between dominant myth and counter-myth.\textsuperscript{53} The approved journalistic \textit{oeuvre} was an affirmation of dominant myths: the sinister motives of Marxist countries, the treachery of those who deviate from approved family values, and the generalized terror of the hidden alien.

To Fiske and Hartley, there are not two but three competing code systems: the dominant; the subordinate which strives on behalf of a group within the social system while accepting its framework; and the radical which questions the entire framework.\textsuperscript{54} Pincher \textit{et al.} give the outward appearance of belonging to the subordinate category, by being critical of certain aspects of the security services while supporting their existence.

\textsuperscript{52} Jenkins 1991: 69

\textsuperscript{53} Tulloch 1990: 8

\textsuperscript{54} Fiske & Hartley 1978: 104
and basic aims. The ‘group’ they represent could be seen as the British middle class, since part of their criticism is aimed at aristocratic incompetence. However, they were used by dominant forces, and their conclusions offered no threat to the secret services or the existing hegemony. This raises the question of the paucity of radical writers on the subject. Either the Left was unconcerned with such a bywater of the socialist-versus-capitalist debate, or (before the post-Stonewall consciousness of gay rights as a liberal issue) embarrassed by the element of homosexuality. But it is possible that the radical view of the subject matter was simply kept out of the debate by government encouragement of these ‘safe’ authors, who were given first access to large amounts of data (accurate or not) before left-wing writers could make the running on the issue.

The queer/traitor nexus in these works gains greater significance when they are studied from a formalist point of view, such as that of Hayden White, who saw history as a narrative discourse. Drawing on structuralist thought, White wrote:

\[\text{Just as meaning lies in differences between signifiers, history is a Darwinian construction of theoretical networks to connect facts, it does not lie in the facts themselves.}^{55}\]

What then are the connections made in the journalistic texts regarding the Cambridge spies? If we look at them as networks in which ‘facts’ are the nodes, we will find greatest significance in the vectors between nodes. We are told (a) that a certain group of people were at Cambridge together, (b) that they were all from public schools, (c) that they were all homosexual or bisexual, and (d) they were all K.G.B. agents. Costello, as quoted above, is concerned with drawing a significant vector between (b)
and (c), and between (b) and (d). Where authors focus on the process of recruitment through largely homosexual groups such as the “Apostles”, the vectors being given significance are from (a) to (d) and from (a) to (c). In both these examples an arc is formed which links (c) to (d). In this way espionage and homosexuality are connected, not by the assertion of pieces of evidence but by constructed pathways between them.

Post-modern historiography has gone still further in the inclusion of semiotic and epistemological problems, so that such phenomena as central and marginal binaries, as well as being applied in literary criticism, are seen as relevant to historical texts. As Barthes expresses it:

> The historian is not so much a collector of facts as a collector and relater of signifiers; that is to say, he organizes them with the purpose of establishing positive meaning and filling the vacuum of pure, meaningless series."56

In all the accounts of the Cambridge spies and related matters that purport to make sensational revelations, the signifiers of Otherness are the same as in the fantastic fiction discussed in the Introduction: secrecy, deviance, sterility, conversion and infiltration, for example. In both classes of text, the marginalized terms from multiple binaries are being equated – different forms of the Other are unified and demonized.

In addition to all these factors, there are other historiographical problems when historical writing takes the form of biography, and especially autobiography. The following chapter will therefore deal principally with texts written by one of the

---

56 Barthes 1997: 121
Cambridge spies or one of their close associates. We will then be ready to look at the final layer, that of dramatization, and investigate the complexities of representation of the spies on stage and screen.
Chapter 3 - Biography and Autobiography

‘Intriguing,’ she said. ‘But can your words change the past?’

The Fool considered this.

‘More easily, I think,’ he said. ‘Because the past is what people remember, and memories are words. Who knows how a king behaved a thousand years ago? There is only recollection, and stories. And plays, of course.’

Terry Pratchett

Wyrd Sisters (Gollancz, London) 1998

Biographical works touching on the Cambridge spies have, in comparison with the books by journalists and other ‘outsiders’, a greater emphasis on creating a picture of one of their personalities. The focus is on character rather than the spies’ individual or collective functions in a story of espionage. The biographers investigated in this chapter not only cross the important division between biography and autobiography, but are further distinguished by the degree of their own involvement in the events and with the characters they describe. They also represent different aspects of the problems of biographical memory. Thomas Driberg produced an ‘uninvolved’ biography in that his own connection with events is minimized; Kim Philby produced an intellectual and impersonal autobiography; whereas material from Graham Greene and Peter Wright are selections from their own autobiographies, so their descriptions of Philby and Blunt could be called ‘involved biography’. Miranda Carter’s biography of Blunt, being a recent work (published 2000), is a research-based and essentially distant piece of scholarship. Finally, John Banville produced a ‘novel’, with all characters’ names changed and altered events and situations, to produce a strengthened picture of an isolated and bored yet protected infiltrator. In each case, therefore, the cultural and political position of the author must be examined, bearing in mind historiographical
relativity. This can be discussed intrinsically by reference to the texts but also through the opinions of other authors, since these and the journalistic publications form a debate over the issues surrounding the Cambridge spies. It will also be noted where the biographies have influenced the works of stage and screen written subsequently.

Burgess never produced an autobiography, but his friend Thomas Driberg wrote *Guy Burgess: A Portrait with Background* (1956). The distance between this work and the journalistic oeuvre is demonstrated by the fact that Chapman Pincher went to some lengths to discredit this biography and its author in *Their Trade is Treachery*. Costello in *Mask of Treachery* places Driberg succinctly as working for both sides of international politics, and therefore potentially as doubly untrustworthy:

Driberg graphically described in his memoir *Ruling Passions* how he became homosexually active before going to public school. Like Blunt, Driberg became a Communist. For many years he was a Member of Parliament and a Russian agent who also fed information to M.I.5.¹

Driberg’s biography of Burgess does not touch on his own activities but seeks to create a detailed picture of Burgess’ character which includes, but is not limited to, his ostentatious behaviour.

On the espionage side, however, *Guy Burgess: A Portrait with Background* is a flattering likeness with significant background missing. The key to its political positioning is provided in an appendix, namely Burgess and Maclean’s statement to the international press, made just before publication in 1956. It could not be described as a

¹ Costello 1988: 66
frank revelation, but Driberg takes it at face value and his writing adheres to it as the framework for Burgess’ activities in the diplomatic and security services. Burgess and Maclean admit to being Communists while employed by the Foreign service but not spies:

We both of us came to the Soviet Union to work for the aim of better understanding between the Soviet Union and the West, having both of us become convinced from official knowledge in our position that neither the British nor, still more, the American government was at that time seriously working for this aim.\(^2\)

The statement thus paints a picture of the two men as high-minded, left-wing dissenters, and this is the basis for Driberg’s portrait of Burgess. For example, with respect to the dramatic high-point of the 1951 defection, Burgess’ given reason for accompanying Maclean to Moscow was that he was going to be sacked in any case:

Therefore when Maclean told Burgess that he himself had decided that he could no longer work for the Foreign Office and its policies and suggested that they should both go to the U.S.S.R., Burgess had no difficulty in agreeing. There alone, there appeared to both to be some chance of putting into practice in some form the convictions they had always held. As a result of living in the U.S.S.R. we (sic) both of us are convinced we were right in doing what we did.\(^3\)

---

\(^2\) Driberg 1956: 121

\(^3\) Driberg 1956: 124
This account contradicts Philby’s and every other version, which assert that Burgess’
defection was his own idea, carried out against the instructions of the rest of the spy-
ring, and which led to suspicion falling on Philby. Driberg’s intentions do not permit
him to depict Burgess as incompetent or capricious on this point – it is unclear whether
the reason for this was personal loyalty or a desire to adhere to the official Moscow line
at the time.

As a general theme Driberg, like Chapman Pincher, quotes John Harrington:
“Treason doth never prosper; what’s the reason? For if it prosper, none dare call it
treason”. Driberg’s writing is straightforward and sober (which is in contrast with other
writers’ descriptions of the author himself). He criticizes the early journalistic writings
and their cries of ‘treason’ and ‘traitor’ with regard to Burgess, and thus opened the
general debate on the relevance of the sexuality issue to questions of espionage:

Even the more erudite of the commentators such as Mr Cyril Connolly
and Miss Rebecca West, laboriously though they had analysed it, did not
seem to me to have got the story straight. None of us can write such a
story with complete objectivity, but the special fears and prejudices of
these brilliant writers – Mr Connolly’s fear of the real world around him,
Miss West’s deeply rooted anti-Soviet prejudice and her antipathy to the
irrelevant phenomenon of homosexuality – were precisely those fears
and prejudices which would most handicap them in their study of this
particular case, and render their approach to it incurably subjective.  

4 Epigrams, book 4 number 5 (1618).

5 Driberg 1956: 3
Driberg does not acknowledge the degree to which this kind of relativism in biographical or historiographical writing extends to himself, despite his peripheral involvement with the intelligence community, possibly on both sides, and his own sexuality. His views on the concept of truth are not expressed generally but applied specifically to narratives he opposes, a phenomenon which would in turn be directed at him. Driberg thus becomes both the originator and the victim of problematic historiography.

With the exception of a concluding recorded dialogue between Driberg and Burgess, the biography is a conventional chronological narrative. Early in Driberg’s account of Burgess’ life, we are given a hint of the schizophrenic attitude to England and its institutions that would be used in the plays of Alan Bennett as a key to the character of Burgess, and also of Blunt:

As a Socialist, Guy Burgess disapproved of the educational system of which Eton is a part. As an Old Etonian he has an enduring love for Eton as a place and an admiration for its liberal educational methods.  

Driberg’s account of Burgess’ education at Eton and at Dartmouth Navy College anticipates some of the dramatic treatment of his personality, especially that of Julian Mitchell:

---

6 Driberg 1956: 14
Some of those who have sought to analyse his character may be surprised to learn that there is in the story of his schooldays no element of persecution or of precocious revolt.\(^7\)

Mitchell’s play *Another Country* uses fictional character names to explore the idea of persecution at school, in the kind of character analysis to which Driberg refers. The character ‘Bennett’ rebels against his class when he is excluded from the school’s elite and caned for homoerotic behaviour. This contradicts Driberg’s account of Burgess’ Eton years. However:

When he was at Dartmouth he rebelled against the barbarous ceremonial of corporal punishment known as ‘official cuts’. He and three of his friends turned ostentatiously away in order to avoid seeing this performance, which the cadets were paraded to witness. Similarly, when he was a sixth form praepostor at Eton and had to attend birchings, he would turn aside to avoid seeing them.\(^8\)

In another apparent influence on Mitchell, Driberg introduces the person upon whom the Marxist character, Judd, in *Another Country* may be based. Jimmy Lees met Burgess at Cambridge, not Eton, but he was a coalminer and member of the Independent Labour Party:

He was unlike anybody Guy had known before, taught him a lot and troubled his conscience. ‘You’, he would tell him searingly, will get a

\(^7\) Driberg 1956: 10

\(^8\) Driberg 1956: 13
First because your energies are not exhausted by life, because of the class prejudice of the examiners, and because you got here easily and aren’t frightened by it all. I don’t have the brilliance of ignorance. I shall do ten times as much work as you and get a good Second.’ Both halves of this prediction proved precisely accurate. ‘He knew a great deal more than I did’, Guy told me. ‘He was interested in truth, I in brilliance. I made epigrams, he got the right answers.’

In Kanievska’s film of Another Country, it is revealed that Judd was later killed in the Spanish Civil War. In this regard, he becomes a composite of Lees and John Cornford, another Communist friend of Burgess’ at Cambridge, who suffered this fate along with many of the most earnest anti-fascists of the 1930s.

During the period of the West’s appeasement policy towards Hitler, Burgess was working for the BBC. Driberg describes Burgess’ admiration for Churchill and a conversation they had in 1938. Burgess was tongue-tied when Churchill asked what assistance he (Churchill) could give to the fight against appeasement at a time when he was without power or party. This aspect of Burgess character is taken up in dramatic form by Alan Bennett. In An Englishman Abroad, Burgess is too abashed to meet famous left-wing American singer Paul Robeson when invited.

---

9 Driberg 1956: 17
10 Moffat’s 2003 miniseries Cambridge Spies depicts the death of a character named Julian Bell in Spain, causing much grief and bitterness for Burgess.
11 Driberg 1956: 44
In dealing with Burgess’ operations for British intelligence, Driberg sticks to a plain narrative interspersed with references to the historical background of the time. One of his few analytical statements in this part of the book is that Burgess was enamoured of the *éminence grise* archetype and wanted to become one.\(^{12}\) This could be seen as an aspect of the playfulness explored fictionally by Banville and referred to by Peter Wright, in which espionage is a game and a means of leading an exciting life beyond the dullness of a civil servant or diplomat.

Driberg’s final chapter, on the flight to the U.S.S.R., is recorded as a dialogue between himself and Burgess which took place in Moscow. Burgess says he went to see Maclean to pass on personal messages from people in the United States and to discuss a memorandum on the Far East.\(^{13}\) The two then discovered they had similar opinions. In short, the dialogue continues the denial of espionage contained in the joint press statement. The reason for Burgess’ departure from Washington, which in all other accounts was a scandal deliberately engineered, is elided in Driberg’s account.

Ian Curteis’ teleplay *Philby, Burgess and Maclean* makes copious use of the Driberg/Burgess interview for its dialogue. Maclean was being “followed by the dicks” and he pointed them out to Burgess. “Sure enough” says Burgess, “there they were, jingling their coins in a policeman-like manner.”\(^{14}\) Maclean claimed (says Burgess) that he was under suspicion because he had been making indiscreet remarks at the office. Curteis depicts Maclean as panicking and having second thoughts about defecting. This

---

\(^{12}\) Driberg 1956: 62  
\(^{13}\) Driberg 1956: 91  
\(^{14}\) Driberg 1956: 93
idea must have had some currency by 1956, since Driberg puts it to Burgess. Burgess replies:

No, he didn’t weaken… It’s just that he’s got no sense of time or rather he’s got a Russian sense of time. He dillied and dallied over the ham.\textsuperscript{15}

Donald Maclean was not well known personally to the other members of the spy ring. They had known him in Cambridge, but he spent his most productive years as a spy at the Atomic Energy Commission in Washington, and none of the biographical material on Burgess, Philby or Blunt contains much detail on his character. Driberg reports that in stark contrast to Burgess, Maclean was:

…of the Scottish governing type, as rigid, austere and uncompromising as John Knox, son of a man who rose by thrift and perseverance to become a Liberal cabinet minister. To the foreign office he seemed perfect, ‘flesh of their flesh’… Burgess was an entirely different sort of person: it seems probable that he got more emotional satisfaction than the doctrinaire intellectual Maclean out of their joint enterprise, and I have heard him likened to an old-fashioned Anarchist, or to Dzerzhinsky.\textsuperscript{16}

When the narrative moves to the subject of life in exile, the interview between Driberg and Burgess includes a passage that is similar to Coral Browne’s account of her conversation with Burgess, as used in Bennett’s \textit{An Englishman Abroad}:

\textsuperscript{15} Driberg 1956: 96

\textsuperscript{16} Driberg 1956: 9
As you’ve noticed I don’t even speak Russian very well. Just kitchen Russian, enough to talk to my housekeeper at the dacha... I’ve always been lazy about languages. As a matter of fact my inadequate Russian is the main thing holding me back from applying to join the Communist Party again – the CP of the Soviet Union, of course, I mean.17

This linguistic difficulty - Burgess’ inability to project his personality as he had in Britain – is a cornerstone of several representations of the problem of post-exile dissatisfaction. Again quoting Burgess:

Don’t think I’m starry-eyed about this place. As you’ve already said, I can’t stand that attitude. Nor can they, the Russians I mean. I criticize things here, and they take serious criticism seriously... Sometimes, yes, I am lonely, and I’d like to have a good gossip with some old friends. But here I am lonely for the unimportant things. In London I was lonely for the important things – I was lonely for socialism.18

This dialogue concludes Driberg’s portrait of a man who wanted the best for Britain from a leftist point of view and was finally unable to continue living in his country the way it was. Such a thematic approach is more fruitful than closely inspecting Driberg’s work for factual detail, and is in accord with the workings of reminiscence as described by Conway in Autobiographical Memory, a work for cognitive psychologists:

17 Driberg 1956: 103
18 Driberg 1956: 104-5
Perhaps one useful way to think about these different aspects of autobiographical memory is as follows: the hierarchical structure of autobiographical memory might be viewed as representing the thematic structure of one's life. Lifetime periods and general events instantiate various aspects of personally relevant themes - such as goal-attainment - and index sets of memories which are associated with specific themes and attributes of themes.\(^{19}\)

Driberg’s work is a poor source for any representation of events concerning espionage - the themes, in Conway’s sense, are personal. What Driberg essentially wants to say is that Burgess was a deeper and more thoughtful man than the stereotypical ‘buffoon queen’, as he had been portrayed for the last five years (1951-56). But throughout his book, Driberg only makes one significant reference to sexuality. This is an attempt to sideline the issue, in response to the early journalistic books published:

Much of the muckraking was concerned with allegations of homosexuality. These charges have been repeated with such vociferous intensity and such frequency that the British public may be pardoned for supposing that they have something to do with the case.\(^{20}\)

He goes on to point out that many homosexuals were serving the Foreign Office in a conventional way, and that most spies detected have been heterosexual (British

---

\(^{19}\) Conway 1990: 142

\(^{20}\) Driberg 1956: 108-9
examples being Fuchs, Nunn-May and Pontecorvo). Loose living and blackmail, Driberg says, can occur for both.\textsuperscript{21} The issue of homosexuality had been raised to create prejudice, in the ‘transatlantic technique of the smear’.\textsuperscript{22}

Driberg’s subtext here may be an indication of the hatred for the U.S.A which is ascribed to the spies themselves. But positioning Driberg politically may be done principally by reference to his adherence to Burgess and Maclean’s official statement. Since this statement would clearly have been approved by the Soviet government, it may also be said that Driberg’s book was Moscow-approved just as the works of Pincher and West were London-approved.

The principal narratological point to address concerning Driberg’s work is its selectivity, and the degrees to which this is conscious or unconscious. Brooks’ article in *Narratology: An Introduction*\textsuperscript{23} outlines the role of an author’s general philosophy and particular psychological responses as the basis for inclusions and exclusions. Applying this to Driberg, we have a surface text concerned with his political agenda (to accord with the Moscow statement) combined with the subtext of his sexuality, in common with Burgess’, and the possibility that they may have been partners at some point.

Obvious selectivity, of course, attracts an easy form of criticism. In *Their Trade is Treachery*, Chapman Pincher asserts that there was a decidedly conscious form of

\textsuperscript{21} The whole concept of ‘blackmailability’ addressed here is described in *The Epistemology of the Closet* as a precursor to homosexual panic (Sedgwick 1994: 20). People over whom leverage can be applied should not be trusted. Fear of falling into this category is seen by Sedgwick as one of the causes of terror in a man of slight bisexual tendencies when propositioned by another male.

\textsuperscript{22} Driberg 1956: 109

\textsuperscript{23} Brooks 1996: 260
selectivity and distortion on Driberg’s part. He ascribes to Driberg early membership of the Communist Party as well as of M.I.5. The K.G.B., he claims, expelled Driberg but when he became a Member of Parliament they enticed him back. Driberg had provided information on the Labour Party and MPs personal lives to both the K.G.B. and M.I.5.\textsuperscript{24}

\textit{Guy Burgess: A Portrait with Background} is thus a disinformation exercise according to Pincher.

Pincher paints Driberg as treacherous even to Burgess, claiming that their meetings in Moscow were part of an M.I.5 operation against Burgess, to make him commit technical breaches of the Official Secrets Act, so he could never return to England.\textsuperscript{25} Driberg’s association with M.I.5, according to Pincher, explains his evading prosecution after arrests for homosexual acts in public. Driberg had an M.I.5 phone number used to secure his release:

The award of a peerage to such a notorious homosexual who had admitted to another MP, Woodrow Wyatt, that he had once enjoyed the favours of a House of Commons chef in a Members’ lavatory, was also a cause for public curiosity.\textsuperscript{26}

As has already been noted, Pincher softened this last statement in a later publication, but at the time his intent was clearly a total condemnation of Driberg’s book, using the emotive tactic of painting a sordid picture of its author. However, rejection of this kind of homophobic writing does not constitute uncritical acceptance of Driberg’s stance. As

\textsuperscript{24} Pincher 1982: 237-8

\textsuperscript{25} Pincher 1982: 242

\textsuperscript{26} Pincher 1982: 244
well as his political motivation, there is, as always, the more unconscious form of selectivity always present in biographical memory. From a psychological point of view, Conway expresses the relativity of memories thus:

…it may be an important feature of autobiographical memories that they are never true in the sense that they are literal representations of events, and in this respect it makes little sense to ask whether an autobiographical memory is true or false. Nevertheless, autobiographical memories may be accurate without being literal and may represent the personal meaning of an event at the expense of accuracy.\(^{27}\)

One may allow the possibility then, that Driberg’s recollection of the personality of Burgess, including the component of sexuality, are the focus of a genuinely held personal meaning – that Burgess’ life held significances for Driberg, which are not essentially distorted by his dissembling of the truth on the subject of espionage. Burgess’ specific acts on behalf of the K.G.B. are absent from the narrative. Such absences are themselves significant. As Currie points out, this approach flows from Derrida’s view of signs being based on exclusion – “what is not there in a discourse is constitutive of what is.”\(^{28}\) Viewing Driberg’s text from this perspective, we gain an overall impression of an author who wanted to give a fuller picture of an admired friend who was currently being represented in a shallow manner, while eliding the seriousness of his activities in the world of international politics.

\(^{27}\) Conway 1990: 9

\(^{28}\) Currie 1998: 80
Though it has been noted that Driberg’s biography accorded with a Soviet-approved political position, in order to be published in Britain, Driberg’s work would also have been vetted through the D-notice system. It is therefore an account which offended neither side, even though Cold War secrecy was at its height at the time of publication. The same political ‘safety zone’ (approval by governments of both sides) can be ascribed to Philby’s My Silent War, published in the West in 1968.29

In his (very circumscribed) autobiography, Philby’s given reason for embracing Marxism was dissatisfaction with the British Labour Party after its rout in the 1931 election. He adds, however, that it took him two years to decide to abandon the Socialist viewpoint for a Communist one.30 This would place his final conversion in 1933, when Hitler came to power. This is still too early to place him in the large category of educated people who embraced Marxism as a reaction to the appeasement policies of the Western democracies. In Curteis’ teleplay Philby, Burgess and Maclean, Philby is made to say:

Europe was about to collapse in front of the Nazis. The only hope seemed to be Soviet Russia... Of course it seems different now. But then, if you cared and were twenty years old there was no alternative. I used to see it hit undergraduates around me like a religious conversion.31

29 Several books have been published internationally out of the Soviet Union. George Blake, a K.G.B. mole inside M.I.6 but not of the Cambridge group, published No Other Choice after his escape from Wormwood Scrubs. Philby’s wife Eleanor, who followed him to Moscow, wrote Kim Philby: The Spy I Loved in 1968.

30 Philby 1968:15

31 Curteis 1977
Most of these converts left the Communist Party when the German-Soviet Non-aggression Pact was signed. In My Silent War Philby explains why he did not abandon Communism in the face of this and the worst features of Stalinism, when so many did. He chose a course of action:

…to stick it out in the confident faith that the principles of the revolution would outlive the aberrations of individuals, however enormous. It was this course I chose, guided partly by reason, partly by instinct. Graham Greene in a book appropriately called The Confidential Agent imagines a scene in which the heroine asks the hero if his leaders are better than the others.

‘No, of course not’ he replied, ‘but I still prefer the people they lead, even if they lead them all wrong’.

‘The poor, right or wrong’, she scoffed.

‘It’s no worse, is it, than my country right or wrong? You choose your side once and for all – of course it may be the wrong side. Only history can tell that.’

This passage throws some light on my attitude in the depths of the Stalin cult. But I now have no doubt about the verdict of history… Advances which thirty years ago I hoped to see in my lifetime may have to wait a generation or two. But as I look over Moscow from my study window I can see the solid foundation of the future I glimpsed at Cambridge.32

Philby, of course, did not live to see the fall of the Berlin wall and the disbanding of the Soviet Union. This passage suggests that he believed in Marx’s idea

32 Philby 1968: 16
that the collapse of capitalism was inevitable, that revolution must come eventually. It also reflects the period in Soviet history when criticism of Stalin was acceptable, as a reason for past mistakes and present difficulties, and to provide a veneer of freedom of expression, just as Burgess was allowed (in Driberg’s biography) to express criticism of life in Moscow.

*My Silent War* describes how Philby and Burgess organized the establishment and syllabus of Britain’s first school for espionage and the creation of the Special Operations Executive for the purposes of anti-Nazi propaganda, disinformation, sabotage and subversion. The S.O.E. is portrayed, as is S.I.S. (M.I.6), in terms of a long list of minor and major incompetencies.\(^3\) This taunting of Western intelligence services is a cardinal point in the book’s agenda. The reason for this is elusive – it is not in the interest of a security service, even the K.G.B., to portray its enemies as incompetent, since they must compete for government resources. If the enemy is stupid, there is no urgency to spend more on combating them. It may be that Philby justified this tack as part of a purist commentary on the decay of the West, and on the rottenness and unworkability of capitalism.

Philby then deals with his wartime career as head of British intelligence for the Iberian peninsula. He claims a complete penetration and ascendancy over the German Abwehr in Spain and Portugal. But during that time he also sabotaged German attempts, made through Spain, to make a separate peace with the West which would have isolated Russia.

