

FROM FUTURE HOMEMAKER OF AMERICA TO THE LESBIAN  
CONTINUUM: THE QUEERING OF MARY ANN SINGLETON  
IN ARMISTEAD MAUPIN'S *TALES*

By

Sara Katherine White

---

Matthew W. Guy, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of English  
(Chair)

---

Christopher J. Stuart, Ph.D.  
Professor of English  
(Committee Member)

---

Heather Palmer, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of English  
(Committee Member)

---

J. Scott Elwell  
Dean of Arts and Sciences

---

A. Jerald Ainsworth, Ph.D.  
Dean of the Graduate School

FROM FUTURE HOMEMAKER OF AMERICA TO THE LESBIAN  
CONTINUUM: THE QUEERING OF MARY ANN SINGLETON  
IN ARMISTEAD MAUPIN'S *TALES*

By

Sara Katherine White

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the University  
of Tennessee at Chattanooga in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements of the  
Degree of Master's in English

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga  
Chattanooga, Tennessee

December 2012

Copyright © 2012

By Sara Katherine White

All Rights Reserved

## ABSTRACT

Armistead Maupin's *Tales of the City* series is a turning point in homosexual literature in twentieth century America. This paper mainly examines the character of Mary Ann Singleton and the “queering” of her character. The writings of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Adrienne Rich, Eve K. Sedgwick, and Simone de Beauvoir are vital in understanding how a straight woman journeys onto the lesbian continuum as a revolt against gender roles (defined by Butler and Beauvoir) and as a result of her friendship with Michael Tolliver. Michael's character provides a discourse (as defined by Foucault) on homosexuality and through this discourse, he provides a contrast to the dysfunctions of compulsory heterosexuality in Mary Ann's journey. The combination of these two characters intertwines feminism and queer rights in Maupin's narrative.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, who has been unbelievably supportive in my educational pursuits and in my personal journey. I also dedicate this thesis to my late father who always urged me to do my best and pursue a higher degree, but above all taught me to be a curious and open-minded citizen and student.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Dr. Matthew Guy, Dr. Christopher Stuart, and Dr. Heather Palmer for giving me much needed feedback from the process of writing the prospectus to the final thesis. Special thanks to Dr. Palmer for her help in my independent study of queer theory and the writing of the paper that is the foundation for this thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Joyce Smith for pushing me to submit a paper to a conference in my first semester of grad school and for always being so helpful and accessible.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| DEDICATION.....  | v  |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....   | vi |
| CHAPTER  |    |
| I. INTRODUCTION.....   | 1  |
| Brief History of Homosexuality in US.....                                    | 2  |
| Brief Overview of Gay Literature.....  | 5  |
| Critical Reception of Maupin.....  | 7  |
| Summary of the Series.....   | 8  |
| Narrative Structure.....   | 10 |
| Brief Outline.....   | 10 |
| II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....   | 12 |
| Michel Foucault: History of Homosexual Identity and Theory of Discourse..... | 12 |
| Gender Performativity.....   | 14 |
| Heterosexism and “Queer”.....  | 16 |
| Adrienne Rich: The Lesbian Continuum.....                                    | 18 |
| Simone de Beauvoir.....  | 19 |
| The Lesbian.....   | 20 |
| The Mother.....  | 21 |
| The Independent Woman.....   | 22 |
| III. MARY ANN SINGLETON AND THE LESBIAN CONTINUUM.....                       | 24 |
| Mary Ann’s Dissatisfaction with Compulsory Heterosexuality.....              | 25 |
| How Mary Ann’s Love Life Pushes Her to the Lesbian Continuum.....            | 27 |
| Beauchamp Day.....   | 28 |
| Norman Williams.....   | 29 |
| Burke Andrew.....  | 31 |
| Brian Hawkins.....   | 32 |
| Mary Ann’s Career.....   | 36 |
| IV. MICHAEL TOLLIVER AND PROGRESSIVE DISCOURSE.....                          | 40 |
| Casual Sex in the Homosexual Community.....                                  | 41 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Michael as the Romantic Lead.....         | 43 |
| V. MARY ANN AND MICHAEL’S “MARRIAGE”..... | 46 |
| VI. CONCLUSION.....                       | 54 |
| Social Significance of the Series.....    | 55 |
| Gay Literature Post-Maupin.....           | 56 |
| REFERENCES.....                           | 58 |
| VITA.....                                 | 60 |



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The heterosexual character Mary Ann Singleton is queered in Armistead Maupin's complete 28 Barbary Lane series; this is partially accomplished by his "normalization" of homosexuality through the character of Michael Tolliver. The series began in 1976 as a humorous 800-word daily serial in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "the most ordinary of all ordinary daily papers," (Warhol 392). A 1977 article from TIME magazine described it as follows: "There is Mary Ann Singleton, newly arrived in San Francisco and immediately caught up in that city's often kinky lifestyles." The article is a short piece which covers several print "soap operas," as it calls them, across the country, which serve to report "the ongoing breakdown of sexual taboos" ("Soap Operas"). It is obvious that to TIME, *Tales of the City* was the most taboo of all as the article uses the words "lurid" and "kinky" to describe Maupin's work. Beginning in 1978 and ending in 1989, the series was published in novel form with the following titles: *Tales of the City*, *More Tales of the City*, *Further Tales of the City*, *Babycakes*, *Significant Others*, and *Sure of You*. Broadly, "queer" as an adjective applies to anyone who does not adhere to societal norms and stereotypes as an integral part of their identity (Hall 13). Mary Ann's transformation is a "queering," a troubling, of her identity and of female gender roles. Mary Ann and Michael display aspects of queer theory in narrative action as they develop over the six novels. Mary Ann's development can be seen clearly through significant events which show how the more fluid gender structure of San Francisco has affected her identity. To provide contrast and a supporting rhetorical method, the queer identity is "normalized" through Michael. One manner in which Maupin accomplishes this is through his sexual discourse. By refusing to feature homosexuality as a taboo, as a

sensational hook, he avoids society's prevailing heterosexual discourse; instead he explores the characters' complexities. Maupin takes homosexuality in literature out of the closet, which results in a weakening of the stigma surrounding it. He is not the first, as several authors, such as Gore Vidal and James Baldwin, wrote about gay characters in their time. However, Maupin published in the mainstream paper the *San Francisco Chronicle* in serial form. He reached a much wider audience and permanently opened the closet door. Maupin's narrative structure, jumping from character to character, reflects the complexity of the queer identity and is another result of this serial format.

Heterosexuals have the “luxury of not having to think about their sexuality” (Thomas 17). Yet, Maupin makes the reader do so through the dysfunctional straight relationships and functional gay relationships presented in his works. The narrative puts straight relationships and identity up for examination, “queering” them by using a lens which focuses critically on the dynamic of heterosexual relationships. Mary Ann's development as well as her relationship with Brian as compared to her relationships with Norman and Burke, an investigative reporter/child pornographer and an amnesiac journalist, respectively, also work to “queer heterosexuality.

## A Brief History of Homosexuality in the US

By diverging from the “norm,” homosexuals have been defined by their difference rather than any of their similarities to heterosexuals; therefore, “many homosexuals defined themselves as society defined them, by the very trait that distinguished them from heterosexuals: their sexuality” (Andriote 3). This kind of self-identification did not flourish until the 1950s and '60s since homosexuality was not even considered an identity until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the US, a movement to fight against the oppression of homosexuals by homosexuals themselves did not really flourish until the late 1960s. In 1969, the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street in New York City became the site of a riot which resulted in the deaths of several activists. The riot led to annual parades in major cities in support of

gay rights called pride parades. In the 1970s, gay politics was local rather than national; “your typical gay person wasn't involved in gay politics” says Eric Rofes, a leader of the 1979 gay rights march on Washington (13). The march produced an increase in a “national sense of gay solidarity” (14). The 1970s were a decade of opportunity for gay men to emigrate to major cities in order to be surrounded by other gay men and to escape the fear and bigotry of their home towns (14). In cities like San Francisco, heterosexuals were open-minded on the subject of homosexuality. The city “represented safety, literally a refuge from the insults, beatings, and moral condemnation they had suffered throughout their lives merely for being homosexual” (17). Armistead Maupin arrived in San Francisco in 1971 and found that straight people also accepted him there. He said, “It had nothing to do with burying myself in a ghetto and surrounding myself only with my own kind. There were enough people here not like me who accepted me [so] that I was able to feel good about myself” (15). This sense of community led to the creation of alternative families (15). It also played a significant role in the gay community's ability to handle the crisis of AIDS. Maupin states, “The thing that annoys me most is the revisionist attitude that gay people didn't discover the bonds of family until AIDS and impending death forced it upon them” (16). Maupin's work shows these bonds through the alternative family created at the fictional 28 Barbary Lane.

There were two general groups of gay men in San Francisco. First, there were the over thirty group of men who had lived there for at least a decade were professional and opera board types who had an interest in the community. The second group, the “Castro clones,” were men who escaped from heartland America and were poor, drug users, and politically radical (17-18). They were “refugees” whose oppression was ignored by the professionals on the basis of snobbery (18). Maupin himself terms the Castro the “gay ghetto” (*Tales* 113). In *More Tales of the City*, he describes the gay hierarchy:

There was, of course, a sprinkling of A-Gays on the A List, but they were expected to behave themselves. An A-Gay who turned campy during after-dinner A List charades would find himself banished, posthaste, to the purgatory of the B-Gays. (46)

In the environment of bathhouses, bars, and the gay ghetto, “one's attitude toward promiscuity became a kind of litmus test for how 'out' he was” (Andriote 19). To be uncomfortable with anonymous sex meant a man hated being gay (19). To many men, such as Maupin, the baths were “places of extraordinary communion and coziness” (22). There was also a culture of drugs that were intertwined with sex; many gay men took “poppers,” which were “amyl and other nitrite inhalants that became ubiquitous aphrodisiacs” (23).

Despite the acceptance found in cities like San Francisco and NYC, the media portrayal of gay people was one of public sex, drug use, drag, and leather (15). One example is the 1980 CBS special called “Gay Power, Gay Politics,” for which Maupin played host for the crew. The host of the special, George Crile asked a gay activist, “Isn't it a sign of decadence when you have so many gays emerging, breaking apart all of the values of a society?” (15). Maupin had no idea “they were doing a hit piece” (15). The question from Crile illustrates that media portrayal of homosexuality, of being out and open, was one of immorality and the destruction of society. The emergence of AIDS on top of this prejudice left little room for sympathy for the gay community on the part of the media which has a certain control over the views of the population (15). Clinics that specialized in STDs rose up in private locations to serve the gay population in private, especially for diseases that were almost entirely linked with gay sex. They offered an alternative to public VD clinics and led to a national network, which helped immensely with the response to AIDS as doctors noticed a pattern in patients and symptoms they had never before encountered. Response to the “public health crisis” of AIDS was “treated like an unprecedented threat” (Bersani 198). Bersani quotes Simon Watney's book *Policing Desire* to point out that AIDS was “effectively being used as a pretext throughout the West to 'justify' calls for increasing legislation and regulation of those who are considered to be socially unacceptable” (201). The mainstream media was a breeding ground for ignorance in regards to AIDS research (202). Maupin himself addresses this media bias through Thack's response to Burke calling the seventies a “great big

blank” in regards to social movements in *Sure of You*:

Michael saw the cloud pass over his lover's face and realized with certainty what was about to happen. “I don't know about that,” Thack said.  
Burke offered him a sporting smile. “O.K. What happened?”  
“Well,” said Thack, “gay liberation for one thing.”  
“How so?” [...]  
“For instance...marches and political action, a new literature, marching bands, choruses...a whole new culture. You guys didn't cover it, of course, but that doesn't mean it didn't happen.”  
“We guys?”  
“The press,” said Thack. “The people who decided that black pride was heroic but gay pride was just hedonism.” (91)

The media portrayal of homosexual culture was one of Sodom and Gomorrah rather than a civil rights movement because the taboo nature of homosexuality made mainstream society uncomfortable.

