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Outlaw Fathers in Victorian and Modern British Literature: Queering Patriarchy

Helena Gurfinkel

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Outlaw Fathers in Victorian and Modern British Literature: Queering Patriarchy Helena Gurfinkel *Outlaw Fathers in Victorian and Modern British Literature: Queering Patriarchy* traces the representations of outlaw fathers, or queer patriarchs, and their relationships with their queer sons, in a particular literary tradition: mid-to-late-Victorian and twentieth-century British fiction and memoir. Specifically, I look at such representations in Anthony Trollope's *Doctor Thorne* (1858) and *The Prime Minister* (1875-76) (while also drawing on *An Autobiography* (1883) and *The Duke's Children* (1880)); Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* (published in 1901), Henry James's "The Lesson of the Master" (1888), J. R. Ackerley's *My Father and Myself* (written in the 1930s and published in 1968), E. M. Forster's "Little Imber" (1961) (with an occasional detour into *The Longest Journey* (1907), *Howards End* (1909), and *Maurice* (published in 1971)), and Alan Hollinghurst's *The Spell* (1998). In the coda, I consider the implications of including transgender, transnational female-to-male fathers of color in the ranks of queer patriarchy and discuss two contemporary novels, Jackie Kay's *Trumpet* (1998, Scotland) and Patricia Powell's *The Pagoda* (1998, Jamaica and the United States), as well as—briefly—an episode an episode of the television show *The L-Word* (2008) and the documentary *U-People* (2007).

The term "queer patriarchy" has two components. The first one is a non-traditional, primarily—but not exclusively—non-heterosexual, pervasively present, and culturally important, paternal subjectivity. The second one is the bond between such queer paternal figures and their sons, biological and non-biological. This study pays attention primarily to the relationship between psyche, language, and ideology, but it will join a larger conversation about the changing roles of men in general and fathers in particular, which is taking place outside of the field of literary studies.

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