\(^3\) Philby 1968: 29-36
Moving to the Cold War era, Philby’s narration covers his time in Washington.\(^{34}\) Continuing his apparent aim, to embarrass Western intelligence organizations, he presents a catalogue of F.B.I. and C.I.A. incompetence. While he was there, the nuclear scientist Klaus Fuchs was exposed as spying for the U.S.S.R.. Philby says Fuchs (the main character in Ian Curteis’ teleplay *The Atom Spies*) incriminated himself under questioning by William Skardon of M.I.5, who was later to interrogate Philby.\(^ {35}\)

Philby’s position as M.I.6/C.I.A. liaison officer in Washington was complicated by Guy Burgess’ appointment to the British embassy there in 1950. At that time, using material supplied by Soviet defector Kravitsky, London was already searching for a spy codenamed ‘Homer’ who was known to be of ‘good family’, educated at Eton and Oxford, an idealist working without payment.\(^ {36}\) There was a short list consisting of Roger Makins, Paul Gore-Booth, Michael Wright, and Donald Maclean. An S.I.S. official offered Philby short odds on Gore-Booth because he was a classical scholar (hence ‘Homer’), a teetotaler and a Christian Scientist. This added up to too much idealism, which fitted Kravitsky’s description. However, the use of the newly developed electronic computers led to the cracking of old wartime coded signals that pinpointed Maclean. As a Cambridge graduate he was only on the list of suspects because S.I.S. correctly guessed that foreigners would assume all well-bred and highly-placed Englishmen went to Eton and Oxford. At a meeting with the Foreign Secretary, Herbert Morrison, it was decided that Maclean would be arrested on the following Monday. One of the few people informed of this was Philby in Washington. Burgess, on Philby’s instructions, had himself returned to London for gross misbehaviour, since Burgess

\(^{34}\) Philby 1968: 134  
\(^{35}\) Philby 1968: 150. Curteis dramatizes this interview also, with *My Silent War* as his principal source.  
\(^{36}\) Philby 1968: 155
would be expected to report to the head of the American Department (Maclean) for
disciplinary action.\textsuperscript{37}

Burgess thus conveyed to Maclean the details of the escape planned for him. However, Burgess unilaterally decided to go to Moscow as well, causing immediate suspicion to fall on Philby and Blunt as his known associates. On Monday, Philby was called to the office of an embassy official who told him that “the bird has flown” and that Burgess had gone with him. Philby writes “At that my consternation was no pretence.”\textsuperscript{38} This is one of many points illustrating that Moscow approved revelations that were not conceded at the time of Driberg’s writing, twelve years earlier.

Philby describes his interrogation by expert cross-examiner Helenus Milmo and the gentle but probing William Skardon. After public exoneration, despite which his usefulness to M.I.6 was over, he moved to Beirut, ostensibly as a journalist.\textsuperscript{39} When he escaped to Moscow he was given the Order of the Red Banner and his rank of Colonel in the K.G.B. was officially declared.

Just as Driberg described Maclean as more dry and intellectual than Burgess, Philby’s description of his own motivations are more cerebral than a general leftist wish that social conditions were better in Britain. The themes driving Philby’s autobiographical memory are overtly ideological, and though he is more frank than Driberg concerning espionage it must be borne in mind that Philby’s book was also approved for publication by both sides of the Iron Curtain.

\textsuperscript{37} Philby 1968: 154

\textsuperscript{38} Philby 1968: 157

\textsuperscript{39} Philby 1968: 167-177
Philby had used a quotation from the works of his friend Graham Greene, and in response, *My Silent War* contains an introduction by Greene. In it he says of Philby:

‘He betrayed his country’. Yes, perhaps he did. But who among us has not committed treason to something or someone more important than a country?  

The two-way link between Greene’s writing and Philby’s arises from a personal connection between them as fellow members of British intelligence during World War Two. Greene’s view of Philby can be read in extensive published interviews with Greene. The wide scope of these works, such as those of Allain and Sherry, makes them effectively autobiographies of Greene - in fact, Sherry received a letter from Philby to aid in this task, which on a personal level expresses the same admiration as Greene shows for Philby.  

The period of their friendship began when Greene worked under Philby in M.I.6’s wartime activities in Iberia and North-west Africa. Greene was initially stationed in Freetown, but after the allies’ North African landings, he was moved to the home base of Section V (dealing with M.I.6’s most pro-active foreign operations) at St Albans. Philby and Malcolm Muggeridge (later famous as a Christian writer and commentator) were also working there. Greene says that Philby was widely admired and imitated for the coolness of his approach to the work. The thematic memory that

---

40 Philby 1968: 7. This, of course, echoes E. M. Forster’s dictum from “What I Believe” in *Two Cheers for Democracy* (1951), hoping for the courage to betray a country before betraying a friend.

41 Sherry 1994: 119

42 Sherry 1994: 167-8
emerges is Greene’s liking for Philby which he refused to discard in the light of later revelations. Greene continued to find aspects of Philby’s life, even as a spy, which can be admired.

Section V moved to Ryder Street in London, and although Greene drank with Philby at the King’s Arms behind St James Street, a certain distance was nevertheless kept between them. Philby did not probe Greene on his Catholicism, which Greene never mentioned. In retrospect, Greene considered the possibility that this was because Philby feared any deep probing of belief in return. In this respect Greene places both himself and Philby in a position similar to the ‘whiskey priest’, whose faith wavers, in his novel The Power and the Glory. Bearing in mind Philby’s quotation of Greene in regard to resisting any wavering of faith in Communism, it is notable that Greene has a clear fascination with people whose beliefs are not dissembled or concealed, but instead are uncertain or in transition. He expresses this in an interview with Allain, concluding with a quote from A.H. Clough:

It is not betrayal or defection that interest me, but what goes with it, a sort of waning faith. I am interested in the moment when a man reaches ‘the dangerous edge’ where faith wavers.

“Of all the people under heaven’s high cope
They are most hopeless who had once most hope,
The most beliefless who had once believed”.

43 Sherry 1994: 179-80
44 Allain 1984: 104-5
Greene indicates that his own belief would be a blessing if he were permanently conscious of it and secure in it. He does not go to confession or communion, he says, since his private life is irregular. He has broken the rules, again like the priest in *The Power and the Glory*. But faith is a gift of God, and is above belief, which is rational. Therefore Greene claims that he keeps his faith through long periods of disbelief.\(^{45}\) Philby, presumably a dialectical materialist, would probably not make the distinction between faith and belief, but nevertheless this paradox comes close to his description of his thinking during the worst periods of Stalinism.

Sherry writes about Greene’s consistent defence of Philby’s motives, when Sherry suggested that he might have been a nihilist, devoid of any real devotion to an ideology, but acted as he did for internal psychological reasons:

> ‘In Philby’s case it wasn’t for personal gain,’ he kept insisting. That his friend had acted out of a belief in Communism, acted idealistically, was enough for Greene to forgive Philby – or so it would seem.\(^{46}\)

However, as in the work of Banville and others, the concept of amusement and game-playing also arises in the Sherry interviews: ‘Much of our work had to be taken as a lark if one wanted to stay *compos mentis*.\(^{47}\) This may be suggesting the need for a mental escape from the darker aspects of intelligence work, but has elements of ‘Cowboys and Indians’\(^{48}\) as a refuge from boredom. Greene is at his most analytical when dealing with how the game can become everything:

\(^{45}\) Allain 1984: 172-3

\(^{46}\) Sherry 1994: 489

\(^{47}\) Sherry 1994: 490

\(^{48}\) Banville 1997: 22
The spy takes more interest in the mechanics of his calling than in its ultimate goal – the defence of his country. The ‘game’ (a serious game) achieves such a degree of sophistication that the player loses sight of his moral values. I can understand a man’s temptation to turn double agent, for the game becomes more interesting. Perhaps my childhood experience of divided loyalties has helped me to sympathize with people like Kim Philby, who have gone to the limit with their divided loyalties. I myself would not be capable of such courage, of such a force of conviction.\textsuperscript{49}

What then does Greene believe Britain should have done about these spies, with whose beliefs he disagrees but whom he so admires? He tells Sherry what he might have done if he had known the full truth, saying he would have given Philby twenty-four hours to flee, then reported him.\textsuperscript{50}

Greene’s personal loyalty to Philby continued after Philby’s defection. They met four times in the Soviet Union, and Greene urged the British Government to find a way to allow Philby to return.\textsuperscript{51} He claimed that Philby had ‘cheated Moscow’ by giving certain information to Greene, knowing he was acquainted with Castro, Ortega and Allende.\textsuperscript{52} As with Driberg and Burgess, this again suggests that betrayal occurs in

\textsuperscript{49} Allain 1984: 183-4
\textsuperscript{50} Sherry 1994: 183. Such an idea is reminiscent of the opportunity given to Oscar Wilde to escape to Paris so that the embarrassment of his trial might be prevented.
\textsuperscript{51} Sherry 1994: 492
\textsuperscript{52} Sherry 1994: 496
infinite series, with no closure, no final loyalties. But such a concept is an anomaly in Greene’s thoughts about Philby, which paint him as an ideal representation of constancy:

One admires qualities one does not possess oneself. Philby really lived out his loyalty. I like this monolithic quality of his.\(^{53}\)

Philby’s *My Secret War* was seen in advance not only by Greene for the purpose of writing the introduction, but also by Peter Wright. He was given the task of vetting the manuscript for M.I.5 when they obtained an advance copy from the printers.\(^{54}\) Though the British security services could not influence the writing of the book (unlike the case of Pincher), they could choose whether or not to allow its release. Wright gave his impressions of Philby when he wrote his own book, *Spycatcher*. The subject of a highly publicized court case in Sydney (see earlier reference to revelations concerning Chapman Pincher), Wright’s memoir contains technical descriptions such as of bugging equipment and how it was used, as well as personal passages. Listening to tapes of M.I.6 interviews between Philby and Nicholas Elliott in Beirut just before his defection, Wright recollects:

I thought back to my first meeting with Philby, the boyish charm, the stutter, how I sympathised with him; and the second time I heard that voice, in 1955, as he ducked and weaved around his MI6 interrogators, finessing a victory from a steadily losing hand. And now there was

\(^{53}\) Allain 1984: 20

\(^{54}\) Turnbull 1988: 22
Elliott, trying his manful best to corner a man for whom deception had been a second skin for thirty years.\textsuperscript{55}

Wright apparently had an initial admiration for Philby similar to Greene’s, but was less reluctant to let go of it, most likely because Wright had a determined right-wing political position which Greene had not. But \textit{Spycatcher} is more useful for its biographical material on Blunt than on Philby. Between 1965 and 1979, Wright interrogated Blunt for hundreds of hours.\textsuperscript{56} He describes his initial impression in a passage typical of many whose language seems influenced by knowledge of Blunt’s sexual orientation.

We met Blunt several nights later. He was tall and extremely thin, wearing a tweed suit with a large bow tie. He looked distinguished, if slightly effeminate.\textsuperscript{57}

Wright’s political disapproval of Blunt is reflected in his claim that Blunt could readily switch modes and become the hard K.G.B. professional.\textsuperscript{58} In \textit{Spycatcher}, the outward behaviour of the political Blunt and his aspects of class and sexuality (sophistication and snobbery) do not form a natural nexus but are at odds, and are described as changes of mood. Wright recounts in detail his meetings with Blunt at the Courtauld Institute, which are dramatized (without Wright’s name) in Alan Bennett’s

\textsuperscript{55} Wright 1987: 194
\textsuperscript{56} Turnbull 1988: 167
\textsuperscript{57} Wright 1987: 219
\textsuperscript{58} Wright 1987: 220
play A Question of Attribution. Bennett’s character (Chubb) is as charmed as Wright clearly was:

Always we talked, about the 1930s, about the KGB, about espionage and friendship, love and betrayal. They remain for me among the most vivid encounters of my life. Blunt was one of the most elegant, charming, and cultivated men I have met. He could speak five languages, and the range and depth of his knowledge was profoundly impressive. It was not limited solely to the arts; in fact, as he was proud of telling me, his first degree at Cambridge was in mathematics, and he retained a lifelong fascination with the philosophy of science.\(^{59}\)

As Wright himself was not from an upper class background, it might be argued that he was exhibiting an English tendency to be seduced by noblesse oblige, an instinctive tugging of the forelock. Class-consciousness is certainly a factor in Wright’s description of the interrogation of a man named by Blunt as a Cambridge Communist:

I met Long several times with Arthur [Martin], and disliked him intensely. Unlike the other members of the Ring, he lacked class, and I often wondered how on earth he was accepted into the Apostles.\(^{60}\)

\(^{59}\) Wright 1987: 224

\(^{60}\) Wright 1987: 221
Spycatcher highlights the contradiction between Blunt’s patrician bearing and his supposed belief in the dictatorship of the proletariat. Wright makes it clear that this was part of a wider paradox:

The most striking thing about Blunt was the contradiction between his evident strength of character and his curious vulnerability. It was this contradiction which caused people of both sexes to fall in love with him. He was obviously homosexual, but in fact, as I learned from him, he had had at least two love affairs with women, who remained close to him throughout his life. Blunt was capable of slipping from art historian and scholar one minute, to intelligence bureaucrat the next, to spy, to waspish homosexual, to languid establishmentarian.

This switching into different modes is the only way Wright can resolve conflicting aspects of a complex personality. His is also the only work by a conservative author to deal with the emotional side of the relationships between any of the subjects, as distinct from purely physical aspects of homoeroticism:

He talked of how he had joined the Soviet cause, recruited by the then youthful, brilliant Guy Burgess. Guy was still a painful subject for Blunt; he had just died in Moscow, alone, his once virile body broken by years of abuse...

---

61 Playwrights Bennett and Chapman take up this point in their characterisations of Blunt.
62 Wright 1987: 225
63 Wright 1987: 226
This raises the question of the emotional effect on Blunt of Burgess’ sudden and unauthorized defection with Maclean. On the day these matters were discussed, Blunt showed to Wright Burgess’ last letter:

It was a pathetic letter, rambling and full of flaccid sentimental observations. Burgess talked of Moscow life, and tried to make it sound as if it was still as good as ever. Now and again he referred to the old days, and the Reform Club, and people they both knew. At the end he talked of his feelings for Blunt, and the love they shared thirty years before. He knew he was dying, but was whistling to the end. Blunt came back into the room after I finished reading the letter. He was upset, more I suspect because he knew I could see that Burgess still meant something to him. I had won a crucial first victory. He had lifted the veil for the first time, and allowed me a glimpse into the secret world which bound the Ring of Five together.

So despite an initial impression of sensitivity, Wright now shows a professional manipulation, as if he too can ‘switch modes’. He is of a determinedly right-wing persuasion but, unlike Pincher, he puts the pragmatics of spycatching before point-scoring or demonization. Nevertheless his thinking shows a belief in a hidden society with a secret language typical of the ‘invading alien’ myth:

---

64 It will be seen later how Robin Chapman’s teleplay Blunt explores this emotional issue, with Poussin’s painting Et in Arcadia Ego as a symbol of good times that were now gone.

65 Wright 1987: 226
I soon realised that the Ring of Five stood at the centre of a series of other concentric rings, each pledged to silence, each anxious to protect its secrets from outsiders. There was the secret ring of homosexuals, where loyalty to their kind overrode all other obligations.\textsuperscript{66}

‘Their kind’ are thereby implicitly disloyal to their country or to any other values but those of sexuality. Wright also refers to a stereotype of a gossipping old-queens’ network. He is advised by an M.I.5 colleague:

"Don't go to see Bowra," she told me, referring to Maurice Bowra, the distinguished Professor of Literature at Oxford University. Bowra was a homosexual as well as a close friend of Guy Burgess, and was close to the top of my list of those I thought could help me.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because he'll have it all around every high table in Oxford if you do," he said.\textsuperscript{67}

Taking a step back from the chapters on Blunt, it is clear that Wright’s principal aims were to accuse Roger Hollis, the late head of M.I.5, of being part of the ‘Ring’; and to complain about even the innocent in the security services protecting the guilty in order to avoid scandal, whereas he was always in favour of exposing and expelling all spies as quickly as possible. This culture of suppression also touches on Blunt in a way that colours Wright’s picture of him further:

\textsuperscript{66} Wright 1987: 243
\textsuperscript{67} Wright 1987: 242
Fear of scandal reached fever pitch when, in 1975, Blunt was thought to be suffering from cancer, and likely to die. Victor [Rothschild] approached me again, and asked me whether I thought it likely that Blunt would leave a last will and testament to be published on his death, blowing the lid on the whole affair. I had often asked Blunt about this, and he had always denied making any preparations, but there was a streak of vindictiveness in him which I never quite trusted... It was not just the problem of the immunity; there was the horrendous possibility that he might name fellow conspirators, both living and dead, as well as the chance that he might choose to leave a more intimate record of the halcyon days of the 1930s. More than a handful of reputations stood to suffer if their sexual peccadilloes from that time were circulated on Fleet Street, not least the former Prime Minister, Anthony Eden.68

The impression of vindictiveness is another that may tie in with the ‘waspish homosexual’ label used earlier. But none of these epithets prove that Wright was arguing that there is an essential link between being gay and being a traitor. In fact, he is quoted giving evidence at the trial over his book in Sydney:

People mistakenly see the penetration problem is having been limited to a few colourful, often homosexual, Cambridge intellectuals. It went much further and deeper than that. It revealed a fundamental weakness in British society. Understanding the past will enable us to prevent

68 Wright 1987: 372-3
repetition in the future. In my life I have seen too many people in power
turning a blind eye to this sort of thing.\footnote{Turnbull 1988: 174}

So the queer/traitor nexus is denied except possibly in the sense that homosexuals are a
subset of the espionage problem. But Wright’s main thrust proceeds from a sense of
British decay, perhaps subconsciously associated with the ‘end of empire’. The
homosexual is, in this view, part of a repetition of the fall of the Roman Empire through
decadence.

Anthony Blunt: His Lives by Miranda Carter is a research-based (though not
academically annotated) biography. The author introduces it with her intention of
covering Blunt’s role in the world of art history as well as espionage and his private life.
One of her principal themes is stoicism and the suppression of emotion, increasing as
Blunt became older:

Among his own students, Blunt still inspired intense feelings, though the
immediate warmth that his students of the 1950s had witnessed seemed
less present. Beyond this circle he was increasingly viewed as an
intimidating, distant, slightly mysterious figure, inviting respect and
curiosity rather than affection.\footnote{Carter 2001: 436}

Carter positions Blunt in a ‘selective closet’, whose walls are transparent to a
particular class of men, heterosexuals included:

\footnote{Turnbull 1988: 174}
\footnote{Carter 2001: 436}
Blunt did not hide his homosexuality - at least not in the worlds of art history and literary London. 'Everyone knew', said Ernst Gombrich, who musingly added, 'but then it was a sort of occupational disease among British art historians'. In fact Blunt could be very open indeed about his sexuality... The times were sufficiently innocent, and so little about homosexuality was publicly acknowledged, that despite the rise in prosecutions and public antipathy towards homosexuals in the early 1950s it was possible for a middle-class man to be more or less honest about his sexuality to those who understood, without giving offence to the uninitiated. Institutionalised ignorance helped: even well-meaning books characterised homosexuality as a deeply peculiar and hidden subculture.71

This form of the closet therefore has boundaries which may be crossed within sight of a certain subset of the heterosexual elite. However, full public revelation was still forbidden. Blunt was more discreet than Burgess since he understood exactly where the boundaries were, and how they shifted depending on who was observing.

Published shortly before Carter, but occupying a different niche in the field of biography, is John Banville’s novel The Untouchable. Here, Anthony Blunt becomes a semi-fictional composite character - aspects of other lives (Graham Greene, Victor Rothschild) are incorporated, as well as fictional embellishment. The presence of constructed reality in biography is no longer hidden in this form of writing – the subjectivity of the author’s gaze is made obvious by a conjunction with the conventions of the fictional novel. The use of non-historical names for the characters enables a more

71 Carter 2001: 381
complex psychological picture to be drawn, depicting a multiplicity of motives. As narrator, “Blunt” recalls an interview in which he was asked the reason for his career in espionage.

'Why?' I said. 'Oh, cowboys and Indians, my dear; cowboys and Indians.'

It was true, in a way. The need for amusement, the fear of boredom: was the whole thing much more than that, really, despite all the grand theorizing? 'And hatred of America, of course'.

Many writers of non-fiction concerning espionage have listed boredom and self-aggrandizement as causes of treason. Banville chooses these above all questions of sexuality in his treatment of Blunt and Burgess. The protagonist revels in his ability to maintain a double life, to fool everybody. Asked about his calm when facing the press after his exposure, the pseudo-Blunt says:

I am a great actor, that is the secret of my success. Must not anyone who wants to move the crowd be an actor who impersonates himself? - Nietzsche.

The trend in these later writings is to look for more complex motives for the Cambridge group, with sexuality becoming a minor aspect or even mere background. As a later chapter will show, this trend is also evident if one contrasts various authors of drama on the subject. Ian Curteis writes with a similar agenda to Pincher’s earlier

---

72 Banville 1997: 22
73 Banville 1997: 7
books, and with similar working methods. Alan Bennett’s plays have a depth more equivalent to Banville’s work.

Summing up the historiographical position of all these writers of biography and autobiography involves the same problem as exists with the journalistic writings, namely their perceived position as historians. Samuel again refers to their exclusion under some definitions of history:

Biographers do not count, either because their subjects are literary rather than historical, or because they opt for narrative rather than analysis.\(^{74}\)

The selectivity of biographical memory is relevant to a broad definition of ‘history’, especially if we include historical representations in popular culture, as Samuels urges. This would not only include biographies (Spycatcher was a best seller) but also the plays built on the foundation of biographical works. The thrust of this narratological point is that selectivity is based upon what is thematically important to the writer. In Conway’s cognitive memory terms, matters of routine (though they may contain important data) are deselected whereas:

The emotional intensity and personal significance of an event give rise to autobiographical memories which are detailed, highly available for recall, and comparatively resistant to forgetting.\(^{75}\)

\(^{74}\) Samuel 1994: 4

\(^{75}\) Conway 1990: 104
In addition to selectivity there is also the historiographical problem of hindsight. Lowenthal puts it simply: “Knowing the future of the past forces the historian to shape his account to come out as things have done.” But this is also subject to thematic selection. The inclusion in any account of incidents that, by consensus, “did not happen” is not a case of selectivity but may be prompted by the incident’s consistency with hindsight. Conway describes psychological experiments which show that:

…autobiographical memory is typically inaccurate and that memories are reconstructed in terms of schemas so that any plausible event description which does not violate a schema expectancy might be erroneously judged to have been experienced.

The relevance of this data lies in the possibility that the schema in a historical play, for example, may be either principally or incidentally homophobic, or at least heteronormative. All selections and interpretations of events will be filtered through this schema. If fear of Communism is also part of the schema, the stage is set for a union of both fears, and memory will function in a manner which upholds such a union.

A principal motivation in the construction of schemata for biographical writing is the presentation of myths. In particular, a mythic journey which constructs aims and progress towards them is applied by authors to the individual or community:

The mythical element in life stories is the pre-established framework within which individuals explain their personal history: the mental

---

76 Lowenthal 1985: 218

77 Conway 1990: 98
construct which, starting from the memory of individual facts which would otherwise appear incoherent and arbitrary, goes on to arrange and interpret them and so turn them into biographical events. Such mystical frameworks are common in all societies. They are especially widespread in societies undergoing rapid development and change, where individuals tell their histories as a kind of progress or journey.\textsuperscript{78}

The journey may be structured as the classical ‘hero’s journey’, or in a hostile or tragic biography it may be the inverted ‘monster’s journey’. Peneff comes close to dealing with espionage when addressing an example of this rationalization:

Let us also think about underground action in wartime: it arouses mistrust and suspicions towards very close comrades, and demands scheming, whereas upright action, open friendship, and straight talking are what we normally value. How can a person escape these difficulties and contradictions? Autobiography is one of several ways of getting the better of this trap and convincing oneself that the commitment, with all the lost time and wasted energy, had a meaning, either individual - in the building of an interesting life - or collective; that history has a meaning.\textsuperscript{79}

Philby’s autobiography is a clear example of this phenomenon, particularly bearing in mind Marxist beliefs in the force of history. Acts of betrayal and subversion carried out for both sides (of World War Two and the Cold War) are justified in the context of an ideological cause which overrides the morality of individual acts. This apologia

\textsuperscript{78}Peneff 1990: 36

\textsuperscript{79}Peneff 1990: 40
becomes the schema for autobiographies and sympathetic biographies such as Driberg’s.

The thematic nature of biography is a possible reason for its being the principal source for dramatic works. The greater emphasis on personalities and the authors’ impressions of them are more in tune with theatrical requirements than a dry analysis of events. However, the more dense narrative of journalistic works makes them tempting to use as artefacts in establishing background history, especially in the more analytical style of docudrama such as that of Ian Curteis. Similarity of political position between a prose author and a playwright intensifies this. We therefore have a series of strata being built: journalists’ reportage, personal biography, then dramatized representation with all its visual as well as textual interpretations to be added. At each stage, underlying artefacts are transformed according to a new agenda:

We change the past, then, not only by altering antiquities but by using them as stimuli or subsequent creations. Innumerable acts of imitation and emulation, of re-enactment and commemoration, of imagery and reproduction, add to the stock of what passes for the past and transforms the impact of its surviving relics.80

There are therefore many layers of historiographical problems for playwrights, who are also writing according to the constraints of theatrical representation or the requirements of the television docudrama genre. It will be seen that they tend to follow either the political agenda of the espionage exposé, or the thematic and character-based formula of biography.