#### Brief Overview of Gay Literature

Homosexual literature has often restricted itself throughout history to the cultural and societal view on homosexual acts and homosexuality at the time of writing. For a large part of the history of the English speaking world, much of the poetry and plays had homosocial elements such as the ones found in Shakespeare's poems to male aristocrats or between characters such as Antonio and Sebastian in *Twelfth Night*. Homosociality is built upon the premise that being emotionally and physically close with men as a man demonstrates masculinity, while socializing with women feminizes a man. In Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, male characters in love are described with feminine connotations. Long before Shakespeare and Chaucer, the female poet Sappho wrote of lesbian love, called so for the island of Lesbos in the Mediterranean where Sappho lived. Most of her poetry was lost through the oral tradition. “Homosexual” was not considered an identity until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Oscar Wilde's arrest in 1895 for being rumored to be a homosexual shone a light on his work which lends itself to a queer reading. Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* has several sections which can easily be read as depicting homosexual desire. By the mid-twentieth century there were some homosexual authors who wrote of

gay relationships in a forthright manner. James Baldwin and Gore Vidal are two such authors; their respective texts, *Giovanni's Room* and *The City and the Pillar* focus on young gay males contemplating their sexuality while immersed in the gay subculture. *Giovanni's Room* is a first person narrative from the perspective of David, a young man who moved to Paris to escape his past; he had frequently gotten into trouble after his first sexual experience with another boy at the age of sixteen sent him into a state of shame and denial. He recalls thinking to himself the morning after sex with Joey, “[H]ow could this happen *in me*?” (Baldwin 9). The act was not just something that happened *to* him, instead there was an internal shift or reveal in himself, even as he simply sat admiring Joey's body. His desire with the specification of it happening *in* him presents homosexual desire as more than just actions, but as part of his identity, even if he is ashamed and in denial in regard to its significance. In Paris, Giovanni meets and becomes engaged to an American woman, Hella. He desires her as well, which makes it easier to deny his homosexual desires. Then he meets Giovanni and has an affair with him while Hella is in Spain. They live together for a time, but eventually David abandons Giovanni upon Hella's return. The novel does not describe sex between men in detail, but their affection for one another is elaborated upon through Giovanni's words and David's thoughts. He describes a moment when he and Giovanni are walking through Paris and he felt perfectly happy for a moment. Despite these moments of love and happiness, David wants to escape Giovanni for he cannot accept his own sexuality as easily as his lover can. He cannot stand men like his acquaintance, Jacques, who do not bother to disguise their homosexuality. He wishes he could be purely heterosexual because then his manhood would be unquestioned. Even if he could settle down with a woman in a heteronormative relationship that wouldn't necessarily make him happy, he could feel more masculine (104).

Gore Vidal's *The City and the Pillar* centers around a man equally obsessed with masculinity, except he cannot force himself to find women attractive. Jim Willard places himself on a level above other homosexuals in part because of his naïve view of the world and himself, until finally he is able to

stop pretending to himself that he is not a homosexual. Like David, Jim's journey of identity begins with a sexual encounter with a male friend as a teenager. The difference between the two characters is that Jim puts all his romantic hopes on being with Bob again once they find each other. Bob is the "City" and Jim is the "Pillar," Lot's wife who could not resist looking back at Sodom, for while Jim was pining for Bob and having sex with men, Bob forgot about his night with Jim and proposed to his high school girlfriend. When they finally meet again years later, Jim rapes Bob when the latter rejects his sexual advances with disgust. Jim is furious and hurt that Bob is no longer a reflection of himself and likely never was since their night together was a shameful mistake for Bob and a personal revelation for Jim.

### Critical Reception of Maupin

The authors of the review "Lives on the Boundary: Armistead Maupin's Complete Tales of the City" describe the series as "the fictional vehicle of a master storyteller discursively creating a wider discourse on sexuality in modern society" (Einstadter 684). Maupin created a queer discourse to challenge the narrative discourse Foucault describes. The article "Making 'Gay' and 'Lesbian' into Household Words: How Serial Form Works in Armistead Maupin's 'Tales of the City'" by Robyn R. Warhol examines the character Michael Tolliver and how he was a tool for Maupin to remove the stigma of homosexuality for the general public in the 1970s and 80s. *Tales of the City* was the "first serialized domestic novel addressed to a mainstream audience that explicitly attempts to reconfigure public and private assumptions about...gay sexuality (379-80). By infiltrating "domestic space, blurring the boundaries between 'public and 'private' discourse," Maupin's subversion of the serial form "renders" homosexuality pedestrian (382-83). This is partially accomplished by the fact that "the only character whose romantic ideas about committed coupling persist is the gay hero, Michael Tolliver, ... whose pursuit of the ideal longtime companion propels his story through countless sexual liaisons over

six volumes' worth of story lines" (389). These sexual liaisons illustrate the environment of casual sex in the gay community while Michael simultaneously longs for more.

### Summary of the Series

The residents of 28 Barbary Lane, the central location of the Tales, are: Mary Ann Singleton, a twenty-five year old woman from Ohio who intends to change herself in San Francisco; Michael Tolliver, a gay man searching for love in a city tailored for one night stands; Brian Hawkins, a former civil rights lawyer turned waiter who jumps from bed to bed until he finds love with Mary Ann; Mona Ramsey, a lesbian woman who begins as a radical feminist and changes into a woman searching for contentment; and Mrs. Madrigal, the landlady dubbed "The Mother of Us All" (*Tales* 29). These characters form the alternative family that was often formed by immigrants to the city. Maupin thought this formation of family was a vital part of the culture of San Francisco, particularly for gay men and lesbians. Mrs. Madrigal is a transsexual who identifies most as a mother figure to her tenants; most importantly they embrace her nurturing manner. She doles out advice, love, humor, and marijuana. Her only biological child, Mona Ramsey, is an outspoken bisexual who self-identifies as a "dyke" by the fourth book, *Babycakes*. The oldest of the residents, she leaves San Francisco when it no longer holds the answers for her. Once she discovers that Mrs. Madrigal is her father in *More Tales of the City*, she is able to move on to the next phase of her life, which eventually lands her in England, married to a gay English lord, and taking care of his manor while he sows his oats in San Francisco in the novel *Babycakes*. Through Michael, Mona meets a gay teenager who was abandoned by his father; she adopts him and becomes a nurturing landlady just like Mrs. Madrigal.

Brian Hawkins is a womanizing bachelor until he determines that Mary Ann Singleton is the love of his life. As the series progresses, Brian becomes a "soft man" (*Babycakes* 247). In other words, he becomes more "feminine" by being less obsessed with sex, being less successful than his wife,



having more gay male friends than straight, and desiring fatherhood over a career. His womanizing never completely disappears as he cheats on Mary Ann twice; one of those times leads to him being tested for anti-bodies, or what is later defined as HIV. His wife, Mary Ann, is examined in great detail in later chapters of this paper. She is a driven and independent-minded woman who is also very caring of her friends until she becomes career-obsessed. Michael Tolliver is her best friend and is also explored in greater detail in later chapters. He is a gay man who craves romance and monogamy in a city in which the subculture revolves around anonymous sex. Unlike Brian, Michael does test positive for anti-bodies and loses his husband to AIDS.

The series captures moments in time in San Francisco. There are many pop cultural references such as an unnamed a celebrity who is closeted and whose name is represented as “\_\_\_\_\_” in the text. Once the real-life actor passed away *Significant Others*, the fifth book, confirms that it was Rock Hudson with whom Michael had sex. Maupin's own sexual history with the actor was the inspiration for Michael's affair with the actor. It also reflects the relationship that Jim has with an actor in *The City and the Pillar*, down to the Gatsby-esque parties that both actors in each book throw. Maupin also brings Jim Jones, the cult leader, back from the grave in *Further Tales of the City*, with the premise that two of the secondary characters, DeDe and D'orthea, escaped from Jonestown shortly before the massacre. Queen Elizabeth II's visit to San Francisco is referenced as Mary Ann tries to cover her visit as a reporter and sleep with Simon, a crew member of the royal ship who abandoned his duties. Wimminwood is based on a real festival where women gathered for music, poetry, time in nature, and the companionship of each other. Anita Bryant's crusade against homosexual people is used to prompt Michael to come out to his parents when his mother writes that she supports Bryant's cause. It is not until the last couple of books, however, that the politics of gay rights is addressed in more than a passing manner; this is a result of the author's own rising anger at the way AIDS deaths were ignored and homosexuals demonized.

## Narrative Structure

Discourse is based on point of view as well as interaction with listeners (Lanser 4). *Tales of the City* never alternates narrator; it is written through third person omniscient. The character, or the point of view, is changed on average after every three chapters, sometimes fewer. Maupin's interaction with his readers through the serial format of the initial publication is a vital element of the discourse. His own personal views can be found in the narrative as well, whether they are directly stated by a character such as Michael or found in his pejorative characterization of the upper-class or his multifaceted characterization of his female characters. The types of characters he chooses to represent not only provide a variety of stories, but also add to the overall themes of identity and sexuality. There is no one way to be a man or a woman; no one way to be gay or straight; no one way to love. The queer identity is varied does not fit into any prepared roles or gender imperatives. The variety of points of view that Maupin creates work to present each character as but one small part of a larger whole.

## Brief Outline

In chapter two, the theories used to examine the primary texts are described with the relevant connections to this thesis. Michel Foucault's theory of discourse and history of homosexual identity; Judith Butler's theory of gender as performance and compulsory heterosexuality, along with Eve K. Sedgwick's theory of the latter; Adrienne Rich's lesbian continuum; and selected chapters from Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* are summarized in detail. Chapter three examines Mary Ann Singleton in relation to the lesbian continuum, compulsory heterosexuality, gender performatives, and female identities. In chapter four, Michael's character as a tool of progressive discourse is examined through the lenses of his romantic life, participation in gay subculture, and his redefinition of family. This discourse helps to reveal the normative discourse of heterosexuality. Chapter five examines her

“survival relationship with Michael Tolliver and its role in “queering” Mary Ann. Chapter six concludes with a look at the social significance of Maupin's work as well as the literary significance.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Michel Foucault: History of Homosexual Identity and Theory of Discourse

Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* offers a way to understand the foundation for the sexual discourse of Maupin's works. Maupin set out to make homosexuality part of the norm so the discourse surrounding heterosexuality had to be changed. The heterosexual relationships portrayed in the series do not reflect the mainstream discourse. Michael and Mary Ann's respective developments present this new discourse. Foucault describes the social discourse of sex from the beginning of what he calls an age of repression in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the Victorian period of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the “modern sexual repression” of his lifetime (5). This age of repression is undeniably connected to capitalism and repression is a “fundamental link between power, knowledge, and sexuality” (5). He explains that as a pleasurable activity, sex is a distraction from the labor imperative and thus must be regulated to reproduction and otherwise repressed (6). When speaking about sex, people tend to exhibit a body language and tone of voice which show “that [they] know [they] are being subversive” (6).

One example is Mona's repetition of the word “crotch” in an increasingly loud voice in defiance of a client who insults her by treating her like a delicate “lady.” Though Foucault wrote about the act of sex itself, it is hardly a stretch to apply this “revolt” (7) as it can easily be applied to the breaking of the taboos surrounding queer identities as present in Maupin's works.

Context is the most important element when examining discourse. Meaning can only be derived when taking context into account, which requires looking not only at the speaker and their

circumstances, but the broader societal institutions which prompt the discourse itself (11). In the Victorian era, rather than censorship of sex “[t]here was installed...an apparatus for producing an ever greater quantity of discourse about sex, capable of functioning and taking effect in its economy” (23). “Discourse on sex...became essential” to “power mechanisms” such as the church and economy (Foucault 23). Sexual discourse had the aim of making sex functional, leading to its becoming a “police matter” (24). Rational discourse on sex was preambled by apologies for speaking of it, but it must be discussed. Population, dependent on procreation, was a large focus of sexual discourse from analyzing “the birth rate, the age of marriage, the legitimate and illegitimate births, the precocity and frequency of sexual relations, the ways of making them fertile or sterile, the effects of unmarried life...” (24-26). The discourse surrounding sex became not only about marriage and children, but the manner of sexual acts themselves (26). It is strange to think that the various discourses surrounding sex could be possible in an age of repression, but repression need not mean taboo. Foucault states, “If sex is repressed...then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression” (6). This gives the transgressor a power of their own, outside the dynamic of sex and power set by the establishment (6).

According to Foucault, we do not excuse ourselves for speaking of sex, rather we are consciously subversive in the hopes that one day in the future “sex will be good again” (6-7). This hopeful, subversive path to a future in which sex is not repressed can be found in the women's rights and gay rights movements of the mid- to late-twentieth century. Birth control gave women not only power over their bodies, but economic power as well. The sexual revolution created fissures in the foundation of sexual repression. The gay rights movement expanded the underground subculture and encouraged men and women to come out. By living openly with their sexuality rather than confining it to the bedroom, homosexual persons chipped away at not only sexual repression, but heteronormativity as well. While gay bars and parties made homosexuality somewhat public in the early twentieth

century, the emergence of bathhouses profited specifically from sex in an obvious manner to the general population in major cities like San Francisco and NYC. Subculture needs the oppression to remain subversive; inevitably with progress, the subculture changes. AIDS sped things up for gay subculture, creating more oppression while stifling the subculture in respect to public sex. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries “have been...the age of multiplication: a dispersion of sexualities, a strengthening of their disparate forms, a multiple implantation of 'perversions'” (Foucault 37). Homosexual acts and eventually the identity itself was condemned. Homosexuality pervaded the whole of a person's composition (43). There was a shift in the western world's mindset about sex in the 1960s. Love and sex for heterosexuals became less bound by traditional rituals, resulting in new rituals such as love-ins; psychedelic drugs played a part in this sexual revolution, as did the birth control pills. Both Foucault and Maupin's works reflect this shift.