80 Lowenthal 1985: 324
Chapter 4 – The Playwrights and their Historiographical Approach

‘Can you write a play? A play that will go around the world, a play that will be remembered long after rumour has died?’

Terry Pratchett

*Wyrd Sisters* (Gollancz, London) 1998

The construction of dramatic works based upon historical events adds a new layer of problems in historiography. A re-evaluation of the existing dramatic canon took place with the rise of postmodern historiography. (Greenblatt’s *Shakespearean Negotiations* is just one example of the ‘new historicism’ arising in literary criticism.¹) The study of agency and of character in narratology also has a special application to drama. In plays concerning the Cambridge spies and similar characters, the authors’ choices in historiographical technique, depiction of character and narrative structure will convey meanings in the areas of sexuality, class and political ideology. This chapter will survey the plays produced, examine the additional constraints imposed by the genre of docudrama (particularly television docudrama), and re-examine historiographical theories as they apply to the work of the playwrights studied.

Definitions of documentary drama tend to be drafted with absolute concepts of history in mind. Pickering’s *Dictionary of Theatre* refers to documentary theatre as “A form of theatre, also known as Theatre of Fact, in which productions are closely based upon historical truth”.² Hartnoll & Found are a little less simplistic in their *Concise Oxford Companion to the Theatre*:

¹ Greenblatt 1988

² Pickering 1988: 145
**Documentary Theatre**, theatre based, usually for propaganda purposes, on fact, as documented in material such as records, films, newspapers, official reports, and transcripts of trials.³

All attempts to define a genre in one paragraph should be treated with suspicion, but the substitution of the phrase ‘on received history’ for ‘on fact’ in Hartnoll & Found’s definition can be used to delimit documentary drama for current purposes. With a similar caveat, we may also regard a play based on historical persons or events that does not rely on particular documentation as a ‘history play’, as distinct from a docudrama. Like the Greek theatre, this type of text relies on common public knowledge of its historical basis. The history play does not seek to reveal additional researched details, but merely to tell a story based around a simple iconic concept of a historical entity.

The principal site for both genres, in terms of greatest audience reached, is television. Even those ‘spy plays’ originally written for the stage have found their greatest audience as television adaptations. Though there are many cinema-release films that purport to convey history, the principal medium of biographical and historical drama is the television special or mini-series, promoted in such terms as ‘a startling true story’. Many video rental shops have sections labelled ‘True Stories’. It is the use of this label which has been thoroughly analysed by writers such as Derek Paget. Paget distinguishes between ‘recording’ (a liberal / conservative mode of writing) and ‘reporting’, which acknowledges that there is no value-free historical representation.⁴ He also separates the True Story (literally a document-ary) from the History Play, which

---

³ Hartnoll & Found 1992: 127

⁴ Paget 1990: 39-40
deals with a story already known, or the ‘bio-pic’ where characterization of the individual effaces the historical background. In Paget’s view the entire placement of the ‘true story’ amongst other genres is problematic:

The True Story is an important form to analyse from a cultural materialist perspective because, while the insulation of ‘English’ or ‘cultural study’ from ‘real life’ is often taken as read, here is a form which claims (even pro-claims) a direct linkage to that very ‘reality’. This has occasioned profound critical uncertainty. Are True Stories merely dramatised journalism? Because event-specific are they ‘not-art’ (to be regarded as in some way ‘disposable’ and lacking the much-prized ‘permanence’ of ‘art’)? Do they, or should they, have a moral or ethical relationship to facts which tempers their ‘art-fulness’ and therefore reduces it?

The divergences expressed here can be seen in plays dealing with the Cambridge spies. Some of the plays and teleplays purport to be dramatized journalism through their reliance on documents, and turn out to be thematically equivalent to the journalistic writings already surveyed. Others are (and are declared to be) dramatic art with history and historical characters as a background only. However, neither type of writing can be ideologically neutral:

Art in general, and dramatic art (being highly social) in particular, does not just re-flect the society which produces it, it also in-flects that society with

---

5 Paget 1990: 162

6 Paget 1990: 6
developed (and developing) meanings. Nowhere is this more evident than in the True Story.\(^7\)

The use of the word ‘true’ requires that the historiographical assumptions of the playwrights be scrutinized. According to Tulloch, historical research for the purpose of docudrama has always been empirical in nature, and this empiricism assumes separation of subject and object - the existence of independent facts. Historical drama based on empiricism and positivism also tend to dwell on supposed 'great men' because, like facts, they are tangible whereas such forces as class dynamics are not.\(^8\) The creation of such expectations for historical drama is problematic for the treatment of the Cambridge spies, where there is no discernible hero upholding existing societal values. In documentary drama and other 'period pieces' there is often a nostalgia for times of uniform values, as a conservative reaction to social reform. But the times idealized by nostalgia had their own myths.\(^9\) Failure to take this into account leads to an artificially unifying approach to history - to the construction of, for example, Tillyard’s single Elizabethan world view\(^10\), which ignored the existence of any oppositional thought in the face of the dominant culture. Many members of an audience in, say, the 1980s, viewing docudrama set in the 1950s may be disturbed by the depiction of homosexuality and Marxist infiltration amidst the clean white-picket fences and traditional family life they expect will be represented in any drama set in the 1950s.

\(^7\) Paget 1990: 27

\(^8\) Tulloch 1990: 97

\(^9\) Tulloch 1990: 94

\(^10\) Tillyard, E.M. *The Elizabethan World Picture*, 1943.
There has been debate over whether the standard docudrama format can ever convey ideas other than the conservative ‘official’ view of history. Radical reinterpretations of the past have tended to take other forms, such as episodic works interspersed with music and other aspects of local culture. Examples include McGrath's *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black Black Oil* and *Oh What a Lovely War*. Alternatively, Postlewait describes another self-referential form of historical presentation in which alternative interpretations remain possible in a realist format:

> Usually, the measured, stylistic voice of the historian carries a modernist tone of multiple, ironic perspectives. In the process the documents are often foregrounded, so that their problematic status is openly acknowledged. The scholar conjectures and conjures with possible meanings. Thus, the idea of a case study has been given a new configuration.\(^{11}\)

Debate on the place of traditionally authored historical or documentary dramas, such as those concerning the Cambridge spies, also deals with the supposed dichotomy between popular and elitist programming – where does the docudrama genre lie in the scale of ‘culture’? Brandt lists signifiers of alleged ‘quality’ in historical drama on television: a canonical literary source; prestigious actors; a high budget; and a heritage aspect with images of Englishness. On this last feature, he rightly attacks the construction of a 'never-never-land' of social harmony. But he substitutes his own quality markers, namely the provision of a distorting mirror of life; reflection of real human concerns; exposition of individual experiences related to a moral structure; and

---

\(^{11}\) Postlewait 2000: 97
broadening of viewers' sympathies. Both lists suggest the idea of ‘educating the masses’ or, at best, consciousness-raising on issues. The process of docudrama-making is still didactic, and therefore prone to inescapable authorial bias. The remaining question is whether this bias will be acknowledged and foregrounded, or whether the drama will still be upheld as a true story, albeit an alternative ‘truth’.

Historical teleplays have been commonly categorized as ‘high culture’ - the pinnacle of British drama on television, with the B.B.C. as the equivalent of a flagship theatre company such as the National Theatre or the Royal Shakespeare Company. The resultant product is intended to elevate and educate the viewer, and is distinguished from popular culture, the latter being typically, in the case of television, the game show and the soap-opera. Samuel’s *Theatres of Memory* argues for the reversal of this dichotomy when considering how history is established in the minds of a population. Popular culture and especially pictorial imagery, he argues, is a greater purveyor of history than the works of historians. But Tulloch shows how the scales have tipped in the other direction:

It is this familiar 'high culture' discourse (positioning 'serious drama' as other than mindless soap) that radical theorists have been recently challenging. But in its turn this new polemic on behalf of popular television has frequently been just as quickly dismissive of 'serious' or 'authored' drama (for representing 'elite' high culture).

---

12 Brandt 1993: 4
13 Samuel 1994
14 Tulloch 1990: 90
Tulloch points out the potential of authored drama as a space for alternative or oppositional discourse, despite the tendency of radical critics to question the notion of authorship itself. His arguments are supported by the uses to which such drama has been put during its formative years. In Britain, the modern docudrama has antecedents in political fiction. *Cathy Come Home* (1963) has been seen as documentary and frequently named as a progenitor of the genre, although its characters are fictional. It deals with a young couple looking for a home, who in the end have their children taken away from them. This work by Tony Garnett is referred to repeatedly as a drama documentary, though it was entirely fictional.\(^{15}\) With *Cathy Come Home*, director Sandford powerfully exploited the form of drama/documentary. Banham describes the sense of authenticity conveyed by the reportage style of writing, and the deliberate application of filming techniques patterned on newsreel immediacy, which created considerable public focus on the issues involved.\(^{16}\) It had such an impact when originally broadcast that a new charity was formed to address the effects of the housing crisis.

As the genre grew, however, a number of barriers to politically effective, and particularly counter-mythical, television drama were put in place. Selectors of programs, whether in commercial networks or not, demanded a certain sized audience as a criterion for success. In the television industry, even the news must compromise with entertainment values. Non-government free-to-air television is dominated by the need to deliver the audience to the next advertisement. Such an aim must come into conflict with the intentions of the serious playwright, whatever his or her social agenda may be. Molette describes the networks’ phenomenon of 'least objectionable

\(^{15}\) Sutton 1982: 25

\(^{16}\) Banham 1981: 196
programming', which assumes that most viewers' tendency is to avoid changing channels unless they are irritated or offended by what they are seeing. Therefore no controversy or demanding themes must be permitted. Non-controversial conflict is achieved, for example, by using morally unambiguous figures for villains, such as Nazis. Producer Stephen Kandel said "you write, direct, produce, edit, and release a piece of film that will demand the least of an audience that doesn't want very much demanded of it".\textsuperscript{17} These pressures create a temptation to depict the Cambridge spies in a stereotypical and morally simplistic manner (or not present them at all). It is undesirable to require the audience to understand complex characters. In this manner of thinking, it is ‘least objectionable’ to present a simple story of ‘Communist poofers that sold us out and got away with it’.

Debate on the ideological place of scripted television drama also deals with its invariable use of naturalist format. Fiske and Hartley note that realism sits uneasily with the oral and the individual (which are preferred modes of communication for marginalized cultures) yet it claims to be the only way of seeing:

Seen thus, realism could be said to act as a kind of silent weapon in the extension of what amounts to bourgeois ideology over all other sections in society. The power of realism, then, resides in the appearance that its ideology \textit{isn't there}, and that its derivation from bourgeois modes of thought is irrelevant since its version of reality is true.\textsuperscript{18}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Molette 1989: 31
\item \textsuperscript{18} Fiske & Hartley 1978: 165
\end{itemize}
In response to suggestions that for this and other reasons television (especially commercial television) should be abandoned as a medium for alternative drama, Trevor Griffiths wrote in his preface to *Through the Night*:

> While at its most secure [theatre] offers the writer a greater degree of control than any other medium over the production of his work, it is incapable, as a social institution, of reaching, let alone *mobilising*, large popular audiences... Success in the theatre can confer fame, prestige, wealth, critical acclaim and a place in literature, but all of them will be pickled in a sort of class aspic.\(^{19}\)

For this reason, the work of Griffiths and other authors of resistant teleplays retain naturalism as a production style. They also seek to remove a barrier to audience reception. As Braun puts it, 'naturalism is the form most adjacent to the television audience and hence presents least obstacles to the full assimilation of a complex argument'.\(^{20}\)

There are therefore various ways in which authored drama, on stage or screen, may be used to make statements which oppose conservative tendencies to marginalize groups such as homosexuals and Marxists. The genre can be used either to affirm or deny a link between sexuality and treason, or to comment on the very process of creating such a nexus using post-modern reflexivity. These are the possibilities - but what has actually been written?

---

\(^{19}\) Braun 1981: 56

\(^{20}\) Braun 1981: 72
The authors of drama concerned with gay men who were (or were suspected of being) spies cover a range of political positions and a variety of relationships to the media of stage and television. The list includes John Osborne and Julian Mitchell (principally connected with the stage), Robin Chapman and Hugh Conner (standard television scriptwriters), Ian Curteis (known as a ‘quality’ television writer) and Alan Bennett and Hugh Whitemore (with a substantial involvement in both media).

One of the first modern dramatic works concerning espionage and sexuality was John Osborne’s *A Patriot For Me* (1966). Although not concerned with the Cambridge spies, it is included because it is the forerunner in the construction of protagonists who are homosexual spies, and being concerned with a non-fictional person, it is subject to the same historiographical constraints as the Cambridge spy plays. The play is a treatment of the life of Colonel Alfred Redl who was head of counter-espionage for the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the late nineteenth century. Blackmailed on account of his sexuality, he was compelled to provide secrets to Tsarist Russia. Redl is depicted as closeted and full of self-loathing.\(^{21}\) Despite Redl’s high office in the Hapsburg Empire, his background made him vulnerable. He had overcome several forms of marginalisation, being Jewish and lower class. Clum describes the traitor as the greatest outsider\(^ {22}\) but leaves open (as does Osborne) the question of causal links between Redl’s multiple estrangements. Redl’s life could easily raise the questions of Jewishness or lower class origins as a ‘cause’ of treason, besides homosexuality. Osborne focuses on Redl’s suppression and denial as enabling the Tsarist blackmail, but the anti-Semite, the

---

21 His life story and his suicide were also the basis for the 1985 film *Colonel Redl* directed by Istvan Szabo (Russo 1987: 287)

22 Clum 1992: 213
snob and the homophobe could easily compete for whose prejudice explains Redl’s betrayal of his country.

*A Patriot For Me* was a docudrama under the provisional definition earlier proposed. It is built upon details of people surrounding Redl, and incidents in his life beginning at his military training. When it opened, the general fear of the psychosexual themes of the play were manifested through the Lord Chamberlain’s obstruction, but also by a state of denial on the part of some personnel involved, akin to Redl’s own. A *Patriot For Me* falls into that category of stories which depicts the queer character as necessarily miserable, tortured and suicidal. The protagonist never attempts to assert that his sexual preference has any positive value or legitimacy, and makes no attempt at self-justification. Innes sees the homosexual in this play as a “symbol of the isolation and sterility of the individual in modern civilization”. DeJongh, however, is disappointed with the actions taken by this individual:

Osborne, albeit attracted by the allure of overweening rebels, would not give his Redl the elements of courage and positive consciousness that he had imparted to his other fighters against convention.

---

23 Due to the Lord Chamberlain’s objections to representations of homosexuality on the stage, the Royal Court was turned into a ‘private’ club theatre, with seven thousand pounds of Osborne’s own money, ‘and the plod of policemen’s feet’ (Osborne 1991: 251).

24 According to DeJongh, actor Maximillian Schell (playing the part of Redl) expressed the belief that his character was basically heterosexual but had had a bad love affair (De Jongh 1992: 110). The Gay Sweatshop theatre company also encountered a problem with the state of mind of heterosexual actors as outlined by Osment (1989).

25 Innes 1992: 108

26 De Jongh 1992: 118
The suicidal gay man in the style of Osborne’s Redl was to become *de trop* in stage and film representations for the next decade or more. Vito Russo’s observations of the representation of homosexuals in film in the 1960s, as miserable and self-destructive\(^{27}\) hold true for mainstream stage works in the same period. In Terence Rattigan’s *Ross* (1960) for example, T. E. Lawrence’s realization of homosexual and masochistic tendencies in himself, after his capture and abuse at Derra, lead to his attempted annihilation of his identity, by posing as aircraftsman Ross. Like Redl, Lawrence is depicted by the playwright as a courageous warrior who nonetheless seeks to obliterate himself, though less literally, because of sexual guilt.

Another play ending in the (apparent) suicide of a real-life homosexual character is *Breaking The Code* by Hugh Whitemore\(^{28}\). This concerns Alan Turing, wartime codebreaker and a pioneer of computer technology and theory. It has never been established that Turing was a spy but, like Burgess, Maclean and Blunt, was educated at Cambridge. When his sexual preference became known he was barred from all government work, a victim of guilt by association. *Breaking the Code* was made into a 1996 teleplay with the role of Turing played by Derek Jacobi, as in the London and New York stage productions.

\(^{27}\) Russo 1987

\(^{28}\) Hugh Whitemore went on to write screenplays for *My House in Umbria, The Gathering Storm, Jane Eyre, Utz, 84 Charing Cross Road, The Return of the Soldier* and *Stevie*. Whitemore’s television work includes *A Dance to the Music of Time, Concealed Enemies, Nixon -- The Final Days, Rebecca* and one of the six teleplays making up the series *Elizabeth R*. Among his plays are *Pack of Lies* and *Letter of Resignation*. (www.hbo.com/films)
The plot shifts back and forth in time frequently, and commences with Alan Turing in 1952 reporting to the police that certain goods have been stolen from his home, and claiming that a brush salesmen warned him about a thief in the area. In the television version, an M.I.5 official reads the list of stolen goods and warns the police that Turing was a ‘top man during the war’ and a favourite of Winston Churchill. In 1929, the young Turing introduces his friend, Christopher Morcom, to his mother, and expresses the wish that the two boys could live together and pursue science and mathematics. In 1952, Turing emerges from seeing the Walt Disney film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, and meets a young man named Ron in a pub, inviting him home. The scene then shifts to wartime - Turing arrives at the Government Code and Cipher School (G.C.C.S.) at Bletchley Park, Surrey and meets its chief, Dillwyn Knox. They discuss Turing's work on the incompleteness of mathematics, on right and wrong, and logical provability. Fellow codebreaker Patricia Green shows Turing the German Enigma coding machine.

In 1952, Turing warns Ron that he is mixing cyanide weedkiller in the bath. He notices that money is missing from his wallet and challenges Ron about this. The next scene is set in wartime, when Patricia declares her love for Turing although she knows he is a homosexual. Turing tells her of his love for Christopher Morcom, who died of tuberculosis, and how he wondered whether Christopher's mind could exist separately from his body. This had led him to ask what mental processes are, and whether a machine could possess them.

Police inspector Ross presses Turing on his ‘brush salesman’ story, and Turing admits Ron's presence and the nature of the relationship between them. Ross lays
charges against him for ‘gross indecency’. Ron gives evidence against Turing and escapes sentence, but Turing is given parole on the condition he submits to drug treatment. After the trial Turing meets Patricia, telling her the effects of the oestrogen treatment he has been forced to undergo, and learns for the first time about Knox’s bisexuality. In the television version, Turing is interviewed by an M.I.5 official and told that the United States is very jumpy about him since the defection of Burgess and Maclean. Turing dies from eating an apple poisoned with cyanide, (as in Snow White). Collecting his effects from Ross, Turing's mother insists that he would not have committed suicide, and that it must have been an accident.

Turing, as represented by Whitemore, has none of the depression and guilt of Osborne’s Redl. He is proud of his achievements, expresses no distress at being homosexual, and his anger is aimed at the simple facts of his prosecution and his exclusion from further classified work. Whitemore viewed Turing as having been emotionally frozen in adolescence, partly by the death of Morcom. His suicide seems out of character, though Whitemore does not mention any of the later conspiracy theories which allege that he was murdered by British or American security services.

Breaking the Code falls under the definition of docudrama indirectly, since it is based principally on the research carried out by Alan Hodges for his biography Alan Turing: The Enigma.29 Whitemore described his approach to dramatising Hodges’ biography at a symposium in September 2001. His contribution, “Adapting history to drama: a dramatist's experience” states:

29 Hodges: 1983
It was never my intention to write a straightforward biographical play about Turing. There were things about his life that I reacted to personally - and, of course, a writer always searches for a personal involvement with his subject be it entirely imaginary or based on carefully researched fact. For one thing, Turing was a man flawed by a Jungian gap between thinking and feeling. The critic Nicholas de Jongh pointed out that half of Turing's tragedy - and this applies to both heterosexuals and homosexuals - was that he was driven by his sexual energies but could not relate them to his intellectual life. I wanted to explore this gap between thinking and feeling.\(^3\)

This suggests that although Whitemore acknowledges the subjectivity of the process of playwriting, he divided drama into a binary of the purely fictional or the purely factual. While expressing his wish to explore a psychological theme, it seems that he wanted to remain within a framework of researched ‘truth’, principally Hodges’ biography. He was aware of the danger of extreme dramatic licence, which might well have been taken in exploring the life of Turing. His symposium speech goes on to say:

Finally, as an epilogue, let me tell you what happened when the play was in Washington, at the Kennedy Center. It had been a great success. Leonard Bernstein had prostrated himself in homage before Derek Jacobi. I was in my hotel room, enjoying a brief moment of triumph. The phone rang. It was a leading Hollywood producer. "Your play is a masterpiece" he said, "get on a plane and we'll talk about making it into a motion picture." And he named a colossal sum as a potential fee. Riches,
at last, seemed to beckon. "Just two things," he said. "What's that?" I asked. "I don't want this guy to be a faggot and for God's sake cut out all the mathematics."

In other words, the film proposed would have been one of those biographies in which the homosexuality of the subject was suppressed, such as those dealing with Cole Porter, Michelangelo and John Nash. Secondly, a principal theme of the play – the non-existence of absolute values of right and wrong, even in mathematics - would have been excised. Whitemore did not negotiate further with this producer, and the screen adaptation was made by British television, not by Hollywood.

The issue of betrayal is a minor one in Breaking the Code, expressed through the character of Ron and the suspicion aimed at Turing by the authorities. However, Whitemore explored betrayal more deeply in another ‘spy play’. His teleplay Act of Betrayal (1971) was a documentary drama dealing with the arrest of American couple Helen and Peter Kroger. In Britain in 1961 they were sentenced to twenty years for transmitting classified information to the KGB, but were exchanged for a British prisoner in Moscow in 1969. Whitemore redeveloped this script into a stage play, Pack of Lies (1983). In the introduction to the published script he provides further insight into his views on genres and the boundaries between them:

The television script had adhered very closely to known facts and, as is always the case with documentary drama, the scope for imaginative development of characters and situations was limited… With these

---

31 www.nbi.dk/NBA
thoughts in mind, I decided to rework the basic story of *Act of Betrayal* in a longer, less restricted, more fictionalised form.\(^\text{32}\)

In other words, *Pack of Lies* became a history play rather than a docudrama. Despite the implications of Whitemore’s absolutist reference to ‘known facts’, he shows his willingness to construct plays with the aim of exploring basic themes (in this case loyalty and deception), with history providing a background only, and fictionalisation fully acknowledged. While the Kroger’s real names are used, the play is centred on neighbours with fictional names whose house is used as an observation post by M.I.5. Barbara, played in the London opening by Judi Dench, is made physically ill by the combination of betrayal by her best friends of five years standing and being forced to lie in return, to them and to her daughter. The core themes of *Pack of Lies* are betrayal and the complete invisibility of the insurgent ‘aliens’, that is, their effective passing as normal. It also deals with the power of the intelligence services, the interests of the state compared with those of the individual, and Peter Kroger’s recruitment during the Great Depression - an American equivalent of the many Marxist conversions in British universities at the same time. For James Fenton in the *Sunday Times*:

> The focus of attention is always on the relationship between Miss Dench and Barbara Leigh-Hunt [playing Helen Kroger]... Miss Leigh-Hunt, who is extremely clever portraying those moments when Helen is making her calculations as a spy, never lets you doubt the warmth of her relationship with the family. For Judi Dench, the tragic dilemma is to

\(^{32}\) Whitemore 1983: 9
understand both that Helen is her friend and that she is a liar and a traitor.\textsuperscript{33}

While sexual preference is not an issue in this play, Whitemore reminds us that in the Cold War, betrayal was a way of life and could make victims of any person or family. Philby, Burgess, Maclean and Blunt lived in a world saturated by double-dealing and betrayal. As one of Le Carre's characters expresses it:

We betray to be loyal. Betrayal is like imagining when the reality isn't good enough... Betrayal as hope and compensation. As the making of a better land. Betrayal as love. As a tribute to our unlived lives... Betrayal as escape. As a constructive act. As a statement of ideals. Worship. As an adventure of the soul. Betrayal as travel: how can we discover new places if we never leave home?\textsuperscript{34}

If we now focus attention on plays and teleplays directly concerning the ‘Cambridge Four’ we find works written by career television writers such as Hugh Conner, Ian Curteis and Robin Chapman, as well as writers of wider experience such as Julian Mitchell and Alan Bennett.

Hugh Conner's teleplay \textit{Kim Philby} (1980) is a treatment of Philby’s last days before relocating to Moscow. Philby is residing in Beirut as joint correspondent for the magazines \textit{The Observer} and \textit{The Economist}. He is living with his third wife, Eleanor, in a state of almost perpetual drunkenness. An M.I.6 agent, Nicholas Elliott, persuades

\textsuperscript{33} Miller 1998: 192

\textsuperscript{34} LeCarre, 1986: 163
him to speak freely about his time as a Soviet agent. The C.I.A. is also keeping an eye on Philby and are seen speaking with the Lebanese head of security, Colonel Jalbout, arranging for every street trader and beggar to watch him. Philby is aware of this and suspects that Britain may want to forcibly return him to London.

At his interview with Nicholas, Philby speaks about Cambridge, the Spanish Civil War, how he prevented a separate peace between Britain and the Nazis, and how he betrayed Volkov, a potential defector. The British are undecided whether to try to return him or to persuade him to turn double-agent against the Russians, but Philby now refuses a stream of invitations to functions and interviews at the Embassy. In discussions with his Russian contact, Philby decides that it is time to escape to Moscow. He begins drinking even more, and his wife suspects that he has done something wrong. The two are invited to dinner with Nicholas and some American agents. Eleanor arrives but Philby does not. He is seen leaving on a ship that night.

By writing extensive dialogue based around so few recorded events, Conner has produced a hybrid of the docudrama and the history play. It is difficult to identify any overall themes in Conner’s work - *Kim Philby* seems to be documentary in the narrowest sense, setting out a sequence of events with no particular through-lines apart from the idea that the U.S.A. was far more keen on arresting Philby than the British were. British reluctance to prosecute is dealt with more pointedly, however, in works concerning Anthony Blunt.

Robin Chapman’s *Blunt* (1987) was made for television, partly adapted from his early stage play *One Of Us*, concerning Burgess and Goronwy-Rees (a temporarily-
Marxist friend from Burgess’ Cambridge years). Chapman is principally a television writer, adapting some of Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories and Roald Dahl’s *Tales of the Unexpected*.

Chapman’s *Blunt* begins with newspaper and radio articles on the protagonist’s exposure in 1979. Anthony Blunt is seen examining art at Windsor Castle in 1950, and he receives a dinner invitation from King George VI. The Royal chauffeur returning Blunt to London remarks that McCarthy has the right idea, 'rooting out the Reds', and Blunt comments that McCarthy's methods would be un-English. In London, Blunt meets a young Soviet contact in a public convenience and insists that this is a dangerous place to meet. "Because of the English vice?", asks the diplomat. Pictures of class, Englishness and sexuality are thus painted in the first ten minutes of the play.

Burgess arrives home from Washington on Blunt's orders, and his reunion with Blunt is affectionate. Blunt says that he is now officially in command (Chapman thus agrees with author John Costello on the relative power positions of the spies). Blunt is then seen giving a lecture on Poussin and the painting *Et in Arcadia Ego*, saying that in Poussin's time Reason was an energising force, as theoretical Marxism has been in the twentieth century. Burgess then visits with Goronwy-Rees and his family. Burgess freely mentions that Philby is in M.I.6 in front of Mrs Goronwy-Rees, who is plainly discomfited by Burgess’ presence. Maclean, during a recent drunken incident, had publicly said to Goronwy-Rees "you were once one of us, but you ratted". In private, Burgess tells Rees about Maclean's imminent escape and the possibility that Burgess may also go. Rees says that Burgess departure would “break Anthony's heart”, but Burgess swears him to silence.
Blunt is depicted giving Burgess the details of Maclean's escape plan. On the eve of departure, Burgess posts a letter to Blunt containing the words "What's become of Waring?...". Looking up the appropriate Browning poem, Blunt deduces that Burgess will not be "pacing up and down, any longer London town". Blunt, infuriated, destroys a number of documents and photographs including a postcard of *Et in Arcadia Ego*, written by Burgess on the twentieth anniversary of their meeting. Blunt looks wistfully at this and a number of photographs before destroying them.

When Rees tells his wife what is happening, she persuades him to go to M.I.5. Blunt visits Rees and warns him that M.I.5 will wonder why he is only talking now, twelve years after he joined the Comintern. Rees meets with Liddell, but Blunt is also at the meeting and Rees cannot object to this without betraying Blunt immediately. It is clear that Blunt has undermined Rees' credibility in advance, but Rees then names Blunt in written evidence, and Liddell says that M.I.5 will 'mull on it'. The play concludes with a lecture by Blunt on the same painting, in which he says that "Neoclassic visions of social harmony" continued to be offered by various philosophies.

By detailing a sequence of events, Chapman has produced a docudrama, but without sacrificing thematic concerns for the sake of detailed and unadorned narrative. He uses Poussin’s painting *Et in Arcadia Ego* as a thematic link and, like Young in *Historical controversies and historians*, he connects Blunt’s scholarship on Poussin with his secret existence. Blunt attributed a double life to Poussin in his secret adherence to Neo-Stoicism. Yet ‘Arcadia’ in Chapman’s *Blunt* is not a socialist utopia

---

35 Young 1998
but Blunt’s life with Burgess, terminated when Burgess makes his unilateral decision to accompany Maclean to Moscow.

In Julian Mitchell’s\textsuperscript{36} play \textit{Another Country}, a semi-fictional character named Guy Bennett represents Burgess in his school days. Mitchell’s protagonist is ostracized for his overt deviance in his elite school, and turns against his aristocratic class as a form of revenge. The use of pseudonyms makes it clear that the events and conversations depicted are speculative, and place this work under the definition of a history play. No historical names are used, but understanding of the significance and issues of the play depends on public knowledge of the Cambridge spies.

As the play commences, we are introduced to the public schoolboy Bennett, whose two principal desires are to be a member of ‘the gods’ (the school’s elite prefects), and his desire for Harcourt, a boy from another house. A younger boy, Martineau, has recently committed suicide after being caught in the act of mutual masturbation with another boy. A meeting of the prefects declares that nothing remotely like it must ever happen again. There is therefore a hostile atmosphere in the school for Bennett, particularly expressed by Fowler, who is in charge of the military cadets. Bennett’s only confidant within his house is Judd, a Marxist student. Judd’s refusal, on principle, to be a prefect means that there will not be sufficient prefects the following year. It is therefore planned that Fowler will stay at the school for another term, to make up the

\textsuperscript{36} Julian Mitchell is a prize-winning novelist and his published stage plays include \textit{A Heritage and its History} (1965), \textit{A Family and a Fortune} (1975), \textit{Half-life} (1977), \textit{Francis} (1983), \textit{After Aida} (1986), \textit{Falling Over England} (1994) and \textit{August} (1994, a version of \textit{Uncle Vanya}). His film scripts include \textit{Arabesque} (Stanley Donen, 1965), \textit{Vincent and Theo} (Robert Altman, 1990), and \textit{Wilde} (Brian Gilbert, 1997). Like Whitemore, he contributed to \textit{Elizabeth R} in 1971. (www.pfd.co.uk)
numbers and to be Head of House. Fowler’s distaste for Bennett means that Bennett has no hope of being elected to ‘the gods’.

When Bennett turns out on military parade in a slovenly condition, Fowler and the other prefects attempt to cane him. But Bennett blackmails them by saying he will go to the housemaster with a list of all the students (prefects included) that he has ‘done it with’ over the last few years. But Bennett’s downfall comes when he sends a young boy with a note to Harcourt, but Fowler intercepts it and shows it to all the prefects. Bennett, unable to repeat his blackmail without involving Harcourt, is caned. Judd meanwhile agrees to become a prefect, but a deal has been done by the Head of House – another boy will fill the vacant post of prefect, provided he is also made a ‘god’, which excludes Bennett from that position. Bennett and Judd, both now excluded from the elite, discuss Marxism and espionage. Bennett speculates about becoming a ‘secret agent’ as a means of revenge on his class.

Another Country was made into a film by Marek Kanievska. Russo in The Celluloid Closet comments that the inclusion of Mitchell’s off-stage character, Bennett’s lover Harcourt, makes the film a same-sex romance (as opposed to mere sexual liason), for which there were few precedents in mainstream cinema. Another addition in the screen version is a framing device in which the story is told by an aging Bennett to an American reporter in Moscow. This is a convention drawn from docudrama, but applied to a play with mostly-fictional characters. In this addition, Bennett expresses his desire to plant himself indelibly in the memories of those who excluded him. This adds a new speculation on the motives of Burgess, and possibly Blunt, in addition to revenge.

37 Russo 1987: 306
**Guy Bennett:** I’ve always wanted fame. I’ve always liked the idea of my name going down in history.

**Julie Schofield:** Going down as a spy for Russia?

**Bennett:** Fame or infamy, what does it matter? I shan’t be forgotten.\(^\text{38}\)

De Jongh quotes *Daily Mail* critic Tinker’s comment on *Another Country* (6/11/81) – that the play presents a fiendish picture of the establishment in embryo.\(^\text{39}\) *Another Country* puts homosexual identity in a social context, says De Jongh. However, the whole idea of homosexual identity is a problem for the play’s protagonist. Bennett is struggling to find his place in society with no awareness of such a concept, a situation that will be discussed in the final chapter.

The most recent addition to the dramatic representations of Blunt, Philby, Burgess and Maclean is the four-part BBC miniseries *Cambridge Spies* (2003), directed by Tim Fywell. Its production values are reminiscent of *Brideshead Revisited* and *Chariots of Fire*, with picturesque settings chosen to represent an idealised version of Cambridge in the 1920s. Each episode begins with a ‘disclaimer’ noting that events and characters have been altered or added for dramatic effect. BBC advertising for the series comments that its characters “would become notorious for being the most devastatingly successful spies in the history of modern intelligence, whose actions would lead to the deaths of many British and American people”.\(^\text{40}\) The writer of the series, Peter Moffatt (previously a director for such BBC series as *Dr Who*), described them as:

---

\(^{38}\) Mitchell/Kanievska 1984

\(^{39}\) De Jongh 1992: 157

\(^{40}\) www.bbc.co.uk/history/programmes/cambridge_spies
...four young but devastatingly effective double-agents, who knew from the start that they stood or fell together. Burgess is the loudest spy in the history of espionage, a gifted gob [sic] and wicked wit. Philby is the most successful spy of the lot, becoming Head of Counter Intelligence in MI6. Blunt is cool, viciously funny and clever, while Maclean veers between being warm and friendly and drunk and difficult. Until Burgess and Maclean's desperate flight to Moscow on 23 June 1951 they live in each other's pockets.\textsuperscript{41}

These potted descriptions of the characters are familiar ones from previous prose and drama. The impression gained from the author is that any cause for admiration of the spies arises from their wit – that the audience can ‘smile along’ with their sophisticated villainy. His views are supplemented by those of the actors on the BBC website. Samuel West, the son of actors Prunella Scales and Timothy West, plays Blunt, and describes his character as possessing a fatal arrogance but upholding his principles before his country. The production depicts Blunt as the most dominant character of the four.

Philby's heterosexuality is strongly emphasized from the beginning of the series, with a vignette, irrelevant to the plot, in which he must smuggle a girlfriend out of his hall of residence. His marriage to Litzy Friedman in Vienna is turned into an adventure, running through the darkened streets from Nazi officials, and then becomes a story of heterosexual estrangement - Philby is ordered to leave her as part of a show of abandoning all his left-wing connections. Another significant aspect of the representation of Philby is the absence of his stutter, making him a better romantic hero.\textsuperscript{41 ibid.}
for these early scenes. Toby Stephens, the actor playing Philby, raises the problems of conflicting evidence in historical and biographical sources, ending with the concession that the character is ultimately the construction of the playwright and the actor:

Uncovering the truth about Philby proved difficult because of the misinformation that surrounded the lives of these four men. Firstly, after it all happened, MI6 didn't want to release any information about him because the whole episode was an embarrassment. Secondly, his own biography, written when he was in Moscow, was vetted by the KGB and proved useless. It was quite difficult trying to find out what was true and what was false, and as a consequence I don't think many people know what Philby's real story is. In the end, I just had to play him as the person Peter Moffat had created, rather than as a villain.42

In this series, Moffat portrays Guy Burgess differently from other dramatic works, by infusing the character with more aggression. Though he is shown as a heavy drinker, this version of Burgess lacks the superciliousness usually attributed to him, and in Cambridge he is depicted as assisting the college waiters to strike, and angrily baiting Nazi sympathizers among the elite students.

As in Ian Curteis’ work, Maclean is depicted as weak and nervous. He is manipulated by the other characters through the death of his father (a cleric and government Minster) and is the most unsure about joining the Comintern.

42 ibid.
The strongest contrast in historiographical approach, within the range of these Cambridge Spy dramas, is obtained by comparing the work of Ian Curteis\(^{43}\) (*Philby, Burgess and Maclean* and *The Atom Spies*) with that of Alan Bennett (*The Old Country, An Englishman Abroad* and *A Question of Attribution*). 

Curteis’ teleplays *The Atom Spies* and *Philby, Burgess and Maclean* are ideologically similar to the books published by journalists such as Chapman Pincher in the 1960s and 1970s. The focus is on the incompetence of the aristocratic leadership of the security services and the role of the old-boy network in shielding the spies - in short, the failure of the upper class to protect Britain from the horrors of Communism. It is also in *Philby, Burgess and Maclean* that the homosexuality of the Cambridge circle characters is depicted as comical and pretentious to the greatest extent.

The representations of the spies in Curteis’ plays is conditioned by his approach to historiography. This is set out clearly in his introduction to the published version of *The Falklands Play*, which was controversially rejected by the BBC. He lists people he

\(^{43}\) Originally an actor, Ian Curteis graduated to BBC staff direction in 1963 and worked on episodes of *Z Cars, Kipling, Out of the Unknown* (William Trevor’s *Walk’s End* in 1966), and John Betjeman’s *Pity About the Abbey*, before turning to full-time writing on the likes of Sunday Night Theatre (*The Haunting*, 1969), *Doomwatch, The Onedin Line*, and Thirty-Minute Theatre (*A Distant Chill*, 1971). The late-70s were very much a boom time for Curteis, seeing him write *People Like Us* and *Hess* (1978), the six episode serial *Rough Justice, The Atom Spies* and *The Prince Regent* (1979). 1979 also saw Curteis’ epic three-hour *Churchill and the Generals* for the BBC, with Timothy West as the Prime Minister and Ian Richardson as Montgomery. Later in the year, *Suez 1956* was about the failed Anglo-French military attempt to take over the Suez Canal after the Egyptians nationalised it… Marking a return to the BBC now under “new management” - the five-part adaptation of *The Choir*, from the novel by his then-wife, Joanna Trollope. (*The Guinness Book of Classic British TV* 1996, 2nd edition -www.625.org.uk)
interviewed and places he visited - all British, none Argentinean or even of Falklands origin - and says "All the facts [his italics] I took strictly from authoritative printed sources". Describing a conversation with Peter Goodchild, BBC Head of Plays, on Margaret Thatcher's character and on excessive jingoism, Curteis says 'When I asked him why he was raising such points and tried to pin him on evidence (the play is meticulously researched) he immediately backed down.' When it was suggested to him that there must have been some Cabinet discussion of the war’s effect on a forthcoming general election, Curteis refused to add such material because it was not in the Cabinet minutes: “He was, it seemed to me, asking me to go substantially against the historical record under my own name”. In a letter to Goodchild on this subject, Curteis wrote “As you know, every single fact in the present text can be verified from printed sources, and I would be wrong to add such important and new elements without good evidence”. All of this reveals, not only an Oxford School approach to historiography, that of absolute realism, but a belief in the sanctity of pieces of paper. Regardless of who wrote them and why, they are conveyers of truth about these postulated 'real' events.

The published version of The Falklands Play includes a bibliography of Curteis’ sources. The only material related to Argentina concern the geography and culture of Buenos Aires. There is no mention of any documents related to the proceedings of the Argentinian government. Nonetheless, the play depicts meetings of the inner circle of

---

44 Curteis 1987: 15-16
45 Curteis 1987: 22
46 Curteis 1987: 26
47 Curteis 1987: 27-28
48 Curteis 1987: 191
General Galtieri (effectively the Argentinian leadership) in which the participants are drinking heavily. By contrast, the concluding images of Mrs Thatcher contain such stage directions as ‘it is her true moment of celebration and triumph’ and ‘Freeze frame on her triumphal gesture’. It is this aspect of the teleplay that has attracted accusations of jingoism and hagiography, justified through a selective historiographical process.

An approach which is absolutist yet selective would have inevitable consequences for the shape of Curteis’ plays concerning espionage, but so too would his placement on the ideological spectrum. In his letter to BBC Director-General Alasdair Milne, Curteis makes his own political position quite clear:

By its very nature, *The Falklands Play* is pro-Government and pro-Mrs Thatcher. You personally commissioned it. It is meticulously researched…

As a result of over 80 plays and series transmitted over twenty years, I’ve become known as the only television playwright of the first rank [in this country] with beliefs right of centre.

Elsewhere in the published introduction, he states:

---

49 Curteis 1987: 188
50 Curteis 1987: 32
51 Curteis 1987: 33
Politically, I am a moderate, and the play reflects the straight-down-the-centre line and sense of history that the great majority of the British felt and believed during the crisis.\textsuperscript{52}

When the production was cancelled, the resulting controversy was exacerbated when a production of Charles Wood's \textit{Tumbledown} (an oppositional drama) went ahead.\textsuperscript{53} For some time, the only broadcast of \textit{The Falklands Play} was the reading of a few excerpts in \textit{The Liberal Conspiracy} during BBC radio Channel 4's \textit{Banned} season in 1991. However, in 2002 it was finally produced for the fledgling BBC4, and may possibly be repeated on BBC2.\textsuperscript{54} It may be argued that the historical events involved are no longer as highly charged party-politically now that the Conservative government is no longer in power in Britain. However, the public debate did not cover the issue of absolutist historiography, an issue that remains with respect to Curteis’ work despite the passage of time. Such an approach must inevitably colour a play’s treatment of issues and people, infusing them with the opinions of those who supplied the source documents as well as those of the author.

\textsuperscript{52} Curteis 1987: 50

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Tumbledown} is based on the life of Robert Lawrence, a British soldier who was shot in the head during the Falklands conflict. Simultaneously published, Lawrence’s and his father’s book, \textit{When the Fighting is Over} (31/5/88) complained of the abandonment and indifference he encountered at the hands of military and medical authorities after he was repatriated. The same media outlets criticizing the rejection of Curteis’ play seized on all examples of dramatic licence in \textit{Tumbledown}. The BBC stated: ‘Our position is that \textit{Tumbledown} is a play which speaks for itself. We have never suggested that it is a documentary or a drama-documentary.’ (Reeves 1993: 147). Paget’s interpretation of \textit{Tumbledown} is that it is not about the Falklands war at all, but a ‘wounded hero’ drama, which typically becomes a heterosexual success story, that is, redemption through the love of a good woman (Paget 1990: 190-11). Ron Howard’s 2001 film \textit{A Beautiful Mind} works the same transformation on the life of the bisexual John Nash.

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{The Guardian}, 20/4/02
What then, in Curteis’ view, what would be the ‘straight-down-the-centre line’ held by the ‘great majority of the British’ on the subjects of homosexuality and espionage? One aspect of the answer to this question can be seen in the contrast between Curteis’ representation of homosexual spies in *Philby, Burgess and Maclean*, and heterosexual ones in *The Atom Spies*. In the latter teleplay, Curteis gives a sympathetic portrayal of three scientists who are passing classified research to the Soviet Union. Through the defection of Soviet cipher clerk Gouzenko in Canada, M.I.5 detects and arrests Alan Nunn-May, who explains that he wanted to bring about a balance between the superpowers. Later, when the chain of events leads to the questioning of Klaus Fuchs by M.I.5, Fuchs describes the abuse of his family by the Nazis and how this led to his becoming a Marxist. The third spy, who escapes to Moscow, is Bruno Pontecorvo from an Italian Communist family. These three characters, all heterosexual, are given high-minded and understandable motivations for their ‘treason’. This is not the case in Curteis’ other spy play.

*Philby, Burgess and Maclean* begins with the offer of Colonel Volkov of the K.G.B. to defect to Britain with the names of high-level Soviet spies at Whitehall. The matter is passed to Philby to handle, and Volkov disappears. Afterwards, Philby is considering whether to take on the job of M.I.6 liaison in Washington. Burgess is first seen being reprimanded by Farqueson of Foreign Office security for his behaviour in Gibraltar. At the same time, inquiries are proceeding into the identity of a spy codenamed Homer who worked in Washington immediately after World War II. Farqueson and Sir Stuart Menzies (head of M.I.6) discuss Homer on the basis of information provided by Volkov and an earlier defector, Kravitsky. Farqueson insists on
the new idea that spies are not recruited from secretaries and people who empty the waste-paper bins, but upper class men recruited at University, who make penetration of the foreign service their life's work. The dialogue for this scene comes mostly from Philby's *My Silent War*. Curteis' constant use of pre-existing material such as this places the play firmly under the aforementioned provisional definition of documentary drama.

Maclean is seen drunk in Egypt, where he is Head of Chancery at the British Embassy. At this time the Soviet Union explodes its first atomic bomb, and it is clear that there is going to be a witch-hunt for those who provided the technical information. It is announced that the United States will now develop the hydrogen bomb, so that instead of a balance of power, an arms race has begun. Maclean has a nervous breakdown and is granted leave.

Burgess is then sent to Washington and stays with Philby, much to the disgust of his wife Aileen. Significant advances have been made in code-breaking using computers, and a lot of old material is processed through them. As a result, Maclean is identified as Homer. The Foreign Secretary, Herbert Morrison, insists that Maclean's arrest be delayed over the weekend so that he can warn the Cabinet. Philby is informed of Maclean's imminent arrest, and Burgess is sent to arrange Maclean's escape to Moscow. This is easy because the men following Maclean only work during office hours. When Burgess takes it upon himself to accompany Maclean to Moscow, Philby is immediately suspected, and a parliamentary scandal ensues. A secret trial is held in the office of the head of M.I.6, using a skilled cross-examiner, Helenus Milmo. Philby uses his stutter to obfuscate. The gentlemanly but persistent M.I.5 interrogator, William Skardon, then conducts a long series of interviews with Philby asking about his early
marriage to a Communist in Austria, and his pro-Communist writings at that time. However, the London security services agree that they do not have time to obtain complete proof of Philby's guilt. He is officially cleared and sent to Beirut. The teleplay concludes with a voice-over relating Philby's disappearance in Beirut and arrival in Moscow, where he was given the Order of the Red Banner.

Curteis’ works frequently choose historical characters to act as ‘comedy relief’, for example, the Israelis in Suez 1956 are buffoons and the Argentinian generals in The Falklands Play are drunks. Burgess, and to a lesser extent Maclean, provide humour in Philby, Burgess and Maclean. Criticism of this should not be taken as a dismissal of comedy as a means of historical narrative - Haydon White included comic or satirical emplotment in his Metahistory, and in his later writings addressed the question of appropriateness in modes of discourse. The mode used in the plays of Curteis, Chapman and Conner is essentially a chronological narrative of events, and in such traditional histories, says White, ‘narrative is regarded as a neutral “container” of historical fact, a mode of discourse “naturally” suited to representing historical events directly’. Other means of story-telling may be introduced, but as controversies over representations of the Nazi Holocaust show, there are modes of emplotment which may be considered offensive and inappropriate. The epic or tragic may be used where farce may not. Yet farce and satire have been often used, even preferred, by writers dealing with gay characters. When the two areas met, in Martin Sherman’s Bent, a play about gay men taken away to concentration camps, the mode of emplotment changed from comic at first (during introduction of the characters) to epic in the later scenes in the camp.

---

55 White 1973
56 White 1992: 37
57 White 1992: 38
Curteis’ comic representation of historical characters therefore should not be invalidated for purely historiographical reasons, but as reproductions of ‘humorous’ stereotypes – the camp homosexual or the fussy and Machiavellian Jew.

Curteis’ sources are frequently traceable, but the overall themes are those of Chapman Pincher - upper-class incompetence and the depiction of a particular homosexual personality type which is ‘vulnerable’ (to use the most charitable possible word) to recruitment for espionage.

A completely different approach to the use of historical material is made by Alan Bennett. The first of his three spy-related plays uses pseudonyms: Hilary in *The Old Country* is a British spy exiled to Russia and is commonly taken to represent Philby. However, Bennett writes that as a personality he was thinking of W.H.Auden, and that the play is about exile rather than espionage.\(^{58}\) *An Englishman Abroad* and *A Question of Attribution* were performed and published as a double bill under the name *Single Spies*. Both plays use real names (Burgess and Blunt respectively) and therefore can more easily be treated as exercises in the construction of plays with historical content. Langford observes Bennett’s priorities:

…these are not history plays in any ordinary sense. Instead of historical facts, Bennett focuses on a process of imaginative compensation that emphasizes interpretation over representation…\(^{59}\)

\(^{58}\) Bennett 1994: 309

\(^{59}\) Langford 1993: 368
Nevertheless, for the purpose of choosing a defined genre, we can regard Bennett’s works as history plays. They depend upon public knowledge of their protagonists as historical characters, but do not provide lengthy or detailed biographies. Bennett avoids such an approach by focusing on a very short span in his subject’s lives, and telling the story he wants to tell, inside this narrow chronological framework.

In order to examine Bennett’s approach to historical drama and historiography generally, we can begin by looking at *Kafka’s Dick*, one of Bennett's stage works that is not only based on historical research but is also about historiography and biography. Described as combining drawing room drama with absurdist comedy, it depicts an insurance clerk writing an article about another insurance clerk, Franz Kafka. In response to his iconoclastic approach, his wife protests:

**Linda**: This is persecution.

**Sydney**: No it's not. It's biography... I just want to cut him down to size.

If I do that I might make my name.  

Bennett may well have recalled writing those lines when Paul Taylor in *The Independent* described him as ‘a loveable lugubrious Eeyore-figure lodged where the cuddly John Betjeman teddy bear once nestled in the nursery wing of the Anglo-Saxon mind.’ Bennett is frequently ‘cut down to size’ in the sense of being devalued as a political playwright. Scarr states that Bennett is more likely to be mentioned alongside

---

60 Scarr 1996: 309

61 Bennett 1985: 55

62 Taylor 1994
Ayckbourn than Brenton or Bond. Some justification of this can be found in his public political position, which is easily charted. When the British Labour Party split in 1981, Bennett became part of the centrist Social Democratic Party which later merged with the Liberal Party. He is a royalist, ascribing his affection for the monarchy to his age more than anything else. But practically all of his overt political commentary has been directed against the Right, targeting Thatcherism, dry economics and middle-class consumerism. In the *London Review of Books* 4/1/96 he described a Cabinet economic advisory body as the 'Adam Smith institute for the criminally insane', and in a 1994 article on Philip Larkin, he drew a parallel between the poet's support of Margaret Thatcher and his pseudonymous publication of pornography featuring sadistic school headmistresses.