### Gender Performativity

Butler says “[T]he 'I' only comes into being through being called, named, interpellated...and this discursive constitution takes place prior to the 'I'; it is the transitive invocation of the 'I'” (*Bodies* 225). The heterosexual ceremonial and normative only exist because they have been named; this is true for “queer” as well. “Queer” as it is known now would not be an identity if queer people did not have the denotations and connotations of the term in which to aspire. Butler continues, “If the performative operates as the sanction that performs the heterosexualization of the social bond, perhaps it also comes into play precisely as the shaming taboo which 'queers' those who resist or oppose that social form” (226). Butler determines that “one” does not, and cannot, take on a gender norm; instead, the “citation of the gender norm is necessary in order to qualify as a 'one,' to become viable as a 'one,' where subject-formation is dependent on the prior operation of legitimate gender norms” (*Bodies* 232). Queer people are dependent on the identities of those before them when defining their own identity.

Butler uses drag to illustrate gender performance; drag is “*the sign of gender...understood as a gender imperative--'girl!'--reads less as an assignment than as a command and, as such, produces its own insubordinations*” (237). Drag exposes the hyperbolic nature of gender as performance; exposing what is to be the mundane gender imperative to be but a mere performance (237). Butler rejects the notion that gender identification has no bearing on sexuality: “For, if to identify as a woman is not necessarily to desire a man...then the heterosexual matrix proves to be an *imaginary* logic that insistently issues forth its own unmanageability” (237). Heterosexism is rooted in the idea that gender performativity is a natural imperative, which in reality does not exist. Heterosexism persists because subjects perform the citation of gender norms (232). Gender and sexuality are interrelated in that both resist “reducing gender to prevailing forms of sexual relations such that one 'is' the effect of the sexual position one is said to occupy” (240). That is to say that masculinity and femininity are found in all genders and sexualities, and that one does not cause the other. This connection between gender and sexuality, feminism and queer theory, is vital to the exploration of Maupin's characters, Mary Ann and Michael. Their individual journeys and their relationship with each other are explorations of heterosexism, gender performativity, and the subversion thereof. While Mary Ann's journey in the series leads her to the lesbian continuum, Michael's journey shines a light on the flawed notions of heteronormativity and the gay identity by combining so-called imperatives of both in one man, which will be explored in detail in chapter four and reveal that Michael's character not only works to highlight the dysfunctions of heterosexuality, but also reformulates the gay male identity through oppositional discourse (241). This oppositional discourse is composed of his desire for heteronormative ideals and his desire for men. Another term for this discourse is “dissident text,” which is the appropriation of concepts and imagery of the dominant yet refusing “an aspect of the dominant, without prejudging the outcome” (Hall 151). While a gay man may desire monogamy and marriage, he rejects a large aspect of the dominant: heterosexuality.

Gender is composed of signifying gestures; it is a performance, according to Butler (*Gender Trouble* xxxi). Being a “woman” is not a common identity as “it becomes impossible to separate out 'gender' from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained” (4-5). Gender is the discourse through which sex is rendered “prediscursive,” that is that it is not a product of discourse (10). The structure of discourse gives the illusion that gender is determined by sex and sex is in no way determined by gender. There is a circular argument produced when gender becomes a question of either “having” or “being” a certain gender. *Are you a gender? Or do you have a gender?* (10). Mrs. Madrigal takes on the nurturing aspects of being a woman because she took on that feminine role; the question never answered is if she decided to become a woman because of her nurturing feelings or if she took them on after her sex change once her body matched her mind.

#### Heterosexism and “Queer”

In Jacqueline Foertsch's essays “Straight Feminism's Lesbian Experience,” she says that Sedgwick and Butler argue “for a notion of identity so unrestricted and liberation that they invited and even forced us to reconsider the makeup of lesbian positionalities and gender constructions as a whole” (Thomas 50). In the chapter entitled “Critically Queer” in *Bodies That Matter*, Judith Butler discusses the resignification of the word “queer,” or how it was reclaimed by the LGBT community from being an insult used by heterosexuals against them (224). She begins by stating that the logic of heterosexism “requires that identification and desire be mutually exclusive...: if one identifies *as* a given gender, one must desire a different gender” (239). This kind of boundary is prejudiced against same-sex attraction and is an element of homophobia. Gender identity, in the view of heterosexism, is wrapped up in being attracted to the opposite sex. The notion becomes that “real” men and women are not attracted to other men and women, respectively. Heteronormativity describes what occurs within opposite gender relationships, or minimumly what the performative expects of those relationships. Eve Sedgwick



defines queer as “the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't be* made) to signify monolithically” (*Tendencies* 8). With this definition, “queer” can be applied to homosexuals, transpeople, bisexuals, and genderqueer people. A heterosexual could be said to be “queered” if he or she has sexual or gender signifiers which do not fit into the heteronormative monolith. Mary Ann is “queered” in this way, as she does not desire children, values career over marriage, and connects more with women and gay men, particularly Michael, than straight men.

In Foucauldian terms, the resignification of the word “queer” is a result of a change of discourse as well as in society; in this case, it is through the queer community itself. Butler attempts to pin down the moments of change, first with Nietzsche's “sign-chains” and Foucault's “discursive power” (*Bodies* 225). She determines that performatives, specifically a “queer performativity” introduced by Eve Sedgwick, to be the medium for resignification. Butler defines performative acts as “forms of authoritative speech: most performatives, for instance, are statements that, in the uttering, also perform a certain action and exercise a binding power” and that “the performative is one domain in which power acts *as* discourse (225). For example, “I pronounce you man and wife” is a statement that has meaning and significance beyond the definition or literal meaning of the statement as a form of authoritative speech. In the same vein, stating “I am queer” has the power to resignify the word from a slur to an identity, or as Butler states “the subject who is 'queered' into public discourse through homophobic interpellations of various kinds *takes up* and *cites* that very term as the discursive basis for an opposition” (232). This reclamation of the homophobic terms renders them hyperbolic through a theatricality, which is “crucial to the exposure of the homophobic 'law' that can no longer control the terms of its own abjecting strategies” (232). In short, the slur is rendered impotent through reclamation. As previously stated in the introduction, this reversal of discourse was evident in the actions of the gay community in the 1970s and 1980s in the form of the geographic concentration of gay men and women

in cities like San Francisco and NYC. In these identity-driven communities, bathhouses capitalized on the homophobic notion that all gay people, particularly men, were nymphomaniacs. As these cities became a symbol of freedom, of leaving the closet behind, partaking in promiscuity became part of the gay identity and the communal way of being out. Later, in chapter five, it will be made clear how Butler's theory of citation and performativity and the promiscuous culture of San Francisco combine in Maupin's depiction of the city and in the character of Michael Tolliver. This confluence relates back to how "subject-formation is dependent on the prior operation of legitimating gender norms," i.e. a man was not "really gay" unless he went to the bathhouses and bars, for they are the norms needed to be "gay" (232).

#### Adrienne Rich: The Lesbian Continuum

In order to truly explore a heterosexual female character in a text that is so much about gender and identity, the societal institution of compulsory heterosexuality must also be examined. Adrienne Rich's essay "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" provides an important foundation to exploring Mary Ann Singleton. Compulsory heterosexuality "undermines the mythic naturalness of heterosexuality since by its very nature—its drive to cajole, coerce, convince—it reveals...what it tries so hard to deny; that is, that heterosexuality" is inefficient; "hence the anxiously repeated effort to install and augment [its] jurisdiction" (Sullivan 120). The term becomes most relevant when combined with Rich's exploration of the lesbian existence, most specifically the lesbian continuum. So-called "marriage resisters," or women who do not "collaborate" with men in the sexual structure of society are considered by Rich to be part of the lesbian existence (635). These marriage resisters throughout history join "witches," *femme seale*, "spinsters, autonomous widows, and/or lesbians" as women who did not "collaborate" with compulsory heterosexuality (635). From the late twentieth century to present day, a marriage resister is often a woman who chooses her career over marriage, which may at times

lead to divorce; Mary Ann Singleton falls into this category of a marriage resister.

One way that the “characteristics of male power,” as proposed by Kathleen Gough and elaborated by Rich, restrict women's ability to resist compulsory heterosexuality is through the glass ceiling, or more specifically “to command or exploit their labor to control their produce” and “to confine them physically and prevent their movement” (638). Another example of male power presented by Rich is the forcing of male sexuality upon women through rape; this includes incest and child abuse (638). Women have, in recent history, been relegated to jobs like secretaries, nurses, and typists and often “the sexualization of the woman' is part of the job” (641). These jobs put them in a subservient position under men and have little opportunity for promotion and the dominant/submissive dynamic can lead to sexual harassment. In fact women are often expected to appear to be sexually available to their male bosses and coworkers (642). Even lesbians often deny their sexuality to keep their job and they must act as “a heterosexual *woman*, in terms of dressing and playing the feminine, deferential role required of 'real' women” (642). Women who resist all or most aspects of this treatment from society like Mary Ann fall onto the lesbian continuum, which is “a range—through each woman's life and throughout history—of woman-identified experience; not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman” (648). It can also apply to female bonding against sexism and even marriage resistance (648). A woman does not have to identify as a lesbian in order to be moving in and out of the continuum and a refusal to have children can be a subversion to male power (651-52). Mary Ann's desire for divorce and lack of desire for a child is explored in detail in chapter three. Women who are on the lesbian continuum often have what Rich calls a “survival relationship,” which is with a woman according to Rich, but in Mary Ann's case her survival relationship is with a gay man, Michael Tolliver; their survival relationship in which they “make life endurable for each other” is explored in chapter five (655).

Simone de Beauvoir

The “distinction between the 'domestic' and the 'public'” is important to change in femininity and the family. For example, control over property and themselves is lost “as surplus increases,” according to Sedgwick (*Between Men* 135). In her pivotal work, *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir examines many aspects of the female identity from the role of society in its formation, to sexuality, to psychology. Three of these roles are the lesbian, the mother, and the independent woman; these roles open up a door to understanding the character Mary Ann.

### The Lesbian

Beauvoir examines lesbian existence as a female role as well as a sexual identity. The focus is more on the woman in a man's world than a queer woman rejecting compulsory heterosexuality, though the psychology of that is explored at some length. Beauvoir mostly examines scenarios of why a woman would be more drawn to other women as part of her identity rather than her sexuality. An accompanying explanation for why a woman would withdraw from or reject male-centric relationships even without a subsequent increase in the importance of female relationships can be found in heterosexual women as well. Beauvoir places lesbian existence as a stage of female development that precedes marriage and motherhood for women who remain heterosexual, but in the characterization of Mary Ann Singleton, the opposite is true. She transitions from a wife and mother onto the lesbian continuum; prior to marriage and motherhood, though career-oriented, she still conformed to the idea of compulsory heterosexuality.

Mary Ann was able to make a man “the instrument of her pleasure” and “enjoy experiencing her woman's condition just as man experiences his” (423). This type of woman, as Beauvoir explains, has a different experience from a man because of socialization. Playing the role of the passive woman is more difficult than the man's role; the absence of competition is largely dependent on the male partner

to accept her “active personality” (423). Beauvoir is not advocating subservience, but rather stating a reality that was particularly relevant in the time in which she wrote. It is an unfortunate reality that often a woman's individual agency is all too reliant on acceptance from a male partner. For the greater part of history, women have been largely dependent on men economically, but Beauvoir speaks beyond that. She speaks of female identity being largely dependent on men through approval and desire. As a result, many sovereign women will still play the feminine role, seeking such approval. Other strong-minded women refuse to attempt to balance work and a relationship with a man. They choose their work, especially if it is mentally and emotionally absorbing and satisfying (424). The idea of sex with a man may still appeal to this kind of woman, depending on her experience with men.