Political satire was, of course, the genre that launched Bennett's career. *Beyond the Fringe*, in 1961, brought to the stage an adaptation of the revue format that became the pattern for television satire throughout the 1960s and 1970s. When Kenneth Tynan wrote his critique of it in *The Observer* (14/5/61) he declared that "Future historians will thank me for providing them with a full account of the moment when English comedy took its first decisive step into the second half of the twentieth century".

Bennett’s writing career proceeded principally through stage plays set in the middle-class south of England and character-based teleplays set in the working-class

---

63 Scarr 1996: 309
64 Bennett 1994: 385-6
65 Scarr 1996: 321
66 Bennett 1994: 557
67 Bergan 1989: 1
north. In this period, Bennett was already making use of gay characters, concealing their sexuality until the conclusion. In *Me, I'm Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1982), the protagonist is assaulted on a bus, humiliated by his fellow teachers in front of his students, and goaded by his mother. But in the space of half a page, he and a young man he has known for some time suddenly declare their mutual attraction, and the bleakness of his existence is clearly about to end, through the revelation of a sexuality not referred to in the text until this conclusion. *Marks*, from the ‘Objects of Affection’ series of teleplays, is similar: a young man has an irreconcilable argument with his mother about his sudden appearance with a tattoo saying ‘Mother’. The teleplay ends with a male hand caressing the tattoo, and saying how erotic he finds them.

In 1987 the first series of *Talking Heads* was broadcast on the BBC. These monologues are pointers to Bennett’s approach to the spy plays, because they reveal the strongly character-based (as opposed to expositional) nature of Bennett’s work. Bennett had already written one monologue piece, *A Woman of No Importance*, performed by Patricia Routledge. Despite the one-actor direct-to-camera format, these 30-minute pieces are richer in narrative than Bennett's previous teleplays. But as with his earlier works, we are shown individuals making the best of a bad situation, whose victories are principally sexual. In his introduction to the publication of *Talking Heads 1*, Bennett discusses the subjectivity of monologue drama. If the same stories were presented as multi-actor plays, the depiction of other characters would be rounder and more fair, but as it is, we see all off-stage personalities through the one filter. A second series followed, with the stories generally darker in tone. In his introduction to *Talking Heads 2*, Bennett indicates his rejection of authorial intention as a measuring stick in literature. After reading academic material written about the first series, he described a literary

---

[68] Bennett 1998: 32
work as a suitcase being inspected by customs: one cannot remember packing that filthy underwear or those embarrassing photos, but somehow people find them. But he does not deny the possible validity of such unlooked-for discoveries - validity as features of the play if not of the author.\textsuperscript{69} Hunt comments that monologue is a direct communication between actor and audience and is inherently theatrical, so that \textit{Talking Heads} reasserts theatricality in a television form.\textsuperscript{70} But the monologues are not didactic, nor even a Brechtian street-accident narration. They function as gossip, which Bennett frequently uses as an antidote to official reality: ‘\textit{Talking Heads} is gossip turned into drama’.\textsuperscript{71} Gossip also holds a central place in the spy plays – gossip both by and about the finely-drawn central characters.

Other than the Cambridge Spy plays, Bennett's two main excursions into historical drama are \textit{The Madness Of King George} and the ‘Kafka plays’. Throughout these works, as well as his writings about them, Bennett treats the historical figure principally as an image, changing with time, only occasionally slipping into rhetoric about 'real' persons or events. Researching \textit{The Madness Of King George} he notes the mutability of his subject in historical literature. To quote his collection \textit{Writing Home}:

\begin{quote}

In the meantime I found that George III's rehabilitation had proceeded apace. No longer the ogre, he had grown altogether more kindly.\textsuperscript{72}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{69} Bennett 1998: 120-1
\textsuperscript{70} Hunt 1993: 21
\textsuperscript{71} Hunt 1993: 23
\textsuperscript{72} Bennett:1994:356-7
In this phrasing, King George is the simulacrum created by historians, not a person with an objective existence at a point in time. A change in subjective views of George III are effectively changes in the king himself – he does not exist on any other basis. All the introductions to Bennett’s historical plays make it clear that these works are not documentary records and do not make any claim to something called the truth. Any lingering absolutism in Bennett’s mind was apparently purged by practical difficulties in staging and filming. In *Writing Home* he says:

> Had Nicholas Hytner at the outset suggested bringing the King from Kew to Westminster to confront the MPs, I would have been outraged at this adjustment to what had actually happened. By the time I was plodding through the third draft I would have taken the King to Blackpool if I thought it would have helped.⁷³

Strict historical truth, says Bennett, was a casualty of the rewrites.⁷⁴

Bennett's approach to historiography is also conditioned by a skepticism of biography, as indicated by the earlier quotation from *Kafka’s Dick*. A speech cut from the final draft of this play continues in the same vein. Sydney says "I want to hear about the shortcomings of great men, their fears and their failings". After reeling off a list of peccadilloes ascribed to one literary figure or another, Sydney adds "He belongs to the ages - just don't catch him at breakfast. Artists, celebrated for their humanity, they turn

---

⁷³ Bennett 1994: 392

⁷⁴ For example, dramatic requirements called for more antipathy between father and son, so the Prince of Wales was made less genial. (Bennett 1994: 360)
out to be scarcely human at all”. Bennett also covers such phenomena as the accretion of credibility through sheer antiquity, and whether suffering is a requirement for a great writer.

This critical approach to the processes of biography and historical writing meant that in Bennett’s treatments of Blunt and Burgess, thematic considerations took precedence over narration of historical events. Bennett is not attempting to document anything, or even to tell an alleged ‘true story’. He simply uses names and vague situations from history as a setting for plays with themes similar to his earlier work. Commentary on English society, the contradictory attitude of the individual citizen towards Britain, the mix of resentment and optimism, all make their reappearance but now set in a historical framework. From a queer-theoretical point of view, De Jongh has criticized Bennett’s work as ‘unexceptional’ because in his plays concerning gay characters there is no triumph of the individual will. Certainly, the spy plays are more concerned with conveying thematic points than with any triumphalism on the part of the protagonists.

*An Englishman Abroad* concerns a meeting between Burgess and Australian-born actress Coral Browne during a run of *Hamlet* in Moscow, a story she first told Alec Guinness while he was starring in *The Old Country*. Guinness took Browne and Bennett to dinner together so she could tell it again. Although Bennett received the story first

---

75 Bennett 1994: 534-5
76 Bennett 1994: 330
77 Sydney declares "Art is not a gift, it’s a transaction, and somewhere an account has to be settled". (Bennett 1987: 68)
78 De Jongh 1992: 159
hand, and Coral Browne played herself in the television version, he is unabashed at taking dramatic licence with events. He states in the play’s preface, for example, that a scene set in the British Embassy did not occur, and it was Michael Redgrave's dressing room that Burgess first wandered into (as a place to vomit), not Browne's as in the television version.\textsuperscript{79}

The stage play begins with monologues by Browne and Burgess concerning the death of Stalin, and what it meant to them. This historical timing serves as the background to the theatre incident, when cultural exchanges were widened between Britain and the U.S.S.R. When Browne visits Burgess’ flat he repeatedly plays a record of Jack Buchanan - for him an item of nostalgia, but for Coral Browne it is an artefact of the real, since Buchanan is her ex-husband. This contrast between whimsy and the down-to-earth is a through-line in An Englishman Abroad. Browne’s pragmatic determination and unpretentiousness (which she sees as Australian, or at least un-English) is most strongly expressed in the play’s concluding scenes, in which she must struggle to obtain clothes for Burgess from his former high-class suppliers.

A Question of Attribution, is exclusively concerned with Blunt. The television version begins with Blunt being x-rayed, twelve months after his stomach operation. Next, at a gallery opening, he is heard saying that he cares much more for objects than for people and no longer feels guilt about it. Also in the television version is a meeting in the office of the head of M.I.5 (Hollis's name has been changed to Donleavy), in which agent Chubb is being assigned to the task of questioning Blunt. Donleavy complains that Blunt is telling them nothing and instead of languishing in Wormwood Scrubs he is seen every day at the Athenaeum. The agent being relieved of

\textsuperscript{79} Bennett 1994: 333
responsibility for interviewing Blunt is named Collins – this was Peter Wright in real life. Blunt meets Chubb at Chubb's home in Purley and does not conceal his contempt of middle-class suburbia.

It is at this point that specific paintings are introduced by Bennett as metaphors for aspects of the lives of Blunt and his associates. A restorer working on the Queen's pictures reveals a third man who has been painted out in Titian's *Triple Portrait*. Blunt examines slides of possible spies with Chubb, and to the latter's frustration he only identifies people who are already dead. Chubb asks about the National Gallery and reveals his new-found interest in art. He is determined to 'crack it' and is taking a chronological approach to art history. In the television version at this point, Blunt meets with Donleavy and it becomes clear that the latter is also a Soviet agent. At the National Gallery, Blunt shows Chubb Titian's *Allegory of Prudence*. That section of the Gallery is closed so that Blunt does not have to endure the ‘intolerable’ public.

At the Courtauld Institute, Blunt invites a student to participate in a little extra-mural work. The student is next seen in Buckingham Palace speaking with Colin, who dusts the paintings. Colin, a cockney, clearly knows more about art than the student does. After Blunt arrives, Colin and the student hide as "HMQ" enters unexpectedly. Blunt says that he wants to switch the *Triple Portrait* for an Annunciation, and the Queen reluctantly agrees. The conversation then turns to the question of portraits and of fakes. Blunt gradually realises that there is a hidden meaning in the conversation.

Later, Blunt notices that the third man in the *Triple Portrait* looks like Titian's son from the *Allegory of Prudence*. Chubb asks whether this matters, and Blunt replies
that nothing matters. Chubb threatens to expose Blunt, as the phrase "stringing you along" has been mentioned. Blunt has been promised immunity but not anonymity. An x-ray examination of the triple portrait now reveals a fourth man behind the third, and when the canvas is rotated, a fifth man beneath all the others. The television version concludes with Blunt's exposure, and press harassment of him at the doors of the Institute.

There is scope for the actor to either minimize or exaggerate the ‘snob’ in this version of Blunt. James Fox, in the televised production, rolls his eyes or sniffs at middle class values and behaviour, but also at some aspects of art. His vocal performance, musical and slightly nasal, depicts contempt with a weary downward inflection. Carter sees this performance as an imitation of art critic Brian Sewell who was at the Courtauld Institute with Blunt in the 1950s:

Reporters, unable to speak to the man himself, began to go to Sewell whenever there was a new angle on Blunt's case. To many he almost seemed to be Blunt's official spokesman. The extent to which Blunt became viewed as an older version of Sewell - sharp, arrogant, opinionated, but without Sewell's mitigation, that he was funny and innocent - would be demonstrated when the actor James Fox played Blunt in the television adaptation of the Alan Bennett play, A Question of Attribution. He sounded not like Blunt, but like Sewell.\(^\text{80}\)

\(^{80}\) Carter 2001: 495
Fox’s performance is, however, free of the clichés of ‘homosexual behaviour’ and would be read as gay only by a viewer who associates upper-class sophistication and artistic leanings with being queer.

* A Question of Attribution makes art a metaphor for Blunt’s concealed politics and, implicitly, his sexuality. Its centrepiece is the multiply-charged conversation with the Queen. As part of this conversation Blunt says:

> The question doesn't pose itself in the form 'Is this a fake?' so much as 'Who painted this picture and why?' Is it Titian or a pupil or pupils of Titian? Is it someone who paints like Titian because he admires him and can't help painting in the same way?... Paintings make no claims Ma'am. They do not purport to be anything else but paintings. It is we, the beholders, who make claims for them, attribute a picture to this artist or that.\(^1\)

All of this points to a consciousness of reader-response theory, not only in art but in history on Bennett's part. His occasional references to ‘what really happened’ do not suggest that Bennett adheres to postmodern historiography, but his acknowledgement of subjectivity contrasts with Curteis' Oxford School position.

Bennett has dealt more frequently with homosexual characters than any of the other authors under study, as in his screenplay for *Prick Up Your Ears*, the biography of Joe Orton.\(^2\) The outlook of Bennett's characters is frequently a mixture of resentment

---

\(^1\) Bennett 1994: 55

with determination to cope with an unfair deal. Scarr describes Bennett's world as 'that of the disenchanted, those who feel that life somehow cheated them'. However, characters are usually left with some note of optimism at the close of a play. Turner, in a *Modern Drama* article, has pointed out that most of these victories are sexual.

Inquiry into possible reasons for the greater depth in Bennett’s portrayals of the spies must be done with care – biographical speculation about the author has frequently been over-used. The frequent appearance of gay characters in Bennett's plays has naturally fuelled speculation about his own sexual orientation. This continued after the ‘spy’ plays, for example in connection with his stage adaptation of *The Wind in the Willows*. Michael Billington in *The Guardian* (14/12/90) wrote 'There are fleeting moments when it seems to be a story of two closet gays (Rat and Badger) fighting over the affections of a young boy (Mole)'. Ian McKellen once asked Bennett point blank whether he preferred men or women. Bennett said this was like 'asking a man crawling across the Sahara whether he would prefer Perrier or Malvern'. Like his representation of Blunt, he apparently preferred an air of ambiguity. But then it came out that he had had a relationship with his cleaner (female) for some time. The existence of a secret heterosexual lover, and his consequent emergence from an inverted form of ‘the closet’, has an irony that Hilary in *The Old Country* would appreciate, and Bennett's Guy Burgess is certainly like Bennett himself in his desire for privacy. Bennett’s resistance to authorial biography as a means of studying texts has been dealt with previously. But

---

83 Scarr 1996: 310
84 Turner 1994: 556
85 Scarr 1996: 320
86 Scarr 1996: 320
one cannot help noticing that Bennett shares with his spy characters these desires for ambiguity, irony and privacy.

While Curteis-style scripts fall into Paget’s category of dramatized journalism and Tulloch’s description of hegemonic tales of Empire, Bennett’s works emphasize art above documentation. These are phenomena specifically related to genre studies in the area of docudrama. But the plays should also be reviewed in terms of more general narratology and historiography.

Contrasting plays with prose, Onega and Landa observe a stronger use of perceived cause-and-effect relationships in dramatic narration. The stage also provides a fresh text during each performance, each of which may be loaded with new signifiers. The more journalistic spy-plays are especially concerned with tracing chains of events, with the most significant ‘effects’ being acts of treason and their ‘cause’ being the cardinal point at issue.

In any form of historical narrative, the *fabula* - the core of events - is used to construct a story. The reader is given a chosen sequence of events known as the *sjuzet* in Russian scholarship, or the *discours* in the French. In the current study, the defection of Maclean may be taken as part of the *fabula*, and any attempt to trace Philby’s or Blunt’s involvement in setting this event in motion is part of a *sjuzet/discours*. Narratological strictures are not only expressed through artificially simple chains of events, but by bringing character types into conflict. For example, Curteis’ version of Burgess (the most extreme and flamboyant of all the representations under study) is brought into sharp relief by conflict with the conservative civil-service official, Farqueson, with the

---

87 Onega & Landa 1996: 3
resulting scene thus containing the strongest demarcation of ‘homosexual behaviour’ as deviant and dangerous.

Barthes analyses the structure of historical narrative at a syntactical level, considering the status of characters. He asks who is the subject and who is the object at any given point. In drama, where character is delineated physically and not just textually, it is especially relevant if a privileged class of characters is constructed. In Mitchell’s *Another Country*, there is a clear elite from which queers and commies are excluded, but they are a collective object which Guy Bennett, the subject, is trying to penetrate. The security services are also objects that are being, or have been, penetrated in most of the plays. But in the Curteis’ and Conner’s plays, they become interrogators, and the spies become objects to be exposed. In *A Question of Attribution*, Alan Bennett’s version of Blunt is struggling to retain agency, to be the elusive enigma manipulating everyone around him, but he is objectified throughout by the ‘painting’ metaphor, as an item to be x-rayed, investigated and exposed as a fake.

Hayden White’s *Metahistory* analysed historiography by setting out categories of emplotment, argument and ideology. Patterns of use of emplotment in the plays under consideration is particularly revealing with respect to the placement of the historical characters in the authors’ preferred thematic contexts. Emplotment is divided into romantic, tragic, comic and satirical. The authors of the plays under study have principally chosen tragic emplotment with its emphasis on conflict, and themes of fatalism. However, there are elements of the satirical in the works of Curteis and

---

88 Barthes 1996: 56
89 White 1973
90 White 1973: 7
Mitchell - triumphs are illusory and people are captive to social forces they cannot control. Curteis’ depiction of Burgess is not comic in White’s sense of the celebratory, but is part of a satirical representation of the British upper class.

Notable for its absence is romantic emplotment (the triumph of good over evil), despite the fact that it is the most common form of emplotment in historical drama. For example, The Missiles of October, one of the first American television works to use an epic style, with intercut news footage, is a melodrama of triumph with a hero (Kennedy), a heroine to be rescued (the U.S.A.), and a villain (the U.S.S.R.). But the stories that can be woven around the Cambridge spies do not have a hero to bring the traitors to justice, neither have any of the authors placed the spies themselves in a heroic role. The successive suspicions of a third, fourth and fifth man mean that there is too great a lack of narrative closure for romantic emplotment.

In Haydon White’s terms, Curteis’ detailed narratives generally fall into the category of contextualist argument wherein events are viewed synchronously. For example, Russia’s explosion of an atom bomb and the decision by the U.S.A. to build a hydrogen bomb are seen as strongly affecting the behaviour of Maclean and Klaus Fuchs in Curteis’ plays. This is also a further example of the narratological magnification of cause-and-effect. These phenomena of narratology and historiography are significant not as mere matters of structural interest, but because of their use in serving a required ideological agenda.

---

91 Asam 1987: 69
Chapter 5 – Homosexuality, Englishness and Treason

The theatre worried her… It changed the world and said things were otherwise than they were. And it was worse than that. It was magic that didn’t belong to magical people. It was commanded by ordinary people who didn’t know the rules. They altered the world because it sounded better.

Terry Pratchett
Wyrd Sisters (Gollancz, London) 1998

The most significant area of comparison for the plays is that of the spies’ sexuality: how it is portrayed, its centrality, and most importantly, whether it is linked to their treason in any essential way. Before examining the sexuality/treason nexus specifically, this chapter will look at representations of sexuality in these plays in terms of: stereotypes of individuals or the gay ‘scene’; characters’ ethics and motives; the distinction between homosexual acts and identities; and the closet and concepts of openness and secrecy. The relevance of these areas of discourse lies in the playwrights’ application of them to the spies and the concept of treason. It is necessary to examine whether their historical or semi-historical characters are being forced into a standard mould, and the stereotype being held up as traitorous rather than the individual. The examination of motives and ethics becomes a question of whether the plays contain any representation of an intellectual thought process behind the spies’ choices or attempts at explanation of motive through individual experience. The playwrights’ stand on act-centred sexuality as opposed to homosexual identity cannot help but colour their representation of sexual orientation and its relationship to treasonous acts or a treasonous nature. The concept of the closet is pivotal, due to its imagery and layers of meaning, and determines distinct kinds of colouration: a character inside the closet may
be shown as being deceitful or blackmailable; an ‘out’ character is either exhibiting
defiance, causing disruption or distracting the world from his real activities.

The background and ‘breeding’ of the spy characters was a strong focus in the
aforementioned prose works (journalistic and biographical), and this continued in the
plays. England and the nature of the English are a constant theme in Alan Bennett’s
works, and Ian Curteis’ emphasis is on the upper class and the ‘old boy’ network. Both
factors are connected with a consideration of the aristocratic public school system. The
playwrights either declare or at least question a connection between these factors and
the tendency towards betrayal. However, Englishness, class and education are
sometimes used not as direct psychological explanations for the characters’ espionage,
but as mere conduits leading to the concept of the homosexual traitor. It is therefore
necessary to examine thoroughly the theme of Englishness in the spy plays (and other
works by the same authors) and from there trace the connections to class, education and
sexuality.

Analysis of the treatment of homosexuality in the plays is informed by various
aspects of queer theory. The works of Foucault, especially his History of Sexuality,
contrast act-based ethics and definitions with the invention of the homosexual person,
and concomitant legal change:

There is no question that the appearance in nineteenth-century
psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature of a whole series of discourses
on species and subspecies of homosexuality, inversion, pederasty, and
"psychic hermaphrodisim" made possible a strong advance of social
controls into this area of "perversity".¹

Prior to this, in Foucault’s view, there was no such ‘person’ as the homosexual, merely
homosexual acts which were simply crimes against civil and religious law. Both views
of sexuality appear in the plays under study.

It should be noted that other writers in the field of queer theory see Foucault’s
concept as having an effect which is too generalizing. Sedgwick’s Epistemology of the
Closet includes in its list of premises:

Axiom 5: The historical search for a Great Paradigm Shift may obscure
the present conditions of sexual identity.²

Foucault implies a unified concept of homosexuality as we conceive of it today. This,
says Sedgwick, is an oversimplification, and the idea that "we know what that means" is
dangerous. A narrative of supercession, of linear sequential concepts, should be resisted
because an intervening model is not necessarily a supervening one. Laws forbidding
sodomy (not homosexuality) still came down after the pre-1870 model was no longer
current.³

It is also possible to go beyond biologically essentialist models of homosexual
identity and view queerness as cultural. Corber, for example, acknowledges that identity

¹ Foucault 1990: 101
² Sedgwick 1994: 44
³ Sedgwick 1994: 46
politics using an ethnic model of a queer minority group has been useful since political strategies could be used in imitation of those of racial and gender politics:

Moreover, the minoritarian understanding of gay and lesbian identity has enabled gay rights organizations to open up new avenues of legal and political recourse by appropriating the strategies of the civil rights movement.⁴

But the more general work of Foucault, along with other post-structuralists, has highlighted the problems of defining who belongs to this pseudo-ethnic group. Further marginalizations tend to occur such as the exclusion of transsexuals or bisexuals. Rejection of gender choice as the basis of a simple homo/hetero binary is just the beginning of a process of deconstruction of texts concerning sexual identity.

... the cutting edge of gay and lesbian studies have used the Foucauldian perspective to shift the focus of lesbian and gay studies from the politics of identity to the politics of culture. Deeply indebted to the poststructuralist critique of the subject, these scholars have gone even further in challenging the ethnic model of gay and lesbian identity and culture. They stress the mobility of desire and claimed that the dislocating operations of the unconscious render the achievement of a fixed, stable identity virtually impossible.⁵

⁴ Corber 1997: 192
⁵ Corber 1997: 195
In this view there is, as in the past, no such thing as a homosexual or heterosexual person. Any attempt to identify queer stereotypes and then to ascribe to them a tendency to treason is based on a fundamentally flawed use of language and meaning.

Sedgwick’s *Epistemology of the Closet* also analyses in detail the role of secrecy or openness in discourse on, and reactions to, sexuality. Placement in or out of the closet invokes binaries of the known/unknown and the explicit/implicit. Silence and ignorance have been preferred modes for dealing with homosexuality, including deliberate organized ignorance as an excuse for prejudice. Looking at the wider uses of the phrase ‘coming out of the closet’ that have entered the language, Sedgwick sees the bulk of representations of all sexuality as being cast in terms of that duality that can be expressed as in/out of the closet.

I think that a whole cluster of the most crucial sites for contestation of meaning in twentieth-century Western culture are consequentially and quite indelibly marked with historical specificity of homosocial / homosexual definition, notably but not exclusively male, from around the turn of the century. Among those sites are, as I have indicated, the pairings secrecy/disclosure and private/public.

This same binary analysis also looks at the terms knowledge/ignorance and natural/unnatural. Sedgwick shows how Melville’s long psychoanalytic description of John Claggart in *Billy Budd* states that we finally cannot know anything about him. Claggart’s implied homoerotic attraction towards Billy Budd is the catalyst for near-

---

6 Sedgwick 1994: 3-5
7 Sedgwick 1994: 72
mutiny and Budd’s hanging. Yet Melville’s description of him uses words such as mysterious, exceptional, peculiar, obscure.\(^8\) These binaries are key concepts in the understanding of the characterizations of the Cambridge spies.

The role of epistemological argument in examining historical drama is wider than the scope of queer theory. Keith Jenkins places the highest possible value on historiographical criticism as an instrument of social change:

I see moral relativism and epistemological scepticism as the basis for social toleration and the positive recognition of differences… This interpretive flux, when viewed positively, is potentially empowering to even the most marginal in that they can at least make their own histories even if they do not have the power to make them other people’s.\(^9\)

With this theoretical basis in mind, we can begin with an analysis of the most common negative recognition of differences, the formation of stereotypes, and then move on to the specific constructed binaries of act/identity and openness/secrecy.

Stereotypical representations of homosexual characters have been extensively studied, in the areas of novel, film and theatre\(^10\) and the flamboyant aesthete such as Anthony Blanche in Waugh’s *Brideshead Revisited* is a recurring type. The presence,

---

\(^8\) Sedgwick 1994: 94

\(^9\) Jenkins 1991: 56, 66

for example, of Guy Burgess in the midst of the historical events being treated by dramatists is a temptation for them to fall easily into such representations. This trap exists because such a character is already larger than life. Burgess is thus represented as demonstrative, flamboyant and uncloseted. For the writer, if a man is demonstrating his sexual orientation to the world, then he must be doing so in a manner that the world recognizes. Certainly, he must be represented this way in the drama, for fear that the audience will not understand the meaning of his behaviour unless it is stereotypical. A perception (correct or not) of audience ignorance has a feedback effect on the writer, causing him/her to perpetuate such stereotypes.

The precise configurations of the various stereotypes arise from the idea that homosexuals are gender-transitive. Just as the stereotypical lesbian must exhibit appearance and behaviour that are ‘masculine’ (according to some set of cultural standards), so the gay male must be typed as either overtly effeminate (limp-wristed, mincing in his walk, bitchy or precious in dialogue, high-pitched or lisping in speech) or as lacking in masculinity in other ways (closeted, timid, overdressed, and either over-groomed or completely dissolute). In the works of Ian Curteis, the homosexual or bisexual Cambridge spies (Burgess and Maclean) are depicted as either outrageous and frivolous or as nervous and pathetic. The audience is encouraged to laugh at them but also to be shocked that such people could have access to the nation's secrets. Curteis’ absolutism in historiography means that his representation of Guy Burgess is based on a set of "documented" incidents from the vast journalistic corpus, principally of the most eccentric behaviour. In Philby, Burgess and Maclean, Burgess is reprimanded by a Foreign Office Security official:
**Farquesson:** In the course of a drunken luncheon at the Rockotel Gibraltar you announced to everyone in the dining room that we were about to recognize Communist China, that the Cabinet was split fifty-fifty on Korea, and other classified matters. You then pointed out the head of British security Western Med, who happened to be dining at the next table, singing a song at him which began with the words “Little boys are cheap today, cheaper than yesterday”.

**Burgess:** Yes, I’ve read all that.

**Farquesson:** And is it an accurate account of your convalescence?

**Burgess:** No. It leaves out all the colourful bits…

**Farquesson:** …There’s a limit to the sort of self-indulgent eccentricities we can tolerate here. Childish exhibitionism! Munching raw garlic at your desk like apples. Downing a half bottle of brandy in the canteen for breakfast. It’s utterly beyond my comprehension how the Firm go on using you, pack of amateurs though they are.

**Burgess:** Then perhaps you misjudge me. My work is top drawer. I’ve recruited some of the best in SIS… I recruited Kim Philby, head of Soviet Counter-espionage. I picked him, I recruited him, and others like him. You don’t like my table manners? Well, stuff it!

**Farquesson:** Was the classified information you were shouting out at all accurate?

**Burgess:** Well, little boys were cheaper that day.\(^{11}\)

---

The somewhat “precious” representation of Burgess in this scene is enhanced by the performance of Derek Jacobi, who uses preening mannerisms throughout - cleaning his

\(^{11}\) Curteis 1977
fingernails, adjusting his lapels. In contrast, Maclean represents the closeted stereotype, afraid of discovery and lacking in ‘manly’ courage. Michael Culver’s performance as Maclean depicts a timid and self-doubting individual, who complains at the critical moment of defection that he was never really convinced of the rightness of Communism. Other members of the spy ring are convinced that if arrested he will crack within twenty-four hours.\(^{12}\)

Curteis’ comic representation of historical characters has been examined in the previous chapter from a historiographical standpoint, and satiric or comic modes of emplotment should not be dismissed as a whole. But when scrutinized as representations of complex individuals, Curteis’ uses of comedy fail to rise above the long-standing one-dimensional ‘sissy’ stereotype or that of the unmasculine coward.

In other plays, stereotypical images are less obtrusive. Colouration is slightly less, for example, in *Blunt* (Chapman 1987). Anthony Hopkins’ portrayal of Burgess emphasizes heavy smoking and drinking but does not emphasize effeminacy. The only narration of his past ‘exploits’ concerns the speeding incident that had him sent back to Britain from Washington, which was in any case deliberately staged by Burgess. Blunt and Burgess are shown greeting each other affectionately, but Blunt is a reserved character at all times. Ian Richardson as Blunt is seen turning back the bed covers in a very solemn manner, dressed in smoking jacket, after inviting Burgess to bed. His stoic and sophisticated manner is thereby synthesized with implied sexual activity – the implication of same-sex relations being all that British television producers dared show.

\(^{12}\) Curteis 1977
In *A Patriot For Me*, John Osborne avoids a single stereotype but offers a menu of homosexual types. For the privileged in the Hapsburg Empire there is a gay subculture, exemplified in a ball held by Baron Von Epp. Osborne’s stage directions at this point divide the ball’s attendees into six categories. First, the paid ‘bum boys’ looking for short or long term meal tickets. This mercenary and insincere group is the most obvious caricature of the unstable and untrustworthy demi-monde homosexual and will be dealt with during later discussion of the queer/traitor nexus. The next group consists of standard drag queens such as the Baron himself, who is depicted as class-conscious, arrogant and bigoted. As a separate group, there are self-conscious rich queens indulging in masculine drag such as riding gear. Osborne says that they “look like lesbians”, implying a unified female homosexual image which seems to be one of transitive gender with overtones of sadomasochism. Discreet non-drag homosexuals are present, with a minimum of makeup worn to humour the host. This brief description does at least indicate that not all the guests fall into the other rigid castes, if one reads into it that the preferred images and personae of these men may be various. Osborne then writes that “There are the men who positively dislike women and only put on drag in order to traduce them and make them appear as odious, immoral and unattractive as possible.” Here we have the image of the misogynistic ‘homosexual’ who despite his sexual orientation towards men has somehow acquired a reason to hate women. If, as seems more likely, these men are heterosexuals with psychological problems, this fact is lost either on Osborne himself or, at best, on his depicted Austrian homosexual scene which admits them to its society. Finally, there are those like Redl in normal evening wear or uniform. In modern parlance these are the ‘straight-acting’ homosexuals. We

---

13 This scene is the only one with a ‘light’ atmosphere in the play – the Lord Chamberlain demanded that it be cut in its entirety.

14 Osborne 1966: 73-4
are given further detail only on Redl himself, and his dress and behaviour are indicative
of his denial of his sexuality and of his firm place in the closet.

Turning now to the more specific area of the characters’ motives and ethical
standpoints, we see a strong contrast in Ian Curteis’ spies. Those who are homosexual
are hypocritical and shallow. In the following section of *Philby, Burgess and Maclean*,
the character of Maclean's wife Melinda seems to be the writer in disguise, stripping
away the spies’ pretensions. First, Burgess and Maclean's ownership of shares is
depicted, not as part of their cover as good capitalists, but as simple hypocrisy:

**Burgess:** I could have drawn more cash by selling shares, but it's a bad
market at the moment.

**Maclean:** Which shares?

**Burgess:** ...DeBeers Mining.

**Maclean:** Did you see ICI put on nine points last night?

**Burgess:** Mmm. I was talking to my stockbroker last night. He said
under the currency regulations act he can send my dividends to me in
Moscow, tax free, for life...

(*Maclean exits*).

**Melinda:** Donald told me last night. That he's been a Soviet agent since
Cambridge. For 19 years. All through our married life. Washington,
Cairo, the lot.

**Burgess:** You'd no idea.

**Melinda:** None. Ours has always been a pretty shaky partnership. But
even so. He also told me about you and him at Cambridge. Disgusting.
Burgess: That was a long time ago.

Melinda: You're saying it finished then?

Burgess: I don't believe you didn't know anything about Donald's work.

Melinda: But why? For 19 years to choose to -

Burgess: You don't choose to do it. You do it because of the sheer crushing weight of dead wood of this country's past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighing like a nightmare on you, so you can't breathe. The entire west is rotting away. It's the God-given responsibility of every civilized man to sweep away the whole criminal crack-brained, gangrenous mess and start again. There is no choice at all.

Melinda: The eighteenth Brumiere.

Burgess: Yes. I'm quoting Marx. It's also true.

Melinda: I bet you've been quoting that since you and Donald first read it in some cheap little pamphlet in Cambridge. Have you never progressed beyond? Always second-hand, Guy? Never an original thought? Do you think the departure of a cheap little pansy like you is going to make the slightest real impression on the world?

Burgess: Yes. Since I'm forced to go, I'm going to slam the door behind us so that the echo will be heard throughout the world.

Melinda: (laughs) Trotsky. “Defence of Terror”.

Burgess: Chapter Nine.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{15} Curteis 1977. On the subject of Curteis' claimed historical accuracy, Melinda Maclean followed her husband to Moscow. She divorced him a few years later, but then married Kim Philby, which does not seem to indicate a distaste on her part for Communists or spies.
The main effect of this diatribe is to add onto the ‘comic’ Burgess a pathetic shallowness. He is not a man who made an intellectual choice, nor a dangerous master-spy, but just a ‘cheap little pansy’.

By contrast, Curteis chose in The Atom Spies to depict a different type of spy, who makes conscientious choices. In this play, the spies are heterosexual scientists. Klaus Fuchs, Bruno Pontecorvo and Alan Nunn-May are depicted by Curteis as having genuine intellectual motives, either Marxist or aiming to bring about a balance of power, as these excerpts show:

**Nunn-May:** We made the bomb and we just handed it over to the military regardless. That was appalling. We also promised the Russians our technical secrets so that we could defeat Hitler together but we never told them a thing... I decided it was my moral duty to adjust the balance. That is why I approached the Russians...

**Fuchs:** In Germany in 1933 there could be no half-measures. You either stood up to the Nazis or you were destroyed. Everything was black and white. You had to either be a Nazi or a Marxist to survive.\(^\text{16}\)

Homosexual spies rarely express such thoughts in any of the dramatic representations of their lives. Certainly, practical ideology is never central to their motives. In Philby, Burgess and Maclean, Philby (heterosexual) describes mass conversions to Marxism in

\(^{16}\) Curteis 1979
the 1930s including his own, but implies he was trapped: ‘The door clangs behind you’.  

A specific but non-ideological motive for espionage is depicted in Another Country. Guy Bennett is shown as consciously constructing a plan of revenge on his class. This arises from his sexuality but it would be unfair to ascribe to Mitchell the construction of a psychological link between homosexuality and any form of untrustworthiness. Rather, the character Bennett intends to deliberately use the outward behaviour of the stereotype to avert suspicion:

Judd: Either you accept the system, or you try to change it. There's no alternative.

Bennett: (suddenly gay) Why not? Why not both? Pretend to do one, while you really do the other? Fool the swine! Play along with them! Let them think what they like - let them despise you! But all the time -

Judd: Don't talk drivel.

Bennett: (dreamily) I'd have the last laugh. I'd be revenged.

Judd: That's just romantic twaddle. You wouldn't be in the mess you are now if you had any discretion at all.

Bennett: What better cover for a secret agent than apparent total indiscretion?  

None of the plays studied which concern Burgess, Maclean, Philby or Blunt depict them attempting to justify their acts (either political or sexual) in terms of ethics.

17 Curteis 1977

'It seemed like the right thing to do at the time', or E.M. Forster's aforementioned maxim urging betrayal of one’s country rather than one’s friends, is the nearest we get to ethical debate.

However, in Whitemore’s *Breaking the Code*, Alan Turing (only suspected of spying) has considered ethics more deeply. Mathematics and sexual behaviour are connected through questions of philosophy. Turing was a friend of Wittgenstein and had done work arising from Bertrand Russell’s attempt to codify all logical discourse in mathematical terms. In a result similar to Godel’s Incompleteness Theorem, he had shown that no logical system can guarantee the provability of all statements made even within its own language restrictions. After unwisely admitting to a police officer (Ross) that he has engaged in homosexual acts, Turing argues for a form of situational ethics that conflicts with the policeman’s absolutism:

**Turing:** Because the law makes everything black, white; right, wrong. Life’s more complicated than that… Even in mathematics there’s no infallible rule for proving what is right and what is wrong. Each problem – each decision – requires fresh ideas, fresh thought…

**Ross:** Decisions have to be made; and if we can’t decide what’s right and what’s wrong, then we’ve got to get someone – or something – to decide for us. All we’ve got is the law – and, in the present circumstances, that means me.19

In Foucault’s terms, this is the pre-1870 definition of sexuality in terms of illegal acts. Turing does not argue for the alternative model, that of sexual identity, but argues

---

19 Whitemore 1987: 64
within the bounds of act-based ethics. A sexual act may or may not be morally acceptable but the method of making this decision is subjective and infinitely variable. If this argument were taken up by a representation of the Cambridge spies it would run thus: espionage is an illegal act but its morality must be judged in each individual case bearing in mind the values of the individuals and countries involved. Did they believe they were serving a morally and politically superior system over a corrupt one? Were their motives purely personal?

In drawing up a multi-dimensional picture of such men as Burgess and Blunt, and examining their personal motives, the most fruitful material is in the plays of Alan Bennett. Bennett's version of Burgess offers a desire for solitude as a reason for his becoming a spy - paradoxically, given his extrovert lifestyle. 'If you have a secret you're alone' he says in *An Englishman Abroad*.20 Where Curteis parades Burgess' peccadilloes, and Mitchell in *Another Country* suggests they are a false front for a vengeful espionage career, Bennett implies they are a 'persona' in the Jungian sense, hiding a deeply introverted psychology. Bennett thus contradicts the extrovert stereotype for Burgess completely. In *An Englishman Abroad* Burgess is too shy to visit Paul Robeson on his Moscow visit, and describes agonies when meeting people he really admires such as E.M. Forster, Picasso, and Churchill.

In *A Question of Attribution* Blunt's sexuality is not central to the play – it is relegated to a subtext in the dialogue. As an individual he is portrayed as shrouding himself in the kind of ambiguities he likes in art. He wants to be 'an enigma' and not simply a fake. Hilary in Bennett's *The Old Country* is a complete contrast to this. His entire setting - an English country cottage in Russia - is a fake, and he is fully aware of

20 Bennett 1989: 13
the falsehood. He is conscious of the paradox in his conservatism - the absurdity of not wanting the country he has betrayed to change. Turner sees this dichotomy as present in the use of language - Hilary imitates the language of his class but with an ever-present irony. 21

When the plays under consideration are examined for their treatment of the phenomenon of homosexuality itself, or any attempt to define it, we find examples of both of the models set out by Foucault, as pre- and post- 1870s. These paradigms contrast a legalistic act-centred approach with that of sexual identity. In A Patriot For Me, Baron Von Epp is an advocate of identity, which is associated with libertine individualism:

We are none of us safe. This is the celebration of the individual against the rest, the us’s and the them’s, the free and the constricted, the gay and the dreary, the lonely and the mob… 22

But he is far from being an enlightened man, expressing extreme class and national prejudices. The ‘scene’ over which he presides exists through the protecting power of its most high-ranking members such as Kunz, the Judge Advocate. This raises in a different context Sedgwick’s question as to whether male homoerotic relationships are a threat to patriarchal power structures or part of their construction. The Austrian gay subculture uses the power of its members for mutual protection, but its power is fragile. Should it become too visible, the majority of that same male power network would act against it. The hypocrisy of the situation is pointed out by Innes, who compares the drag

21 Turner 1994: 566
22 Osborne 1966: 77
ball with the Court Ball depicted in another scene, and points out that appearances are illusory in both.\textsuperscript{23}

However, the dominant mode of thought on sexuality in Redl’s cultural context is supplied by Osborne through the speeches of Dr Schoepfer. These are hostile condemnations using a mixture of psychoanalytic and religious terms,\textsuperscript{24} making Schoepfer part Kraft-Ebbing and part Christian fundamentalist. He exemplifies the post-1870 view described in Foucault’s \textit{History of Sexuality}, that of psycho-medical definitions.

Sedgwick has pointed out the incomplete nature of the paradigm shift of the 1870s and the survival of the act-based paradigm. Indeed many of the plays demonstrate the continued use of the old model in the twentieth century. The act-based approach is shown as strongest in Mitchell’s \textit{Another Country} where ‘society’ is in the microcosmic form of Gascoigne School. Sexual \textit{identity} is dealt with more in Kanievska’s film version, which brings two of Mitchell’s offstage characters into view: Bennett’s lover Harcourt, and Bennett’s mother. Her view is of the homosexual as clown, and is clearly unperceptive in her son’s case:

\textbf{Imogen:} I don’t think Arthur would like Judd, darling.

\textbf{Bennett:} I didn’t mean Judd. Darling. Anyway, Arthur thinks everyone under the age of eighteen is either a pinko or a pansy, so it won’t make much difference who I bring will it?…

\textsuperscript{23} Innes 1992: 108

\textsuperscript{24} Osborne 1966: 92

\textbf{210}
Imogen: …You really shouldn’t joke about it, Guy. Not after that poor boy. I suppose he was dreadfully unpopular.

Bennett: Martineau? No.

Imogen: I should have thought a boy like that…

Bennett: Oh, well, better off dead, no doubt about it!

Imogen: Well I have known one or two of - of those, and they’re never very happy, you know.

Bennett: Mummy!

Imogen: They can be very amusing but – Oh, here we are.²⁵

In the original playscript however, the characters are oblivious to the distinction between homosexual acts and identity, with the former being all that they understand. Mutual masturbation is a forbidden, though not infrequent, act at the school. Bennett alone makes the mental leap to sexual identity, but has never been given the language with which to frame his thoughts. He does realize, however, that he faces a life of societal disapproval and discrimination:

Bennett: Look, I’m not going to pretend any more. I’m sick of pretending. I’m - [He can’t find a suitable word.] – I’m never going to love women.

Judd: Don’t be ridiculous!

Bennett: It’s why Martineau killed himself. He’d known since he was ten, he told me. I didn’t know. Well – I wasn’t sure. Till James.

Judd: You can’t possibly know a thing like that at ten. Or now.²⁶

²⁵ Mitchell/Kanievska 1984

²⁶ Mitchell 1982: 93-4
This exchange takes place in spite of the fact that Bennett has had many sexual encounters with other boys, and Judd is fully aware of this. All the prefects, as well as Judd, assume Bennett’s activities are a passing phase that occurs with many, even most, boys in the school. In Foucault’s terms they are in a pre-1870 frame of mind, where sexuality consists of events:

Doubtless acts "contrary to nature" were stamped as especially abominable, but they were perceived simply as an extreme form of acts "against the law".  

In Another Country, such a social situation exists in miniature form in the School. “The law” consists of the written and unwritten school rules. Although sexual acts would be punished only by a caning if the prefects (many themselves ‘guilty’) could have their way, in Martineau’s case it has meant expulsion and suicide. There is no belief that there is a ‘type of person’ in the school who is prone to these acts; the problem is seen simply as an increase in bad behaviour. This does not mitigate the severity of the crackdown proposed by the most conservative elements, exemplified by Fowler. It is a simple matter of uncovering and punishing transgressions, as in Foucault’s view of broader society:

This new persecution of the peripheral sexualities entailed an incorporation of perversions and a new specification of individuals. As defined by the ancient civil or canonical codes, sodomy was a category

---

27 Foucault 1990: 38
of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was nothing more than a judicial subject of them.  

*Another Country* is not the only play to deal with the subject of nascent sexuality in the young. The manner in which Whitemore’s *Breaking the Code* deals with sexuality begins with the young Turing’s affection for his friend Christopher Morcom. According to Whitemore, and to Hodges’ biography, Turing did not recognize the nature of this attraction during Morcom’s lifetime. As a schoolboy he is depicted as saying:

> I wish this was my house. My own house. Then we could live here, you and I. We could have our own rooms, our own laboratories. We could work together. Share everything. What a w-w-wonderful life that would be.  

Morcom’s early death due to tuberculosis affects Turing profoundly. He later tells how he speculated about the metaphysical nature of human consciousness. Whitemore upholds the view that sexuality affects all aspects of life, and rejects an act-centred representation of homosexuality – there were no ‘acts’ between Turing and Morcom. Morcom is depicted only as an object of desire.  

---

28 Foucault 1990: 42-43  
29 Whitemore 1987: 16  
30 Could Christopher’s mind exist without his body? Can mental processes take place outside a living brain? There is an implication that in this way, Turing’s affections influenced his work in the prosaic field of the first general-purpose electronic computers. (Whitemore 1987: 38-9)  
31 A concealed affection for a boyhood friend is also depicted in Stoppard’s biographical drama *The Invention of Love*, concerning the classicist A.E. Houseman. In this, Houseman conceals his desire for
One of the most important concepts in the representation of sexual preference is ‘the closet’. This includes consideration of society’s requirement that homosexuals remain inside it, and of the linguistic binary of openness and secrecy that pervades all discussion of sexuality. In Osborne’s work *A Patriot For Me*, for example, Colonel Redl is closeted in the most extreme manner, being in a state of denial. On his first visit to a homosexual meeting place he becomes angered when one of its denizens remarks “I know what you’re looking for”. Redl desperately tries to escape his desires:

> He [Redl] told me once how hard he’d tried to change... Tried everything apparently. Resolutions, vows, religion, medical advice, self-exhaustion. Used to flog a dozen horses into the ground in a day.

In the ball scene, Redl at first seems to relax, drinking heavily. He then reverts to denial, reacting in disgust to the banter of more effeminate characters. The closet is seen as a solution to other people’s problems but not his own. In fact, his secrecy is what leads to his being blackmailed into spying for Russia, and to his suicide. He is typical of the miserable and self-destructive image of the homosexual portrayed in the films of the 1960s.

By contrast, in *Another Country*, Guy Bennett’s exclusion from the school’s elite triggers a resentment which is seen as a motive for his espionage, but also as a

---

Moses Jackson throughout his life, leaving his sexual preference unconsummated. (Stoppard 1997).

32 Osborne 1966: 67

33 Osborne 1966: 82

34 Described in detail in *The Celluloid Closet* (Russo 1987)
desire for visibility. A spy would never draw attention to himself in the manner Bennett intends, but his planned ‘total indiscretion’ is also a form of direct revenge in its own right. He will breach, as flagrantly as possible, his peers’ requirement for the secrecy of the closet:

**Bennett:** You know, when Delahay was beating me - I could see it in his face, he was trying to flog me out of his memory. He won't succeed, though. I'll haunt the whole bloody lot of them!\(^{35}\)

*Breaking The Code* explores most specifically the preference on the part of heterosexuals that all deviance from the norm should remain in the closet. In urging secrecy and discretion, Dillwyn Knox (head of the Government Code and Cipher School) uses his fatal illness as an analogy. Turing would feel embarrassed, says Knox, if he broke down and revealed that he was afraid and had no wish to die:

**Knox:** Similarly – or so it seems to me – when you reveal the nature of your sexuality, you cannot afford to ignore the effect it’s bound to have on other people. Fear, for example; when people are asked to accept something they do not understand. Or anger – when what you so unashamedly reveal seems to be contrary to everything they’ve ever believed in. And pain. You’re bound to cause a lot of pain. Not for yourself, necessarily – that’s your concern anyway - but for people who are close to you, anyone who’s fond of you.\(^{36}\)

\(^{35}\) Mitchell 1982: 98

\(^{36}\) Whitemore 1987: 55
Sedgwick describes the kind of response used by Knox as a common one in cases of ‘coming-out’. It is basically “fine, but why did you think I’d want to know about it?”

The closet is, of course, the principal representation of the epistemological binaries studied by Sedgwick - secrecy/disclosure, private/public, inside/outside. The hegemonic response to the closet may occasionally be a demand for ‘outing’ as a precursor to a purge, but is more usually a preference for the deviant to remain hidden from view.

When he is charged and tried, Turing experiences the pain alluded to by Knox through rejection by his brother, and in his Mother’s initial reaction – “Thank God your father isn’t alive”\(^{37}\) – although she quickly becomes supportive, and a degree of communication grows between them that did not previously exist. But the implications of crossing the in/out boundary are depicted even more clearly through the character of Patricia Green, Turing’s friend at the Government Code and Cypher School. She knows about Turing’s sexuality but seeks to form a partnership with him regardless of this.\(^{38}\) Later, when Knox’s youthful homosexual encounters are revealed to him, Turing suggests that he should have ‘played by the rules’ like Knox; had his fling when young, then married Pat.\(^{39}\) By entering or re-entering the closet he would have been acceptable to society. He would have been on the required side of the binaries: unknown, implicit, private, secret, silent, ignorant. But this course of action was too fraudulent and barren for Turing. Similarly, in *A Patriot For Me*, the emptiness of staying in the closet – of marrying and passing for heterosexual – is discussed, especially with reference to specific problems of aging for homosexual men.\(^{40}\)

\(^{37}\) Whitemore 1987: 57

\(^{38}\) Whitemore 1987: 41-42

\(^{39}\) Whitemore 1987: 69

\(^{40}\) Osborne 1966: 117-9
Foucault’s reference to the formation of counter-narratives has some specific examples with respect to the closet. Clum points out that both the closet and the traitor/queer nexus may be appropriated for alternative discourse in this sense. Homosexuals not only used psycho-medical texts to find positive portrayals of themselves and begin forming identity politics, but began to use negative images as a form of defiance:

Treason, like disease, both physical and mental, has been a controlling metaphor for gay men, but it can also contain the germ of an empowering metaphor. Freedom, and a sense of private revenge, can come from consciously playing out the role one is assigned, but such duplicity traps one in a constant performance. Treason is another closet in which the gay man has the illusion of control.41

But this approach is also problematic because it suggests that treason is necessarily attractive to the homosexual so that he can appropriate this illusion – an unwarranted affirmation of the queer/traitor connection.