In her psychoanalysis of lesbians, Beauvoir verges on giving the impression that being a lesbian is the effect of one cause, but she recognizes that this is not true: “In truth, there is never only one determining factor; it is always a question of a choice made from a complex whole [...] ; no sexual destiny governs an individual's life: on the contrary, [her] eroticism expresses [her] general attitude to existence” (430). Beauvoir does not specify what she means by “complex whole,” but in relation to people, she likely means the overall composition of personal identity or nature; a person's place in the world; their goals and circumstances; personal views of gender roles, the opposite sex, and the same sex; personal needs; and choices. As Meryl Altman observes in her essay dissecting the lesbian chapter by Beauvoir, the latter posits that lesbians do and do not exist; they are created or invented, merely a societal concept, but they still exist. Altman brings in Beauvoir's assessment of Woman as a societal concept as well as a real type of existence (Altman 216).

### The Mother

Beauvoir examines all facets of motherhood, including women who do not desire children. Though she wrote a few decades before the women's liberation movement in the U.S., the societal

demands of motherhood that she describes remain largely the same. Society still widely holds the belief that a woman's nature is to produce children and be nurturing. Little girls are given dolls to nurture as a preparatory phase of motherhood; in adolescence such a restrictive practice of identity may lead to a rejection or resentment of children (533). Some will grow to be women too absorbed in their career or love life to give much thought or importance to having children (534). Beauvoir spends a great deal of space in her chapter on the mother on the subject of abortion and enforced maternity (526). The pervading point is that denial of abortion only harms the mother and the child and forbidding it is the immorality in society rather than abortion itself (532-33). Beauvoir also discusses the relationship between mother and father and the effect it has on the child. One particularly relevant point for Mary Ann is the idea that a child could be used to strengthen the relationship between a man and a woman, and attachment to the child for the mother “depends on the success or failure of her plans” (537). Mary Ann's attempt at conceiving a child to make Brian happy lead to a detachment from the child on Mary Ann's part. Mothers tend to look for their double in their daughters and when it is not found, the mother feels irrationally betrayed (561). This can be seen in Mary Ann's relationship with her adopted daughter Shawna, which is discussed in detail in chapter three.

### The Independent Woman

Independence is gained through work and “work alone can guarantee [a woman's] concrete freedom” by closing “the gap separating her from the male” (721). However, women also are exploited in the workplace through low wages, denied the chance to move up the promotion ladder, endure sexual harassment; women are also exploited as male workers are through harsh, unsafe work conditions, for example (721). Mary Ann is sexually harassed by her employers and denied promotion for not giving in to their demands, or even denied a job by indicating she would not have sex with the man for whom she would be working. Independent women may be seen by some men as equals, but a

woman has a more difficult time seeing a man as her equal because he does not introduce her to a “new world” as she does to him, for his world is “common to both of them: he brings only himself” (732). This dynamic is evident in Mary Ann's relationship with Brian, which is discussed in detail in chapter three, as is her aversion to artificial insemination, which Beauvoir connects with voluntary motherhood (735). Independent women, from Beauvoir's perspective and context, were often artists, singers, or actresses. Beauvoir also speaks of the female narcissist as having a deep desire to return to the sovereignty of girlhood, to break out of woman labels such as wife and mother (671). As a television personality, Mary Ann verges on being an actress and is most definitely a narcissist (741).

## CHAPTER III

### MARY ANN SINGLETON AND THE LESBIAN CONTINUUM

*A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory* by Nikki Sullivan contains several essays, including “Queering 'Straight' Sex,” which discusses the discursive nature of the normalization of heterosexuality and the gender roles associated with it. She also discusses ways to “queer” heterosexuality (121). Sullivan describes Adrienne Rich's theory about compulsory heterosexuality as “an institution (rather than a natural inclination or a choice)” (120). Sullivan cites Lynne Segal's invitation to straight women “to play an active role in subverting heterosexual norms by 'queering': traditional understandings of gender and sexuality, questioning the ways in which women's bodies have been coded as uniquely 'passive', 'receptive', or 'vulnerable’” (128). Though Segal is speaking specifically of bodies, it is easy to apply this line of reasoning and this invitation to the internal aspects of female gender roles. While as a slim woman who wears dresses and makeup, Mary Ann physically fits into the the traditional understanding of what it means to be female, she doesn't fit into the traditional understanding of what a woman is socialized to do with her life. She is no longer a Future Homemaker of America. Her husband Brian complains to Mrs. Madrigal of her elevation of her job above her love for him: “Our private life has to take a back seat to every dumbass little news story that comes down the pike” (*Babycakes* 15). She wants to hyphenate her name so she keeps name recognition and he thinks she wants a baby, Brian knows that he wants it more (72, 68). This chapter will analyze Mary Ann's dissatisfaction with compulsory heterosexuality, her love life in relation to her move onto the lesbian continuum, and her career's role in establishing her as an independent woman. Her love life will be examined



chronologically through her relationships with Beauchamp Day, Norman Williams, Burke Andrew, and Brian Hawkins.

### Mary Ann's Dissatisfaction with Compulsory Heterosexuality

By moving to a city in which there is no real default sexuality, Mary Ann no longer feels obligated to fit into the role heteronormativity has assigned her as she watches her friends and others assert their queer identities. She rejects certain aspects of the female heterosexual role as her queer friends “trouble” their own gender roles. The city of San Francisco can only contain her for so long, however. The move to NYC is necessary to prevent her from bowing to pressure to assume her assigned gender role as wife and mother. Her identity is dependent upon her momentum, which contrasts with female gender roles which rely on settling down. Mobility is a part of Mary Ann's queerness because as a straight woman, she is expected to settle down, to make a nest; however her personal connections are rendered secondary. By series' end, Mary Ann has given up on her marriage, convinced that Brian has fallen out of love with her just as she has with him. She struggles with motherhood even after five years of raising Shawna. Rather than attempt to mend these two relationships, she mentally and emotionally moves on; a physical move to NYC is the natural next step when it presents itself as an opportunity.

San Francisco allows her to break free of these heteronormative ideals by revealing to her the possibilities within herself; the city queers her by allowing her to break free of the heteronormative monolith. The city gives Mary Ann the possibility of limitless opportunities. She has more freedom to reject the cookie-cutter model of a straight woman. She has the freedom to pursue her career. Just like Michael has always been gay and wishes that someone had come to him in Orlando when he was a kid and told him everything was going to be okay, Mary Ann always had it within her to be something other than the heteronormative woman that she thought she had to be in high school when she was a

member of the Future Homemakers of America (*Tales* 6).

Mary Ann's decision to remain in San Francisco rather than return to Cleveland is a significant moment to introduce her character since it establishes Mary Ann as an outsider to San Francisco as well as establishes her desire to change. As she speaks to her mother, Mary Ann asserts her independence from her parents, perhaps for the first time. She is leaving the nest for good to live on her own and find her own path of happiness in San Francisco. Her mom worries, "But you won't be...the same!" and Mary Ann responds, "No. I hope not," (*Tales* 3). She subverts the heterosexual compulsion of society of leaving her parents via marriage by deciding to live alone rather than by marrying a man. As Mary Ann establishes her foundation for independence by searching for a job and an apartment, she also spurns the advances of men she meets while out with her friend Connie and exhibits disgust and ridicules the way Connie throws herself at every man she encounters:

Connie laughed throatily. "Relax, hon. I wasn't suggesting we...You're a new girl. Give it time. This city loosens people up."  
"I'll never be that loose...or desperate."  
Connie shrugged, looking vaguely hurt. (*Tales* 6-7)

While Connie left the same town years before, she has not changed at all since high school in Mary Ann's eyes. Though she supports herself and lives on her own, she still defines her self-worth through how many men find her desirable. She reacts in utter disgust at a man who says he wants to get before they get physical. She only spent time with that man to show another man who rejected her that she was desirable (22).

Mary Ann does not bow to the pressures of male power, particularly sexual harassment. She spurns the advances of a sleazy, new-age man only to have Connie bring him home for herself. When she rejects the advances of a man at the Marina Safeway, he says, "Get off the rag, bitch!" (17). Mary Ann also loses the opportunity for a job when the male boss suggests that he expects his "Girl Friday" to be sexually available to him by responding that she is "uptight" (*Tales* 26). According to Adrienne

Rich, heterosexual men are stunted in their sexual development to the point where they believe that all women should be sexually available to them at all times (Rich 638). Mary Ann also loses a job opportunity for a job when the male boss suggests that he expects his “Girl Friday” to be sexually available to him by responding that she is “uptight” (*Tales* 26). When a woman spurns advances from certain men, it leads to harassment and rape and gendered-insults such as “bitch.” These tactics of sexual harassment are quite typical encounters women face. Though it may be easier to give in to them, Mary Ann refuses to advance her career through any means other than her own hard work and qualifications. Her disgust with Connie's desperate attempts for male approval and Connie's rejection of a man who does not force his sexuality upon her illustrate Mary Ann's general disgust with compulsory heterosexuality, including its effect on the self-worth of women who buy into the power dynamic. Mary Ann's rejection of compulsory heterosexuality lends to a portrayal of heterosexuality as dysfunctional and composed of arbitrary dynamics through Mary Ann's relationships.

#### How Mary Ann's Love Life Pushes Her to the Lesbian Continuum

If the difference between straight and queer is societal constructions, then Maupin's choice to narrate a society in which straight is the scrutinized sexuality is a way of queering it, because that is what made “queer” the after effect of having a norm. If to be “queer” is “simply to occupy the lower half” of the hetero-/homosexual binary (Hall 13), then by putting heterosexuality up for scrutiny, Maupin “queers” it. Mary Ann is never swept up in a typical depiction of heterosexual love, not even with her husband Brian, as her career overshadows their relationship. In fact, Maupin depicts the love lives of heterosexual couples and singles as more dysfunctional than that of homosexual characters throughout the series. Maupin's single heterosexuals are shown to be as promiscuous as stereotypical homosexuals. Connie Bradshaw, for example, never settles down and even chooses to be a single mother. Brian's life before Mary Ann is centered around “getting laid.” If homosexual relationships are

usually seen as lacking in love than heterosexual relationships, then Maupin inverts the hierarchy by portraying them as more loving. The main heterosexual relationships in the novels are portrayed as dysfunctional rather than model relationships with one or both of the people lacking in morality. Beauchamp and DeDe are both adulterers; Norman, whom Mary Ann dates, is a child pornographer; Burke, whom Mary Ann also dates, has a past that controls their relationship; Mary Ann ignores and cheats on her husband Brian.

Maupin often identifies heterosexuals solely through their sexuality; when some straight characters are given more complexity, they subvert heteronormativity. For example, Mary Ann's character development centers around her rejection of normative structure of heterosexuality. When her husband wants a child but does not know that he is sterile, Mary Ann cheats on him with a man named Simon in an attempt to become pregnant (*Babycakes* 237). When Connie dies in *Babycakes*, she leaves her newborn child in Mary Ann and Brian's care; Mary Ann never becomes a nurturer. Instead, Brian becomes the primary parent. Eventually she leaves her husband and child to pursue her career across the country in New York City. She rejects the gender roles that are attached to her sexuality, thereby queering herself by creating a new identity for the heterosexual woman. Her relationships with Beauchamp, Norman, Burke, and Brian lead to this rejection. With Beauchamp, Mary Ann submits to male power over her sexuality for the one time in the series; Norman leads to the destruction of the ideal of the traditional man in her mind; Burke marks her determination to create her own path; and her marriage to Brian solidifies her rejection of compulsory heterosexuality.

### Beauchamp Day

Beauchamp is a perfect example of the entitled male, and thus compulsory heterosexuality dictates the progress of Mary Ann's relationship with him. Their weekend away together is one of the first examples of the dysfunctional heterosexual dynamic that repeats throughout the series. He clearly

manipulates Mary Ann into having sex with him; the power shifts to her when he cannot retain an erection, so he becomes edgy and yells at her. Mary Ann gives in to his perceived compliments about her innocence after he yells at her:

“You should never know what you are...or your magic will disappear.”

“You think I'm naïve, don't you?”

“A little.”

“Unsophisticated?”

“Oh, yes!”

“Beauchamp...I don't think that's...”

“I worship it, Mary Ann. I worship your innocence.” (*Tales* 79)

In the patriarchal society, women are supposed to be pure in spirit and in body. The societal pressure to at least appear innocent are instilled in girls from a young age by their parents, teachers, and other aspects of society. Mary Ann goes on the trip hoping to nurture Beauchamp, and thus ease his pain about his loveless marriage. However, she is not naïve; she knows very well that sex is a real possibility. The whole weekend was about nurturing him: “Look, Beauchamp, I personally resent the implication that...this...was the purpose of this trip. I came up here because I *like* you. You asked me to help you” (85). The notion that having sex with a man is the most effective way for a woman to satisfy his needs and to fill the holes in his heart comes from the notion that sex is a gift she bestows upon others rather than a way to satisfy her own wants and needs. Beauchamp's method of making her believe he needed her emotionally is more effective than the overt sexual come-ons she received when out with Connie, because at this point in her journey Mary Ann still believes herself to be a sexual object rather than a subject. She believes that her reasons for having sex with Beauchamp make her participation in his adultery a kindness rather than the sinful act it would have been had the sex with him been for her own satisfaction. In fact, the way the scene is written in which they have sex verges on sexual assault. She says, “Beauchamp, for God's sake! Beauchamp!” when he puts his arms around her and initiates sex even though she protests (86).