Though Clum may see these appropriations as ensnaring and illusory, there are other positive uses of the closet that can be made. Successfully staying within it may bring about a sense of self-satisfaction from having succeeded in a masquerade. There are notes of triumphalism in Conner’s Philby and Chapman’s Blunt as the title characters become smug in confessing some of their achievements. In Philby, Burgess

41 Clum 1992: 209
and Maclean, Burgess delights in declaring to Maclean that ‘on Monday there will be a raspberry from one end of Whitehall to the other’ as a result of their defection.\footnote{Curteis 1977}

Aspects of nationality, class and education were key ingredients in contemporary analysis of the spies, in tandem with, but also leading back to, the question of their sexuality. Miranda Carter sums up the connections created by the media in 1979, when Anthony Blunt was publicly exposed:

The press harped on about the naturally lax, relativistic morals of intellectuals and their automatic assumption that they were better than anyone else; these were the obvious reasons for Blunt’s misdeeds…

Blunt became defined as a caricature of his class (privileged, therefore over-indulged), his calling (academic, therefore elitist and snobbish) and his sexual orientation (homosexual, and therefore predatory and wedded to secrets).\footnote{Carter 2001: xiv}

Definitions of class, of “Englishness” and views of educational divisions are, of course, not absolute or universally accepted. Perceptions also shifted between the 1930s when the spies were recruited, the 1950s to 1970s when they were revealed, and the 1970s to 1990s when the plays were written. “Englishness” may be seen as a set of attributes of English culture and upbringing which contribute to a perceived national character, or as the outcome of these influences embodied in a mythical ‘typical Englishman’. Obviously, regional and class differences must be elided in any such
attempted representation. Creators of stereotypes achieve this elision by choosing a single option – usually a London male of upper or middle class.

National stereotypes are usually imposed from the outside, that is, by the literature or popular perceptions of other cultures. However, British literature has had a strong tendency to self-examination. Satire, in particular, has shown an English willingness to ‘laugh at ourselves’. This cannot be dismissed as a case of one class satirising another - the Cambridge Footlights revues including *Beyond the Fringe*, in which Alan Bennett took part, are an example of satire aimed against the privileged but constructed largely by members of the same privileged class.

Similarly, concepts of *class* in Britain are neither simple nor static, as has been noted during discussion of the historical background. Ill-defined classes with indistinct boundaries meant that pejorative references to the Cambridge spies’ status as upper class require the definition of this elite to be tailored to fit a framework to which Philby, Burgess, Blunt and Maclean belonged: not actually titled but with ties of friendship or family to those who were; from families who could afford an elite education for them; being ‘intellectuals’ and therefore thriving at elite universities; and having sufficient influence to obtain significant positions in the diplomatic and security services.

An English education was also a concept subject to change, especially between the time of the writing of the plays and the events they represent. The spies were active before the introduction of the comprehensive school system, for example. On the whole, however, when the future spies passed through the education system, a British citizen’s
school and university were pointers to his/her class. This connection has governed how the spies were and are perceived in representations of them, in prose or on the stage.

Kanievska’s film of Mitchell’s Another Country has an added introduction in which Guy Bennett is being interviewed in Moscow by reporter Julie Schofield. He has been in the U.S.S.R. since his infamous defection, and the school years that take up the play become a story told in retrospect. His entire experience at that time becomes an explicit explanation for treason:

**Bennett**: Background, young lady, that’s all I can give you. The whole delightful, utterly despicable English background.

**Schofield**: Well I understand the delightfulness all right. But not why you had to despise it. How someone of your class and background -

**Bennett**: Should want to kick it in the teeth?

**Schofield**: Precisely.

**Bennett**: You’ve no idea what life in England in the 1930s was like. Treason, loyalty – they were all relative, you know. Treason to what?

**Schofield**: Loyalty to whom? That’s what mattered.  

The ‘delightful, utterly despicable English’ experiences of Mitchell’s character are also at the heart of Alan Bennett’s plays, not limited to those concerning espionage and exile. England was principally divided into two parts for Bennett, a geographical and class dichotomy. The settings of his works are either in the working-class north, the world of his childhood, or the middle-class south to which he had relocated.  

Bennett, then, is not one of those playwrights who construct characters from one class only. His

---

44 Mitchell/Kanievska: 1984
spy plays contain significant characters drawn from the lower class. The character Colin, from Bethnal Green, in *A Question of Attribution* is depicted as having a detailed knowledge of art, acquired on-the-job and not through an elite education. But, Colin says, he can work at Buckingham Palace because he looks the part – he could be public school until he opens his mouth. \(^46\) Accent is depicted as an immutable marker of class - no amount of knowledge or efficiency at his job can change this. \(^47\)

Bennett’s stage works (as opposed to television) have most often been about the southern English establishment, describing it more satirically than the north. For example, *Forty Years On* depicts a play within a play, being performed in a public school. The Headmaster is retiring and his successor has already declared his intention to abolish corporal punishment and compulsory sports. The retiring Headmaster simultaneously bemoans and expects the social change this signifies - he is a determined conservative but well aware of the downside of the old Englishness he cherishes:

\(^45\) Bennett’s television plays were largely slice-of-life, character-based dramas with little or no plot development, and set in the north. *A Day Out* depicts a group of Northern workers and their families on a day trip, and exemplifies Bennett’s treatment of the region’s distinctive discourse. His scripts do not have the *accents* of the north built into the spelling, but the rhythms of northern speech, the clipped sentences, are there, especially in the women. Bennett describes this as a conscious process in his introduction to *Office Suite*, which focuses on working women. (Bennett 1981: introduction)

\(^46\) Bennett 1989: 44

\(^47\) Although Bennett’s version of Blunt is a snob in most respects, he appears to have a high regard for Colin. Different performances of the play have made this appear to be either a respect for his knowledge (James Fox’s performance in Schlesinger’s TV version 1991) or flattery arising from homoerotic attraction (Ronald Falk’s performance at the Marian Street Theatre, Killara, Australia 2001).
Once we had a romantic and old-fashioned concept of honour, of patriotism, chivalry and duty. But it was a duty which didn't have much to do with justice, with social justice anyway.\footnote{Bennett 1996: 95}

Nevertheless \textit{Forty Years On} has a sense of the mob invading the halls of the privileged in the post-war period, as in Trevor Griffiths' \textit{Country}, and of the end of empire. The final words of the school play sum up its view of England:

\begin{quote}
To let. A valuable site at the cross-roads of the world. At present on offer to European clients. Outlying portions of the estate already disposed of to sitting tenants. Of some historical and period interest. Some alterations and improvements necessary.\footnote{Bennett 1996: 95}
\end{quote}

Bennett uses the same sentiments in his spy plays, especially \textit{The Old Country}, in which the central character shares the headmaster's conflicting criticism and sentimentalism towards England. The changes in post-war Britain, such as the collapse of empire, bring about the phenomenon of the upper class character who sees and despises the new English culture but cannot escape it except by working for a revolution, or ultimately by exile.

In a state of cultural flux, the spy plays must pose the question “which kind of Englishness is the upper class spy betraying, and which is he upholding”. In the preface to \textit{An Englishman Abroad}, Bennett writes that he has put some of his own sentiments into Burgess's mouth: 'I can say I love London. I can say I love England. I can't say I
love my country because I don’t know what that means’. Against what is treason being committed? Is it against the nation-state as a political entity; against the country as a geographical region or population; or against a culture, and if so, against what part of it? The selectiveness of the spies is a major theme for all the playwrights – their choices of which aspects of Englishness to love and which to hate. Part of this phenomenon is the transformation of England during a period of increasing consumerism driven by the middle class, not the upper class of the spies.

It is not only the world of the upper class that is under siege in Bennett’s television plays. The working-class north is depicted as having its rows of attached houses in danger of being demolished or turned into a theme park, and its children absorbing the culture of the south and of the United States. Turner sums up the most common theme of Bennett’s work in the 1980s thus:

...the combined forces of materialism and democratisation... will destroy the myths of both north and south and replace them with vulgar consumer capitalism. Faced with this force, both north and south are doomed to become lost worlds. Meanwhile the south is an absurd world, though Bennett delights in its absurdity.51

The spy characters share a hatred of this consumer capitalism, most especially as embodied by the U.S.A. Although they betray those aspects of Britain they can no longer abide, they are much more enthusiastic (and successful) in betraying American

50 Bennett 1994: 311
51 Turner 1994: 561-2
secrets to the U.S.S.R.\textsuperscript{52} The spy characters’ ambivalence towards their own country does not extend to the West generally. Their depicted hatred of America shows that this ambivalence is specific to English culture.

Other aspects of Englishness besides the cultural divisions of class and region are highlighted in Bennett's attempts to encapsulate England. In \textit{The Old Country} one Englishman's Russian wife describes the English as "the most embarrassed nation in the world" because they still believe in a society where "I won't make you feel bad so long as you don't make me feel bad" is the basic social contract.\textsuperscript{53} This play is the earliest of Bennett’s three spy plays. Its protagonist, Hilary, is often compared to Philby, though the play is about exile and Englishness rather than espionage. Hilary's love/hate relationship with England is marked by an ironic conservatism similar to that of the Headmaster in \textit{Forty Years On}. In an article entitled 'Bennett and the Betrayal of Englishness' in \textit{The Independent} (23/5/94) Paul Taylor says of Hilary: "...if he is to hold on to the platonic England he cherishes, he'd be well advised to stay put in Moscow where it can be preserved in the amber of permanent parody."\textsuperscript{54} But Hilary is not deceiving himself – he is fully aware of his own contradictions and double standards. Scarr expresses Hilary’s betrayal as irony activated – espionage and defection become an extension of his cynicism.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{52} For example, Maclean worked in the American Atomic Energy Commission and Philby was Britain’s liason to the C.I.A.

\textsuperscript{53} Turner 1994: 565

\textsuperscript{54} Taylor 1994

\textsuperscript{55} Scarr 1996: 316
Bennett's spies all share this peculiar mix of affection for certain aspects of well-to-do English life, and a contempt for its political culture. Geography and camaraderie may be loved, for example, but the workings of the institutions of power hated. The exile is therefore in a divided state of mind, with a sense of loss which is only partial. Langford in a paper for the University of Mississippi\textsuperscript{56} raises this feeling to the status of fetishism. The characters compensate for lack through a process of substitution and displacement. They endow certain objects with power - not as mere symbols but actual repositories of meaning and value. With Burgess in \textit{An Englishman Abroad}, for example, the fetishes are suits, gentlemen's clubs, gossip and literary celebrities.

In \textit{The Old Country}, members of the aristocracy back in Britain, at the time of the spies’ exposure, are depicted as completely lacking in resentment towards the exiles. Bennett himself certainly does not condemn them. It seems that their treachery is forgivable because, in Bennett's world, having double-standards is itself an integral part of the English character. Philby's heterosexuality makes him, in Bennett's own words, 'the most clubbable' but he points out that Philby (in Bennett’s view of history) is the only one who actually betrayed agents to torture and death.\textsuperscript{57} This may explain why he wrote no plays about Philby as a person, Hilary in \textit{The Old Country} being a generic character. But the forgiving aspect of Englishness is made explicit in this first work:

\begin{quote}
\textbf{Hilary:} Telling it all has become so respectable. Dirt. Treachery. Murder. Boys. My dear, who cares?
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{Duff:} Oh no, boys are nothing nowadays. And memoirs make a mint.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{56} Langford 1993: 364-5

\textsuperscript{57} Bennett 1994: 332-3

\textsuperscript{58} Bennett 1978: 44
In *An Englishman Abroad*, Guy Burgess is the exile and expresses the same ambivalence toward his country as Hilary. The principal difference is that Hilary alternately shows or masks his feelings through bitter cynicism, whereas Burgess uses a light-hearted banter and trades on his earlier notoriety, on his status as an eccentric. He denies, however, that his open indiscretions were a false front or a consciously calculated act. Burgess tells Coral Browne “I lack what the English call character, by which they mean the power to refrain”.\(^{59}\) Burgess’ self-confessed immoderation is the point at which he departs from the “Englishness” that he displays in other ways. In class, education and even sexual preference (if it had been discrete) he conforms to the play’s title, but in his indiscretion he is “An Unenglish Man Abroad”. Bennett was interested in the degree to which this indiscretion was a façade. In his preface, he applies to Burgess a description of the poet Yevtushenko by Anthony Powell: “He exemplified that favourite type in the classical Russian novel, the buffoon; the man always playing the fool, not only for his own amusement and love of exhibitionism, but also with the object of keeping everyone in the dark as to his own inner views and intentions”.\(^{60}\)

This, however, leads to consideration of the one tool that Burgess has lost in exile - Englishness as expressed through the English language. Burgess' problem in Moscow is that his placement of himself in terms of Powell’s buffoon character is highly dependent on language, and he doesn't speak Russian. He must rely even more on the fetishes of his former class and country:

\(^{59}\) Bennett 1994: 312

\(^{60}\) Bennett 1994: 331-2
Coral: You still have charm…

Burgess: But not here. Not for them. For charm one needs words. I have no words. And, short of my clothes, no class. I am 'The Englishman'.

Burgess’ linguistic problems extend to his need to express his sexuality. Bennett does not appear to be commenting on homosexuality specifically here, but a more universal problem of the exile:

Boys are quite thin on the ground here. I can’t speak their language and they can’t speak mine, so when one does manage to get one, it soon palls. Sex needs language.

In *An Englishman Abroad*, Burgess’ appraisal of English political sensibilities shares the irony of Hilary in *The Old Country*. Burgess is, in a sense, a victim of his country’s rejection of Marxism since it has made him choose exile. But he believes that this rejection is extremely shallow and based on external form.

If you don’t wish to conform in one thing, you should conform in all the others. And in all the important things I did conform. ‘How can he be a spy? He goes to my tailor.’ The average Englishman, you see, is not interested in ideas. You can say what you like about political theory and no one will listen. You could shove a slice of the Communist Manifesto

---

61 Bennett 1989: 8
62 Bennett 1989: 8
in the Queen’s Speech and no one would turn a hair. Least of all, I suspect, HMQ.63

Burgess could be said to be likening England to ancient Athens and himself to Socrates. One may hold any views one wishes, as long as societal norms are externally observed. Burgess/Socrates did not observe them. But since he did go to the correct tailor and so forth, this analysis raises the question of precisely how and when Burgess crossed the line and become subject to English ire. The most obvious answer seems to be his overt homosexuality, but even here An Englishman Abroad deals with a British tendency to turn a blind eye. On the subject of getting caught in public lavatories, Coral says:

That’s very English. We will pretend it hasn’t happened because we are both civilized people. Well, I’m not English. And I’m not civilized. I’m Australian.64

Bennett makes full use of Coral Browne’s Australian background to make her an external commentator on Englishness. She rebels against British values when refused service on his behalf in a London store:

**Coral:** …You were quite happy to satisfy this client when he was one of the most notorious buggers in London and a drunkard into the bargain… But not any more. Oh no. Because the gentleman has shown himself to have some principles, principles which aren’t yours and, as a matter of

63 Bennett 1989: 12

64 Bennett 1989: 13
interest, aren’t mine. But that’s it as far as you’re concerned. No more ‘jamas for him. I tell you, it’s pricks like you that make me understand why he went. Thank Christ I’m not English!

**Assistant:** As a matter of fact, madam, our firm isn’t English either.

**Coral:** Oh? What is it?

**Assistant:** Hungarian.

**Coral:** Oh, I said, and thinking of the tanks going into Budapest a year or two before, wished I hadn’t made such a fuss.65

The implication is that an English woman would have been more reticent and would have had greater skill in avoiding embarrassment. She would have used the social contract mentioned in *The Old Country*, and avoided making anyone ‘feel bad’ whatever their behaviour. But as it is, she is not reticent with Burgess himself, even on the central subject of espionage:

**Coral:** Only, you pissed in our soup and we drank it… But you’re not conning me, darling. Pipe isn’t fooling pussy. I know.66

Miranda Carter’s recent biography of Blunt broadens the concept of the English social contract as alleged by Bennett (mutual avoidance of embarrassment) into a Stoic resistance of any display of emotion or perturbation, a specific form of the cliché “stiff upper lip”:

---

65 Bennett 1989: 18

66 Bennett 1989: 13
I have tried to tell the story of the spying, of the art history, of the self-deception, and other stories besides – not least that of Blunt as a particular type of Englishman in whom almost all emotional effort was diverted into the denial of feeling.67

An English Stoicism especially applies to Blunt’s attitudes in the years following his public exposure. Blunt’s writings on Poussin praise his adherence to Neo-Stoicism and although Poussin was French, Blunt seems to have adopted certain aspects of Poussin’s behaviour into his English form of sang-froid.

He [Blunt] made a point of never complaining about his predicament. It was almost as if the exposure had given him a last opportunity to live according to those Stoic ideals he had failed to live up to, to achieve the kind of calm detachment that he had attributed to Poussin’s last years.68

These pictures of Englishness flow into the question of sexual orientation via stereotypes mostly expressed by Americans and other non-British nationals. The image of the effete and therefore effeminate Englishman makes many appearances in popular culture. “I thought Englishmen didn’t like women, the way they talk”, says the macho ex-CIA man in the film A Fish Called Wanda.69 The intellectual Englishman Wesley Wyndham-Pryce in Buffy the Vampire Slayer, although he is depicted as attracted to a woman, is called “Princess Margaret”70, and is told he will be needed “if we need

67 Carter 2001: xviii
68 Carter 2001: 488
70 Buffy The Vampire Slayer, Episode 50 “Doppelgangland”, 1999.
someone to scream like a woman”.\textsuperscript{71} This kind of foreign view has fed on the phenomenon of the Cambridge spies, and is depicted in Chapman’s \textit{Blunt} when a Russian contact asks if clandestine meetings in public lavatories are dangerous “because of the English vice”.\textsuperscript{72} Within England, of course, there is no myth that the average Englishman necessarily tends towards homosexuality. At home, the stereotype is reapplied on the basis of class and education.

The principal aspect of English society to be mentioned in the plays under review is the class system. In the same manner as Chapman Pincher, Ian Curteis attacks upper-class officials for allowing Communist infiltration into the security services. They are guilty of incompetence, as a class, because the ‘old school tie’ syndrome does not allow them to suspect each other. In \textit{The Atom Spies}, an M.I.5 and a special branch officer consider a list of suspects:

\textbf{Major Phillips}: But this just lists the top nine atomic scientists working in England!

\textbf{Burt (Special Branch)}: Nobody else had access to the material under any circumstances. And we’ve been interviewing all those spotty secretaries, and people who empty the waste paper bins.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Buffy The Vampire Slayer}, Episode 56 “Graduation Day”, 1999.

\textsuperscript{72} It is noteworthy that the most famous of fictional English spies, Fleming’s James Bond, is made the subject of massive over-compensation in the area of sexuality. He must seduce more than one woman in every film. The general pattern is to establish that he is attracted to any young woman, including the ingénue, the ‘vamp’ killer, or the deceitful double agent. All suspicion of his inclusion in the sexually dubious stereotype of the ‘real life’ British spy must be repeatedly allayed.

\textsuperscript{73} Curteis 1979
Here, lower or middle class workers have been under suspicion rather than an intellectual elite. But the class basis is even more clear in *Philby, Burgess and Maclean*, where the heads of M.I.6 and Foreign Office security discuss a similar short list.

**Menzies**: But these men – they’re *our* sort of people.

**Farquesson**: But that’s just it, you see. Your department has always assumed that spies are recruited from secretaries and chauffeurs and people who empty the waste paper bins. But Volkov and Kravitsky imply Soviet recruitment of people like us, while young, maybe still at University, who then make penetration of the foreign service their life’s work.\(^{74}\)

Curteis does not, however, make much of an attempt to explain why members of the upper class do, in fact, become spies. He seems content simply to declare that the phenomenon exists – the real issue is the failure of others to detect and expose them. The security services would, perhaps, have done a better job of defending capitalism if they had been in the hands of the middle class, whose commitment to its values is greater.

Upper class solidarity is dealt with very directly in Moffat’s 2003 miniseries *Cambridge Spies*. When Burgess is caught in bed with a waiter, the waiter is sacked and Burgess is brought before Arthur Quigley, a senior academic. Burgess condemns the hypocrisy of the situation:

\(^{74}\) Curteis 1977
**Burgess:** I would say a quarter of the male population of this university is homosexual and a third of the academic staff.\textsuperscript{75}

Quigley replies that the problem is ‘not the sex’ but the crossing of the class barrier between ‘us and them’. Burgess is told that he is part of an exclusive club. Membership is for life, so he will not be sent down – only the waiter will be victimized.

**Quigley:** The club makes allowances for the mistakes of its members.

**Burgess:** Are you a homosexual?

**Quigley:** The club even allows for mistakes which last a lifetime.\textsuperscript{76}

Though the four future spies are disgusted by this class-based privilege, they substitute their own closed value system – ‘friendship is everything’.

With Julian Mitchell’s cast consisting entirely of aristocratic characters, *Another Country* makes the upper class more heterogeneous. Fowler represents the uncompromising authoritarian; Menzies is the diplomat who will go to great lengths to avoid public scandal; Barclay, the head of house, is the liberal who is seen to be cracking up; Judd, the Marxist intellectual, says that liberals always do crack under pressure – that they want an easy life and an easy conscience but have no right to either.\textsuperscript{77} In weighing the separate facets of this upper class microcosm, Clum sees the ‘norm’ as being embodied by the ‘moderates’, Menzies and Barclay. Fowler and Judd,

\textsuperscript{75} Moffatt 2003

\textsuperscript{76} Moffatt 2003

\textsuperscript{77} Mitchell 1982: 81
as absolutists, are out of step but can be tolerated.\textsuperscript{78} The appearance of conformity is paramount for the moderates. Fowler and Judd place their (diametrically opposed) principles before personal appearances but do not threaten the overall appearance of the school or house. But Guy Bennett does pose such a threat to upper class self-image, notably in his disruption of a military parade. He is therefore the target of retribution, even though Judd’s politics are as radical as Bennett’s sexuality.

It is on the question of which class most threatens the fabric of British politics that the works of Alan Bennett contrast sharply with those of Ian Curteis. For Curteis, the upper class is the threat, so in accordance with that theory the Cambridge spies are typical of their class, and there is a potential threat from anyone of a similar background. For Bennett, a greedy and hypocritical middle class are the threat\textsuperscript{79}, so upper class traitors are written in his plays as individuals - as character studies, not exemplars.

Bennett depicted the forces of consumerism and globalization, exemplified by the middle class, as attacking those ‘above’ them also. The upper class woman in “Soldiering On”, one of the \textit{Talking Heads} monologues, is a victim of her circumstances. Her son, who has taken on middle-class acquisitive values, robs her of all her possessions. In Bennett's work in the 1990s, the consumer society has alienated the individual. Scarr sees \textit{Talking Heads} as ‘attempting to reclaim the individual from

\textsuperscript{78} Clum 1992: 215

\textsuperscript{79} The middle class are generally seen as a destructive force in its attempt to press its values on those ‘below’ them. \textit{The Old Crowd}, a television play set in the middle-class south, was Bennett’s most controversial work. Lindsay Anderson directed it in a non-naturalist style, revealing cameras and lighting. This, combined with the themes of the text - the characters’ pontificating on falling standards while displaying their own moral obliquity – resulted in strong criticism by the television critics in Fleet Street.
the facelessness of society’. In this context, Bennett’s spy characters are cast as individuals in such a battle. Their individualism is not conferred upon them by their class, since they depart from class values and loyalties. They are determined not to be faceless members even of their own narrow class-based society.

Of all Bennett’s spy plays, A Question of Attribution is most concerned with individualism within class, rather than a more general Englishness. The character of Sir Anthony Blunt is given a large measure of snobbery. He is clearly pained at having to travel to the middle-class suburb of Purley. He says he does not visit the National Gallery during opening hours because ‘the public make it so intolerable’. Another gallery in the suburbs is dismissed as ‘a bit chocolate-box’. In short, Blunt’s attitudes are a product of his class and not of his avowed Marxism, unless one chooses to read his arrogance as being directed solely towards the bourgeoisie. But Bennett does not represent Blunt’s views of the proletariat, so that the inconsistencies of being a Marxist aristocrat potentially remain.

The centrepiece of the play is Blunt’s conversation with the Queen, which forces him into a subordinate position. Conversing with a social superior puts Blunt on the defensive as he steps carefully through a discourse loaded with multiple meaning. Scarr points out that in this dialogue it is the character styled ‘HMQ’ who is acting like a spy – she is manipulative, crafty, and working to a hidden agenda. Being at the peak of the

---

80 Scarr 1996: 317
81 Bennett 1989: 35
82 Bennett 1989: 43
83 Scarr 1996: 316
aristocracy she epitomizes that duplicity that predisposes some of its members to become spies.

The concept of upper class as a metonym for homosexuality began in dramatic works long before the spy plays were written. The representation of the aristocratic ‘nancy-boy’ is covert in the early decades of the twentieth century because of the general taboos on gay representations in general. Nevertheless, the clothing and mannerisms described as those of the ‘sissy’ in Russo’s *Celluloid Closet* are often duplicated in representing the ‘Salad Days’ youth or the in-bred ‘chinless wonder’. When archetypal gay characters began to appear in more permissive decades, such as that of John Inman in the 1980s television series *Are You Being Served*, such characters invariably had (or were affecting) upper-class accents, or at least a tendency to over-enunciation – never a cockney, a west-country or a northern accent. The homosexual figure is always ‘posh’.

From the 1990s, modern market-research demographic techniques were brought into play in studying the correlation between sexual orientation and class, at least in terms of income bracket. Advertisers were told that homosexuals tended to be intelligent, educated, professional and they therefore had money to spend. Advertising in gay magazines increased as consumer capitalism forgot all prejudice in the face of the imperatives of marketing. In Australia and the U.S.A. this was a simple “gay equals money” equation, but in Britain it necessarily acquired a class dimension. If there are more gays in moneyed professions, goes the argument, there must be more of them in the classes with access to those professions.