## Norman Williams

The Mary Ann of Cleveland, Ohio would have married someone like Norman. However, his dark secret undermines her trust of men as well as her trust in her own judgment. On the surface, he is so bland that she would have stopped seeing him eventually, but he was the type of man that her parents would have her marry, and Mary Ann has not been out from under their influence for more than a couple of months when she meets Norman. If Beauchamp worshipped her innocence, then Norman Williams destroyed it. Her relationship with Norman begins as a friendship with the occasional dispassionate kiss and hand-holding. Norman is older, which combined with the lack of passion, gives them a dynamic closer to father and daughter than boyfriend and girlfriend, though he is not that much older than she. She is drawn to him because he seems to be cut from the same cloth; he is not like the other men she has met in the city. He babysits a young girl named Lexy, which makes him appear to be gentle and good with children. Her first impression of him is that nothing about him “struck her as organic” (*Tales* 206). He is unoriginal and that is what she wants after Beauchamp's post-coital treatment of her. When he indicates he wants more from her, she cannot bring herself to reciprocate. She tells him “Norman, you are *gentle*...and considerate...and you believe in a lot of...traditional values...and you don't make me feel like I'm out of it all the time” (304). He begins drinking heavily, to come home late, and is completely unreachable. An anxious Mary Ann breaks into his apartment to find out what he really does. What she finds in a suitcase is his dark secret: child pornography in which he is a participant. This revelation upends her trust in men; it also destroys any innocence she had left in regards to the safety she has been socialized to find in straight men. It's not something she can just let go like she did with Beauchamp, so Mary Ann confronts Norman. His drunken beligerance makes him reveal his true profession as a private investigator as well as that Lexy's parents knew that Norman was taking pornographic pictures of their daughter. His drunken state leads him to fall to his death, which Mary Ann does not report. The police do find the photos when searching his apartment after he went

missing, so Mary Ann believes that Lexy will be safe. She feels guilty about not being able to save him and traumatized by the truth. Ultimately, Norman's death represents Mary Ann's rejection of the “traditional” man.

Her reaction to Norman's death is to cover it up. She does not report his fall to the police, assuming the water took his body out to sea. She burns the documents of his investigation of Mrs. Madrigal so the police would not discover them when they inevitably searched his apartment when he was reported missing. His death and her fear of being thought to have pushed him off the cliff represents her rejection of the bland heterosexual relationship as well as her fear of moving forward. His dark secret reinforces her preference for gay men, whose sexuality is nonthreatening and does not aim to exert power over her. There is another kind of death in regards to Norman for Mary Ann: the death of the safe man. When Mary Ann finds out that Norman had been molesting Lexy with her parents' permission, the illusion is broken. The truth makes her realize that anyone can be a criminal, even the parents of a child and the most normative man she had ever met. Norman's molestation of a child is an example of the abuses that compulsive heterosexuality can lead to. He illustrates the male power of men forcing their sexuality on women, even children (Rich 638). Norman thought that as a female, Lexy was sexually available to him, no matter her age. Mary Ann's subsequent relationship with Burke, a man who cannot even remember his own secrets, is how Mary Ann reacts to the destruction of her former assumptions about men. Norman's literal death acts more as a karmic punishment for his crimes and affects her less-so than the truth of his character.

#### Burke Andrew

Burke's amnesia makes him a blank slate, but also a potential freak. As a blank slate, he is harmless and she can make him anything she wishes: “She knew instantly why she had loved him from the beginning. He was a clean slate, a virgin.... And she could show him the way” (*More Tales* 160).

She could exert power over him in an inversion of male power over women as described by Rich and which is the driving force of compulsory heterosexuality. When she first meets him on the cruise ship, she is unsure whether he is gay or straight, which subconsciously makes him more attractive. Despite the attraction of his amnesia, she is compelled to help him uncover his past because Norman's secret was so horrible and traumatizing. Luckily, Burke's memories, while horrible, show he was never the culprit, just the reporter. He was a freelance reporter when he stumbled upon the transubstantiation cult at Grace Cathedral, which was eating actual human flesh from amputated limbs; the trauma of seeing this act made him forget three years of his life. The juicy story jump starts Burke's career once his memory returns and the police are contacted. Rather than joining him in NYC where he procured a journalist job, Mary Ann declines and enters the same career. The revelation of his memories change him from a blank slate to his own person who would be guiding her if she went to NYC with him. Michael says that she does not want to run away from home anymore, which is likely true on one level. In the broader development of her character, the reason is that she does not want to follow anyone. She wants to make her own path.

### Brian Hawkins

Mary Ann's relationship and marriage with Brian leads to events which solidify her separation from compulsory heterosexuality and her movement onto the lesbian continuum. As the most successful half of the relationship in regards to her career, Mary Ann takes on the more "masculine" role, to Brian's frustration. While he says he would be happy to have a child and be the one to stay home with it while she works, he still feels like less of a man by relying on Mary Ann financially. Though he eventually attains job satisfaction by working with Michael at the nursery, Brian is still the more "feminine" half of the relationship in that his marriage and child are more important to him than his job. This inversion of masculinity and femininity is reflected in their physicality by the last book:



Mary Ann is hard and muscular while Brian has a middle-aged pudge.

By the time that Mary Ann and Brian get together in between *More Tales* and *Further*, he has softened quite a bit from when they first met and she wrote him off as a sleazy man who treated women like whores. They get together four days after Burke leaves town; she goes to Brian crying over Burke: “She remembered all too well the weepy night she had headed up to Brian's room with a joint of Maui Wowie and a bottle of rotgut Chianti” (*Sure of You* 38). When the reader first sees them together in *Further Tales of the City*, their relationship is balanced, passionate, and full of love. Both are working jobs they do not enjoy: Brian is still a waiter and Mary Ann talks about cheap consumer tips during the local afternoon movie. The difference is that Brian approaches his as a dead-end and Mary Ann approaches hers as a stepping stone to greatness as an investigative reporter. His job dissatisfaction and low pay makes him feel as though he is her dependent:

“I have to do *something*,” he told Mary Ann.

“About what?”

“Work,” said Brian. “My job.”

“You mean your tips aren't...?”

“It isn't the money.” His voice had an edge to it. His flagging pride was making him cranky. *Don't take it out on her*, he warned himself. “I just can't go on like this,” he added in a gentler tone.

“Like what?” she asked cautiously.

“Like your dependent or something. I can't hack it, Mary Ann.” (*Further Tales* 28)

Once a pro-bono lawyer for civil rights in Chicago, he now has no definitive ambition, which when compared to Mary Ann's ambition leads to dysfunction in their relationship throughout the years.

Brian's longing for a child disrupts their relationship because it is an attempt to draw Mary Ann back into an antiquated, traditional, female role rather than that of breadwinner. Mary Ann is a career woman who tries all the scheming of getting pregnant with Simon, as described above, in order to make her husband happy. She does not truly desire having a child herself. Beauvoir states, “Sometimes a child is desired to strengthen a relationship or a marriage, and the mother's attachment depends on the success or failure of her plans” (537). Mary Ann's plan fails, first due to Brian's sterility and then in her

seduction of Simon being a fruitless endeavor because of his vasectomy. The child, Shawna, that Connie leaves them has no biological attachment to herself nor Brian and is instead attached to Connie, a reminder of her past. Their marriage is weakened because of her seduction of Simon. Though Shawna's arrival temporarily slows the dissolution of their marriage, it ultimately becomes a deciding factor in the end of their marriage because Mary Ann feels no deep attachment to her adopted daughter in addition to never wanting a child. Lacking in both the desire for a child and the hormonal changes that come with pregnancy, as well as the nine month gestation, Mary Ann cannot see Shawna as her "double" (Beauvoir 561). Echoes of Connie haunt her through Shawna's face and mannerisms:

Mary Ann gazed over at the child's animated face, the tiny hands rapping rhythmically on the dashboard. Ordinarily she welcomed this little sing-a-long, since it strengthened her tenuous bond with Shawna, but today, because of that damned makeup, something entirely different was happening. All she could think of was Connie Bradshaw. (*Sure of You* 18)

These circumstances alone do not explain Mary Ann's rejection of Shawna, however. Mary Ann simply does not find fulfillment in motherhood. Unlike most of the women of whom Beauvoir wrote, Mary Ann has the option as a liberated woman to leave her daughter in the care of her more nurturing father and follow her own path to fulfillment that has more of a basis in her career than her personal life. She is unsatisfied with the nontraditional man, Brian, and unlikely to return to a seemingly traditional man, so Mary Ann leaves Brian when the opportunity arises. She does not want a relationship in which the traditional roles are simply reversed; she wants an equal who has similar ambitions.

In an exhibition of treating her personal life as an investigation, Mary Ann decides to sneak around and have fertility tests done on herself and Brian without his knowledge. The sneaky process to gather his sperm for testing is like sneaking around gathering facts for a news story. Her excuse is that she is saving his feelings, but really she is distancing herself from having a baby. Another way to handle the situation would be to tell Brian and consider their options; however, she does not want options because she does not want a child. Instead, she wants to undermine his fatherhood and their

marriage. Mary Ann can pretend that she really wants to have a baby until Simon confronts her and she admits that Brian is the one who wants a baby:

“He doesn't know anything.” She decided to throw herself on his mercy. “He doesn't even know he's sterile. The hell of it is...*he's* the one who wants the baby. It's no big deal with me. He doesn't have a job now, and he thinks the baby would be something he could....” (*Babycakes* 272)

Mary Ann not only rejects the compulsory nature of having a baby in a heterosexual relationship when she leaves in *Sure of You*, but here it is clear that she lacks the desire for a child at all. Becoming a mom is not a part of her identity like becoming a dad is for Brian. Mary Ann's claims of wanting a child before were attempts at conforming to gender roles and compulsory heterosexuality. Her cold manipulation of both Brian and Simon is in stark contrast to Brian's unbridled joy at the idea of having a child. He takes to parenting Shawna immediately while Mary Ann is still adjusting years later. When he thought they were trying to conceive, he was focused mostly on the possible result while Mary Ann wanted to concentrate on the sex itself:

“Besides,” she added, “it strikes me that some sleazy neon would do wonders for both of us. Not to mention the Magic Fingers...and one of those Korean oil paintings of Paris in the rain. We can mess up both beds if we want to, and...”

“*Jesus!*”

The explosion really frightened her. “What on earth...?”

“*Is that the way you want it to be?*” (*Babycakes* 187-88)

For her it need not be romantic; in fact she wanted it to be sleazy to match the truth of her lies and her lack of desire to have a child. He wants it to be a magical experience, but her knowledge of his sterility makes the idea laughable to her. When Mary Ann keeps the job offer from Burke a secret, she rationalizes it by thinking he does not love her anymore since she does not love him anymore. She tells Michael:

“I don't love him anymore, Mouse. I haven't loved him for a long time.” [...]

“But the talk-show thing forced the issue?”

“Well, it made things clearer. I saw how long I've been settling for less than the whole package. I need a partner, Mouse. Someone who dreams about the same things.” (*Sure of You* 127-29)

She feels like she settled for less than she deserves so she does not want to bring along the lesser parts of herself: Brian and Shawna. She flat-out rejects the compulsory heterosexual dream when she makes the decision to move to NYC alone. She wants an equally ambitious partner rather than the swap of gender roles she and Brian have and, most especially, rather than traditional gender roles.

### Mary Ann's Career

Of queer theory, Calvin Thomas states that it “might designate the critical process by which straights can learn...to make interventions into the reproduction of heteronormativity or compulsory heterosexuality” (23-24). Mary Ann does not set out to defy heteronormativity, but her actions do so in any case. She does it purely for personal satisfaction; as a straight person she is more at liberty to do so since her actions do not hold the weight of her whole sexuality upon them, unlike the pressure put upon homosexuals. She challenges the idea that as a woman she wants to be a mother and that she is always nurturing, and wants to settle down into a life of being a nurturer.

Mary Ann's life as a locally famous journalist and television personality starkly contrasts this nurturing role. The upper-class world runs on the old form of sexual discourse, in which sex and power are related. When Mary Ann chooses her career over her family, Maupin paints her in a less than flattering light as a commentary on how she has become a member of the social elite by the end of the sixth book. Sex and power are related with Mary Ann much like they are according to Foucault. However, instead of having a child and being married in order to be more powerful, Mary Ann feels suffocated by the idea. Mary Ann's rise in her career correlates with the deterioration of her relationship with Brian. The desire for family ultimately leads to a fracturing of the family. Through an inversion of gender roles, Maupin subverts the conventional sexual discourse and expectations of heterosexuality. Eve Sedgwick says that it is “impossible to imagine a form of patriarchy that was not homophobic”

(Between Men 3). Both marriage and motherhood are branches of the tree of patriarchy. For women this means that under the patriarchy, a woman should aim to complement a man. One way women are kept down under the patriarchy is through being thought of and treated as sexual objects, as breeders, as property. In a lesbian relationship, men are completely absent in the power dynamic. In a gay relationship, the possibility of one or both men being viewed as a sexual object arises. This objectification of men is why in straight media, gay men are portrayed as feminine and lesbians as masculine. Marriage between a man and a woman relies on the patriarchal dynamic of gender roles and homosexuality defies this dynamic. Leaving Brian and Shawna behind for her career is how Mary Ann escapes the compulsive heterosexual life for which she settled. Though she does not join a community of other women who resisted marriage or left it because it was unfulfilling, Mary Ann very much reflects their rejection of heteronormative standards.

In *Further Tales of the City*, Mary Ann helps DeDe Day bury the body of Jim Jones. The plot revolves largely around DeDe's escape from Jonestown, Jim Jones's return from the grave, his kidnapping of DeDe's children, and his subsequent murder in the backyard of DeDe's mother's home. DeDe and Mary Ann bury the body in the yard rather than alert the police in order to protect the family maid, Emma, who killed him. Maupin's version of Jim Jones is a personification of compulsory heterosexuality. He leads a cult and claims the women and children as his own. He raped DeDe at Jonestown and kidnapped her children in *Further Tales of the City*. Like Norman, he is such a repellant character that his death does not deserve mourning, especially from those he hurt most. His death affects DeDe more than Mary Ann, who nonetheless finds herself covering up yet another death of a man who was able to pretend to be a compassionate person, but who was really an example of the dangers of compulsive heterosexuality, through his seduction and manipulation of a minor character, Prue Giroux and his rape of DeDe and other women at Jonestown. DeDe was clearly in a lesbian relationship, but he claimed her body for his own use. With Jones no longer a danger to DeDe's

children, Mary is able to break the story that DeDee survived Jonestown, which breaks her out of hosting the afternoon movie and into investigative reporting.

As an investigative reporter in the fourth book *Babycakes*, Mary Ann has to skip romantic time with Brian in order to cover a story. She abandons their plans for a weekend away to cover a tortilla with Jesus's face on it, which hurts Brian:

“We can still drive up there tomorrow.”

“No, we can't. I canceled our reservations. We were damn lucky to even get a room. I had no way of knowing if you'd pull this again.” (*Babycakes* 187)

Their weekend plans were meant to be time for conceiving a child; Mary Ann further irritates Brian when she suggests a motel. Later, her job becomes her cover for cheating on Brian with Simon. She insists that Brian go to a weekend party without her because she had to cover the sunrise service on Easter Sunday, which is when she is actually ovulating, though she tells him it is the weekend before, which is the weekend that her job ruins. Mary Ann's determination to put aside her personal life in favor of her job is an effect of all the obstacles she had to go through to get it. The sexual harassment from employers, such as when her boss moved a woman named Bambi up to investigative reporter because she did him sexual favors. Mary Ann knows that if she wants to avoid having to do the same thing, she has to be ten times as hardworking as her male coworkers, or Bambi, in order to keep her job or earn a promotion. Mary Ann eventually earns her own talk show in between *Babycakes* and *Significant Others* called *Mary Ann in the Morning*. For much of the latter book, she is just a face on the television screen. When Brian goes away with Michael, Shawna wonders why her dad isn't on television:

Mrs. Madrigal came back on the line. “The telephone throws her. She thinks you should be on TV.”

“What do you mean?”

The landlady chuckled. “When Mommy's away, Mommy's on TV. So when Daddy's away...well, it makes sense, doesn't it?” (*Significant Others* 226)

Mary Ann's job renders her a background character for much of the fifth book. The most present part of

her is their new apartment in a high-rise building, overlooking 28 Barbary Lane. The fruit of her success also takes her away from the alternative family of Michael, Mona, and Mrs. Madrigal. This fissure in her connection to them and to San Francisco makes the job in NYC more appealing to her in *Sure of You*.

Mary Ann's career increasingly becomes the source of her fulfillment with each promotion and opportunity. The NYC job offer comes at a time when her local talk show host job no longer provides the fulfillment it once had given her as well as a time when she has grown apart from her friends and family. While San Francisco long held the key to independence, Mary Ann found herself within the heteronormative structure of marriage, which she rejects as a result of her ambition for a life more like that of Clöe and Russell Rand. Russell is a closeted homosexual and Clöe became his wife in order to conceal that fact from the public. What Mary Ann senses in their relationship is power as a couple, not as a result of their marriage and the possibility of children, but rather as a result of the lack of a sexual dynamic between the pair. Russell wishes to continue his work as a clothing designer without jeopardizing his business by being associated with AIDS simply because of his sexuality. Clöe, who is from a modest background like Mary Ann's, is simply enjoying the wealth and power her marriage to Russell provides. They satisfy themselves sexually outside the marriage, which allows Clöe to avoid the power dynamic that usually occurs between husband and wife. Mary Ann's envy of their relationship, combined with her affair with Simon, her friendship with Michael, and her career ambitions lead her to pursue the job in NYC, for it gives her the opportunity to leave the heteronormative relationship.

## CHAPTER IV

### MICHAEL TOLLIVER AND PROGRESSIVE DISCOURSE ON HOMOSEXUALITY

Michael Tolliver, as a character, provides a progressive discourse, in the Foucauldian sense, on homosexuality and the gay male identity. According to Foucault, “normalization” is “not the imposition of an alien will, but a distribution around a statistically imagined norm” (Berlant 557). By this, Foucault means that “normality” does not have an original definition, much like Plato's forms. Instead “normality” is determined to fall within certain boundaries which are arbitrarily determined and which can be expanded. Michael Tolliver as a progressive discourse is an effort to expand the distribution of the sexual norm to include homosexuality, while acknowledging that it will take more than one character to accomplish such a task. This chapter examines his romantic life and his participation in casual sex through the lens of this discourse. Michael's character provides a contrast to the dysfunctions of heteronormativity and heterosexual relationships.

The 28 Barbary Lane series created a new discourse about homosexuality through Maupin's descriptions of homosexual sex, love, and the depth given to gay characters which illustrates them as being composed of more than their sexuality. At first, the series is composed of light fare, uses humor and absurdities as part of its discourse. There is more focus on Mary Ann in the first two or three books, while Michael's development gets more page time in the latter books. The biggest reason for this shift is the national discourse about AIDS at the time and Maupin's HIV positive partner. There was an absence of gay voices as President Reagan ignored AIDS for years and the media only talked about how it could possibly affect heterosexuals (Grave). Maupin describes how the closing of the



bathhouses leads to a depressing array of circle jerks. The first death from AIDS in the series happens off page, in between *Further Tales of the City* and *Babycakes*. The character who dies is not insignificant; he was the love of Michael's life. This off-page death of a character the reader has grown to love serves to not give emotional impact in later scenes when Michael finds Mona and tells her what happened to Jon, but to also illustrate the media erasure of gay voices on the subject of AIDS. Michael's relationship with Mary Ann becomes strained as he becomes more ill and she becomes more career-minded (*Sure of You* 220).

### Casual Sex in Homosexual Community

Judith Butler asks “[W]hat happens to the performative when its purpose is precisely to undo the presumptive force of the heterosexual ceremonial?” (*Bodies* 225). How do the homosexual performatives in the 28 Barbary Lane series “undo” this force? Michael takes on queer performative aspects, such as his participation in a gay choir and attendance of gay clubs and bars, but when it comes to the part that truly defines him as gay—love and sex with other men—he reflects the normative in his desire for monogamy and a happily-ever-after. As a character, he is repetitive about his romantic desires that are quite normative by societal standards: monogamy, domestic fantasies, using the word “husband” to refer to his significant other. Through his personal discourse there is a shift in the discursive power of “gay,” “homosexual,” and “husband” for the reader. His existence as a gay character both reflects a nonstereotypical identity and creates the same. Michael is a repetition himself, of the author, his lovers and friends, and gay men in the population as a whole. This discursive power and resignification reflect Butler's theories of resignification. Butler defines queer performative acts as the medium of resignification of homosexuality itself. These acts “exercise a binding power” and this power “acts *as* discourse” (*Bodies* 225). This effectively destigmatizes homosexuality for the broad audience for whom Maupin wrote. Through Mary Ann, the normative is painted as a trap from which

she breaks free, but Michael's monogamous nature exists side-by-side with the gay subculture of bathhouses, anonymous sex, cross-dressing, parades, etc. Maupin does not ignore this part of the subculture, because the performative acts of homosexuality cannot be ignored; to erase this subculture would defeat the purpose of breaking down the barrier between the heterosexual mainstream and homosexuality. The subculture exists in the first place because of the barrier which was erected due to prejudice. The Zoning Text Amendment of 1995 in NYC restricted adult business “within five hundred feet of another adult establishment or within five hundred feet of a house of worship, school, or day-care center” (Berlant 551). Considering that gay communities were confined to small areas in cities like NYC's Christopher Street and San Francisco's Castro Street, the effect on businesses would have been “devastating” (551). The risk of violence from straight users of porn would increase as they would be in the same general area. In short, “[t]he impact of the sexual purification of New York [would have fallen] unequally on those who already have fewest publicly accessible resources” (551). The importance of these areas to the gay community was even more significant in the 1970s.

Casual sex portrayed in the series is important, as it presents a realistic portrayal of San Francisco in the 70s and early 80s. It is a city of immigrants, many seeking a place where their sexuality can be freely expressed. The bathhouses and clubs capitalize on this promise of freedom of expression and love. While the main thrust of his love life is the search for a true partner, Michael enjoys casual sex as well and sometimes uses it as an escape while he longs for something more complete. These escapes from the emotional through the physical combat the notion that gay men never get attached to partners. While Michael is sexually satisfied, emotionally he is starved. An excellent example of this is when he slow dances with the man at The Rodeo in Nevada while his casual sex partner retrieves poppers:

He felt so profoundly *comfortable* in this man's arms. Even his gracelessness was endearing. It wasn't the man, he reminded himself, but the circumstances. Two prevailing cultures—one very straight, one very gay—had successively denied him this

simple pleasure. He felt like crying for joy.” (*Further* 213)

Michael tells the man that he gained more pleasure from being held than all of the combined sex he had all year. The emotional emptiness that Michael feels with casual sex destigmatizes homosexuality by humanizing Michael rather than contributing to the “othering” of homosexuals from heteronormative society.

### Michael as the Romantic Lead

Maupin's portrayal of homosexual relationships and homosexual encounters subverts heterosexism. The “queering” of Mary Ann is thrown into full relief by the fact that Michael “Mouse” Tolliver, a gay man, takes on the role of the romantic lead of the series, often citing his desire for marriage and the domestic life. He is the character most like Maupin himself. His love life is the focal point of his development, most profoundly through the death of his lover from AIDS and his own contraction of HIV. Despite such a controversial topic at the time it was written, Michael's story is never sensationalized for shock value. His search for the love of his life is sprinkled with homosexual stereotypes, but those stereotypes never define Michael. Maupin utilized that the personal is political to combat the marginalization of homosexuals. Michael is so easy to relate to that the reader grows to feel like they know him. He has moments of insecurity and a deep need for family, friendship, and love. He often hides his insecurity through humor and treats other characters with a kindness that many readers would welcome into their own lives. Through this humanization of Michael, Maupin normalizes homosexuality and provides a point of identification for a straight reader.

Next to giving a face to AIDS, Michael's letter to his mother in *More Tales of the City* is the most needed thing Maupin wrote in the series. He tells his mother that he is gay because she is rallying behind Anita Bryant and it hurts him. He says, “I never needed saving from anything except the cruel and ignorant piety of people like Anita Bryant” (221). He describes the self-hatred he carried around

for so long and how he wishes someone *had* “recruited” him because then he would have been made to feel like he could be anything he wanted to be (221-22).

Michael craves marriage more so than his straight counterparts and his idea of marriage is heteronormative:

“Do you believe in marriage, Mary Ann?”

She nodded. “Most of the time.”