*Russo 1987*
The idea of the lower class homosexual gets little mention in works about the Cambridge spies, except as faceless pick-ups and rent-boys who may in any case be ‘really’ heterosexuals demeaning themselves for money. The oft-repeated accusation that upper class gay men have a penchant for the risks of ‘rough trade’\footnote{Pincher 1987: 138-9 for example.} acknowledges the existence of lower class gays but does not know what to make of them.

The strongest alleged link between the upper class and homosexuality is embodied, however, in its education system. Significantly, a predisposition of the upper class towards treason is also frequently affirmed in connection with education. For example, Dennis Potter depicts a traitor and an M.I.5 guard in his teleplay \textit{Blade of the Feather} (1980). The spy is asked whether he ever loved England, and replies:

> I was born into a class that loves only what it owns, and we don’t own quite enough of it any more. That is why all – all, mind you, not just some but all – of the renowned traitors working for Nazi Germany or for Stalin’s Russia came from my class. Silver spoons tarnish easily, you know. I suppose we were all riddled with disappointment. And futility is the \textit{sine qua non} of a classical education… The English have lost more battles on the playing fields of Eton than on any other acre of land this side of Vladivostok. We none of us liked team sports, you know.\footnote{Potter 1994}

The regimen of Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Winchester and so forth is used principally in \textit{Another Country} but is invoked in many of the plays under study. There is a rigid hierarchy, corporal punishment, licensed bullying and the ‘fag’ system – using
younger boys as servants. Compulsory athletics, allegedly intended to foster cooperation and *esprit de corps*, are really another hierarchy despised by all the aristocratic participants, with the possible exception of the team captain. Judd, the Marxist student in *Another Country* has the same observations on the school system as Potter’s character in *Blade of the Feather* – that everyone cheats, that sportsmanship is hypocrisy.\(^{87}\)

Specific details of the school experiences of the Cambridge spies are usually typical of other reports from alumni of the public school system – focusing on the primacy of athletics, on harsh conditions, and on the brutality of prefects and other older boys:

Blunt’s first two years at Marlborough were pretty awful. He was useless at games - a prerequisite, for younger boys at least, for school success - treated as a freak, viewed as a loner... School food was either bland or disgusting, and there was never enough of it: one hot meal a day at lunchtime, plus bread, margarine and tea at breakfast and teatime... In addition the previous headmaster, Dr Wynne Willson, had bequeathed a particularly unpleasant prefectorial regime, giving power to the boys as a way of shrugging off his own responsibilities.\(^{88}\)

\(^{87}\) Mitchell also emphasizes the longevity and importance of the public school system. Its entrenchment is such that the parents (or at least the fathers) know what goes on in the schools, sexual improprieties included, but subject their sons to it nonetheless. (Mitchell 1982: 39)

\(^{88}\) Carter 2001: 18-19
Carter’s description goes on to describe the link between athletics and the school elite, one that discriminated against the purely intellectual or artistic boy.

At Marlborough the senior prefects were always sportsmen. The triumph of sport was personified in the figure of ‘the hearty’. The term denoted someone muscular, sporty, loud and stupid, and with a sneering contempt for ‘cleverness’.  

We therefore see a source of potential alienation for the intellectual and artistic spy characters, and for Whitemore’s falsely accused character, Alan Turing, who was the epitome of stuttering ‘cleverness’. Turing’s biographer, Hodges (Whitemore’s principal source for *Breaking the Code*), presents Turing’s school, Sherborne, as a nation in miniature through a quote from its Headmaster:

> In form-room and hall and dormitory, on the field and on parade, in your relations with us masters and in the scale of seniority among yourselves, you have become familiar with the ideas of authority and obedience, of cooperation and loyalty, of putting the house and the school above your personal ideas.  

This corporatism conflicts with the capitalist priorities of the individual entrepreneur and the profit motive. The concept can also be translated into the idea of the ascendancy

---

89 Carter 2001: 20

90 Alec Waugh’s *The Loom of Youth* (Richards Press 1917) was one of the first works to expose the darker side of England’s public schools, and Waugh attended Sherborne, from 1911 to 1915.

91 Hodges 1983: 22
of the state over the individual. Certainly, individual freedom of thought had no place in the system. Despite professions to the contrary, public schools encouraged individuals to keep their own counsel. Secrecy and hypocrisy became second nature.

*Bennett:* I think perhaps I’ll be a spy when I ‘grow up’.

*Menzies:* You couldn’t keep a secret for two minutes.

*Bennett:* You’d be surprised. You can’t beat a good public school for learning to conceal your true feelings.⁹²

The regimen of uniform thought and feeling poses a fundamental question, namely whether the Cambridge spies, as schoolboys, hated this required conformity or accepted it and reapplied it to the superiority of the proletarian state over the individual, which is the upshot of applied Marxism. Hodges sets out a less abstruse theory connecting snobbery in the school system to the phenomenon of upper-class Marxists.

For products of the English public school, apt to despise trade, it was but a small step to reject capitalism, and place greater faith in state control.⁹³

This social situation may have inspired pupils to become Keynesian economists, favouring a governmental hand on the levers of the economy, but not necessarily Marxists. Further, Hodges does not mean to describe this as the experience of Turing himself, rather that of contemporaries whose activities caused Turing to fall under suspicion.⁹⁴ Ergo, such schools as Sherborne did not produce a uniform product of

---

⁹² Mitchell 1982: 77

⁹³ Hodges 1983: 72
young upper class men all thinking alike, but examples of conformity, apathy, or extremity, and some of the extremists turned to Communism.

One of the primary areas of introspection and concealment required by the boarding school system is that of sexuality, despite the fact that nascent homosexual acts are made inevitable by the school environment. Alleged reasons for this include the unsupervised prefect/fag system, the unisex surroundings, and the syllabus’ domination by the Greco-Roman classics, with their bisexual overtones. The flyleaf of Another Country quotes Cyril Connolly in *Enemies of Promise*:

> The experiences undergone by boys at the great public schools, their glories and disappointments, are so intense as to dominate their lives and to arrest their development. From these it results that the greater part of the ruling class remains adolescent, school-minded, self-conscious, cowardly, sentimental and in the last analysis homosexual.  

The core issue for examination is whether these authors represent treasonable behaviour as arising directly from sexual orientation. In each play text, is the principal equation (if any) no longer “upper-class educated Englishman equals traitor” but “homosexual equals traitor”?  

Although direct conscious motives for espionage and treason in the plays have been dealt with above, it is now necessary to turn to the most crucial, namely the

---

94 There is little evidence that Turing ever embraced Marxism, but ignored faiths, religious conversions, or grand narratives of any kind.

95 Mitchell 1982: 2
supposed existence of a direct link in the tendency to homosexuality and the tendency to betrayal. Even when questions of class and nationality are put aside, and treatments of individual aspects of homosexual representation are taken into account, we are left with this overarching nexus in which deviant sexuality becomes a metonym for betrayal and treason.

The simplest manifestation of this link is a category of instant betrayal, by homosexual or bisexual ‘pick-ups’. In Act 1 Scene 10 of *A Patriot for Me*, for example, Redl is seen finally expressing his sexuality (though all scenes with men in bed together were banned from performance by the Lord Chamberlain), and is immediately robbed by the youth he has picked up. He is told to ‘Get used to it’.96 In *Breaking the Code*, Ron is similarly established as the untrustworthy bisexual,97 robbing Turing and adding to the betrayal by giving evidence against him. His role as Turing’s downfall finds a parallel in treatments of the life of Oscar Wilde. Leaning heavily on *De Profundis*, these dramatic representations depict Lord Alfred Douglas as fickle and malicious, the sole cause of Wilde’s disgrace.98

The larger aspect of this nexus is the association of homosexuality with Communism and concomitant treason. This is depicted as a largely American phenomenon, with some justification, as set out by Turing’s biographer:

96 Osborne 1966: 68-9. There is an identical scene in Krishnamma’s film *A Man of No Importance*, associated with the main character’s first attempt to consummate his preference. He is beaten and robbed by the young denizens of what appears to be a gay bar, or at least a pickup point for male prostitutes.

97 Whitemore 1987: 30

98 For example, *Oscar* (teleplay 1986, H.Herbert dir.) with Michael Gambon in the title role.
Never far below the surface, indeed lay the highly traditional equation between sodomy, heresy and treachery. It was an equation which, even if overstated by Senator McCarthy, contained its grain of truth. Christian doctrine no longer mattered to the state, but belief in its social and political institutions certainly did. The family system, depending upon sex as a commodity for men to earn and women to surrender, remained a central doctrine of that faith, and the very idea of homosexuality undermined it. In the post-war re-establishment of male employment and female domesticity, that threat became more conscious. To those who perceived marriage and child-raising as duties rather than as choices, homosexuals appeared as the secret, seductive protagonists of a heresy, portrayed in religious terms of ‘converts’ and ‘proselytising’ and assumed, together with Soviet-inspired Communists to be plotting a conversion of the world - a mirror-image Christianity, in which the forbidden would be made compulsory.99

In *Breaking the Code*, Mr Smith of M.I.5 outlines to Turing the state of American fear. The U.S.A. has given him access to high-level secrets including the latest developments in speech encipherment.100 The need for discretion (remaining in the closet) is therefore paramount. Chapman’s *Blunt* also starkly depicts the state of American thinking, when Burgess is speaking to Goronwy-Rees and his family:

---

99 Hodges 1983: 500

100 Whitemore 1987: 71
**Burgess:** The Yanks have gone barmy, crazy... Thanks to Joe bloody McCarthy it is now universally accepted that if you’re queer you’re commie and vice versa.

**Daughter:** What’s queer, Guy?

**Burgess:** Me, dear. It means homosexual, which means -

**Mrs Rees:** Guy! Do you think you ought to tell the girls this?\(^{101}\)

Judd, the Communist student in *Another Country*, is also aware of the pairing in people’s minds when neither he nor Bennett are to be admitted to the School’s elite group:

**Menzies:** Look, we've saved the house from Fowler, we've saved your conscience -

**Judd:** Oh, yes, all problems solved! For life! No commies and no queers!\(^{102}\)

Bennett’s *A Question of Attribution*, uses Anthony Blunt's position in the art world to comment subtly on the ‘queer as traitor / traitor as queer’ nexus, as an underlying thought pattern. It is set in the period when Blunt was officially known to have been a spy, but was not yet publicly exposed. The idea of a fake picture, vetted by the experts but not what it claims to be, is given a triple meaning in a conversation between Blunt and the character styled ‘HMQ’, who has clearly been briefed about him:

**HMQ:** Have I many forgeries? What about these?

---

\(^{101}\) Chapman 1987

\(^{102}\) Mitchell 1982: 97
Blunt: Paintings of this date are seldom forgeries, Ma'am. They are sometimes not what we think they are, but that's different. The public are rather tiresomely fascinated by a forgery - more so, I'm afraid, than they are by the real thing.

HMQ: Yes, well as a member in this instance (somewhat unusually for me) of the public, I also find a forgery fascinating... 103

In a discourse simultaneously about art, sexuality, political alignment and espionage, even class and background, the characters go on to a discussion of Van Meegeren's forgeries of Vermeer.

Blunt: What has exposed them as forgeries, Ma'am, is not any improvement in perception, but time. Though a forger reproduce in the most exact fashion the style and detail of his subject, as a painter he is nevertheless of his time and however slavishly he imitates, he does it in the fashion of his time, in a way that is contemporary, and with the passage of years it is this element that dates, begins to seem old-fashioned, and which eventually unmasks him.

HMQ: Interesting. I suppose too the context of the painting matters. Its history and provenance - is that the word? - confer on it a certain respectability. This can't be a forgery, it's in such and such a collection, its background and pedigree are impeccable - besides, it has been vetted by the experts. Isn't that how the argument goes? So if one comes across a painting with the right background and pedigree, Sir Anthony, then it must be hard, I imagine - even inconceivable - to think that it is not what

103 Bennett 1989: 54
it claims to be. And even supposing someone in such circumstances did have suspicions, they would be chary about voicing them. Easier to leave things as they are in every department. Stick to the official attribution rather than let the cat out of the bag and say 'Here we have a fake'.

**Blunt**: I still think the word 'fake' is inappropriate, Ma’am.

**HMQ**: If something is not what it is claimed to be, what is it?

**Blunt**: An enigma?

**HMQ**: That is, I think, the sophisticated answer.\(^{104}\)

Blunt revels in political and sexual ambiguity and wants to be as enigmatic and impossible to define as the art he studies. The significance of this passage is that both his Communism and his homosexuality are undercurrents in the conversation and are thus susceptible of the same logic and interpretations. Each is a metaphor for the other, as art is for both. The commie and the queer are both seen as alien insurgencies - as the Other made lethal.\(^{105}\)

We can see how far this parallel goes by comparing liminal cases, that is, by comparing a treatment of a ‘bisexual person’ with someone on the political fringe of Communism. We find both of these positions in Chapman’s *Blunt* and, unsurprisingly, they exist in the same person. Goronwy-Rees was recruited to the Comintern at the same time as the Burgess and the others, but resigned soon afterwards and was never a

---

\(^{104}\) Bennett 1989: 54-55

\(^{105}\) The 2003 miniseries *Cambridge Spies* contains a small scene echoing the above conversation. Blunt is depicted meeting George VI’s Queen Elizabeth (later the Queen Mother). She declares that men without moustaches are either pones or spies, and asks Blunt which one he is. Blunt replies “A little of both, Ma’am. Aren’t we all?”
spy. Occupying a fringe position politically he is also bisexual, assuring his wife that his affair with Burgess is long over.

**Rees:** You mustn’t mind Guy. You’re the only one, cross my heart.\(^{106}\)

Discourse concerning liminal sexuality has compared bisexuality with mixed-race or multiethnic culture and referred to ‘epistemologies of the fence’. Maria Pramaggiore explicates bisexual epistemologies as “ways of apprehending, organizing and intervening in the world that refuse one-to-one correspondences between sex acts and identity, between erotic objects and sexualities, between identification and desire… [they] acknowledge fluid desires and their continual construction and deconstruction of the desiring subject”.\(^{107}\) This fluidity is likely to be misunderstood and portrayed as weakness or as an identity crisis. In Chapman’s work, Blunt and Liddell of M.I.5 say they don’t know what to make of Rees. Blunt quotes Foster to Rees, asking him not to betray his friends but to have ‘the courage to betray (his) country’. But he adds “You’ve never had the courage, have you?”.\(^{108}\)

Driberg’s biography of Burgess had this to say about Burgess and Rees:

I must emphasize however that, as one of his London friends put it, Guy is almost the only person who defends Goronwy. When I expressed my own opinion of his action in providing the material for the abysmally

\(^{106}\) Chapman 1987

\(^{107}\) Pramaggiore 1996: 3

\(^{108}\) Chapman 1987
vulgar and sensational *People* series, Guy merely said ‘Poor chap, he probably needed the money badly’.\(^{109}\)

Nevertheless, Goronwy-Rees is depicted by Driberg and in Chapman’s play as a traitor at a second level – disloyal to the Cambridge circle. This raises the subject of the bisexual as a double-agent within the homosexual community. The stereotype is expressed as “don’t take a bisexual as partner because s/he will always leave you for someone of the opposite sex”. The queer/traitor metonym thus exists in nested Russian-doll fashion – the group stigmatised as disloyal has its own fears of betrayal which it attaches to another sub-group. It is also, of course, one of a number of problems arising from the sexual-identity model with its requirement for boundaries. It only works if one can rigidly define a person as either bisexual or homosexual.

All of the plays depict or encode the queer/traitor nexus in some way. It is either implicit and therefore not exposed to critique by the text itself, or it is explicit, exposed and critiqued as in Mitchell or Bennett’s work. The plays are mainstream works, conveying a version of history to a mainstream audience – the specialised gay theatre has been silent on the Cambridge spies. Therefore, any analysis of possible alternative representations of them, using a queer point-of-view, can only be speculative. The only general prediction one would dare to make is that they will be perceived as individuals, not as typical samples of a group. But the important point is that there could be as many ‘queer views’ of the spies as there are views of them in the mainstream audience. They might be thought of either as heroes of the revolution or as incompetents by queer Marxists; as heroes by the less doctrinaire merely because of their individualism and

\(^{109}\) Driberg 1956: 25
defiance of the establishment; as unhelpful stereotypes by ‘straight-acting’ gays; as irritating rotten apples in the queer barrel; as appalling traitors by right-wing and happily-capitalist homosexuals; or as Cold War dinosaurs irrelevant to the gay community today. But these choices, or any others, can only be made on the basis of the representations available and the reader’s pre-existing biases. These historiographical problems will always exist for any new works or new interpretations of old works about the spies, even when a heteronormative gaze is removed.
Chapter 6 – Conclusion

“But there’s lots more a real historian could tell you --” said the minstrel.

“Hah!” said Cohen. “It’s what ord’ry people remember that matters. It’s songs and sayin’s. It doesn’t matter how you live and die. It’s how the bards wrote it down”.

Terry Pratchett

*The Last Hero* (Gollancz, London) 2001

The fundamental prejudice behind the queer/traitor nexus is this: “Anything which is different from you cannot be trusted.” Layers are then built onto this foundation: “The Other will not speak the truth. It will not share your values. It will therefore betray those values, however much it claims to agree with you and to be like you. Things which are Other will gather together in a conspiracy against you. They will hide their difference, but if you are wary you may detect them – their Otherness will have certain signifiers. Sexuality is a vital part of human existence and looms large in the psyche. Therefore, anything that is sexually different is displaying a potent symbol of Otherness. Therefore, it will betray. Here, in our television program or stage play is an example of such betrayal. And it is a true story.”

Late twentieth-century history provided a background and a particular form for this chain of ideas. Fear of Communism and nuclear war became a template, upon which these associations could be mapped. Homosexuality was spasmodically emerging from legal suppression and cultural annihilation. Its appearance in the theatre and partial acceptance under the law increased its potency as a threat, its visibility making it ripe for connection with the Communist menace (the real threat to the economic basis of power in the West). The principal means for the communication of this two-fold
paranoia was neither informed political debate nor the writings of professional historians and sociologists, but popular culture. When a prima facie example of the pairing, the defection of Burgess and Maclean, occurred in 1951 it was therefore the trigger for best-selling exposés, for biographies and for dramas of stage and screen.

The journalistic works were, as has been shown, full of sensationalism, manipulated by government, and otherwise constructed according to their authors’ concept of ‘the truth’. The biographies were subject to the vagaries of memory, were inevitably selective, and each one sought to construct a schema according to the motives of the author. When the dramatic treatments were written, they added to all these historiographical problems the additional subjectivities of characterization, dialogue, mannerism and the further selectivity of dramatic licence. Representations of the spies were also conditioned by the overwhelming choice of the identity paradigm of sexual orientation, as opposed to the juridical act-based model or that of multiple and dynamic human desires.

In this thesis, the results have been traced in the plays, in the form of stereotypical behaviour patterns, questionable attribution of ethics and motives, and highly charged subtexts of secrecy, closure and the closet. Additional cultural signifiers such as class, education and Englishness were variously used in the play texts to either underline or expose the metonym of homosexuality and treason. ‘Miniature’ versions of the queer traitor were offered in the form of fickle personalities or the doubly liminal bisexual. Most importantly, it can be seen that the nexus is more likely to be confirmed by playwrights adopting claims of absolute historical truth, but more likely to be
acknowledged and criticized by those acknowledging the subjectivity of historiographical writing.

Since the connection of treason with non-heterosexual identity is a means of engendering fear, it is clearly a branch of general homophobia. Curteis uses pre-existing stereotypes to manifest homophobia, merging it with a fear of the upper class. Whitemore shows the effect of homophobia on the innocent. Bennett bypasses it to refocus the audience on the individual and on English culture. Chapman’s substitutes for fear are pity and sentimentality. Mitchell uses cause-and-effect to show homophobia as a reason for espionage rather than a reaction to it (which, of course, does not break the nexus). Osborne shows us fear and hatred directed inwardly, the phenomenon of the homophobic queer.

Some of the playwrights have attempted to use the genre of documentary drama to critique homophobia or the treason metonym, and thus to use the power of the ‘true story’ to combat fear and ignorance as they see it. However this is simply replacing one myth with another in the mind of the audience. A sympathetic, individualistic, complex and interesting representation of, for example, Anthony Blunt would not necessarily engage a critical capacity in the audience. A more ‘enlightened myth’ can easily be replaced by a more sinister one in subsequent representations. This problem can only be alleviated if a historical scepticism can be developed in broad audiences.

As this thesis has adumbrated, one solution lies in resistance to absolutist historiography, which requires the abandonment of the terms ‘true story’ and possibly even the word ‘documentary’. Documents of past decades or centuries will be infused
with the attitudes towards homosexuality prevailing at that time, filtered by the values of those who select and comment on the documents, and finally reinterpreted by those who read the results. In this way, playwrights and other authors who are still ‘Cold Warriors’ will tend to link together the paranoias of the Cold War era. Relativism and critical scrutiny of representations of history help to avoid viewing it through the eyes of the dominant ideology of the time, but also allow the creation of alternative histories from the point of view of the marginalized, including the queer.

Therefore there are two major problem areas in these examples of historical drama. Firstly, there is the simple danger of the perpetuation of the queer/traitor metonym, through a thought pattern in the mainstream audience that runs thus: What I am seeing is a true story – it is history – homosexuals acted in this manner – they look like ‘typical’ homosexuals – therefore homosexuals are collectively treasonous, capricious and not to be trusted. But secondly, there is the epistemological set of problems, affecting gay and straight audience members alike, which impose new meanings on the concepts of the closet, of queer identity, of alien-ness, and of British culture and class.

Further work needs to be done in a number of areas concomitant with this study. Images of the Cambridge spies have influenced the construction of fictional characters, especially spies. The question for study then becomes the use of the queer/traitor image when free of the restraints of historiography. Other potentially useful studies include the application of the metonym to non-heterosexual women, and its use against bisexuals, especially within the gay community. Finally, the increasing number of positive images of homosexuals in popular culture suggests a study converse to this thesis, namely the
use of images of loyalty, fidelity and trustworthiness in the affirmative depiction of non-normative sexuality.

The queer/traitor metonym today remains principally bound up with stories of the Cold War years. The mainstream dramas being written in the twenty-first century are still evocative of a general paranoia toward a hidden menace, but the specific application of political phobias to gay people has, for the moment, diminished. The ‘new world order’ and the ‘war against terrorism’ require different warnings to be issued to the public, and spawn different types of ‘insidious alien’ characters in popular culture. At the time of writing, a religious metonym has superseded the sexual one in the lexicon of fear. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the events of September 11, 2001 mean that the Arab or Muslim is the alien to be feared, more than the homosexual. But historical events can create a new target, or revive an old one, at any time.
### Appendix 1 - Timeline

An author’s name and title alone denotes the opening or publication of a play or teleplay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>World Events</th>
<th>Legal &amp; Social</th>
<th>Drama &amp; Literary</th>
<th>Cambridge Spies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alec Waugh's book <em>Loom of Youth</em> on homosexuality in public schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ackerley's play <em>The Prisoners of War</em> depicts homoerotic desire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td></td>
<td>NY state legislation prohibits ‘perversion’ on Broadway</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Nazis come to power in Germany</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Appeasement era causes increase in Marxist commitment in Britain</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stokes' <em>Oscar Wilde</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>World War Two begins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Philby becomes head of Iberian section in M.I.6.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>World War Two ends, Cold War begins</td>
<td></td>
<td>Maclean given access to U.S. atomic secrets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Otway's <em>The Hidden Years</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kinsey Report on sexuality in U.S.A.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. Senate bans homosexuals from government posts</td>
<td>Burgess joins Philby in Washington</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Defection of Burgess and Maclean, Philby sent to Beirut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Britain introduces positive vetting</td>
<td>Alan Turing charged with indecency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>Wildeblood and Montagu case</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Turing dies of poison</td>
<td>1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Suez crisis</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Khruschev takes over from Stalin in U.S.S.R.</td>
<td>1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Sexual Offences Act recodifies 19th century legislation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gellert's <em>Quaint Honour</em>, Williams' <em>Suddenly Last Summer</em></td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Osborne's <em>Look Back in Anger</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Burgess and Maclean's first public statement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Lord Chancellor allows homosexuality on stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Gellert's <em>Quaint Honour</em>, Williams' <em>Suddenly Last Summer</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Rattigan's <em>Ross</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Crowley’s <em>Boys in the Band</em>, Hopkins' <em>Find Your Way Home</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>U.S. psychiatric association declares homosexuality not an illness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Gay Sweatshop theatre company founded in Britain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Curteis’ <em>Philby, Burgess and Maclean</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Editors of <em>Gay News</em> prosecuted for blasphemy</td>
<td>Bennett’s <em>The Old Country</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Curteis’ <em>The Atom Spies, Grieg's Dear Love of Comrades</em></td>
<td>Blunt's identity as fourth spy becomes public knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Conner's <em>Kim Philby</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Pincher suggests Hollis as fifth spy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Bennett’s <em>An Englishman Abroad</em>, Mitchell's <em>Another Country</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Whitmore's <em>Breaking the Code</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Local Government Act (Britain) forbids ‘promotion’ of homosexuality</td>
<td>Chapman's <em>Blunt</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Bennett's <em>A Question of Attribution</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Fall of the Berlin wall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bibliography

Principal Texts


Other Primary Sources


258


**Secondary Sources**