“Me too. I think about it every time I see a new face. I got married four times today on the 41 Union bus.”

There was embarrassment in Mary Ann's laugh.

“I know,” said Michael unaccusingly. “A bunch of fairies in caftans, tripping through Golden Gate Park with drag bridesmaids and quotations from 'Song of the Loon'...That's not what I mean.”

“I know.”

“It would be like...friends. Somebody to buy a Christmas tree with.” (*Tales* 236)

He does that kind of relationship with Jon and then Thack, eventually. Mary Ann's momentary embarrassment is meant to give readers who relate to her a reflection of themselves, but it also shows how her outlook on marriage and homosexuality changes through the course of the series. Here the idea of two men getting married makes her uncomfortable. Michael's reassurance that it wouldn't be “too gay” relieves her of her discomfort and subtly tells readers like her that the sanctity of marriage would not be ruined by two men getting married, or even that they could just live together rather than officially getting married. Michael's idea of marriage is deeply rooted in the relationship itself rather than the ritual of the wedding and recognition from society. All he wants is someone to watch television with, an activity that Maupin makes sure to describe: “Michael and Jon were in bed watching a rerun of *The Honeymooners* (*More Tales* 191). When he is temporarily paralyzed, Jon asks Michael to marry him (239).

In *Tales of the City*, Michael keeps his sexuality a secret from his parents even when they visit him. Michael's father makes homophobic remarks about the gay citizens of San Francisco celebrating Halloween on the streets. He tells Michael to make sure he keeps the “fruits away. Michael is

uncomfortable, going along with his parents' impression that Mona, his ex-roommate, had really been his girlfriend. His denial of his true self around them allows for the reader to get a glimpse of the isolation that gay men from conservative families feel. Michael's sexual orientation is a large part of who he is as a very loving and affectionate person. His parents' homophobia illustrates how homosexuals are "othered" by society and how staying closeted to protect oneself is about self-defense rather than an agreement that their sexuality is wrong.

Michael and Thacke act like the married couple that Michael always wanted to be part of. In fact, Michael writes to his mother in *Sure of You* that he does not want to be buried in the family plot in Florida. He wants to be cremated in San Francisco and for Thack to take care of the ashes:

I don't know how much time I have left—whether it's two years or five or fifty—but I don't want to be taken back to Orlando when it's over. This is my home now, and I've asked Thack to make arrangements for my cremation here in San Francisco." (*Sure of You* 249)

Such a declaration solidifies Thack's role as husband and as family, one he chose over his mother, though Thack constantly nags him to call his mother (26). Michael's last chapter describes domestic bliss with Thack:

The rain drove them indoors. They made tea and watched the downpour from the kitchen table. Michael thought of his rainy spring at Easley House, over five years before. It was there, at the folly on the hill above the house, that he had finally told Mona about Jon's death. Now, more than anything, he wanted her to meet the man who had made him happy." (254)

Mary Ann's marriage with Brian never gets such treatment, even in their happier times. Robyn Warhol declares Michael's relationship with Thack in *Sure of You* as "the only coupling that looks anything like a 'marriage,' by Michael's definition or, for that matter, according to mainstream culture" (390).

Michael's encounters with homophobia ultimately lead to an inability for Mary Ann to empathize with him nor for him to understand her distaste for the kind of life for which he longs.

## CHAPTER V

### MARY ANN AND MICHAEL'S "MARRIAGE"

Mary Ann and Michael's friendship is often referred to as a "marriage" throughout the series. As a gay man, Michael puts no sexual pressure upon Mary Ann like heterosexual men do. She needs her connection with Michael, for he is her survival relationship. Though described by Adrienne Rich to be between women, the term can still be applied to Mary Ann and Michael. Until her career takes over her life, she and Michael prop each other up when life, particularly love, gets them down. They "make life endurable for each other" (Rich 655). Their friendship develops slowly over the first book until her confession to him about Norman's death creates a bond that they share with no one else. From then until the last book, *Sure of You*, Mary Ann and Michael rely upon each other for support in their personal and professional lives. As Mary Ann moves onto the lesbian continuum with the progression of her relationships, Michael increasingly becomes what Adrienne Rich calls her "survival relationship." She goes to him to recover from the heterosexual men in her life. When Norman dies, representing the death of the traditional, safe man for Mary Ann, she confides in Michael. When she decides not to go to NYC with Burke, Michael is the first person she tells and he provides insight on her decision. When she falls out of love with Brian, she tells Michael first, hoping he will lie for her until she tells Brian she is leaving him. He cannot do so, for by the last book, Michael and Brian have developed a bond. Mary Ann and Michael's survival relationship comes to an end and is treated as the more important relationship in comparison to her marriage with Brian. Ultimately, Michael's loyalty lies with Brian as a result of Mary Ann diverting too far from the heteronormative path. Michael could

never be a permanent survival relationship; only another woman could take that place. However, Mary Ann has no such close female friend, despite her friendship with DeDe. Mary Ann no longer has people tying her to San Francisco so leaving is an easy decision.

Often it seems as though Mary Ann is more attracted to gay men than straight. After accompanying Connie Bradshaw, an old friend from high school, to a supermarket to cruise for men, Mary Ann is attracted to a man named Robert. He is polite, making small talk about a recipe rather than attempting to get her into bed (17). His boyfriend, Michael, becomes Mary Ann's best friend throughout the series. He is the one man who is a constant in her life. When Mary Ann confides in Michael about Norman's death and secrets, their relationship is solidified. Michael reassures Mary Ann on the eve of their cruise that she had broken no laws, despite her pointing out that she did not report his death. He tells her:

That guy...was a certified prick. He was a child pornographer, for Christ's sake. You didn't *push* him off that cliff, Mary Ann. His death was an accident. Besides, if you reported his death, you would have been obligated to tell the police he was investigating Mrs. Madrigal. And we *both* love Mrs. Madrigal too much for that, no matter *what* was in that file. (*More Tales* 26)

He then has to talk her out of feeling guilty for burning the file. This exchange illustrates how close they became in the two months between Norman's death and the cruise. As her “survival relationship,” Michael is the only person who is able to comfort her in the aftermath of losing her innocence and of the metaphorical death of the traditional man having any role in her future. Through his support and humor, Mary Ann is able to leave her old life behind and look toward the future.

There is an aspect of Mary Ann and Burke's relationship that is important to Mary Ann's development that was not discussed in chapter three. When they first meet, Mary Ann is unsure of whether Burke has been watching Michael and herself because he is attracted to her or to Michael. Her friendship with Michael combined with her experiences with Beauchamp and Norman make this ambiguity an attractive trait. This is a change from her resentment that Robert from the Marina

Safeway was gay. Mary Ann has become more drawn toward nontraditional masculinity. In fact, she makes Michael pretend to be her husband, claiming it is for the benefit of their dining table mates on the cruise, Arnold and Melba, when really it is more of a wish fulfillment. Burke even points out that the two friends really are like a married couple:

“Michael loves you, Mary Ann. You must've done *something* right.”

“I hope.”

“Hope? Dammit, Mary Ann, there were times in Mexico when I was almost eaten up with jealousy.”

“Jealousy? Of Michael?”

“Michael and you together. Michael and you laughing and conspiring together. Michael and you playing tricks on Arnold and Melba. Michael and you pretending—hell, you weren't pretending—you *were* married. You were as married as two people could ever be.” (*More Tales* 225)

He says this in response to her chastising herself over her initial impression of Michael at the store with Robert; she was furious with him. She felt that Robert was wasted as a gay man and therefore so was Michael. This self-reflection is prompted by her taking down Michael's dictation of his coming-out letter to his mother from his hospital bed. While Mary Ann cares for Burke, possibly even loves him, and helps him find out the truth of what caused his amnesia, she does not need him.

As described at the end of chapter three, Mary Ann admires the marriage of Russell and Chloe Rand. They are both successful in their own right and they do not have children. The reader knows long before Mary Ann that she covets the relationship dynamic between a gay man and the woman he married for appearances (or his “beard”), to pass as straight. Her “marriage” with Michael is over. His illness has changed the way she talks to and acts toward him. Before she leaves Brian and Shawna for NYC, Brian encourages her to make up with Michael because they are the relationship it will affect most. Brian is the one to bring up Michael during their last conversation, after he vents his own frustrations:

“Michael's the one you should talk to,” he added.

“What do you mean?”

“Well...this is kind of it for you guys.”



“What?”

“I mean, if he got sick...You've thought about this, haven't you?” [...]

“Yes. O.K. My life. Whatever. Just don't accuse me of running away from...his illness.”

*(Sure of You 246)*

The possibility of Michael's death sends Mary Ann into a bout of denial. She becomes more careful around him and spends less time with him. She begins to lose him as a confidante as a result. He is no longer a respite from the trials of heterosexual men. Though she has DeDe, Michael had been her true “survival relationship” (Rich 655). He was her solid ground upon which to assert her independence and without his influence the wealth and ambition turn her cold. However, she continues along the lesbian continuum after losing her survival relationship by leaving for NYC, pursuing her career, and leaving marriage behind. Mary Ann is not running away from his illness, but rather from the fracturing of their relationship, which results partially from the new perspective his illness has given him. Her blindness to Russell Rand's hypocrisy as a result of her desire for his lifestyle ironically leads to the destruction of her relationship with her own Russell. When she and Michael fight about her leaving, he says “I wish there was some way to convince you I'm not dead yet. [...] That's the way you've acted....Ever since I told you I was positive” (220). Mary Ann's reaction to Michael being HIV positive is a reflection of the reaction in society to the gay community which accompanied the emergence of HIV and AIDS. She avoids Michael's illness until it becomes the elephant in the room. A few hours before he attends a party with Mary Ann, Michael finds a possible lesion on his leg. If it is one, that means he has developed AIDS. That same night he gets into an argument with Russel Rand when the designer attempts to hit on him. Mary Ann does not understand why he did it:

“He's a liar, Mary Ann.”

“He's a public figure.”

“Oh, I see. Can't have Amurrica knowing he's queer. Anything but that, God knows.”

“There are practical considerations,” she said. “You're not being at all reasonable.”

“I haven't got time for people who don't like themselves.” [...]

“You liked Russel the other night. Did Thack bad-mouth him or something?”

“No.”

“Then what's gotten into you?”

His beeper went off, answering her question more eloquently than anything he might have said. (*Sure of You* 220)

Their close friendship is deteriorating in conjunction with his body and the rise of her career. She no longer understands him nor he her. While all she can think about is the approval of those whom she aspires to be like, Michael sees the contradiction and lies of that kind of life for what they are: harmful to the gay community.

Michael's relationship with Thack leads to an escape from Mary Ann and his role as her “survival relationship” as he becomes more activist and the threat of developing AIDS looms overhead. While Michael's character serves the purpose of portraying gay men in a new light, Thack is an activist in his words rather than his simple existence as a character. As stated in the introduction, Maupin became more frustrated and angry in the face of the backlash against gay men in response to AIDS. Thack's fierce conviction on gay rights speaks straight to the bigots in the nation and the Reagan administration's vile lack of response to the AIDS epidemic. Thack's political nature eventually opens Michael's eyes to how much she has changed when she gets mad at him for confronting Rand. The end of their friendship, their marriage, is a natural product of Mary Ann's changing identity and her place on the lesbian continuum. Though he is her main survival relationship, he is still a man whom she had wrapped her identity around and therefore they must part for her to continue onward.

Another factor in the deterioration of Mary Ann and Michael's relationship is the development of his close bond with Brian, which results in Michael being unable to keep Mary Ann's true intentions from Brian in the last book. When they first meet, Michael is unsure of Brian's reaction to his sexuality for an out gay person must carefully weight the decision of whom to come out to because each person's reaction is unknown and could lead to insult, violence, or simply losing a job opportunity (46). In Michael's case when he and Brian meet, he is unsure whether Brian will be insulting and angry. He sizes Brian up when they both layout to tan in the courtyard: “Brian nodded and tossed his towel on the

ground. Five feet away, Michael noted. Close, but not *too* close. A perfect HBU. Hunky But Uptight” (*Tales* 217). Michael is cautious with Brian while they lay out, keeping quiet most of the time until they share a laugh, then he is able to be open about his personal life:

“That happens to me all the time,” said Michael. “I meet some person...male-type...at a bar or the baths, and he seems really...what I want. A nice mustache, Levi's, a starched khaki army shirt...strong...Somebody you could take back to Orlando and they'd never know the difference.

“Then you go home with him to his house on Upper Market, and you try like hell not to go to the bathroom, because the bathroom is the giveaway, the fantasy-killer...”

Brian looked confused.

“It's the bathroom cabinet,” Michael explained. “Face creams and shampoos for *days*. And on top of the toilet tank they've all always got one of those goddamn little gold pedestals full of colored soap balls!” (*Tales* 218)

The specifics of this exchanged assure Brian that Michael is not into femininity in a sexual partner; that with Michael, the gender binary is intact. So, while he opens up to Brian here, he does so in a way that still protects himself from potential backlash against any perceived femininity about himself.

They develop a deeper bond when a couple of bigots attack both of them in a hate crime in *Further Tales of the City*. While they are walking down the street together, they are called “faggots” by men driving by (*Further* 334). Brian's unfamiliarity with the situation causes him to verbally confront them, rather than listen to Michael's pleas to ignore them. The men beat them both to the ground and stab Brian. While both physically recover in the hospital, the event brings them closer. Brian gets a glimpse at what it is like to be hated by society and Michael sees that Brian meant well in defending them.

When Brian confides in Michael about getting tested for the anti-body virus after a woman with whom he had an affair told him she has it, there is a shift in Michael and Mary Ann's friendship since he must keep a secret from her. The pair had been through a lot together, but did not always see eye to eye. At the end of *Significant Others*, Michael asks Brian to become his partner at the nursery in a way that mirrors Michael and Mary Ann's relationship:

“I love you, Michael.”  
Michael plumped the pillow again. “So marry me.”  
Brian laughed.  
“I mean it,” said Michael. “I need a partner.”  
“A partner?”  
“At the nursery, you dildo.” (303)

Brian accepts because Michael's work seems enviably fulfilling. “Marrying” Michael for fulfillment would not fill the holes left from his marriage to Mary Ann, but it would fulfill a need to feel masculine, that he is earning his way and is not her dependent any longer. When Brian fears that he has AIDS and must abstain from sex for ten days while he awaits the test results, he goes away with Michael to a cabin upstate in order to avoid telling Mary Ann the truth until he knows the results. Michael comforts him the first night when Brian soaks his sheets with sweat:

Brian lay on his stomach. Michael blotted his back with the wet sheet, then kneaded the knotted muscles above his shoulder blades. There was a moment of deceptive quiet before Brian began to sob into the cushions.  
“Hush,” whispered Michael. “It's O.K....It's O.K.” (*Significant Others* 129)

Though Thack is with them, the weekend and the shared secret they hold from Mary Ann, brings the two men closer. Their friendship makes it so Michael is the person Brian runs to after he confronts Mary Ann about her lies regarding the job in NYC.

As a result of his growing closeness with Brian, when Mary Ann confides in him that she is leaving Brian and Shawna behind for her career, Michael no longer feels comfortable being her confidante. Mary Ann wants Michael to lie to Brian for her about the job, but it is an impossible task, especially since she tells him she does not want Brian to come with her. Michael tells him anyway:

Refusing to meet his gaze, Michael picked up a piece of toast. “It's got nothing to do with you and me.”  
“I know that's not true.”  
“It is. Can't you just leave me out of this?”  
“Nope,” Brian told him, smiling. “Sorry. You're in my life. There's nothing I can do about it. C'mon now. Tell me.”  
Michael sighed and set down his toast. (*Sure of You* 167)

This exchange leads to Brian confronting Mary Ann and leaving their apartment to stay with Michael

and Thack at their house. Michael tries not to choose sides, but he chooses Brian's in the end.

Despite his own marginalization as a gay man, Michael's understanding of Mary Ann are limited to his own romantic perceptions. To Michael, being with the person you love and being in a family are his idea of happiness and power. Society wants to deny him the ability to be with the man he loves and has turned against him because of AIDS. He cannot understand Mary Ann's struggle for power outside of marriage and family. The queering of Mary Ann ultimately leads to the destruction of their survival relationship because though they both are recovering from forms of compulsory heterosexuality, the method of recovery is vastly different for both.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is important to re-clarify how examining the character of Mary Ann through the lenses of Foucault, Butler, Beauvoir, and Rich brought about the conclusion that Mary Ann is “queered” as Maupin's series progresses. Maupin's work, in regards to heterosexuals, looks at the societal structure that gives them power by showing how flawed and dysfunctional their love and sexual relationships can be through the deconstruction of gender roles and ideas of femininity and masculinity. First, Foucault provides a solid history of sexuality and a look at how society has shaped the acceptable and unacceptable. His historical analysis of sexuality provides a background for understanding Maupin's San Francisco. Butler provides a vital connection between feminism/gender and queer theory/sexuality: both resist “reducing gender to prevailing forms of sexual relations such that one 'is' the effect of the sexual position one is said to occupy” (*Bodies* 240). In the case of Mary Ann, it says that just because she is a woman, she does not have to be a wife or mother in order to identify as a woman. This connects to sexuality through Michael, who, just because he is a man, does not have to be attracted to women nor does he have to fit into society's idea of masculinity in order to be a man. The only thing needed to be a woman or a man is to identify as one. Biology and sexuality have no bearing on gender, nor does gender have any bearing on sexuality. Society does attempt to define gender and sexuality in relation to one another, but no one person perfectly fits the role. Mary Ann is “queered” in that her identity as an independent woman who resists marriage and motherhood defies the gender roles that are connected by society with heterosexuality. This brings us to Rich's idea of the lesbian continuum. Mary Ann fits onto the continuum once she makes the decision to leave Brian

and Shawna. Mary Ann never identifies as a lesbian, but like a lesbian she eventually resists the support of men. Her tendency to be drawn towards gay men like Michael and Russel Rand illustrate an inversion of the dynamic she wants in a relationship; she would rather be the masculine one. Once she leaves her family and friends for her career, Mary Ann becomes like Beauvoir's "independent woman."

### Social Significance of the Series

Maupin's series touched gay readers personally by creating characters with whom they could identify. Not only was Michael's coming out letter to his parents Maupin's own way of coming out to his own parents and the public, but many gay readers cut it out of the paper and sent it to their own parents adding "Me too" (Bram 194). Just like Michael, Maupin had come from a conservative family and lived in the closet. Maupin was never HIV positive, but his partner of several years, Anderson, was seropositive (240). It seems Maupin integrated HIV into his stories due to this personal element combined with the silencing of the gay voice in the discussion of AIDS in the media at the time (Bersani 203). Michael would sometimes voice Maupin's own responses to editorial pressure and society's hatred of homosexuals. One instance is when Maupin learned that his column was about to be pulled because management was afraid of volatile climate caused by Anita Bryant's anti-gay crusade. Maupin said "I heard from a lot of gay people: This is a message to go back into the closet, so I had Michael say, 'When I came out of the closet, I nailed the door shut'" (Robins).

Performatives are established through repetition, according to Butler, and the queer performative that Maupin is expressing reverberates throughout every character he pens. This reverberation creates his depiction of San Francisco and directs the development of his characters. Mary Ann breaks free of the limits of her gender and Michael normalizes homosexuality, both through these reverberations. The method of Maupin's aim to normalize homosexuality and other aspects of the queer community is to trouble the straight identity. He challenges straight people to examine why and

how they are straight in the same way that homosexuality has been examined by society since its emergence as an identity. Michael Tolliver was the first character with HIV in American literature. While Maupin did not change policy on government funding for researching the disease through Michael, the character became the first person with AIDS that many straight Americans ever “knew.” He also opened the door for more characters with HIV and even whole stories centered around HIV to be written. Maupin also expressed the rage of the gay community on society not caring that so many of them were dying. The moments when Michael or another character would express their anger were small protests syndicated across the country in numerous papers. The PBS and Showtime miniseries of the first three books secured a place for Maupin's series in American culture. The series' effect on the gay community and those outside of the community is apparent in its cult following; today there is a musical production of the first book in San Francisco.

### Gay Literature Post-Maupin

Though it hasn't been long enough since its publication nor has the series been studied enough to determine the literary significance of the series, the series was written and published at a high point of gay literature. According to the MFA's reading list of “The Queer Canon of Gay Literature,” the *Tales of the City* series was part of the “Golden Age” of gay literature (Killpack). After Maupin, there was a surge in novels that dealt with AIDS, such as the play *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner. Gay literature continued to address the political and social issues of the current time. For example, the book *Shine* was written by Lauren Myracle, who had lived in Laramie, Wyoming when Matthew Shepard was beaten and left for dead. Her book concerns a similar beating and is told through the point of view of his best friend, who tries to figure out who almost killed her friend. The novel *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* was written by two authors, John Green and David Levithan; Green is heterosexual and Levithan is homosexual. The novel alternates between the point of view of two teenagers with the same



name, one straight and the other gay, and how their lives collide. Hopefully as more time passes, Maupin's work will be studied in more depth and a direct lines between his work and new works of gay fiction will be analyzed, as well as his overall effect on literature as a whole.

There are an endless number of subjects to be analyzed within the *Tales of the City* series other than the queering of Mary Ann. One could simply focus on Michael's HIV status, Mrs. Madrigal's transexuality, Mona's identity shift from bisexual to lesbian, D'orthea's racial identity, DeDe Day's transition from married socialite to lesbian mother, the class politics of San Francisco, Maupin's dialogue heavy style which echoes Hemingway, Maupin's place in the literary canon, etc. This thesis touched upon some of these aspects in an effort to illustrate the literary importance of Maupin's work, which encompasses American gay literature at its peak.

## REFERENCES

- Andriote, John-Manuel. *Victory Deferred: How AIDS Changed Gay Life in America*. Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1999.
- Baldwin, James. *Giovanni's Room*. NY: Delta Trade Paperbacks, 2000.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. NY: Vintage Books, 2011.
- Berlant, Lauren and Michael Warner. "Sex in Public." *Critical Inquiry*. 24. 2 (Winter 1998): 547-66. JSTOR.
- Bersani, Leo. "Is the Rectum a Grave?" *October*. 43 (Winter 1987): 197-222. JSTOR.
- Bram, Christopher. *Eminent Outlaws: The Gay Writers Who Changed America*. NY: Twelve, 2012.
- Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter*. London and NY: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- ., Judith. *Gender Trouble*. NY: Routledge Classics, 2008.
- Einstadter, Werner J. and Karen P. Sinclair. "Lives on the Boundary: Armistead Maupin's Complete Tales of the City." *Journal of the History of Sexuality*. 1. 4 (April 1991): 682-89. JSTOR.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. NY: Vintage Books, 1990.
- Hall, Donald E. *Queer Theories*. Palgrave MacMillan: NY, 2003.
- Killpack, Val. "MFA Reading List: The Queer Canon of Literature." scribd.com. July 2010. Scribd Inc. September 29, 2012.
- Lanser, Susan Sniader. *The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1981.
- Maupin, Armistead. *Babycakes*. 1984. NY: HarperPerennial, 1994.
- . *Further Tales of the City*. 1982. NY: HarperPerennial, 1994.
- . *More Tales of the City*. 1980. NY: HarperPerennial, 1998.
- . *Significant Others*. 1987. NY: HarperPerennial, 1994.

–. *Sure of You*. 1989. NY: HarperPerennial, 1994.

–. *Tales of the City*. 1978. NY: HarperPerennial, 1994.

Rich, Adrienne. “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence.” *Signs*. 5. 4 (Summer 1980): 631-60. JSTOR

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. NY: Columbia UP, 1985.

–., Eve Kosofsky. “Epistemology of the Closet.” *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*. NY: Routledge, 1993.

–., Eve Kosofsky. *Tendencies*. Durham: Duke UP, 1993.

Sullivan, Nikki. *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*. NY: NY UP, 2003.

Thomas, Calvin. *Straight with a Twist: Queer Theory and the Subject of Heterosexuality*. Champaign, IL: U of IL P, 1999.

Vidal, Gore. *The City and the Pillar*. NY: Vintage International, 1995.

Warhol, Robyn R. “Making 'Gay' and 'Lesbian' into Household Words: How Serial Form Works in Armistead Maupin's 'Tales of the City.'” *Contemporary Literature*. 40.3 (Autumn 1999): 378-402. JSTOR.

## VITA

Sara Katherine White was born in Chattanooga, TN to Norman and Libby White. She was the youngest of two children; her sister Lisa was seven years older. She graduated from Red Bank High School as an honor student and graduated from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga with a bachelor's degree in Secondary English Education. Her work in the education program earned her a place on the dean's list. She briefly taught eighth grade English before deciding to pursue a master's degree in English and a career in publishing. Sara joined the master's program at UTC in 2010; in February of 2011, she presented a paper titled "Immoral Society, Patriarchy, and the 'Destruction' of Lily Bart" at the TN Philological Association Conference. In the fall of 2011, Sara joined the International English Honor Society, Sigma Tau Delta. Sara is currently searching for job opportunities in the field of publishing.